The Mighty Oak: How the National Trust creates visitor experience.

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Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

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2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.

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5. The word count of the thesis is 75347.

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The Mighty Oak: How the National Trust creates visitor experience.

The National Trust is a heritage and environmental conservation organisation. Managing over 500 heritage properties that are open to visitors presents challenges to ensure a quality visitor experience. Key themes in the literature concern the management of space, authenticity and the skills and experience of managers and visitors. The current literature is about professional practice but what the conversations collected as data uncovered was that we have several different types of professional practice working in conjunction with each other, often not recognising the differences in approach and validity of the varying positions.

How does the National Trust create visitor experience? By examining stories collected from within the National Trust, we can understand how the National Trust creates visitor experience. A greater understanding of how the National Trust works to create visitor experience leads to a breaking through the postmodern veneer of the corporate National Trust. The data for this thesis has been collected through a series of conversations with senior managers, specialists, property managers, visitor facing staff and volunteers at a range of National Trust properties. This research is being undertaken to better understand the organisation and to enhance the visitor experience. Deconstruction has been used for the analysis of this data to investigate the internal workings of the NT, power relationships and positions and how this creates the visitor experience.

There is agreement within the National Trust about what constitutes a good experience for visitors and about key messages that visitors should take away, but there is not always agreement about how this should be achieved. There is also a question about who visitors are and diversity of visitors and within the trust, this is manifested in the question whose story is being told?

This research suggests the following implications for professional practice, the need to define success to develop key performance indicators, the need for the National Trust to address issues of inclusion and representation, review of management and recruitment of future volunteers, introducing a standard approach to curation. The

research also suggests the following academic contribution, development of the concept of the servicescape and the contribution of volunteers.

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Ian Whiteside

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1 Introduction

This thesis examines management within the National Trust, looking at how visitor experience is created and how the organisation itself works. The focus is on the processes that staff use individually and as part of the organisation to create visitor experience. Visitor experience is being explored as a concept. The thesis doesn't look specifically at how the experience is received by visitors; no data has been collected on visitors. Through empirical data collected from inside the organisation and then analysed using deconstruction techniques the power dynamics between staff and volunteers in the creation of visitor experience are examined.

From an initial literature review it was seen that there was a dearth of previous research on the National Trust and their management of visitor experience, it is now understood from carrying out the research that there may be unpublished research commissioned by the National Trust on this matter but not within the public domain. From a more thorough Literature Review, presented in Chapter 2, the key concepts of authenticity and representation were discovered. These two concepts were important in shaping the aim and objectives of this thesis. From the interviews that were carried out, the empirical data, Spirit of Place was discovered. Spirit of Place is the National Trust strategy for developing visitor experience at each property. Discussion of Spirit of Place features significantly in Chapter 4, the presentation of data and its analysis. The other significant topic that emerges from the data is the conflict between volunteers and management about the delivery of spirit of place strategy and visitor experience. This leads to an analysis of power dynamics within the National Trust using deconstruction in Chapters 4 and 5.

1.1 What is this research about?

This thesis is about how visitor experience is created within the National Trust. This is not a piece of audience research, this is about the internal workings of the National Trust, about power relationships and positions and how the organisation creates the visitor experience. This thesis uses Postmodernism and specifically deconstruction to look inside the organisation.

The theoretical underpinning of the original idea for this thesis come from three areas. Firstly, the experience economy as conceptualised by Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Torkildsen (2005) and the servicescape model of Bitner (1992). Secondly, Organizational storytelling in the work of Boje (2001) and thirdly Postmodern heritage tourism experience developed by Dorst (1989).

McCannell describes Chadds Ford, the subject of Dorst's (1989) study "a human community condemned to struggle endlessly to be just like its image, pure surface…failure to be like a painting would result in serious economic loss. One could argue that this is a generic feature of the postmodern condition: life imitates art as a matter of economic necessity" (McCannell, 1992, p.287).

1.2 How has it been done?

Data for this project was collected through a series of active interviews with National Trust staff and volunteers. The transcripts of these conversations were then arranged as stories, about properties or ways in which the National Trust works and presented in the findings of this thesis in the respondent's own words. These stories were then analysed using deconstruction to reveal how the National Trust works internally.

1.3 National Trust and the context of Heritage Visitor Attraction management

This section will set out what is meant by Tourism and Heritage. The sector will be examined and quantified. The size of the market will be explored, and the range of visitor experiences will be introduced.

Domestic tourism within the UK and international visitors to the UK contribute to the UK economy. According to the HLF in 2013 Heritage Tourism was worth £26.4 billion to the UK economy (Daily Telegraph, 2013). According to Visit England there are 873 million-day trips undertaken, worth approximately £39 billion. The top visitor attractions include the British Museum and Tate Modern (Visit England, 2018). According to Visit England (the organisation that promotes tourism in England) the UK visitor economy is worth £97 billion and supports 2 million jobs. England welcomes 25 million international visitors. England has 21 UNESCO World Heritage sites and there are 873-million-day trips made each year worth £37 billion. However, the origins of cultural tourism are not recent. Cultural tourism can be traced back to the 17th century idea of the 'Grand Tour'. Young men were sent to Italy to learn about culture and architecture. As Edward Gibbon described it "foreign travel completes the education of an English Gentleman" (Gibbon, 1826, p.540).

Heritage needs to be discussed and explained for the purpose of this thesis. "Essentially in tourism the term 'heritage' has come to mean not only landscapes, natural history, buildings, artefacts, cultural traditions, and the like which are either literally or metaphorically passed on from one generation to the other, but those among these things which can be portrayed for promotion as tourism products" (Prentice, 1993, p.5). Leask (2010) and Leask (2016) provide a comprehensive review of research on visitor attraction management. Whilst research into management practice in this area has begun to emerge as one of the areas of interest how the experience is created is still a relatively under researched aspect of visitor attraction management.

The Department of Digital, Culture Media and Sport directly funds the National Museums. 3 of the 5 most visited museums in the world are in England. These are the British Museum, Tate Modern and the National Gallery. Nearly 40 million people visit the National Museums and Galleries each year (DCMS, 2018) and each of these three museums have more than 5 million visitors per year, according to the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions.

Arts Council England, the arts development agency for England makes independent funding decisions following DCMS guidelines. The ACE "we invest money from the government and National Lottery to support arts and culture across England". Initiatives run by the ACE include the Renaissance programme, the Museums Accreditation system, and the Designation Scheme, which denotes National collections.

English Heritage (2014) manages over 400 sites which are open to the public. Together these sites attract 11 million visitors each year. English Heritage runs a membership scheme and has just under 750,000 members. English Heritage sites also attract over 445,000 free school visits.

In addition to the "official" arbiters of heritage management there are commercial operators in the sector. For example, the Merlin Group who own a range of attractions such as Madame Tussauds, Legoland and Warwick Castle. The experience offered at Warwick Castle is different to that offered at National Trust or English Heritage sites. The visitor experience at Warwick Castle is very similar to that offered at other Merlin sites such as Legoland. There is considerable focus on family visits and a strategy of offering services to visitors at additional cost following payment of the entrance fee. For example, at both Warwick Castle and Legoland the visitor is photographed and offered the purchase of the photographs as a standard activity, without being asked if they want to be photographed in the first place. This practice leads to queues at busy times which are explained to the visitor as "we are very busy today" when the queues are created by staff stopping visitors to have photographs taken, and then offered for sale.

Warwick Castle presents heritage as entertainment. During the summer of 2014 visitors were entertained by "Horrible Histories", the popular BBC children's TV series. This entertainment-based approach to history contrasts with the traditional way that heritage is presented to the visitor. As Timothy and Boyd (2003, p.254) state "Heritage Tourism is often differentiated from other forms of tourism by the importance placed on the quality of experiences people take home with them." This poses the question regarding authenticity that shall be explored in Chapter 2. Is the "Horrible Histories" fact based but entertainment driven approach less authentic than the National Trust/English Heritage approach and how important is this for the visitor? Warwick Castle is a medieval castle in Warwickshire built originally by William the Conqueror. It is the image of a castle (what people picture in their mind when someone says castle). The castle was originally built in 1068 and has been extensively altered and rebuilt in the following centuries. It was owned by the Greville family, the Earls of Warwick from the 18th century until 1978 when it was bought by the Merlin group.

Warwick Castle has more than 800,000 visits per year. Prices start from £21 online, with an annual pass costing £35. The Merlin Group which owns and runs Warwick Castle also owns and operates several different family orientated visitor attractions such as Sealife centres, Legoland and Madame Toussauds.

There are also independent heritage attractions. These are heritage attractions run as specialist historical sites but are not necessarily part of any other organisation. An example is Crich Tramway Village. Crich Tramway Village is run by the National Tram Association. The museum is a designated national collection of Trams. The museum includes an outdoor track that is 2 miles long as well as workshops and indoor display areas. Every day that the museum is open there is a selection of trams running so visitors can experience a ride on the trams, rather than see only static displays. The site of the museum is a village with shops, café and several buildings that have been moved to the site, such as the façade of Derby Assembly Rooms and the Red Lion public house from Stoke on Trent. The volunteers who staff the museum wear Tram costume (i.e., drivers and conductors). When visitors arrive and pay their entry fee, they are given a pre-decimalisation coin to pay for their first tram ride (they are then given a day ticket for unlimited rides for the rest of the day). The Tram Museum is funded by earned income from visitors and it has received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

1.3.3 A short overview of the National Trust

The National Trust doesn't receive government funding and is an independent heritage charity, with around 5 million members. The National Trust has over 300 historic buildings and 73,000 archaeological sites, this is the largest privately-owned heritage collection. The National Trust have 60,000 volunteers including 12,000 volunteer room stewards. The voluntary hours worked each year amount to 3.1 million hours, the equivalent to 1590 full time staff. The National Trust received £45 million in gifted legacies and £12 million from appeals and gifts. As an example of visit cost Belton costs an adult from £16.50, child £10.50, family £43.50. An annual National Trust membership for all properties costs 1 adult £72, a family membership is £126.

The following section provides descriptions of the three main properties where data was collected, the Workhouse, Southwell, Nottinghamshire, Belton House, Lincolnshire, and Nostell in West Yorkshire. As will be described in Chapter 3 the initial difficulty for collecting data for this study was gaining access to participants. For this reason, snowball sampling was used and the properties that fieldwork took place at were a result of referrals as detailed in Section 3.6.4.

1.3.2 The Workhouse, Southwell, Nottinghamshire

The Workhouse was bought deliberately by the National Trust in the late 1990's as it didn't have a workhouse in its property portfolio. It is the most complete example of a workhouse left in England. Workhouses were a particular feature of Victorian Society, a form of welfare in that people without work could enter the workhouse to be housed and fed in return for work. There is a popular misconception that workhouses were in some way like prison but entry and egress from the workhouse was free to the individual. People generally left the workhouse when they had secured paid work so in effect it operated as a safety net for those out of work. It is significant that the National Trust identified the lack of properties in the portfolio that reflected life for those outside the traditional country house. The Trust also has the Birmingham Back to Backs. A set of inner-city terraced houses but given the origins of the National Trust, with donations of country houses made in lieu of tax the portfolio is overwhelmingly Country houses.

A visit to the Workhouse requires considerable imagination on the part of the visitors. The property has been left in the condition that it was in when purchased. This is a different situation than most properties where they are restored to the condition of a specific period. There was no furniture in the workhouse, so visitors see a series of empty rooms. There are volunteer guides in the rooms to answer questions and there is an audio guide. Creation of an experience requires considerable imaginative work on the part of visitors. How does this fit with postmodernism, it's an entirely individual experience where visitors have to work to create their own experience. There isn't a postmodern veneer, there isn't a veneer, instead there is an empty building with a story.

The decision by the National Trust to keep the Workhouse in the condition that it was acquired is an unusual one for the Trust in that the usual procedure has been to retore properties to how they looked at a certain point in their history, if they weren't in this condition when they came into the Trusts ownership. This change of curatorial emphasis seems to be in line with the ideas of DeSilvey (2017) about accepting change and decay as part of the heritage of the site.

1.3.3 Belton House, Lincolnshire

Belton looks like an English Country House to the extent that the brown road signs used in the UK for country house visitor attractions is a silhouette of Belton. The house and estate were donated to National Trust having previously been run as a visitor attraction by Lord Brownlow. Brownlow had significant connections to Royal Family and particularly Edward VIII. Brownlow played a part in arrangements for Edward's abdication and this story is reflected in some of the room displays. Another room with a royal connection is Prince Charles's bedroom from the 1970s. Prince Charles stayed at Belton when he was training in the RAF. Overall, the visitor isn't given a clear narrative path to follow through a visit. Some visitors never enter the house but make use of the gardens and extensive parkland and the adventure playground. A cynical view of Belton could be that it is an adventure playground with an historic house attached It should be noted that Belton is one of the most visited National Trust properties, this could be for a variety of reasons such as the playground.

The house at Belton is free flow, there is no specific route to take through the house. Guides at the house ask visitors if they are interested in anything such as art or the family history or where Mr Darcey came down the stairs. (Belton has been used as for location filming for a range of period dramas including Pride and Prejudice). Guides are important in making sense of the experience and seem attentive, happy to be there and genuinely interested in visitors. As there isn't one story being told and visitors are free to pick and choose, we can see that visitors have an individual experience. Conversations with guides, information panels and signs are fragments that added together create the experience.

1.3.4 Nostell Priory, West Yorkshire

Nostell is an eighteenth-century mansion with a Robert Adam interior. The house contains a large collection of Chippendale furniture which was commissioned for the house. There is a courtyard with café and shop in addition to parkland all available without buying a ticket. Tickets are only needed for the formal gardens and the house. Car parking charges have been introduced and the staff believe that people join just to use the car park on a regular basis.

So, what does a visitor get from a visit to the house at Nostell? What does one get from the visit? Primarily the impression that the family had good taste in commissioning furniture and buying paintings and clearly considerable money. The difference with the old money country estates, is this one was maintained by the Winn family through profits from coal mining on their estates. Unlike Belton which is in a rural setting in Lincolnshire Nostell is a short distance (less than 5 miles) from Wakefield city centre. There is a difference between being a rich country house in Yorkshire and one in Lincolnshire. The parkland at Nostell now provides local people with an amenity space within in a relatively built-up industrial area. It is set in 300 acres of parkland and a considerable amount of the offer to visitors is outdoors with the property being popular with local people and in effect being used as a local park.

The house contains a series of impressive artefacts and artworks such as a John Harrison clock, Chippendale furniture and, paintings by Breughel. It is described by the National Trust as a treasure house.

We can see here that at all three of the National Trust sites described crucial aspect that everyone has a different, subjective experience. Generally, the heritage sector is assumed or perhaps expected to be non- profit making and about preserving heritage and offering a window into the past. As we have seen the two largest organisations are the National Trust and English Heritage however there are alternatives, such as independent heritage organisations and commercial operators who seeks to provide family entertainment.

1.4 The National Trust as a postmodern organisation

If the National Trust is a postmodern organisation this has implications for this research. If data within the organisation was collected using ethnographic methods, the most obvious postmodern tools, would this serve to break the veneer, the surface of the organisation? Perhaps not if the spectacle, the simulacra, was well developed. The National Trust was approached without the realisation that it might be a postmodern organisation. The initial use of postmodernism was chosen because it might bring insights into power at work and control of the meta-narrative. What has been found is an organisation with decentred control. This decentralisation causes issues for the organisation and how it coherently carries out its functions. The status of the organisation as postmodern meant that it was necessary to adapt the approach and use interviews to penetrate the surface. Also adopting the use of snowball sampling for breaking through the postmodern veneer of the corporate National Trust. The corporate veneer is a surface that the researcher must find a crack in and then work inside to find "true stories", find fragments that make up the grand narrative. The post-modern organization is often seen as characterised by use of technology and having a post-modern outlook (whatever that might be). It is not about trying to exercise a measure of control - it is about the opposite. In a sense with the form of post-modernism it is about the design of organisations, as Parker (1992, p.9) says "a flexible culture will become an opportunity for excellence and not a problem. The grand (modernist) narrative is still clear. Methods for organizing must be found in an increasingly turbulent and complex society.".

1.5 The Aims and Objectives of this thesis

Having introduced this research project and the context and how it is to be carried out these ideas have been formalised into the following aim and objectives.

Aim: To investigate how the National Trust creates visitor experience.

Objectives:

1 To identify current management practice in National Trust properties.

2 To explore the power dynamics between the staff and volunteers in the creation of stories that are told to visitors.

3 To understand how 'authenticity' is used to communicate with the visitor.

4 To develop recommendations about how managers can enhance the visitor experiences.

1.6 Layout of the rest of the thesis

Chapter 2 reviews the literature relevant to this study in four sections which examine the key concepts for this thesis of power, structure, postmodernity, and experience.

Chapter 3 describes and justifies the postmodern approach and the use of deconstruction. This chapter sets out how the data was collected and analysed.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research in the form of seven stories that were created from the data. These stories are then analysed using deconstruction.

Chapter 5 is a discussion based on a consideration of the literature in chapter 2 and the findings and analysis in Chapter 4.

Chapter 6 Presents conclusions from the research, recommendations for professional practice, and areas for further research.

2 Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This literature review is organised in four sections, focusing on the key concepts for this thesis of power, structure, postmodernity, and experience. These four sections were created from a wide range of reading. The reading led to a conceptual framework for the Literature Review. This then played a significant part in forming Aims 1 and 3 for this thesis. Aim 1 being concerned with current management practice and Aim 3 being about the role of authenticity.

1 Power and Structure. Heritage Visitor Attraction management, this includes management theory, critical museology, and the management of volunteers. The section continues with structure and power and then moves on to postmodern visitor experience. First, we examine Organisational Theory and concepts such as the cultural iceberg, cultural framework and cultural web and look at why this doesn't work with an organisation such as the National Trust or other not for profit organisations that create experiences, and work with volunteers. This leads into the specifics of how Cultural Heritage organisations are managed. This is more appropriate for the National Trust. Next change in voluntary organisations is explored before moving on to the specifics of how the National Trust is managed. This takes us into New Museology and changes to power structures and how this connects with the concept of the postmodern organisation, such as the National Trust and this in turn leads into production work between the National Trust and audiences, where audiences share power in the creation of meaning with the organisation.

2 Postmodernity and Authenticity. The Heritage Experience from a postmodern perspective. This includes National Trust organisational structure and discussion of power within the organisation, the National Trust. Postmodernity and power are introduced in this section as is the postmodern visitor experience. The postmodern visitor experience Tamaraland is introduced and the power relationships in the creation of meaning are explored. The key concepts of the heritage tourism experience, authenticity and nostalgia are explored leading to the importance of staged authenticity in creating the visitor experience. The discussion of authenticity includes senses and how they are used to stimulate the feeling of authenticity along with the deployment of technology and value. Finally, the concept of authenticity is brought together with the experience of authenticity for the visitor. This section also links with the postmodern methodology.

3 Structure, Space and Experience. How meaningful visitor experience is created by professionals in Heritage Visitor Attractions. This is what the professionals do to create the visitor experience, curation and decision making by professionals. Looking first at curation as a skill and why it is necessary to make choices to help audiences understand what they are seeing or to tell a story. We then examine the use of space, how audiences interact with space and how space is organized. Place is also a component of this and links with the National Trust Spirit of Place strategy. In addition, communities and participation are important considerations for both heritage professionals and visitors.

4 Power and Experience, what do we know about the how this is received by visitors from the professional's perspective? This section looks at how the visitor experience is created based on professional knowledge of visitor behaviour, knowledge, and experience. This section combines power and structure in creating the postmodern visitor experience. Firstly, in this section we look at whose story is being told and how. Starting from the theoretical standpoint of services management the key concepts of the experience economy and the servicescape are explored before the concept of Historic attractions as a commodity, a product that can be charged for is discussed. The visitor experience then as a commodity is a facilitated experience, something that can be sold but also something that can be educational, entertaining, thought provoking and enjoyable. This section concludes with thinking again about whose story is being told and a post-modern critique of anthropology and the prioritisation of white history.

A conceptual model was created to show the body of knowledge needed to answer the research question. This model was created through extensive reading. The reading was organised into the four sections described above and illustrated below.

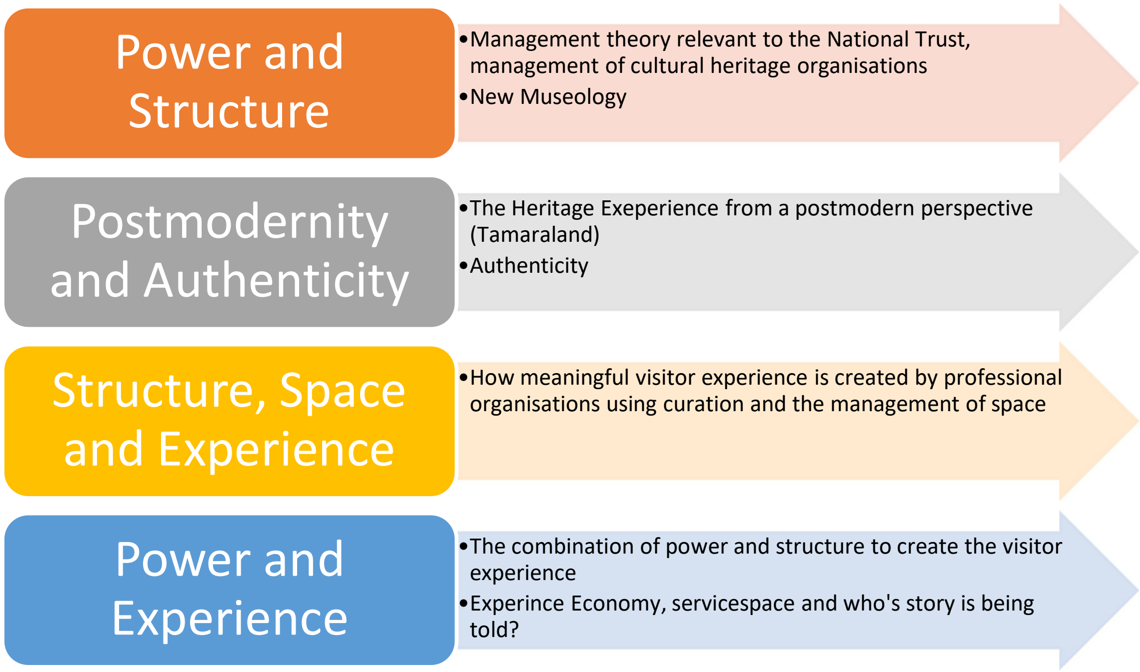


Figure 1 Literature Review Conceptual Framework

2.1 Power and Structure, Management Theory relevant to the National Trust

To investigate the National Trust, and how it creates visitor experience, we need to behind the postmodern veneer (Dorst, 1995) of the organisation. To do this we need to look at some elements of Organisational Theory, looking at organisational culture and how this might relate to power, one of the objectives of this research. Three theories seem appropriate for this case. Two of these theories are binaries, inside and outside the organisation and the third is multifaceted.

The first two are the Cultural Iceberg and the Cultural Framework. The third is the Cultural Web. The Cultural Iceberg (figure 1) offers binary positions, although binary the iceberg is useful as it demonstrates the point that there is a small portion of the organisation is visible from the outside. Most of the organisation is unseen but vital. The unseen parts of the organisation are doing the work to create the product for the customer or in the case of the National Trust the visitor experience. The work of this research thesis is to understand the processes that create this visitor experience so being aware of the nature of the organisation is vital context to examine how power operates within the organisation.

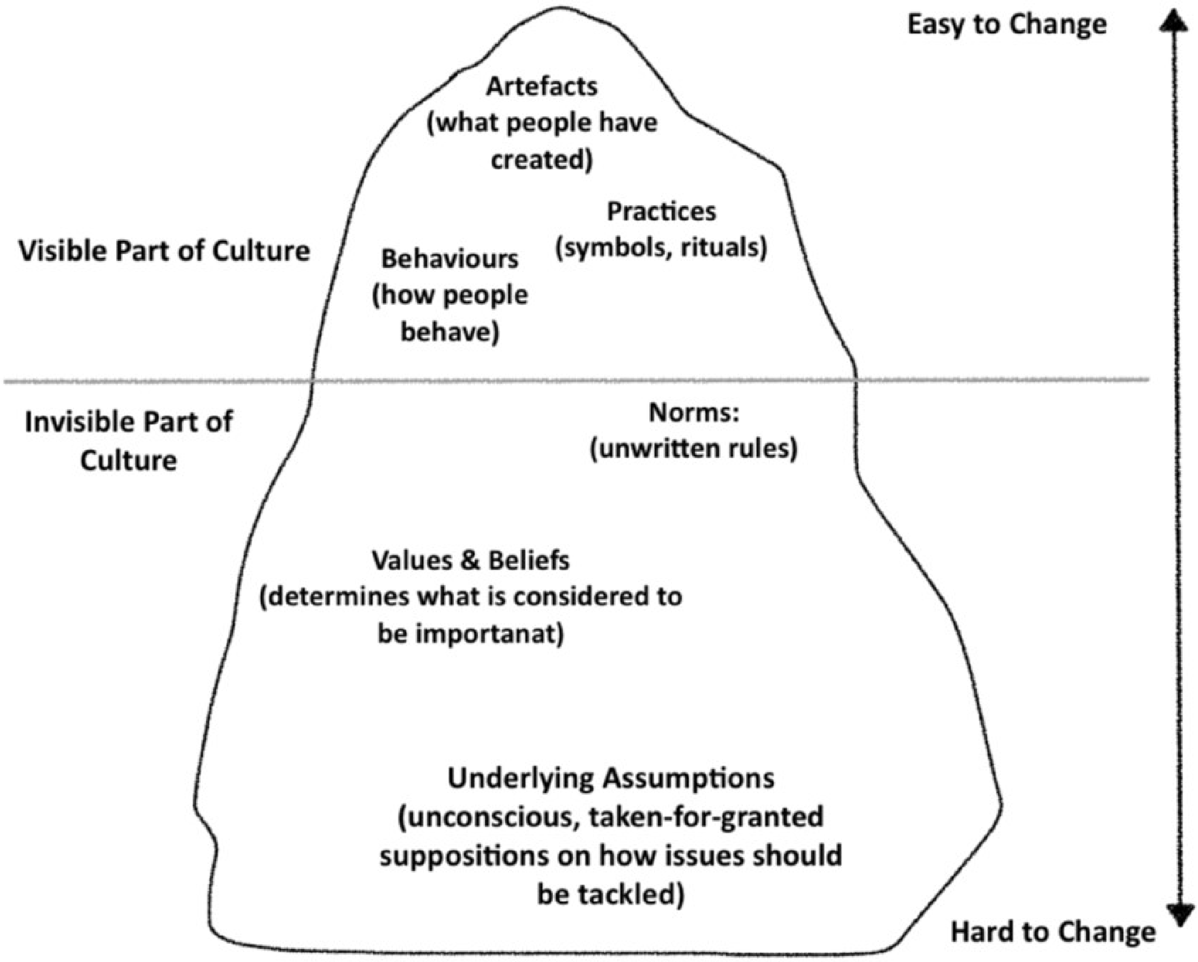


Figure 2 Cultural Iceberg (Schein, 1985)

The second model, Schein's Cultural Framework (figure 2) again has binary positions and emphasises the visible and the hidden within organisations. The culture of the organisation is more complex than it often appears from the outside. We often say that the culture of an organisation is "the way we do things around here", in fact this is a manifestation of the culture. By close examination we can attempt to gain greater understanding of this culture and therefore examine how in the case of the National Trust the visitor experience is created.

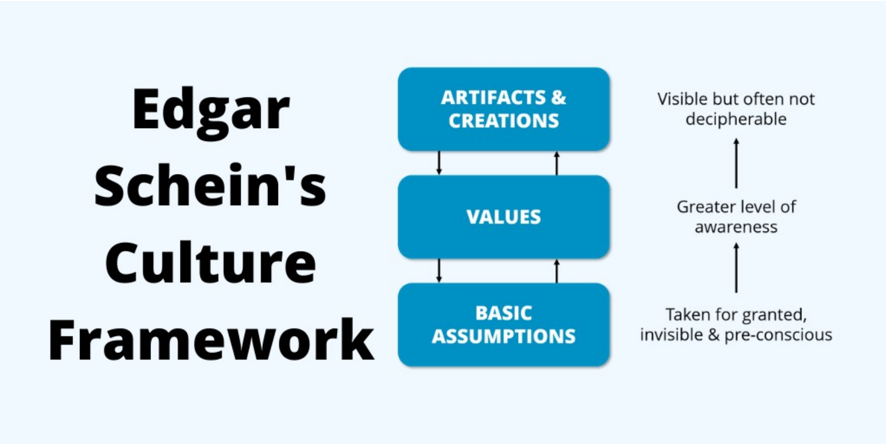


Figure 2 (Schein, 1985)

The Cultural Web (Johnson and Scholes, 1992) has six elements that make up a paradigm or pattern (figure 3). The Cultural Web is used to analyse how the culture of the organisation is now, how the organisation would desire it to be in the future and map the difference between the two. Thinking about where power lies within an organisation, it needs to be noted that Culture and Ideology are part of the cultural web, this introduces power into the discussion that needs to take place in terms of who decides what stories are told by the organisation.

The Cultural Web is a useful tool to make changes to the strategy of the National Trust. However, this research is looking to understand how the National Trust creates visitor experience.

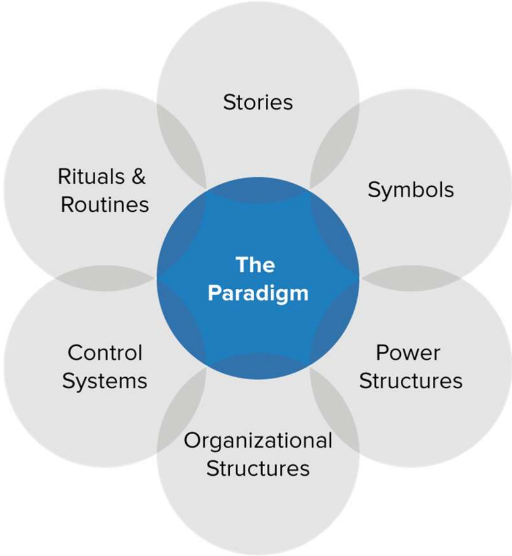


Figure 4 The Cultural Web (Johnson and Scholes, 1992)

A greater understanding of the organisational culture of the National Trust using these three models is helpful in allowing the researcher to see what is happening in the organisation, to see beyond the postmodern veneer (Dorst, 1989). How the National Trust is organised is discussed within this Literature Review.

2.1.2 Management of Cultural Heritage Organisations

Much of the literature on organisational theory (Crowther and Green, 2004; Mullins and Christy, 2016; Mullins, 2016) looks at private, profit-making businesses and the people within the organisations are employees (Francescato, 2015). This is significant as it assumes that the relationship between employee and organisation is a financial one. People work in their jobs to get paid. If we change context and look at the heritage sector (in common with the charity sector) people can have different motivations for work and we also have the addition of volunteers in the workplace, who are motivated by desire to help the organisation's cause. This suggests that for the National Trust we need to look instead at literature that focusses on the cultural/heritage sector if we want to understand the work taking place in the context of this research.

A traditional structural perspective views empowerment as a set of structures, policies, and practices by which authority and responsibility are distributed downward through organizational hierarchies from upper level to lower-level employees. This perspective is especially useful for job satisfaction via the creation of self-managing teams (Leach, Wall, and Jackson, 2003), and building intrinsic task motivation (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990).

The management literature, often assumes that empowerment occurs when power holders delegate or grant power, authority, and responsibility to those with less power (Menon, 2001). One of the most important ideas to take away from the organisational theory literature (Leach, Wall, and Jackson, 2003); (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990) is Peterson and Zimmerman's (2004) view of the importance of communication and appreciation of contributions of different stakeholders in an organisation and the ability of these people to find solutions to problems when viewing it from a different perspective.

Organisational culture is developed and shaped by the ongoing interactions of the people in the firm as well as by the strategic choices these people make (Bannen, 1991). Organisational culture is context specific. This is useful for a researcher as it underlines or highlights specific issues and problems in an organisation that might not be seen or suggests areas to look for previously unexplored tensions such as the use/ownership of power.

“The point of creating well-functioning working and social groups, beyond providing a sense of shared purpose is to create a more effective organisation. The strength, number and frequency of contacts and interactions – in other words, the strength of networks within an organisation are crucial to its efficiency and its morale” (Hewison and Holden, 2011, p.119).

Here we can see the Importance of shared purpose and of listening and talking so people understand the rationale for decisions. The problems are that Hewison and Holden (2011) are looking at cultural organisation such as a theatre or gallery not an organisation of the size and scope of the National Trust. Indeed, the further problem is for this study is that there doesn’t appear to be any anyone looking specifically the of the National Trust.

The Heritage Lottery Fund commissioned Hewison and Holden to devise a possible model that might suit the purpose of this research. They reviewed a range of different approaches to capturing the value of heritage. As well as looking at traditional measures of value, such as significance or the economic and social benefits of heritage, they also drew attention to Mark Moore's work on public value. Moore (1995) looks specifically at how public-sector organizations create value in the way they behave as organizations, including such qualities as trust, transparency, and accountability.

Hewison and Holden identified nine indicators for how the Heritage Lottery Fund created value, encompassing three different kinds of value that in effect asked whether the fund was protecting what people cared about (significance, or "intrinsic" value); whether it was delivering wider economic, social, and other benefits (sustainability, or "instrumental" benefits); and whether it as an organization behaved in a manner that was trustworthy and accountable (through the service it provided to the public, or "institutional" values). This took heritage values beyond a focus on what was achieved by protecting or investing in heritage sites and fabric to include values demonstrated through organizational behaviour and the social process of conserving heritage (Holden, 2006).

Heritage organizations raise leadership challenges because they deal regularly with competing and often contradictory pressures. They are asked to be both more inclusive and attract a wider range of visitors, while also being more commercial, and to reconcile development and conservation, natural heritage and cultural heritage, collections, and buildings. Because there are different views on what is important, passions run high and cultural heritage attracts a wide range of opinions on how it should be managed. For cultural heritage leaders, therefore, a clear sense of organizational values is as important as it is for other organizations, or perhaps even more so (Hewison and Holden, 2011).

Heritage leaders also need to recognize that these different stakeholders may have different priorities in terms of what they value. A funder may care about accountability, transparency, and delivery; a member of the public may value customer service; a partner may care about trust and collaboration, while a peer group may be more concerned with the quality of the heritage work. The political dimension is never far beneath the surface in any cultural organization, and leaders need to be acutely aware of the climate in which they operate and gain legitimacy. There is often more than one reporting line (for example to both a board of trustees and a government department), and multiple stakeholders, such as a separate foundation or membership organization. To maintain support and engagement, leaders need to be adept at recognizing those different audiences and what they care about without losing sight of the core purpose of the organization in the eyes of the public.

For heritage organizations at least, the question of how they create value through their services, practices, and behaviour as organizations has never been more relevant. Leading a heritage organization today can feel as much about running a business as about delivering public services. This means that the ethics and values of heritage organizations themselves become even more challenging as they seek to maintain trust and engagement while also generating more income and becoming more business-like. Demonstrating how an organization creates value for the wider public, at a time when public services have never been more under threat and in question, is perhaps the greatest and most interesting challenge for the values agenda.

2.1.3 Managing in voluntary organisations

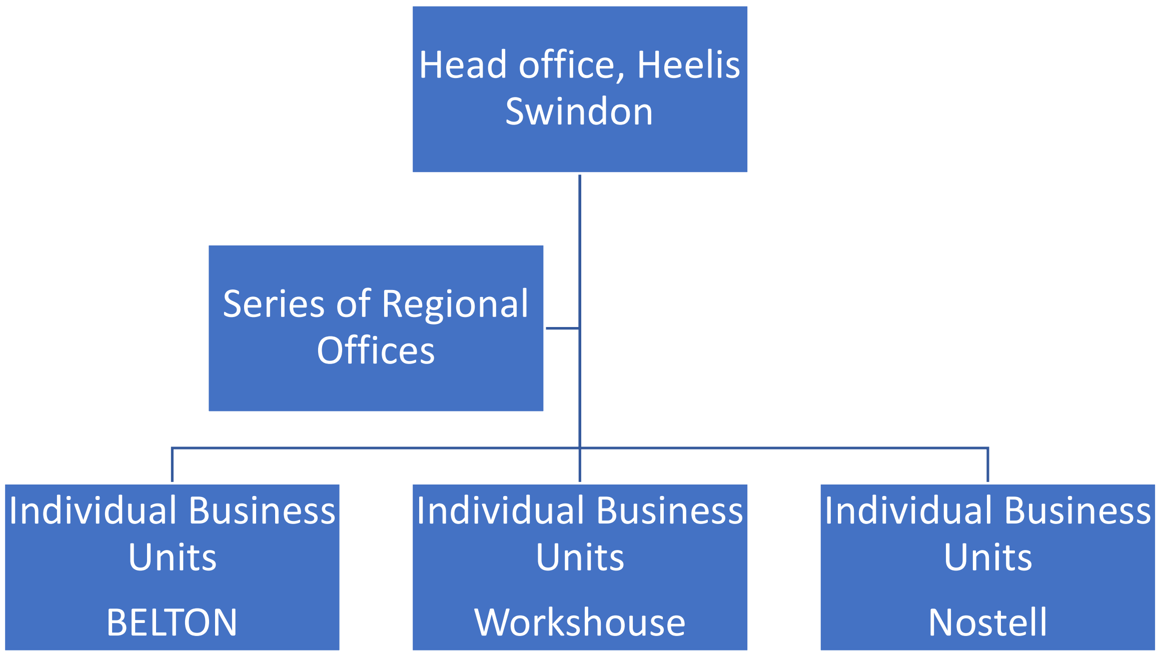
The Variable System Model (VSM) is a management system, as advocated by Stafford Beer (1985), which allows senior management to maintain control of the organisation without having to be present in the decision-making process as they have set out the parameters within which decisions can be made. The use of a systems approach, such as advocated by Stafford Beer has much to commend it. It provides a scientific framework to study problems in the organisation and a method to make decisions however it doesn’t seem suited as Checkland (1980) noted for use in highly complex situations such as a diverse networked organisation as we would characterise the National Trust. The issue being that using a positivistic system to adapt a postmodern organisation is a mixing of incompatible modes of thought.

The development of systemic management instead of traditional autocratic management is a structural solution to manage complexity in complex situations or contexts. By focusing on the interactions between autonomous operations and their environments, systemic management can provide and distribute information and knowledge required by all to adapt and respond to environmental threats and opportunities, the desired approach would be to maximise self-organisation at every relevant level, within the overall ethos of the whole.

2.1.4 Management in the National Trust

The National Trust is a hierarchical organisation. The national organisation of the trust can be seen in the organisational chart below. They have a Head Office which sets strategy, a series of regional offices who support the head office and act as their representatives in each region and then a series of individual business units run by General Managers.

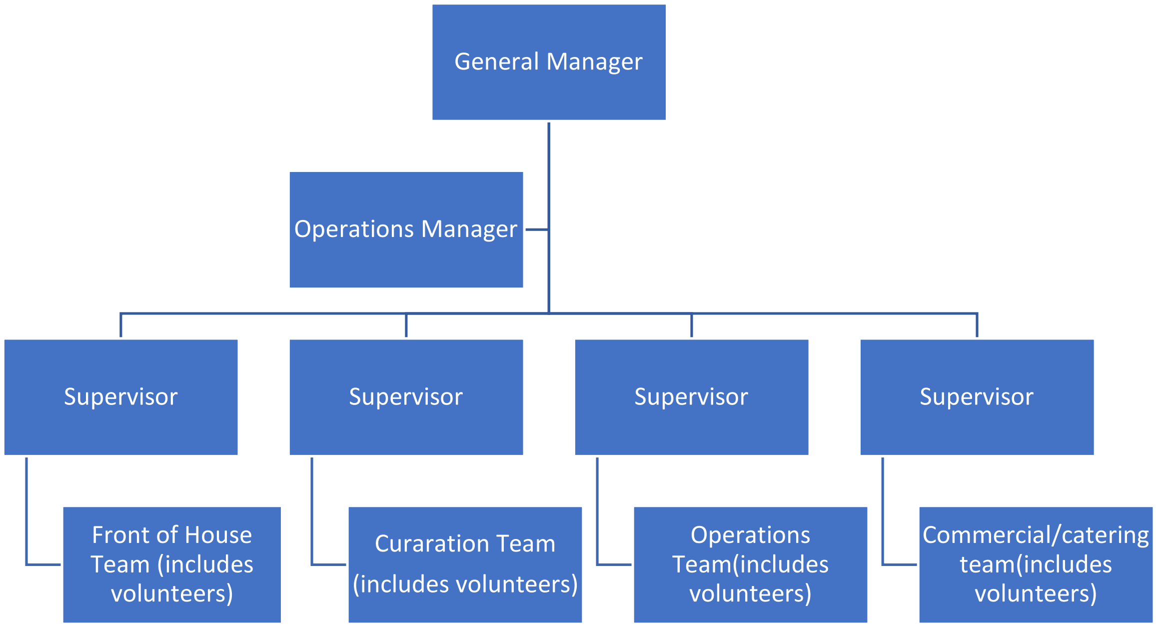
Figure 5 National Trust organisational structure



The three example Individual Business Units are the three that were used to collect primary data for this thesis (as described in Section 3).

The next chart gives an example of how the Individual Business Units are structured.

Example Individual Business Unit organisational structure



Note volunteers only appear on the bottom tier of the hierarchy

Figure 6.

This is an example of how one of the Individual Business Units is run. The General Manager has the authority to decide how the business runs and then has a series of departments each with a specific remit in the delivery of the business plan. Volunteers only feature in the bottom of the organizational diagram but can and often do feature in all the different teams within the business.

2.1.5 New Museology

We could characterise the discussion so far in this section as generally relating to operational Museology. Operational Museology follows a traditional pattern of organisation whereas New Museology questions the role of the museum and the stories that are untold. In this respect it has an affinity with postmodern thought which seeks to uncover untold or suppressed voices. New Museology looks at how change is managed in museum organisations because there is a need for the role of museums in society to change (McCall and Gray, 2013). Traditional Museology, the practice of running museums was based upon the importance of collections and the preservation and display of these collections. New Museology is concerned with ideas, this is a fundamental shift in emphasis from the objects in a collection to the engagement that people, an audience, have with the collection. New Museology calls for changes in the way that museums work, concentrating on the functions of the museum and the work they undertake (Simon, 2010), (Janes,2009). If principles of New Museology are applied, we see a change in approach that tackles issues of representation and access. This will prove relevant to the study of the National Trust.

The advent of New Museology is a reaction to the perceived situation where traditional views were pressed on to the public, i.e., a common-sense approach that insists on a fixed narrative of history. As will be discussed in the Methodology chapter postmodern thought is valuable for allowing different voices to be heard.

With traditional Museology curators are seen to be collection based (Gibson,2009), this means that they view their role as about preservation and access to the collection. Whilst senior management targets new audiences and potential new ways of telling stories there is conflict with the curatorial profession and its professional standards. Over a period, curators have seen their influence in the museum hierarchy diminish and the rise of professional managers. Curators often feel that they are fighting for their position within organisations, and they are increasingly distant from decision makers (McCall and Gray, 2013), (Gibson 2008). This leads to conflict where curators are seen as defensive and not working towards organisational goals being seen as too collection and preservation focussed. This conflict within organisations, between management and curators is likely to influence the ability of organisations to innovate and address issues of access and representation. There is an opportunity to see museums and their collections in a new way, not simply as collections to be viewed or discussed but as laboratories to explore ideas (Shelton, 2013).

2.1.6 Co-production

Co-production fundamentally challenges the roles of company and customer (Prahalad, 2004). Co-production can cause tensions in interaction because individuals exercise choice. Value is created in the interaction. This value is created in the combination of negotiation, collaboration, and the possibility of breakdown of the co-production relationship.

For an organisation to be co-creation orientated its vision and strategy must align with co-production, both strategy and vision raise potential problems and may hinder co-production (Minkiewicz, 2016). The difficulty for many cultural organisations might be that the Trustees/Board set the strategic direction and may not favour co-production as it represents a challenge to their authority.

Cultural organisations are service operations that desire to provide memorable and unique experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) Co-production is an opportunity for strategic differentiation, offering a unique experience. This is needed to attract visitors and remain competitive in a highly competitive market. Co-production allows opportunities to interact, though this might raise questions of access to technology for some demographics and hence perpetuate inequalities. (Palmer, 2010, in Minkiewicz, 2016). This links with the use of technology in section 2.2.9.

Co-production needs to happen early in the planning process to work. For example, in the co-production of exhibitions there needs to be a specific way of working where the co-producers are included in initial discussions rather then brought in later when key decisions have already been made, if the co-producers are to be involved in the creation of the overall experience (Minkiewicz, 2016). Issues can include managing expectations of audiences and co-producers, difficulties of time, space, and budget.

Getting external participants to illustrate a pre-written story, e.g., choose objects in a pre-curated exhibition is not co-production (Lynch, 2010). This is not always made clear to community participants. Is authority genuinely shared or does the organisation retain authorship and a right to veto decisions that are uncomfortable? Do organisations exercise cultural authority? Does doing this undermine the reasons for taking part in co-production.

How does power work in co-production? We have already discussed the role of Trustees and the fact that co-production might destabilise their position of power. In practice the position of power for curatorial staff is rarely disturbed as it is they who choose the terms of engagement with the process. Should museums strive for consensus or recognise and even embrace dissensus as being a likely outcome when looking at difficult issues? What is needed is radical trust (Lynch, 2010) where the museum cannot control the outcome. This could lead to unforeseen consequences, so an element of risk is inevitable. Radical trust may allow organisations to become aware of legacies of prejudice and offer the opportunity to unlearn embedded modes of thought. There is a need to work on a shared space that is new to all parties and belongs to all, rather than the host organisation having a home advantage and associated control or power.

In a museum where visitors are encouraged to touch and interact with artefacts this can initially be difficult and surprising for visitors and volunteers as traditionally, we are told not to touch. Often in these situations where touching is encouraged the artefacts are replicas. This links with indexical authenticity (Section 2.2.4) aimed at creating a mindful experience where truth influences perceptions of authenticity (Thyne,2016); (Greyson and Martinec, 2004). This means that the role of curators and guides (volunteers) is to provide true accounts in a setting and acknowledge differences between indexical and iconic authenticity.

Kershaw (2018) believes that museums tend to follow co-production strategies in a tokenistic way mainly to appeal to funding bodies, rather than from a desire to innovate visitor experience. This is significant as it relates to the question of who sets the strategic direction of the organisation. If it is the trustees, who are mindful of funding opportunities co-production could be seen as necessary in a pragmatic way, to obtain funding, rather than for the positive options that co-production itself presents.

A benefit of engaging in co-production for museums is the potential for increased audiences. Audiences can be diversified by choosing which communities to engage with. This is a proactive approach rather than a position of being there for anyone who is interested. Communities can feel used. The phrase ‘consulted to death’ is sometimes used to describe this (Kershaw, 2018). The important question is whether the organisation is genuinely interested in co-production or interested primarily in satisfying funder requirements. Some communities have become used to being seen as in need of engagement and poor co-production experiences in the past can make them suspicious of the motives of organisations who want to engage.

So why can co-production work? Communities can offer knowledge in the form of intangible cultural heritage. The museums have resources and expertise. The combination of the community and the museum can produce new and innovative work. However, there is a danger that communities are seen as co-producers but then also as the audience for co-produced work and their co-production seen as secondary to the real work of the organisation. Government demand for success measured by visitor numbers leads to this approach. Co-production is ethical and moral in the new museology, but museums are too often motivated by funding targets such as audience numbers (Holden, 2006); (Kershaw, 2018). Staff with interpersonal skills and cultural knowledge are vital for museum co-production. These staff can be seen as cultural intermediaries and as such are a valuable source of innovation, not only in terms of co-production but also as advocates of this way of working. (Kershaw, 2018).

2.2 Postmodernity and Authenticity

2.2.1 Postmodernity and Tamaraland

The theoretical underpinning of the original idea for this thesis come from three areas. Firstly, the experience economy as conceptualised by Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Torkildsen (2005) and the servicescape model of Bitner (1992). Secondly Boje's work on storytelling organisations and then thirdly the concept of Postmodern heritage tourism experience developed by Dorst (1989).

McCannell describes Chadds Ford, the subject of Dorst's (1989) study "a human community condemned to struggle endlessly to be just like its image, pure surface…failure to be like a painting would result in serious economic loss. One could argue that this is a generic feature of the postmodern condition: life imitates art as a matter of economic necessity" (McCannell, 1992, p.287). A key text in the development of these ideas was The Tourist (McCannell 1979) which looks at middle class tourists with leisure time and explores how they spend this time using concepts such as authenticity and socially constructed reality.

Storytelling has developed as a way of looking at organizations. This research will look at the stories that are told within the organization. Boje's work on Disney as a storytelling organization has been highly influential to this research (Boje, 1995) and will be discussed here. Boje (1995) describes Tamaraland a theatre/performance piece that takes place in a venue where multiple strands of the story are taking place at the same time and the audience makes its own choices about which parts of the story to follow. One can choose to follow a character from one scene and setting to the next or follow the action that takes place in one setting. After the performance audiences can discuss with others what they have seen. Everyone will have seen different scenes and be able to tell a different story of what happened. Boje sees this a useful analogy for what happens when people visit an attraction such as Disneyland. The research in this thesis is taking the same approach to the visitor experience at National Trust properties. Visitors make choices about what they see, where they go and how much detail they absorb in each location and in the same way as audiences to Tamaraland they could compare their experience with other visitors and find that they have had a different experience. Although the experiences will have similarities each visitor has a different visitor experience.

Boje sees Disney as a storytelling organisation and the National Trust can also be seen in this way. The data collected in this thesis from active interviews (Chapter 3) has been analysed using deconstruction following Boje’s example (Chapter 4).

Boje's methodology is a postmodern one. A considerable part of the rest of this chapter will look at postmodern research, with a discussion of the merits and features of postmodern research methods and address the potential difficulties of subjectivity and reflexivity and the contribution of the research to professional practice.

2.2.2 National Trust Experience

Moving on to look at the National Trust experience whilst referring to these ideas it is important to note that a crucial aspect is that everyone has a different experience, a subjective experience which depends upon choices that they make during their visit about what to see, what to read, whether to ask questions or simply observe. The implication for managers creating an experience is that if they opt for the idea of safe programming this isn't a strong idea because that anticipates that everyone has a similar experience.

The National Trust has style guides and instructions for Property managers. These set out approved ways for signage and information boards etc. working to ensure a corporate look. When one visits a National Trust site the signs and uniforms etc. are all branded in the same way. This is centralised management. There is a style guide and a series of internal publications produced at Head Office that set out the rules for General Managers. From this we can see that there are elements of control exercised to ensure consistency across the property portfolio. These things are relatively easy to implement and to audit. A simple check list on a visit can confirm fidelity with the guidelines.

What is more difficult to control is the actual experience that the visitor has. This is governed by a series of intangibles such as the staff that they have contact with. One of the interesting aspects of the way in which the National Trust works is that there appears to be no criteria to measure the quality of the visit other than the visitor survey which in operation seems to be seen as a confirmation that there aren't any problems. The National Trust doesn't appear to have a way of tracking visitors in terms of frequency of visits or range properties visited. As far as can be ascertained any evidence of this nature is anecdotal and shared between staff on an ad hoc basis. Managers seem to view low numbers of complaints as a satisfactory indication that the visitor experience is good. Academic thinking such as Chopra (2014) and Grönroos, C. (2000) suggest that a much more proactive approach to managing the customer relationship is needed to be able to achieve high levels of satisfaction.

2.2.3 Postmodernism and power relationships

Postmodernism places a constant emphasis on power relationships, how power is represented and the frameworks in which power is exercised (Clegg, 1989). There is a notion of developing a postmodern freedom from power, this relates to the site where the work of the organisation is performed. In a large, dispersed organisation like the National Trust which produces multi-site experiences rather than physical goods there is a freedom enjoyed by workers (and volunteers) with a power shift because the workers have direct contact with the customers (visitors). This seems to fit with Bauman (1988) and his idea of seduction being the source of power in a consumer society. In the case of the National Trust the visitors are dependent on the relationship with the face-to-face workers rather than the management for the delivery of the experience. In a traditional relationship between the customer and the product traditional power is held by management who control the delivery of the product. In the delivery of a service the source of power to influence the experience moves away from the management. Do all service sector workers have this power? No, for example in a situation such as fast-food service at McDonalds staff must follow strict guidelines (this is clear management control).

The utility of Postmodern analysis is that it reveals power relations which can then expose the fragility of organisations and the myth of stability. On the surface an organisation appears strong and stable but once we examine under the surface, we can see the fragility that holds together the status quo (Parker, 1992). For an organisation such as the National Trust we can examine fractures in the structure, explore where power appears to reside and where it is exercised.

These ideas lead into how we examine organisations using the tools suggested by Boje (1995). Boje set out a range of options to analyse the storytelling that takes place in organisations. This fits with the strategy work of Johnson and Scholes (1992) where they look at organisational culture. Boje proposes postmodern tools for examining the marginalised voices within the organisation so we can crack the veneer and look at what is happening underneath.

Boje (1995) posits the idea of Disney as a storytelling organisation with the stories told about the organisation being an important element in building the Disney brand. For this research project the National Trust is being viewed as a storytelling organisation. The visitor experience (product) is based on stories but importantly, for this research, the stories told within the organisation (like Disney) work to create the National Trust brand. Whilst we can see the outward facing brand, we generally cannot see the workings behind the brand façade. To carry out this research it is necessary therefore to look behind the façade. The difficulties that this might pose are tackled by the particular methodology chosen, as described in detail in the next chapter, in particular the choice of snowball sampling to collect the data and deconstruction to analyse the data.

This close analysis of the stories told by people within the organisation leads us to potentially question the grand narrative of the organisation. As Lyotard (1984) tells us postmodernism is sceptical of grand narratives. With these research tools, it is hoped that differences and multiplicities (Best and Kellner, 1991) can be explored. Within organisations stories shape the organisation. This is seen in strategic management in the organisational culture, but generally researchers don’t focus on the specifics of the stories and how they shape and control the organisation. In an organisation such as the National Trust, which is differentiated and diverse in its locations and operations, stories play an important role in organisational life.

From a postmodern perspective we would expect the senior management to exert control of a grand narrative and then look to uncover lesser heard voices. The point of this work isn’t to show official stories within the organisation to be untrue but to show that there are other stories worth telling, in theory terms voices that have been marginalised or silenced. It has been suggested by Jones (1991) that employees might create stories that don’t match the official story to relive stressful situations. Stories created in this way add to a multiplicity of voices, many of which are unheard. Unlike strictly or closely managed organisations the National Trust senior management don’t have a panoptic gaze (Foucault, 1977), this means that they aren’t actively controlling the stories told within the organisation. Different stories (discourses) shift in emphasis and priority within the organisation, as will be seen in the discussion in Chapter 5. So, the purpose of this research is to look beneath the branding and official National Trust stories to explore the unofficial stories present within the organisation, following Lyotard’s (1984) assigned task for postmodernists of breaking down the grand narrative of the organisation into a multiplicity of voices. These fragments help us to understand the organisation and how power is exercised to better understand how the visitor experience is created. By using deconstruction as the analytical tool for the data we can open socially constructed stories from within the organisation to reveal their multiple meanings.

The data collection described in Chapter 3 uses snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is suitable for finding respondents inside an organisation as it works based on each respondent suggesting the following respondents. For this research several National Trust properties were contacted and the one that responded was The Workhouse in Southwell. The interview with the General Manager there started the snowball rolling and went on to include Regional and National staff and visits to Belton in Lincolnshire and Nostell in West Yorkshire as well as further respondents at The Workhouse.

2.2.4 Heritage Tourism Experience – authenticity and nostalgia

Authenticity is seen as a key component of the Heritage Tourism experience, having examined the postmodernity vital to this thesis we now need to look at the importance of authenticity, as has previously been described from a postmodern viewpoint, heritage sites are working to maintain their veneer of authenticity in the belief that this is important for visitors.

McIntosh and Prentice (1999) discuss how visitors to period theme parks perceive authenticity, they identify three thought processes – reinforced assimilation, cognitive perception, and retro-active association.

Reinforced assimilation is seen as a reflection on the past where the visitor to a heritage theme park makes comparisons with present lifestyles. Visitors in the study identified recognition of the hardship of past lifestyles and often made comparisons with present standards of living. The study found "respondents feel more appreciative of their present lives, thus "reinforcing" their identity and satisfaction with present lifestyle. The process of reinforced assimilation represents the process whereby, during the comparison of past and present lifestyles, visitors seemingly incorporated new ideas or insights (authenticity) with their existing knowledge and in a personal subjective manner" (McIntosh and Prentice, 1999, p.602). It seems that visitors assimilated new information gathered during a visit in a way that was personally meaningful to them. As McIntosh and Prentice summarise "the experience of cultural authenticity gained is that which is assimilated through previous personal knowledge and in relation to that which is personally significant" (McIntosh and Prentice, 1999, p.602).

The Process of Cognitive Perception is a process of the new knowledge which has been attained in a visit leading to new insights or improved comprehension but are not assimilated with personal experience as the cultural experience is unfamiliar. Visitors are seen to be gaining experiential insight from a visit rather than information “It could be argued that insight (authenticity) is somewhat dependent upon the particular interests and experience of individual visitors” (McIntosh and Prentice, 1999, p.603).

The Process of Retroactive Association involves visitors thinking deeply about the past. “A new experience (authenticity) is made familiar by retroflective thinking; and so are their descriptions of empathy and critical engagement with the past. Objects become imbued with personal meaning and histories” (McIntosh and Prentice, 1999, p.602). It was also noted that visitors gained enjoyment from reliving personal memories through this reflective process.

“Due to the relatively short time spent by cultural tourists at built attractions demands are often to “show and tell” the past, rather than to be amazed or entertained” (Schouten and Houtgraaf, 1995, p.607). From this perspective, attractions are in essence experiential products facilitating feelings, emotions, imagination, and knowledge, quite literally constructions for experience. Contemporary museum design seeks to take the visitor’s imagination from the observation of artefacts to the comprehension of the processes making it significant. Tourists in McIntosh and Prentice’s study are seen to be insightful. Insightfulness is part of the search for authenticity, perception, and insight. It represents what is achieved by tourists from their encounter in terms of the attainment of emotionally charged and value-laden personal insights and association. Therefore, insightfulness recognises that visitors to an attraction aid the production of their own experiences of authenticity. Therefore, “the concept of insightfulness is offered here as going some way toward the replacement of the traditional passive view of authenticity (MacCannell, 1976) by a more interactive one.” (McIntosh and Prentice, 1999, p.608).

If we then add in the concept of nostalgia from both provider and consumer perspectives, we find that sentimentality and authenticity both influence on visitors (Wilks and Kelly, 2008). Visitor experience is inherently subjective and individual, the notion of intangibility is important to an understanding of nostalgia – authenticity debate. Nostalgia is closely related to feelings (subjective) whereas authenticity can be identified with information (objective).

The idea of authenticity as a sociological discourse was initiated by MacCannell (1976) who discussed its relevance within the broader framework of a controversy regarding the relationship between tourism and modernity (Cohen, 2002). MacCannell saw modern people as alienated from their own society and therefore "reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler life-styles" (MacCannell, 1976, cited in Cohen, 2002, p.269). This fits neatly with writers such as Hewison (1987), Lowenthal (1985,1998) and Wright (1985) who suggest that feeling nostalgic for the past represents dissatisfaction with the present. Therefore, reality can be found in the past, leading people to consume everything it embodies.

Early work on authenticity, such as MacCannell's, assumed the existence of some objective authenticity of sites as defined by professionals, the assumption being that the visitor's sense of authenticity will be stimulated by the site (Cohen, 2002). However, later work suggests that authenticity is not a non-negotiable, given quality, but is in practice often socially constructed (Cohen, 2002, p.270) and as such different people have different criteria for judging the authenticity of a site or object. The amalgamation of different criteria on which to measure authenticity can also promote the idea that culture is complete and unquestionable in its authority…This suggests that the reality of a 'cultural experience' is borne out of a combination of elements, that includes both the physical (or tangible) and the experiential (or intangible). This raises further questions about the real ability of heritage providers to offer anything which is definitively authentic" (Cohen, 2002, p.131).

Nostalgia is an emotion capable of evoking a desire for the past and a desire for the future, whilst also promoting feelings of empathy. This leads the visitor to believe in the reality of their experience, therefore achieving individualised authenticity. For visitors, nostalgia offers the opportunity to access our historical past and either use it as a resource to contemplate change and development as a society, or to go back to a past that feels comfortable and unchallenging (the good old days). So, what is the role of nostalgia in the consideration of authenticity? According to Cohen (2002) “the concepts of nostalgia and authenticity are more closely related than previously recognised, particularly within an intangible heritage context. The perception of the visitor experience as ‘authentic’ is almost entirely dependent on the existence of nostalgia to promote the correct conditions for empathy and strength of feeling to be realised. Consequently, a belief in the reality of the experience is fostered, leading nostalgia to become a physiological resource for perceived authenticity” (Cohen, 2002, p.138). This would suggest that the visitors/consumers of heritage are not passive but can engage in a psychologically complex way with heritage experiences.

So, how can perceptions of nostalgia and authenticity be useful for managers of heritage sites, are there benefits i.e., visitor satisfaction, increased economic benefits available in these settings?

In the context of historical re-enactments Ray et al. (2006) find, “Tourists at re-enactments are interested in *indexical* authenticity (thought not to be a copy or imitation, the original, or the real thing) in relation to the selection of actual re-enactment sites. They are quite content to accept *iconic* authenticity (resembles the real thing, accurately copies the original or real thing) for artefacts, products, and performances of the actors at the events” (Ray et al., 2006, p.451).

It seems that tourists are less forgiving about the failure of re-enactment actors to maintain the authenticity of their performances. Therefore, the organizers of re-enactment events need to take into consideration the features of their events that are perceived as authentic and inauthentic, working to emphasize the authenticity of the events, and to minimize those aspects that detract from the overall perceived authenticity. Hunt (2004) addresses how participants should behave using Goffman’s (1990) notion of ‘front stage’ and ‘backstage’ where actors are in character in front of the audience or front stage and can return to their normal personae out of sight or backstage. The service marketing blueprint model (Shostack, 1992) provides managerial guidance on how to maintain a ‘line of visibility’ between what consumers see and what it takes to deliver the service. Participants (re-enactors) need to become more cognizant of their contribution to the authenticity of the experience to their audiences. At the same time, organizers (managers) should be aware of and try to minimize portions of their events that would make it hard for participants to stay in character when on the front stage.

Sales of merchandise and catering also need to be considered with the degree that vendors sell items that are not perceived to be authentic, they should be separated from those who make the attempt to provide an authentic experience. As Hunt (2004) suggested, managers can either segregate these vendors from the main event viewing area or incorporate the vendors and the products they sell with the event such as disguising them as trading posts to try and maintain the authenticity of the experience. It seems generally that visitors are appreciative of efforts to maintain both elements of nostalgia and authenticity but don't expect extreme degrees of either.

Lovell and Bull (2018) include official authentication as important. This can be in the form of blue plaques, signs, and expert verification. In terms of "Guided heritage interpretation involves an information flow, largely in one direction, from "official" expert to a non-expert, sometimes reframing an interpretation of a place or an event. Guided tours are also conduits to collective authentication; the tour group can be assumed to share social memories in a two-way process" (Lovell and Bull, 2018, p.51). This could be a useful idea for examining the visitor experience.

Yeoman et al. (2007) describe authenticity as something that needs to be built around notions of ethical, natural, honest, simple, beautiful, rooted, and human concepts. "There is a growing desire to obtain experiences and products that are original and the real thing, not contaminated by being fake and impure" (Yeoman et al., 2007, p.1128). They refer to Pine and Gilmore's (1998) experience economy but "As the experience economy matures, a shift is identified towards authentic. Consumers decide to buy or not to buy, based on how real they perceive the product/service offering to be. Thus, the rendering of authenticity emerges as a selection criterion for tomorrow's tourist" (Yeoman et al., 2007, p.1128). Looking at Scotland as a tourist destination in a postmodern world where the everyday involves hyper reality the need to get away on holiday for an authentic experience may be even greater. They emphasise the need to include the community, to be human and personal. So, Scotland would be seen as, human, dramatic and enduring.

The key points of authenticity for tourism are.

Ethical – an authentic experience should be founded on the principles of community, sustainability, and ethical consumption.

Natural – Tourism should be a natural phenomenon which is pure and not tainted or manufactured. Natural tourism products are those which are quintessentially associated with the destination or region.

Honest – Be honest with your visitors; the tourist industry shouldn’t promise something which can’t be delivered or produce something tainted by falseness that will spoil the authentic proposition.

Simple – An authentic experience should be simple to understand in which the visitor can see the benefits. The more complicated the experience, the more unbelievable it will be. As the world is full of complications, an authentic experience should be simple, pure, and consumed in an inconspicuous manner.

Beautiful – Authentic destinations have a beauty about them, whether this is a magnificent view which creates a sense of place, or the feeling that experience cannot be copied as it belongs there and only there.

Rooted – Authenticity has some sense of past which is rooted in the destination or community. Scotland is the place of dramatic landscapes whereas Las Vegas is all about gambling, dancing girls and illicit experiences.

Human – A human experience is something that is living and people-focused. This means that the tourist wants human contact which is local and real.

Chhabra (2008) looks at how curators define authenticity and suggests a model for placing curators on an authenticity continuum. Representation of the past, documented history, and ‘from the actual period’ were deemed to be the most important criteria of what constitutes the authentic for museum curators. It is interesting to note that the representation of donor values did not rank high on the scale. Chhabra's study results further show that the museum role is stretched between past digging (collection, verification, and preservation) and providing a space for a variety of experiences such as learning, engagement, and enjoyment. This fits with the National Trust access versus preservation question.

It seems, for curators who are more concerned about past digging and the preservation of their objects, not many choices and resources are available to verify authenticity claims except for photographs and historic documents. Arguably, the third important source of verification was perceived to be the donors who received the least ranking in terms of importance on the authenticity scale. Donors often represent the local community, and an attempt is made to incorporate their views. However, several curators expressed concerns when questioned about the authenticity of donor information, however "Because of the scarcity of funds and increasing pressure from the power groups, the need to seek further verifications often lies buried under other priorities" (Chhabra, 2008, p.441).

Heritage isn't fixed but is evolving. The stories that are told change with the passage of time. Generally, these stories are based in tradition but are not fixed. Bruman (2009) identifies four dominant assumptions about the modern-day use of cultural heritage, "marking out things and practices as heritage leads to their falsification, petrification, desubstantiation, and enclosure" (Bruman, 2009, p.277). The four dominant assumptions in a little more detail; Falisification – where the narratives of the past are upheld by specific pieces of heritage and their carriers deviate widely from "real" or documented, historical conditions. Petrification – Here public recognition of things and practices as heritage produces social pressure to fix these things and practices in time. Not only are they seen as unchanged survivors from an earlier time, but they also may no longer evolve freely, being effectively placed under a glass case. Desubstantiation – where the heritage process separates the things and practices designated as "traditional" from their accustomed role in everyday life. What once was simply an unmarked ritual, practical object, or decorative item is objectified and brought into a new register of classification, display (curation) and administration. Enclosure – Here the most widespread assumption sees an interest in heritage as motivated by a wish to draw boundaries around groups formed by the owners and guardians of the things and practices at issue, either by strengthening their internal ties, shutting out those who do not belong, or both: as Hobsbawn has stated, "All invented traditions… use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesions" (Hobsbawm, 1992, p12).

Brumann concludes that heritage isn't fixed but is evolving. He believes that the most important thing about developing new understanding is the inclusion of a range of voices, both from within the heritage profession and outside, including local people. Cultural heritage can be understood through an understanding of a range of points of view. This includes visitors and local people as well as professional perspectives. Heritage needs to be connected to people and locations and demonstrate diversity of ideas and opinion, some of which might disagree with received opinion. This doesn't mean that professional knowledge should be disregarded rather that other ideas should be acknowledged and represented. Using this approach recognises the changing nature of heritage over time. Some objects that were previously seen as vital in the telling of a story may become less important or have less symbolic importance and other aspects may come to the forefront.

Goulding and Domic (2009) is a study that looks at heritage in Croatia and cleansed heritage. They see the Croat authorities as developing a set of practices that reinforce a very particular political view of history. We could see this as manipulation of both history and people's understanding of their past. At this point we should perhaps remember Orwell from his novel 1984 "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past" (Orwell, 1949, p.32) What is happening in Croatia is the development of a Croat identity in opposition to the 'other', the Serb. This is achieved by rewriting history to exclude the 'other', the Serb.

Respondents in the research viewed Serbs as different to Croats and were angry with Serbs to the extent that they believed any Serb artefacts less than 100 years old should be destroyed, literally removing them from the story. Croats saw themselves in a position to reconnect themselves with a Croatian past and develop a sense a of deep-rooted sense of continuity, removing the enemy, the Serbs from the story. A desire to remove all traces of Serbia was to wipe the recent past from memory and to concentrate on Croatia as an independent, Croat country.

"Today in Croatia, history is being rewritten. Tito, the most prominent Croat of the 20th century has, like the Yugoslavia he created, become a taboo subject due to his intense association with the former regime. Since the beginning of the civil war, some of the representations within the country's heritage sites have been 'cleansed' and anything that signified the Serbs has been banished. The majority of those interviewed were aware that after the Second World War the partisans proceeded to destroy anything that linked Croatia to the Ustashe or its fascist past. In an act of retaliation, the new regime has made its own mark, by destroying all partisan remnants" (Goulding and Domic, 2006, p.94).

The past and historical manipulation can be used as instruments of power and control. "Everyone said that there had been changes to the heritage sites since the end of the civil war. These have included changes in the names of the roads around sites from Serbian to Croat, and the destruction of communist symbols within the surrounding areas. Many also reported that all museums, which had former Yugoslavia as a theme, were immediately shut down" (Goulding and Domic, 2006, p.96). There is also the issue of language to consider with the concepts of national and cultural identity In Croatia, the government proposed a change in the language of the people to return to a purer form of communication. These changes were introduced after the liberation in 1992. Nonetheless, the people are now unsure whether the new words are authentic or just another romanticised version of the past, fed to them by the government as a form of rebellion for the fifty years of communist domination. "The vast majority of those interviewed were dissatisfied with the changes to the Croatian language, particularly the younger generation. A common perception was that the language needed to be cleansed of all foreign and international words" (Goulding and Domic, 2006, p.96).

Nostalgia – "Nostalgia is more than just memory; it is memory with the pain taken away. It involves a bittersweet longing for an idealised past which no longer exists" (Davis, 1979). In Croatia we there is a society haunted by its past, which through use of heritage and spectacle, is made to seem more glorious when compared with the present. “All informants felt a degree of despair with the present, emphasizing the fact that life was better before the breakup of Yugoslavia. People lived better and were paid as least three times as much before the war. However, despite this, nobody desired a reunification of Croatia with the former Yugoslavia. When asked what it means to be Croat, most informants talked nostalgically about a rich past and beautiful country. Such sentiments were intertwined with feelings of great pride in being Croat” (Goulding and Domic, 2006, p.97).

Talismans of the past are often ambiguous, and the experience of the past as offered by the media is often one sided, a positive connection may be made with the historical that is more a result of anxieties about the present than the reality of the past. We could link this with the British role in colonialism and slavery. This is also connected to ISIS destroying cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria in recent years and the desire of some British politicians to “take back control”.

2.2.5 Senses and authenticity

Appealing to the senses of visitors can be a route to offering an evocation of the past, although of course we have no real way of knowing if this authentic. Commercial Tourist attractions have been known to use smell in the presentation to the public of medieval life. A key component of a visit to Jorvik, the Viking Visitor attraction in York, is smell. Visitors are taken on something like a fairground ride through the recreated Viking village and exposed to a series of evocative smells. “So vital are these smells expected to be to the touristic experience of this Viking street scene, the Centre’s guidebook has produced a ‘key smells’ on its ‘Journey through Jorvik’ map to help visitors to interpret what they smell” (D’arcens, 2011, p.158). It is widely believed that people associate sense of smell and the act of remembering so being able to smell the streets of Viking Jorvik it is hoped creates a lasting and memorable experience. Of course, it does pose the question, how do we know these are the smells of Jorvik other than being told so by the visitor attraction. “What these touristic smells surround visitors with is an olfactory environment that they can culturally and viscerally consent to recognise as the smell of the Middle Ages” (D’acrens, 2011, p.159).

D'arcens suggests that sense of smell is "authentic and inmate". "It is one thing to experience sights and sounds, which can after all be recorded and disseminated, and thus experienced elsewhere, but touristic odour, is, in situ: one must be there to encounter it. It can only be experienced in its own spatio-temporal specificity, and thus seems to sit outside the disseminative flows of souvenir commodification" (D'arcens, 2011, p.159).

It seems that authenticity has become more of a negotiable concept between the supplier and the customer (Broomhall and Spinks, 2010). Of importance for academics is that tourism gives us access to a context to view historical sights, the tourist encounter, so that we can review the use of space and the understanding of the past.

MacCannell (1973) conceptualised the tourist experience as a meaningful modern ritual. Postmodern tourism is characterised by the multiplicity of tourist motivations, experiences, and environments.

> "Contemporary trends in tourism, such as the rise of small and specialised travel agencies, the growing attraction of nostalgia and "heritage tourism", the flourishing of nature orientated tourism, and the increase of simulated tourism – related environments, are labelled as aspects of "postmodern tourism". Postmodern tourism is characterised by the multiplicity of tourist motivations, experiences, and environments. Conceptualisations which emphasise the multiplicity and flexibility of postmodern tourist experiences react against the tendency of modernist theories to view societies as totalities" (Uriely, 1997, p.983)

For Uriely (1997) Postmodern tourism is "simulational" and "other". He says Simulational = hyperreal, such as simulated theme parks and Other = "real" and "natural" the countryside. So, with the National Trust we are looking at the "other" rather than the hyperreal. The simulational must be created for the visitor to experience it, the other is natural and already exists. We assume that the natural is authentic without perhaps considering that even the natural has been shaped and controlled by people.

There are links with design order and classical beauty that should briefly be considered. There is a desire by urban planners to integrate social order and citizenship with design, looking at design and civic meaning at St. Louis World Fair in 1904 Heathcott (2012) tells us of progress through technology but also rational order combined with classical beauty. The design of the fair concentrated on social order and citizenship. This is reflected in the choice of neoclassical design which both symbolically and practically embodied order and control. The advantage of planning a site for the fair is that it could be entirely controlled unlike an actual city. Actual cities are shaped by a multitude of voices, developers, builders, planners, and finance, giving less opportunity for the imposition of order. With the development of the Fair site order could be maintained, but only for the duration of the Fair. The city meanwhile continued is its unruly development.

Nuryanti (1996) also looked at tensions between tradition and modernity. He discerned four themes on heritage and tourism, Interpretation, marketing, built heritage, planning for heritage and interdependencies between heritage tourism and the local community. The most relevant for this research is Nuryanti's comments on the marketing of built heritage. He believes that there are indications of tourists searching for "authenticity, identity and encounters that differ from those obtainable through mass tourism" (Nuryanti, 1996, p.250).

New forms of reproduction of the past and associated consumption patterns are reflected in the ways that people choose to travel. A movement towards a person's roots and a growing appreciation of tradition are aspects of relating to one's total environment. They reflect the interplay between the local and the global. Such trends can be viewed as manifestations of postmodernism. As in postmodern architecture, travel and travellers display ornamentation and style, aestheticization and symbols, all of which are essential to confirming the tourist's search for new meaning and their place in the world.

"Heritage tourism offers opportunities to portray the past in the present. It provides an infinite time and space in which the past can be experienced through the prism of the endless possibilities of interpretation. Postmodern tourists use the power of their intellect and imagination to receive and communicating messages, constructing their own sense of historic places to create their individual journeys of self-discovery" (Nuryanti, 1996, p.251).

Heritage sites usually attract a mix of domestic and international visitors, but the majority are commonly domestic tourists due to their identification with their history and culture. It is notable when looking at visitor numbers that National Trust properties that somewhere such as Belton, which could be seen as a typical English country house have significantly higher visitor numbers than properties who probably only attract domestic visitors. This has important implications for seasonality, marketing, patterns of visitor behaviour and site management.

Successful marketing involves targeting consumers who may already be predisposed to purchase the product. However, heritage is part of the fabric of society and is usually considered to be part of the public domain. Therefore, concerns could be expressed when heritage preservation appears to clash with private enterprise in delivering experiences for tourists. This works to the advantage of the National Trust who are seen as a trusted brand working for a common good.

Heritage tourism, particularly built heritage, is a form of special interest tourism. It is characterised by two seemingly contradictory phenomena: the unique and the universal. Each site has unique attributes; but heritage, although its meaning and significance may be contested, reinterpreted, and even recreated, is shared by all. Built heritage is particularly problematic because it always appears in a context of social and cultural values. The Workhouse at Southwell is a good example of this.

According to Ashworth and Page (2011) the postmodern city is in a constant state of flux as capital redefines the nature, form, and extent of consumption experiences for residents, workers and tourists and specific segments within the wider tourism market. The tourism and leisure landscapes in the postmodern city are only one facet of a mosaic of social and cultural forms that have been created through time and illustrate diversity and co-existence with other activities (e.g., housing and employment).

The tourist city is not necessarily a distinct spatial entity that the visitor can easily recognise but it is a patchwork of consumption experiences, spatially dispersed and often grouped into districts and zones (e.g., the entertainment zone) with symbols, a unique language and range of icons to differentiate the experience of place consumption. In this respect the tourist city is a series of sub-systems interconnected by the pursuit of pleasure, the consumption experience, and a defining characteristic – the discretionary use of leisure time. This leads to the question that we could ask, where does the experience start at a National Trust property? When one enters the car park? After one buys a ticket. After one enters the property. Is the National Trust property a heritage zone?

2.2.6 Authenticity and value

Is the monetary value of an artefact relevant to the authenticity for the visitor?

Stallybrass (1998) looks at the poverty of the Marx family and the regular need to pawn Marx's coat. This relates to notions of authenticity. How important is the authenticity of the actual object? Does it matter if the object belonged to, was used by, or worn by a particular historical figure? It could be argued that genuine or authentic objects hold specific memories. As Stallybrass (1998) points out when the Marx family pawned Karl's coat the pawnbroker wasn't interested in history, authenticity or memories attached to the garment, instead it had returned to being a commodity, something that could be exchanged for money. We can see therefore that value as an historical object and intrinsic value as a commodity can be quite different. In the language of nineteenth century clothes-makers and repairers, the wrinkles in the elbows of a jacket or sleeve were called "memories". Those wrinkles recorded the body that had inhabited the garment. They memorized the interaction, the mutual constitution, of person and thing. But from the perspective of commercial exchange, every wrinkle or memory was a devaluation of the commodity" (Stallybrass, 1998, p.196).

It is important to note when discussing historical items, such as those owned by the National Trust that where in Nineteenth century London, a pawnbroker would have seen a worn jacket as less valuable than an unworn one we now value the worn jacket as authentic, and valuable if it can be connected to a notable historical figure. The

National Trust appears to place little importance, in terms of its role in telling a story, in the monetary value of objects and much more on its authenticity. It is worth noting that the National Trust believe that the value of a place cannot be quantified in monetary terms. The National Trust Act 1938 section 8 enables the National Trust to enforce restrictive covenants on land. “Injury caused to the Trust cannot be quantified in monetary terms” (New Law Journal, 2012, p.990). So, image is important, maintaining the idea of authenticity or maintaining the postmodern veneer.

2.2.7 Different ways authenticity has been approached

Following a managerial standpoint (Kolar and Zabkar,2010) look at using authenticity to create tourist loyalty, this is a consumer-based perspective where a greater degree of perceived authenticity creates a strong loyalty in the tourist. The politics of nostalgia link with ideas of authentic, canonicity and tradition, cultural histories are informing struggles over multi culturalism (Grainge, 1999). In an Australia case study, Consuming Heritage, the important thing is perceived historical authenticity. A commodified environment based upon the rhetoric of Australian nationalism has silenced alternative versions of the past which highlight oppression, racism, and conflict (Waitt, 2000).

2.2.8 Authenticity and Visitor Experience

Beverland and Farelly (2013) study the consumption of authentic objects with specific personal goals in mind. What consumers consider real, genuine, or true. They identify the interconnectedness between consumers’ search for authenticity and different categories of personal experience. They say, “In identifying the influence of personal goals on judgements of authenticity, we counter claims by Baudrillard (1998) and Eco (1986) that authenticity is impossible where common standards for what is real, or fake are lacking. The problem with this line of thinking is that it presupposes universal standards. However, as our findings clearly show, different personal goals and standards enable people to find authenticity in a range of objects, brands, and events that others may deem as fake” (Beverland and Farelly, 2013, p.853).

This supports Rose and Wood (2005) and the notion of hyperauthenticity, in which consumers actively construct personally useful notions of the authentic. In doing so, this positions the visitor as an adept, creative, and capable producer of authenticity against a background of seemingly competing social norms. Beverland and Farelly also then summarise the work being done by the visitor/consumer. “In contrast to previous research or philosophical reflections on authenticity, the informants in this study found authenticity in functional and ubiquitous objects. Far from needing to be rescued from mass culture (Benjamin, 1960, Boyle, 2003), authenticity was found in mainstream events and brands, including fast food, mass fashion and entertainment, and bathroom products. Our research also helps to explain Grayson and Martinec’s (2004) finding that consumers attributed authenticity to a Sherlock Holmes tourist site. For many Anglo-Saxon consumers, Sherlock Holmes was a childhood hero and part of a societal reality. Thus, such a tourist site enables visitors to reconnect with shared childhood experiences and provides a coherent account of Holmes’s life that fits with the socially constructed view of reality. Put simply, the object (the Holmes site) is a vehicle for people to connect.” (Beverland and Farrelly, 2010, p.854).

The postmodern self is essentially a relational self (Gergen, 1992). The work carried out by visitors or consumers in Beverland and Farrelly (2010) can be seen to suggest that they (consumers) are able to reconcile conflicts between differing and competing versions of authenticity and where they are carrying out this work people are not just recognising the complexity and ambiguity of postmodernism but actively embracing it.

Lykourentzou (2012) looks at visiting styles, improving visitors’ quality of experience by using a technical approach to create “intelligent recommendations”. The principal problem with this approach seems to be reducing visitors to four types and then developing algorithms to produce recommended routes through museums. Considering many museums produce visitor guides with more than one suggested route, dependent upon time available for a visit, this doesn’t seem like a strong innovation. Reducing the visitor types to only four can be seen to suit the use of an algorithm but doesn’t necessary improve the quality of visit or provide data for curators to develop the visitor offer.

How do museum visitors negotiate the inauthentic? Research by Hede and Thyne (2010) reveals scene setting, freedom and imagination contribute to visitors’ potential to overcome absence of authentic objects. They suggest the importance for the

Heritage sector of understanding how consumers overcome the inauthentic. The work needed to be done by Heritage professionals and visitors is also apparent in Hoon Sang (2011) about the appropriation of rural folk knowledge by a modern urban elite. In this ethnographic study the relationship between policy, folklore, and government control in Korea in explored and the tensions of who stories belong to is emphasised. Heritage professionals can be compromised in the pursuit of the authentic by government policy where a particular story is instructed to be told.

Pause and duration could be an important aspect of how consumers value objects, places, and events through multiple and repeated interactions. Heritage experience construction is about the design of personal experiences and interactions with things that visitors' value. If we think about heritage experience in terms of pause and duration as a means of understanding how immediate perceptions, memories and hopes can be enhanced by design to both 'accumulate' and 'mobilize' experience. "As past, present and future are not just 'tenses' but 'tensions', additional conceptual and practical resources are needed to support the design of heritage experience as cultural process." (Giaccardi, 2010, p.38)

2.2.9 Role of technologies in authenticity

The question of the role of technologies in authenticity features in a considerable number of papers such Petrelli (2013), Ruiz et al. (2011), McLoughlin and Ciolfi (2011), Kidd et al. (2011), Traum et al. (2012), Ardissono (2012), McKercher (2012) and Klinkhammer et al. (2011). Topics covered include the conflicts between what curators' value – authenticity and appreciation of heritage holdings and the value of digital augmentation and the added value it can create with technology for interactive and multimedia guides for museums. This work presents technology as an aid to access, technologies employed to support visitor activities, open air visits- creating meaningful experiences, use of touchscreens in museums, interactive virtual guides in museums, use of technology for personalisation with the visitor able to access material (cultural heritage) before, during and after visit and the use of GPS to compare the routes taken by first time and repeat visitors. The importance of the use of technology for creating visitor experience within the National Trust is discussed in Chapter 5.

2.3 Structure, Space and Experience

2.3.1 Visitor Experience

This section looks at Creating Visitor experience from a combination of design practices and professional experience. It aims to determine strategies for organizing space used in professional Heritage Visitor Attraction management and to identify assumptions that curators/managers use about the visitors. The power being exercised here is the power to make decisions about the structure of the story and how a story is told and what is presented to the visitor. This section examines recent thought in the ways that curators and managers in the museum, arts and heritage sector use the space available to create and enhance visitor experiences, this fits with new museology, in section 2.1.5 and fits with the chosen postmodern research methods of this research project.

"The ways in which visitors are encouraged to move through an exhibition, whether along a clearly defined path or more freely weaving a self-directed path, will structure the overall impression of the exhibition" (Wineman and Peponis, 2010, p.86).

Mosser (2010) looks at museum displays, how exhibitions create knowledge, how meaning is created the issue of representation. To demonstrate the powerful knowledge-making capacity of museum displays, we need to consider the diverse range of factors involved in the production of exhibitions and how these influence visitors understanding of subjects. In addition to identifying the critical components of displays it is also important to establish how these components complement and reinforce each other in a system of representation. “While often seen as “props”, details such as lighting, display furniture, and spatial arrangement function as devices that work together to create an environment within which visitors gain understanding of culture, history, and science, as well as concepts such as “civilisation”, “progress”, “race”, and “gender” (Mosser, 2010, p.23). We can see those objects, artefacts, texts, and audio-visual media work both independently and together to convey meanings, and therefore museum analysis is a truly interdisciplinary enterprise.

Ciolfi and McLaughlin (2012) describe an interactive installation to facilitate and support visitor engagement in a living history museum. They look at technological augmentation of heritage sites, using a pilot project “Reminisce” at Bunratty Folk Park, Ireland. The project supports engagement with heritage by use of evocative materials, both digital and physical to support the visitor experience. “Findings from a qualitative study of the Folk Park provided specific insights on what aspects of the museum are particularly memorable and engaging and could be further highlighted: the immersive experience of inhabiting the buildings, the multi-sensory nature of the displays and particularly the ‘lived’ character of the museum. “Reminisce” had the goal of facilitating visitors to make the connections between what they see in the content and the physical artefacts that would also encourage active participation” (Ciolfi and McLaughlin, 2012, p77)

A difficulty that they identified in their research was limitation of design of the exhibition that meant it was difficult for lone visitors to interact with the installation, they concluded that the presence of several components was sometimes daunting for people visiting on their own.

According to Ciofli and McLaughlin (2012) living history museums are seldom researched. Engagement and personal connections can be made by visitors through a combination of different interactional elements from mobile applications to standalone pieces and low-tech tangible components.

Zakrisson and Zillinger (2012) used GPS systems to create studies in subjective experience examining recollections of experience in relation to mobility of visitors. They identify three types of visitors, main attraction visitors, specialists, and wanderers. Their research aimed to marry up objective GPS data of where visitors spent time and the subjective experience of the visitors as described in questionnaires. They concluded that the exploration of space is an important factor when it comes to experiencing a place and adds substantially to the value that is experienced by the visitors. The results indicated that mobility patterns were more obviously related to negative experiences than positive ones. The negative experiences were most closely related to poor service, infrastructure, poor weather. Positive experiences were wider ranging and included elements such as the atmosphere, great views etc. The authors note that the questionnaire technique may be better at capturing negative experiences than positive ones.

2.3.2 Curation

The concept of curation is not a new one. Generally, curation has been seen as a museum and gallery skill. Writing from a contemporary arts perspective Obrist (2015, p.24) tells us that curate, is from the Latin curae; to take care of. He sees it as a Dialogue between artists and places, publics, and exhibitions. He raises issues of sustainability and legacy in terms of how work is created and cared for in the long term. Obrist works in a highly specific way creating exhibitions of generally newly created work. His standard working method is to ask artists about their dream project and then commission them to create the work. As a major player in the contemporary art world Obrist is concerned that curation is misunderstood. As he notes "there is a current fashion for content curation" (Obrist,2015, p.23). Content curation being a term used in several contexts but principally online.

Lowe (2012) provides an example of current use of curation as a notion of choices – editing collections of content online, fashion, music, websites etc. “The key message is that there is too much content in the online world, if left unmanaged; it can only be managed with the interaction of humans” (Lowe, 2012, p.167). Lowe and Obrist both discuss the overwhelming amount of information in the world, the range of sources and the fact that people need guidance and guides. Obrist is against the use of the term curation outside “correct” context of art and museum worlds.

Tang (2006) provides a case study on thematic curation, specifically the Pompidou centre collection hung by theme rather than historical method (traditionally museums hang collections by historical/date order). Thematic curation means that audiences are having a managed experience other than traditional historical interpretation. Tang sees the Pompidou centre thematic hang as an intellectual experiment in how to present artwork to the public. She sees others as more pragmatic “In 2000, Tate Modern opened with a signature thematic hang as well, a deft utilization of its small collection and inability to construct the traditional modernist narrative (Cubism-Surrealism-Expressionism-Abstraction-Minimalism)” (Tang, 2006, p.245). So, using a particular form of curation to cover gaps in the collection. This is a way of making the most of available resources. The Museum of Modern Art in New York followed the trend for a thematic hang of its collection in 1999 but two years later changed back to the more traditional historical arrangement.

Tang (2006) is sceptical about the Tate Modern though given the audience numbers, more than 5 million per year (BBC, 2019) there is credible evidence that this is popular with audiences and Tate Modern is often seen as instrumental in popularizing contemporary visual arts.

According to Tang the Pompidou hang is different in that it doesn't use traditional themes such as landscape and the nude. Between 2005 and 2006 the Pompidou's collections, which are more extensive than Tate Modern's, were reorganised thematically rather than chronologically. There was also the introduction of a range of media. Instead of just contemporary painting and sculpture, photography, film, video, cinema, installations, architecture and design and literature were all incorporated to create new and surprising contrasts and collisions of meaning. As Tang (2006, p.248) states "The greatest strength of a thematic exhibition is its capacity for surprise".

Apart from the obvious fracturing of linear historical progression, towards plural narratives and subjects in a post-structuralist treatment of meaning, thematic hangs create juxtapositions via formal aesthetic properties, foregrounding the taxonomies in aesthetic experience, and shift towards looking at artwork as discrete objects denotive of distinct ideas and new, eccentric syntaxes, rather than describing milieus or genres. These are justified by a curatorial resistance against totalities, shown by Grenier's (2010) rhetoric of continual renewal, diversity and contingency in her curatorial statement, and the catalogue's identification of each theme's co-curators, assigning personal voices to each section, a curatorial language of individual choices rather than official histories. This essentially paradoxical enterprise foregrounds subjectivity and discrete objects within the museum collection, which by its nature, constructs national identities, and overarching historical narratives, important considering the Pompidou's status as the official National Museum of Modern Art. The result of this contradiction is the Pompidou's attempt to retain its edge by quoting rupture and difference as it becomes increasingly institutionalised, without drastically losing its institutional authority therefore advancing a practice of thematic curation, it finds affinity with other museum experiments in cannily subverting their own national and bourgeoisie traditions without really threatening them. If they are all doing it, it becomes the norm.

Tang (2006) doesn't provide any commentary on what audiences think however she is seemingly critical of private sponsorship as inherently conservative, leading to a retreat to traditional practice, “As Tate Modern garners more private funders and amasses a greater collection – nearly every gallery is stamped with a plaque in recognition of a sponsor- a gradual reintroduction of the chronological hang seems unsurprising. Chronological curation is unlikely to be displaced in the modern art museum, as it justifies the collection’s existence, defines its national representation, takes actual risks in telling stories of modernity and history, sets and champions directions, without refuge in the contingent or plural” (Tang, 2006, p.250). However, thematic curation can modify the narrative, and create spaces for alternative views and overlooked media to intrude, and most importantly for a gallery such as the Pompidou, performing international connections and providing a necessary ’novelty effect’ to attract visitors.

Kreps (1998) describes museums as both a western and modern cultural product, however they are now a global phenomenon, but museums are "coloured" by the society they are situated in; in other words, they are context specific. Museums are increasingly seen as sites of “public culture” where various communities debate what culture is, how it should be represented and who holds the power to represent it (Karp et al., 1992). The “new museology” movement promotes the idea of community-based museum development that museums should grow out of the communities in which they exist (Walsh, 1992). The work of cultural documentation and conservation is said to be an organic and dynamic process that is part of how a changing community defines itself (Lavine, 1992, p.155). Local communities determine the purposes and meanings of museums in the process of defining themselves (Fuller, 1992). The new museology stresses the democratization of museum practices and the importance of community participation, not only as visitors, but also as participants in the construction of museum representations and interpretations, or rather, in the interpretation of meanings. The movement also encourages the formation of alternative museum models which challenge conventional notions of museum definition and practice (Vergo,1989). The aim, described here, is to widen the museum concept to embrace a variety of forms and meanings. It will be necessary to return to this point later in the chapter.

For Saeji (2014, p.633), writing about Korea she sees the curation of history as the telling a national story.

> "As the *national* museum, the NMK (National Museum Korea) holds a unique position of authority as it mediates memory through the display of the Korean past." "Just as the curation at the NMK is cumulative, additive process as new items are added to the display, new values are attaching themselves, cumulatively, to the objects on display. The Ten-Story Buddhist Pagoda may have a different meaning for different individuals, but the religious meaning is not erased if a non-believer appreciates other values. It is clear then that the most important question is whether the NMK is fully taking advantage of their museum platform to display objects in a way that clearly communicates, to the extent possible, within a museum, all meanings – positional, exegetical, religious, aesthetic, historic, social, political, and every other meaning and interpretation that exists."

There are several papers looking at the emerging area of digital curation, in a museum setting, rather than online curation as defined by Lowe (2012) as discussed previously. Vincent et al. (2014) describes digital curation as a technological fix that moves from archaeological discovery to public realm very quickly. Using apps that sync information from archaeological digs in the field allows researchers to quickly compare results and should allow for quicker dissemination of results of research into the public realm. There are however a few problems such as funding generally is project based so there are issues of how the information/data remains in the public domain after the lifetime of the project. The solution to this might well be with public libraries and archives, according to Vincent et al. (2014).

This potentially highlights the problems that we have with reductions in public funding. There is it seems a need for technologically up to date libraries and archives with staff who are skilled in digital curation. This does show a possible method for heritage sites to open collections to the public in terms of allowing public access to information and collections without necessarily causing issues of protection of the physical site.

Kimmel (2013) describes digital curation, the mediation role of curators and the implications for access for visitors. “Digital curation borrows heavily from the museum format. Curation provides a very selective collection, designed, and arranged to meet the needs of a particular audience. A curated collection differs from a collection because it is tailored to a particular audience to need, and it is presented in a manner that adds value to the selection.”

Valenza (2012, p.20) describes school librarianship using digital curation “Curators make sense of vast amounts of content that are continually produced. They are talented at scouting, identifying relevance, evaluating, classifying, organizing, and presenting aggregated content for a targeted audience”. Shott (1996) describes the concept of curation as an ongoing process this links to Obrist (2015) and Lowe (2012) as discussed earlier.

Shott discusses the use of the term curation by anthropologists. He believes that the term is ambiguous because it is being used to mean too many different things. For anthropologists “Curation is not a state, a condition, or a qualitative strategy. Like efficiency, curation is a relationship between things. Because of their size, design, and working properties, all tools have a finite amount of value or utility. Use reduces this utility through wear, resharpening, chemical alteration, and the like. All tools are used to some degree up to the maximum utility they possess. Curation is the degree of use or utility extracted, expressed as a relationship between how much utility a tool starts with – its maximum utility – and how much utility is realised before discard” (Shott, 1996, p.267). So, for Shott, curation means “utility extracted”. Curation in its traditional museum sense does not differ from curation as defined here. Both practices involve retaining objects because they will continue to be useful in the future. “Use” can range from butchering animals to museum displays of ancient people butchering animals, from the mystification of relations of dominance to their exposure in exhibits. Both thereby engage the concept of utility and the practice of retention against the prospect of future use. Kimmel (2013), Valenza (2012) and Shott (1996) all relate to the differences in curation as set out at the start of this chapter by Obrist (2015) and Lowe (2012).

McLaughlin (2012) reports on the “Manufacturing Exhibitions symposium at MACM (Musee d’art contemporain Montreal) in March 2012. This is looking at curation from a contemporary art viewpoint. McLaughlin reports a danger of curators looking to the past and asks "How do we find new stories? McLaughlin also identifies a lack of risk being taken by curators with exhibitions being driven by commerce rather than artistic ambition. Curators need to make more of a mess, entanglement and complexity and less numbing sameness. “It’s complicated like life”.

The term content curation was apparently first used in 2009 when Georgetown University marketing professor Rohit Bhargava was brainstorming about the future of web information. “Bhargava predicted, “In just a few years we will reach a point where all the information on the Internet will double every 72 hours”. Such an environment, he calculated, would require content curators. He defines this profession as basically a profession of “sense making”” (Herther, 2012 p.30). A content curator is someone who continually finds, groups, organizes, and shares the best and most relevant content on a specific issue online. The most important component of this job is the word “continually”. In the real-time world of the Internet, this is both critical and essential. For example, if you look at how many individuals are currently using their Twitter account to highlight interesting bits of content they locate, the same would apply to Instagram or Pinterest etc.

For Herther (2012) there are there are several modes of content creation, social curation, expert curation, and algorithms.

Social curation – sites such as Reddit and Digg are examples of social curation, where millions of users find, organize, share, and promote the most interesting content. This works well where there is a large community but starts to fail when there a too few people to form a large enough community.

Expert curation – Here, a small group of curators or even a single curator is responsible for all curation responsibilities. This model works well for areas where there is a narrower field of interest, a smaller community and where subject expertise is needed. This is a potentially interesting type of group for marketing opportunities because it delivers a specific target audience and allows for targeted messages to be communicated to them and to engage a specific audience in conversation.

Algorithms – Whilst not really curation if we see curation as a specifically human skill but the use of algorithms could be useful to target information at individual users. The use of personal recommendations based on previous purchases on Amazon or music recommendations on Spotify are examples of how algorithms might be useful.

Flynn et al. (2001) highlights some of the issues for curators in terms of museum objects from indigenous groups and culturally sensitive objects. "Some museum professionals would argue that museums as scientific places should not be vehicles for religious expression and should manage collections in a strictly objective manner. Incorporating the religious and ritual meaning of an object, as presented by the indigenous culture into its care and preservation, however, enhances its informational value and adds an important dimension to the object's life history" (Flynn et al.,2001, p.31).

The incorporation of traditional methods of care for culturally sensitive materials is a new approach for museums and a change from standard collections care practices. Undertaking new practices results in changes to the way in which ritual objects are housed, handled, accessed, used, and preserved. Usually, museum collections seek to preserve objects; however, "funerary objects in almost all cultures are not routinely preserved. In European cultures, the funerary assemblage usually consists of the deceased clothing and personal effects, such as jewellery or hair ornaments, but in many other cultures these burial items may be quite elaborate. Native American examples include pottery, baskets, dance regalia, and medicine bundles. Certain Native American sacred objects are also traditionally allowed to deteriorate as part of the ritual process. Many funerary and sacred objects were removed from burials and sacred sites to be preserved" (Flynn et al., 2001, p.39). According to Flynn in recent years there has begun to be a process of objects of this type being repatriated and allowed to deteriorate.

2.3.3 Space

Manovich (2006) discusses the term “augmented space” and how people experience spatial forms when they are filled with dynamic and rich multimedia information. “I derived the term ‘augmented space’ from the already established term ‘augmented reality’(AR). Coined around 1990, the concept of ‘augmented reality’ is normally opposed to ‘virtual reality’ (VR). In the case of VR, the user works on a virtual simulation; in the case of AR, the user works on actual things in actual space. Because of this, a typical VR system presents a user with a virtual space that has nothing to do with that user’s immediate physical space. In contrast, a typical AR system adds information that is directly related to the user’s immediate physical space” (Manovich, 2006, p.224).

Manovich (2006) believes that there is a usual order to how technology filters down, first from military use, then business followed by consumers and that after some time these technologies are picked up by cultural institutions. He suggests that because museums have a function of collecting and preserving art works that they also take on the role of collecting historical technology, suggesting that contemporary art museums become museums of obsolete technology. This seems to be a short-sighted view, yes there are museums using old technology because it is required to present specific art works but there are also many museums working with artists and cutting-edge technologies, such as the Welcome Foundation in London. Manovich doesn’t provide evidence that museums are slower than consumers and business to adopt new technologies, however he needs to position museums in this way to then support his claim that Augmented space is the opportunity for museums to adopt emerging technology, “museums and galleries as a whole could use their own unique asset – a physical space – to encourage the development of distinct new spatial forms of art and new spatial forms of the moving image. In this way, they can take a lead in testing out one part of the augmented space future” (Manovich, 2006, p.236).

Windhager and Mayr (2012) suggest that visitors experience cognitive overload and museum fatigue due to the high amount of information. They have looked at physical layout and offer the concept of time geography as a solution. To learn something effectively, relevant information must be selected on an individual basis, must be evaluated, and integrated with the other information present at the site or existing in the form of prior knowledge. These cognitive processes of informal learning often must happen under aggravating circumstances: the prominent wish to see "everything" must encounter complex conceptual and physical exhibition architectures, as well as limited visiting time and finite attention spans. As a common result, museum fatigue occurs. Both perceptive and cognitive overload combine into a strong reduction of visitors' attention towards exhibits, learning and receptivity.

As this is a difficulty for every exhibition designer and curator, several approaches have been suggested to tackle this issue. Exhibit clusters, for example, can provide zones of perceptual similarity e.g. by themes, geographic or temporal proximity, etc) and therefore facilitate the elaboration of general concepts, exhibit arrangements along time and storylines deliver path-like structures to leverage narrative information, interaction engages visitors to overcome a passive mode of perception and encourage active behaviour, whereas advance organizers (discussed in the next paragraph) can support conceptual orientation and information integration on different levels of a learning process.

They also suggest that to support informal learning information available before entering an exhibition to aid conceptual understanding helps visitors to make the most of the learning opportunity in an exhibition. The two methods of organising information for advance orientation used most frequently by museums are maps and timelines. With time geography "two methods became conceptually intertwined: cartography as method to map arrangements on geographic surfaces and chronology a method to map arrangements along timelines. The resulting figures are so called space-time-cubes. Geographic maps, which serve as horizontal layers, get intersected with timelines, so that three-dimensional cubes are unfolding, where the vertical dimension is open to envision space-time" (Windhager and Mayr, 2012, p.541).

By placing the advance organizer (map or timeline) at the exhibition entrance, it has different effects. First, it will not directly compete with the exhibits, but instead directs visitors to them by providing conceptual orientation, as well as raising expectations and curiosity. Secondly, use of technological installations can have high attraction power and motivate visitors to explore it. Thereby it overcomes the shortcomings of textual advance organizers. As a public terminal it additionally can be explored in groups, allowing for discussion of concepts and conversational elaboration.

We should also consider structured vs unstructured use of spaces, “Certain types of spaces trigger particular cognitive modes. Admittedly, different spaces are embedded with and suggest different scripts and our ability to read and act on those scripts depend upon past experiences. These suggestions, however, affect us even when we do not have complete access to the scripts. Accessing cultural forms and templates become possible in part because of the interaction between space and cognition” (Harvey, 2009, p.199).

Balocco and Frangioni (2009) remind us that lighting can be used to enhance visitor experience of space. Lighting can be used to create a particular impression of space without modifying architecture or structure of buildings. Therefore, use of technology such as 3D modelling means that lighting design for museum conditions can be designed with a high degree of sophistication replicating natural light and meeting conservation needs.

Wineman and Peponis (2010) state that the education message in museums is constructed through movement in space. Patterns of access and visibility construct a special discourse that flows, although not entirely separate from the curatorial message. The unique characteristic of informal education in museums is that the educational message is constructed through movement in space. The ways in which visitors are encouraged to move through an exhibition, whether along a clearly defined path or more freely along a self-directed path, will structure the overall impression of the exhibition, connections or separations among spaces or exhibition elements, sequencing and grouping of elements, form perceptions and shape understanding.

So far as exhibition design can create spatial sequences and visual frames for viewing, space can function as a support for a narrative in the sense of a purposefully established sequential pattern of presentation analogous to the sequential pattern of language. This is certainly the case with exhibitions of historical subject matter or exhibitions presenting complex scientific discoveries. The spatial support of narrative, however, is usually interpreted as requiring a spatially dictated movement pattern. The way independent exhibits are arranged in space creates the possibility of spatially guided movement, a pattern of movement that is more likely to bring visitors into contact, and perhaps engagement, with some exhibits more than others. If this spatial ordering is correctly understood, future exhibition designers can even more deliberately create a hierarchy of exhibit elements, some associated with primary messages and some with elaborations, interpretations, and developments of these primary messages, arranging these exhibit elements in such a way as to ensure that the primary elements have higher potential for special attraction.

As Beard and Price (2010, p.4) note “reflection can be a significant, or perhaps even necessary, precursor for learning from experience.” However, as a society we tend not to value refection, thinking and concentrating as much as we value doing. “We equip our workspaces for meetings, with increasing evidence for the benefit of the informal. However, the lexicon of the workplace does not include a similar noun for ‘concentratings'. You cannot reach her: she is in a meeting is an acceptable response to a phone call. You cannot reach him; he is (in a) concentrating is not so readily acceptable. A tension between doing and thinking becomes apparent”. (Beard and Price, 2010, p.4).

When designing museum and heritage visitor experiences we should perhaps bear in mind these thoughts on reflection and the need for reflection in space. Do visitor spaces have room for reflection? Following this could, however, lead back to the careful not to make too much noise in the museum and disturb anyone in the old-fashioned library scenario. An advantage for the National Trust is that many properties have outdoor space, seating etc., places which allow time and space for reflection.

2.3.4 Place

Giaccardi and Palen (2008) see the understanding and preservation of cultural heritage is an essential element of the human condition. They believe that people strive to understand the past and to explain and capture our own lived experiences to leave a legacy for the future through the preservation of artefacts, archaeological, historical, and cultural sites and, increasingly, through evidence of our relationships with the natural environment. However, cultural rhetoric often situates heritage in contrast with contemporary human life and culture, thereby missing the sense of the connection of past and present that ultimately supports a commitment to heritage preservation.

"Supported by recent studies in anthropology and human geography, for example, Kato's case study of the Shirakami-sanchi World Heritage Area demonstrates how a local community's conservation commitment is critical to heritage sustainability, and that heritage is formed through long connection with place" (Giaccardi and Palen, 2008, p.281). They see the sustaining of a whole repertoire of embedded knowledge and social relations that are responsible for the creation, communication, and renewal of our sense of heritage as fundamentally a place-making process.

McCarthy and Ciolfi (2008) discuss an exhibition they designed in Limerick at the Hunt Museum. They are interested in place as dialogue, the relationships in experience, and dimensions of experience and interpretations of museum experience. "Think, for example, of the way in which people's engagement over a relatively short few years with the Tate Modern Gallery in London has made a large formerly industrial building into a modern art gallery for which people have affection and, in the process, has changed many of those people even slightly by enabling them to appropriate modern art into their sense of themselves. Thus, the sense of place and a sense of personhood dialogically constitute each other" (McCarthy and Ciolfi, 2008, p.250).

According to McCarthy and Ciolfi (2008) there are two significant factors that give people the sense of being in place: repeated return and familiarity. Though it isn't clear how these two differ. Experience is seen in terms of the variety of relationships and practices of which it is constituted. So, when thinking about a museum exhibition, for example, we drag up sedimentary layers of meaning from experience or cultural appropriation. McCarthy and Ciolfi (2008) demonstrate the importance of keeping the visitor/audience experience at the centre of decisions about presentation of exhibitions. What they are suggesting is to think through how the visitors will interact with the exhibition as a process to take place in advance of curatorial decisions. The curator's ideas are vital but much more effective in creating meaningful visitor experience if the curator ideas are presented in the form of a dialogue with the visitors. This means that the experience needs to be designed to allow dialogue between visitors and between visitors and curators. This can take numerous forms such as feedback walls where visitors leave comments that can be seen by other visitors and answered by curators, or online equivalents. If this type of interaction is not regularly used it might be seen as strange and unexpected by visitors in some contexts.

Fround (2004) looks at the development of housing and the desire to create authentic places, places with a relationship to the past. "At a time when great guiding narratives like "nationhood" seem increasingly defunct, and boundaries of all kinds are blurred, it is possible to that an inner sense of narrativity will become more important. And in the absence of great collective stories, maybe personal, domestic ones will matter more. With conditions of existence in such a shifting state we should endeavour to see shifts away from what we know not as increasing alienation, but about an ongoing process of negotiation between us and our environment, and a positive challenge regarding creating our home environments" (Fround, 2004, p.229). Given the current political situation in the U.K. since the 2016 referendum the notion that narratives are increasingly defunct does seem dated, however the overall point does hold, authenticity is as evolving and shifting as our identities. "Labelling one form, particularly surface form, as more 'authentic' than another is pointless without consideration of the relationships, bodily and mental, that we establish with the artefacts we judge. Authenticity, like 'sense of place', and indeed, the homely, is not immanent in things, but read or felt in them by us through our interactions with them. In a highly visual society, emphasis on appearance may be inevitable. "But while the visual should not entirely be dismissed, it is a mistake to rely on it as arbiter of authenticity" (Fround,2004, p. 230).

Collins-Kriener (2010) identifies five types of tourism experience based on place and significance of the given experience in the tourists' total world view. Collins-Kriener (2010) cites Cohen (1979) "To understand the dynamics of the visitor experience, Cohen (1979) maintained that the tourist cannot be described as a "general type" Cohen's main modes of tourist experience are based on the place and the significance of the given experience in the tourist's worldview" (Collins-Kreiner, 2010, p.180).

Collins-Kriener describes a shift in research from external and general tourism research to "Inner Experience" First academics worked on typologies of visitor experience and then came a phase of deconstructing typologies before a more sophisticated recognition where we began to "understand that a visitor may undergo diverse experiences and may switch from one to another. The experience has been shown to depend on the visitor and how he or she perceives his or her visit and experience" (Collins-Kreiner, 2010, p.158).

Thrift (1997) believes that when looking at how people view cities it is the belief itself rather than what is believed that is most important. He explains this by suggesting that cities have over time, become richer experiences. Most cities have offered, over the course of history, an increasing range of experiences which it is possible to use as imaginative resources. "If we could measure the process, perhaps our experience of places has thickened, not thinned" (Thrift, 1997, p.148). This is how he explains the concept that it is belief itself, rather then what is believed, that as important.

2.3.5 Museums and Community

Anderman and Arnold-de- Simine (2012) redefined the function of museums not just by changing narratives but by renegotiating the processes of narration and museal codes of communication with the public.

Commenting on the contemporary role of museums Andermann and Arnold-de-Simine (2012, p.7) observe that we need to tell visitors stories. We don't create an experience by relying on the visible object or setting alone. It is necessary to contextualise and tell stories. It is by engaging with visitors through curiosity, empathy, and emotion that meaningful experience or learning can take place connecting visitors with the past and the present. This is a redefining of museums; it is not just the narrative that is being changed but the process of narration itself is being changed and the museal codes of communication with the public.

2.3.6 Participation

During research into teens, with help from the library Youth Design Council, looking audience/participants for activities at the Free Library of Philadelphia Fai Steele (2013) found that “teens desired a safe, colourful, and comfortable space with free access to computers and snacks, freedom to hang out with their friends, interest driven programming – such as graphic design and dance – and support from technologically savvy near-peer mentors who encourage them to excel in school and life. Our Youth Design Council defined ‘near-peer’ as a mentor one or two years older than them, either in college or a recent college graduate. Typically, the near-peer mentor possesses a similar background, or is sensitive and responsive to youth needs and interests.”

The idea of near-peer mentors could have application in several UK Heritage settings as a way of exploring stories, such as whose story is being told, and encouraging engagement and participation. This is one of the challenges for the sector, how to engage new audiences and this could be an element of a solution.

2.4 Power and Experience

2.4.1 Whose story is being told?

This section looks at literature that focusses on whose story is being told and from what point of view? This section also looks at the knowledge and experience of the visitors and the management practices that are used to engage with the visitors and their experience. It will also examine the tools and the opportunities available to organizations and identify barriers to participation and how these are negotiated and can be overcome.

2.4.2 Services Management

The concept of the Experience Economy has become central to Services Management over the last 20 years (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). The characteristics of experiences, of customer participation and connection and the designing of memorable experiences are a management approach to ensuring a quality experience for the customer.

“Economists have typically lumped experiences in with services, but experiences are a distinct economic offering, as different from services as services are from goods. As services, like goods before them, increasingly become commoditized experiences have emerged as the next step in what we call the progression of economic value (Pine and Gilmore,1998, p.97). Therefore, to realise the full benefit of creating and staging experiences, businesses must deliberately design engaging experiences that command a fee.

In designing an experience Pine and Gilmore suggest we take account of the four realms of an experience. This suggests that we can think about the experience offered across two dimensions, thinking about customer participation and the level of connection. Using these two dimensions we can create four categories of experience. The richest experiences for the customer will be when the experience offers aspects of all four realms of experience.

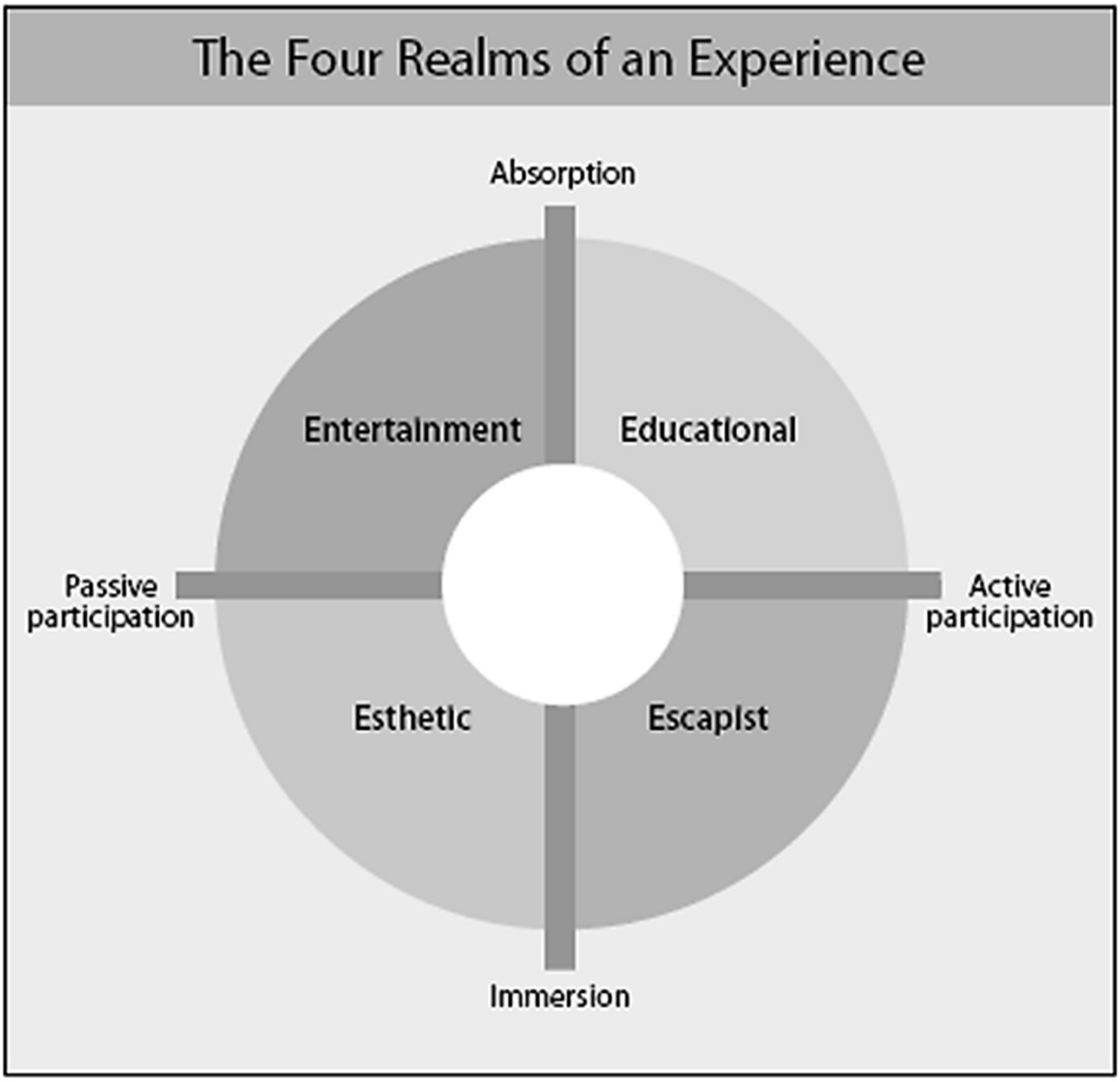


Figure 7. Pine and Gilmore, (1998).

Pine and Gilmore offer five principles for designing memorable experiences; theme the experience, position cues, eliminate negative cues, mix in memorabilia, engage all five senses. These are suggestions for creating an experience in a commercial environment but could, with some adaptation, perhaps work in a heritage visitor attraction setting.

Another management approach to the service experience is described by Hume et al. (2006) with the understanding the service experience, the implications of operations, service and management in non-profit performing arts being examined. Here the provider creates an offering through the design of a series of encounters and interactions. The customer interprets these encounters to construct an overall experience. The service description is the verbalization of the service offering from the provider by their design intent and from the customer by experience. When describing and designing the overall service offering the provider must consider the customer's responses to the encounter to align the service offering with the service experience. Concepts such as value, customer satisfaction and service quality are then related to how closely these encounters, within the offering, are consistent with the customer's wants and needs. The task for managers is to identify the important incidents within the experience and to understand their relationship to repurchase intentions.

This links very closely and is arguably dependent upon an understanding of the concept of the Servicescape as proposed by Bitner (1992). The following diagram sets out the Servicescape which looks at the experience the customer (service user) has in relation to the environment where the service encounter takes place. It is notable that in Bitner's model that the social interactions between customers and employees are noted in the list of behaviours on the right-hand side, but the model doesn't accommodate interactions between employees and management.

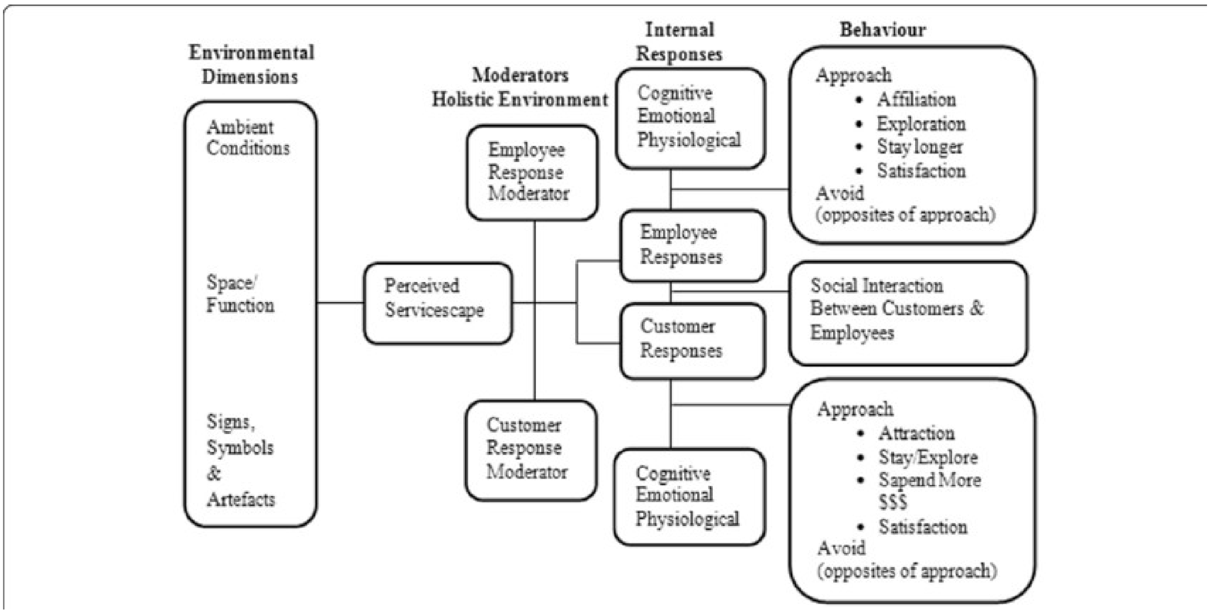


Figure 8. Bitner, (1992), Servicescape model

River Magic (Arnoud and Price,1993) looks at experiential settings and the relationship between customer expectations and satisfaction, with implications for the consumption of services. This is a case study concerned with the experience of river rafting as an “extraordinary experience”, however it could be instructive for a wider range of service encounters. “Emotional outcomes associated with extraordinary experience are embedded in relationships between the customer and service provider” (Arnoud and Price,1993, p.41). This appears to be the first note of the importance of the relationship between the service provider and the customer in an experience setting and only appears to be significant if the service provider (guide) makes specific contact with the customer. “The rite of intensification into which the guide is bound by the experience of clients changes the nature of interaction in fundamental ways, shifting it into a boundary open transaction between provider and customer that transcends commercial interaction. The guide exemplifies a service role of increasing importance as more and more people buy experiences to give their lives meaning” (Arnoud and Price,1993, p.41).

Price et al. (1994) looks at immediate customer responses to service encounters and emotional responses to services. Apparently, consumers generally have little or no emotional response to service encounters “Across service encounters we found that positive emotional responses are influenced by whether the service provider meets minimum standards of civility, provides extra attention and mutual understanding to the customer, is perceived as authentic and performs competently. The significant influence of extra attention in creating positive emotional responses is especially noteworthy.” (Price et al., 1994, p.49).

In this study authenticity is seen as a factor. “A factor that has been recently identified as potentially important to as least some service encounters is authenticity or the extent to which the service provider is viewed as genuine, his/her own person, out of the ordinary in the sense of being more than just a role.” (Price et al., 1994, p.38). This suggests that at National Trust properties the role of volunteer guides could influence feelings of authenticity for visitors, particularly since visitors can spend time talking to volunteer guides asking then questions and sharing opinions as Price et al. expect that perceptions of authenticity are higher when visitors are able to spend time within the service encounter. Following up on service encounters Price et al. (1995) looks at the content of service encounters “The service provider must seem authentic; he or she must behave “like a friend”. In the case of river rafting, in which the affective content is positive, the guide must appear to enjoy the job and the customers. The service provider role incorporates aspects of self-revelation – “let us in on her personal life”, empathic connections – “they wanted to do what we wanted to do,” and mutual giving – “in my case, he went out of his way” that are more characteristic of friendship than commercial service provision.” (Price et al., 1995, p.91). If the National Trust wants to develop and extend audiences, this could be problematic. If guides tend to be older, white, middle class they are less likely to behave “like a friend” to younger and ethnically diverse visitors?

2.4.6 How is the story constructed and sold?

Having looked at how the National Trust is organised we now need to look at how Heritage Organisations construct the stories that they tell and sell them to visitors, creating a commodity. According to Levine, Britt and Delle (2005) Heritage is a mediated and constructed concept that expresses histories to support specific agendas, ranging from scholarly archaeological research to urban renewal and development. In the creation and interpretation of heritage visitor attractions “Heritage experience must appeal to both the tourists and the community whose heritage is being sold” (Levine, Britt and Delle, 2005, p. 402). When looked at as part of the tourism industry we can see that heritage is a commodity. The meanings of heritage are intangible and therefore open to being continually shaped and interpreted and bought and sold by interested parties. It should be remembered that the National Trust buys properties or has received them through financial transactions involving death duties and taxes. What doesn’t change however is the historical sense of place embodied in the concept of the heritage site. Places have meanings that are in large measure created for consumption by individuals in communities; it is in consuming the meaning of a place that the individual is linked historically and immediately to the material and social worlds in which they are embedded. People therefore consume heritage to create a sense of belonging, as the invention of heritage can empower individuals and their communities by shaping a sense of identity. This process of creating identity relies on the interpretation of specific sites or material culture, interpretations that are manipulated for specific ends. After all, historic sites, and trends in interpretation of history do not merely exist for the sake of nostalgia but have a distinct relationship to the creation of present social realities.

What about the role of the imagination in the consumption experience? “We argue that the workings of imagination in tourism sites are inextricably linked to the production of cultural imaginaries, that is, socially important narratives invested with collective values…” (Chronis, Arnould, Hampton ,2012, p.261). What Chronis, Arnould and Hampton identified was a conceptual gap for the role of imagination in collective consumption experience. “What previous thinking leaves untapped is the working of imagination as a social process of co-constructing *collective narratives:* those stories that are commonly known in a particular society - albeit not universally agreed - that circulate for a long but not precisely determined period, and that have no singly, clearly identifiable author." (Chronis, Arnould, Hampton ,2012, p.265).

This Gettysburg case shows that certain collective narratives incorporate sets of values and cultural symbolism. In this case; wilderness as a transcendental force, the American West as a boundless landscape of opportunities, etc. Chronis, Arnould and Hampton call these narratives *cultural imaginaries* and see them as socially important narratives invested with collective values. In this sort of narrative, there are multiple "authors" each providing his or her own version of what happened and how. When a time comes for storytelling, each party will (re)imagine the narrative in his/her own way. Cultural imaginaries therefore are fluid. Not only in their characteristic ability to elicit multiple interpretations - their polysemy - but also, and especially so, in their tendency for varied narrative formations. A useful framework for understanding what makes possible the existence of multiple imaginaries is the notion of the constructed nature of narratives. Since stories are imaginative human inventions, they can be seen as rhetorical or discursive creations, and will always present the challenge of multiple competing narrative articulations. A potential author of a cultural imaginary is a commercial agent. The commercial agent could be the National Trust.

Since there is not a single, explicit author, each person's version of shared narratives is based on existing versions circulating in the culture. Each version of the story is a marked modification or reconfiguration of a pre-existing text. This relates to Urry

(1990) and the notion of tourist gaze where each visitor arrives at an historical site with preconceived ideas or versions of the story of that place. Like other commercial settings, heritage sites are commercially presented through both substantive (or material) and communicative staging.

In the case of Gettysburg, the battle is substantively staged throughout the site itself with markers, signs, and historical houses with bullet holes. Gettysburg is communicatively staged through such media as books, films, re-enactments, and guided tours. Here, we can define narrative staging as the textual reconstruction and commercial presentation of a story in both substantive and communicative terms. “The battle of Gettysburg narrative is offered by the National Park Service, licensed guides, private businesses, re-enactors, historians, novelists, and film directors who are agents of this narrative. The protagonists are high-ranking officers, simple soldiers, and civilians involved in the battle. The media employed to convey it are books, movies, film documentaries, museums, and, above all, battlefield tours"(Chronis, Arnould, Hampton ,2012, p.269).

Consumers/visitors bring their prior knowledge to their experience of Gettysburg. These can be films, book, and oral histories that they have heard, these are synthesised through the imaginative work that the visitors do in engaging with the narrative experience.

2.4.7 Visitor Experience, a facilitated experience

Beyond the desire to be entertained or pass the time there can be value in museum or heritage visitors learning from their visit. Duke (2010) looks at the importance of looking, the visual experience. Duke suggests that there is a need for museum educators to advocate the value of looking, thinking, wondering about complexity and the need to discuss results. An added value for visitors can be in learning how to learn from experiences in heritage settings. Learning from an experience requires the visitor to structure inquiries for themselves rather than jumping through hoops that have been pre-arranged, as they are in a conventional lesson. “Design of “hoopless” learning is challenging, but worth the effort. The aim of museums should not be to create lessons, but rather to create thoughtfully designed learning experiences” (Duke, 2010, p.272).

A visit to a museum or heritage visitor attraction is an experience. It can be structured into a lesson-based teaching opportunity, a format that may feel comfortable and measurable to teachers, but this is to only see part of the opportunity that this type of visit presents. Curators and Educators in these contexts can expand what we see as learning. The visit can present an opportunity to develop observation, attention and thinking skills. These opportunities can be suitable for school visits and a wider, adult audiences. The kinds of thinking people do when they navigate museum experiences are important and can be cultivated. People can learn to be fully present with an experience, to notice more with their senses, to discern thoughts and feelings, to question and to hold back from quick judgements, and to develop a habit of reconsidering. When the experience presents contradictory information people can learn to develop further interpretive skills. This links with National Trust art installations at properties, where artists have been commissioned to create work that has a relationship with the place but not necessarily a straightforward narrative connection, so there is work to be done by the visitors.

We need to remember that a visit shouldn't be a lesson but an experience. Being presented with objects in context is an opportunity to learn and think.

> "Traditional cultures have always understood that people can learn from experiences with man-made and natural objects, not just from words. In a contemporary society that more often thinks in terms of using, consuming, or owning things, thoughtful encounters with the material world can open doors to a new relationship with nature, with each other, and with ourselves" (Duke, 2010, p.277).

Duke suggests that we could view visits to museums as exercise for the mind in the same way that people visit the gym for physical exercise. For this to happen she suggests that curators need to concentrate more on the activity undertaken by the visitor than the key messages that curators want the visitor to take away.

Walby and Piche (2001) look at dark tourism and prisons in Ontario. Research based on observations. Penal museum relics offer a polysemy of meaning to viewers as critical, indifferent, and punitive interpretations are possible. If we accept this multiplicity of potential meanings this leads us to a situation where visitors see what they want to see. So, the meanings are created for them in part by their pre-existing beliefs. So, they might decide that the evidence prison tells them that prison was harder in the past and present-day prisoners have an easier time. On the other hand, they could remain indifferent and not make any connection between past and present. It is possible that the consumption of the representations of prisons and the prisoner might create social distance between prisoners and the public. “Consumption of representations of prisons and prisoners might foster a social distance between prisoners and the public. Our broader point is that representations of prisons and prisoners are made sense of within the context of changing sensibilities towards punishment” (Walby and Piche, 2001, p. 455). This could be the case with the Workhouse, Southwell, and attitudes to the poor.

The fact that the penal museums in Ontario are established in former prison spaces is important to note, as these settings offer different curatorial potential compared to penal museums manufactured in other sites. For example, the gallows at the Old Carleton County Gaol in Ottawa, built into the building, provides a material relic with symbolic resonances that other sites do not have. There is a tendency according to Walby and Piche (2001) to use features such as gallows to appeal to visitors. They note that this appears to be popular with school visits. In terms of the most important features of a prison the gallows are arguably not the most important, not having been a central part of the prison for a century and not used in over half a century. The Walby and Piche (2001) research fits into what seems a recognised method of observing as a visitor, taking photographs, and experiencing a visit as a consumer. This seems, as they say, to limit their research as they did not interview other visitors so only have their own views, which are surely influenced by their position as researchers.

When considering the role of the visitor in interpretation Strange and Kempa (2005) point out that the intended message is not always that one that is taken up by visitors. “In spite of the rangers’ best efforts to encourage tourists to see Alcatraz in all its complexity, many continue to pose comically inside open cells” (Strange and Kempa, 2005, p. 401).

Grenier (2010) looks at how play in a museum setting can influence and support adult learning. The challenge is to design a space to confront dominant stories and existing ideas where co-constructed new meanings can be created. If visitors can be engaged in activities, they can be involved in co-creation.

Describing her personal experience in a museum with her daughter and husband. "Now she was calling after me, hoping to move on to some other part of the museum, but I was having so much fun I didn't want to leave. It was a role reversal – she was watching me play. In the moment before I was dragged off to see the gun boat Philadelphia, I surveyed the lab. I found that I was not alone. Yes, there were lots of kids, but in many cases the parents and other adults were playing independently with the exhibits and stations set up in the lab. This moment was my "spark," and I began to see adults playing in museums not just on that day but also in my visits to history museums, science centres, and art galleries during the course of my research. I began to wonder about play and how play in museum settings may influence and support adult learning" (Grenier 2010, p.77).

Grenier sees museums as becoming more open to and involved with interactive and playful approaches to engaging visitors, and therefore, the conception of the visitor as active participant or even co-creator of content is emerging. The potential of play in museums lies in the possibility of engaging adult visitors in learning and reflection on museum content and context. The notion of reflection is important and something that has also been commented on in section 2.3.3.

The challenge for museum managers, curators and educators is in creating learning spaces that are not simply bound by traditional approaches to static display of content, but places to continually visit. Museums can provide the space to confront dominant stories and existing ideas, and to co-construct new meanings within a constantly changing context of society, self, other, and time. Using the act of play, traditional adult visitors as well as under-represented museum audiences can begin to imagine the museum and its content and their relationship to the museum differently through alternative ways of constructing knowledge and understanding. This could be a way for the National Trust to work with more diverse audiences. This concept of play is also important as a way of generating return visits. From the author's experience as a gallery curator, it can be observed that exhibitions that ask for participation lead to people returning to see how others have reacted to their contributions. "Museums are becoming more open to and involved with interactive and playful approaches to engaging visitors, and as such, the conception of the visitor as active participant or even co-creator of content is emerging" (Grenier, 2010, p.83).

Porter and Salazar (2005) note that with heritage and tourism there are conflicts about what is in the public interest. With commercial interests involved there are different stakeholder voices, but who is heard? Language and other curatorial practices are the vehicles through which human understandings of the past are expressed. Objects or artefacts come to embody these ideas and represent and communicate past times in the present. While no single utterance, practice or object may fully represent a society's heritage, these instances become bound in various publicly accessible discourses that inform the scope and accuracy of the term. Across the world, heritage's objectifying process has ascribed place specific qualities to places, objects, and practices, initiating a host of activities around them, from performance and display to preservation and tourism. The desire of stakeholders to manage their heritage does not always translate into stewardship rights. Stakeholders often willingly or unwillingly surrender development and management responsibilities to government organisations, along with the privilege to shape the site's public representation. "When stakeholders are not stewards, the heritage they believe so inalienable takes on a representation beyond their control and limits them in their ability to participate in an idea they believe uniquely their own. It is when value is disproportionately high compared to stakeholder's role in stewardship that we find ourselves on the verge of heritage tourism conflicts" (Porter and Salazar, 2005, p.363). This does not seem to directly relate to the UK context but could perhaps help understand debates such as the work that English Heritage have carried out at Stonehenge and the ongoing debate about a tunnel for a nearby road.

Prentice et al. (1998) examines experiences and benefits of visitors to tourism attractions. This is looking at the benefits to the attraction as well as to the visitor.

> "*Benefits-based management* describes these experience-based management outputs more explicitly as improved conditions (i.e., the outcomes of the experiences). Inherent in such an approach is the *benefit chain of causality*, linking activities, settings, experiences, and benefits in a sequence. Here activities are taken in settings to gain experiences that are regarded as beneficial (although not all outputs *actually* gained may be beneficial to the person or society in general). For example, psychological benefits may include affiliation, cooperation, nurturance, security, supervision, advancement, exhibition, independence, play, and understanding. Similarly, experiences include the enjoyment of nature, escape from physical stressors, learning, sharing similar values, and creativity. Such benefits may vary by activities undertaken" (Prentice et al., 1998, p.2).

Unless an approach to understanding the experience of visitors is taken Prentice believes that developing an experience will be difficult and without an understanding of the touristic experiential dimensions, product development lacks a scientific basis, a weakness of particular concern for experiential attractions, including heritage attractions offering interpretations of past and place. Different visitors can experience the same visit in different ways. "Even a comparatively "unitary" product, explicitly constructed as museology, has been shown to be differentially experienced, particularly in terms of the interests motivating visitors to come to the attraction. The determinants of experience are multi-attribute in quality and, in consequence, as tourism research attends increasingly to the understanding of tourist experiences, a recognition of multiple causation need to frame research design" (Prentice et al., 1998, p.15). Of course, without clear objectives this approach wouldn't' work. The core product of the heritage visitor experience is the experience that is facilitated. Prentice et al., (1999) note that segmentation of visitors in terms of what they experience may be different to general marketing segmentation in that visitors are more complex than marketing segmentation would suggest.

Beeho and Prentice (1997) conceptualized the experiences of heritage tourists. They looked at what is being gained or consumed by visitors, expressed in the respondent's own words. They looked to understand visitor experiences emotions, thoughts, expressive behaviours, and the benefits gained from satisfying experiences.

Beeho and Prentice (1997) propose the use of ASEB grid analysis, this is a management tool derived from SWOT analysis. ASEB (activities, settings, experiences, benefits) grid analysis is offered as a management tool for tourist attraction managers and designed specifically to aid consumer-led organizational analysis. It was developed to examine the experiences and benefits gained by visitors from visiting tourist attractions, and thereby to address issues arising from experiential consumption, an area at the time of their research that had not been examined in detail.

ASEB grid analysis is conceptually formed as a matrix with rows based on the conventional levels of SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) and columns defined as the levels of the sequential hierarchy of demand (activities, settings, experiences, benefits). This matrix or grid is informed by visitor surveys at attractions. So, data from tourist interviews are collected under the column headings and then entered the matrix in the appropriate cells under each column. Once completed, the matrix is then read row by row, as in a conventional SWOT analysis. The strengths and weaknesses of the activities, settings, experiences, and benefits gained at an attraction are evaluated from a consumer perspective, and likewise the opportunities and threats facing the attraction.

As a focussed SWOT, ASEB grid analysis focuses, first, on the specific critical issue in product development (the experiential product dimensions of a tourist attraction) rather than global issues of an attraction. Second ASEB grid analysis is customer orientated as the strength and weaknesses of the attraction are not only defined in terms of things valued by customers and recognised by them but can be defined by the consumers or visitors themselves in their own words through in-depth qualitative interviewing. “In this way, ASEB grid analysis provides consumer insights into the success of the tourism experience being offered at a tourist attraction, how that experience may be improved or seen as beneficial, and an interpretation of how the experiences can be provided at an attraction might be located in terms of the wider market” (Beeho and Prentice, 1998, p.78). The idea here is that by looking at the visitor attraction as a construction for experience this experience can be examined and therefore improved by looking at the experience of visitors.

Davies and Prentice (1995) explore latent demand. They examine non-visiting of heritage attractions and offer conceptualizations of latent demand. They summarise reasons that have been researched into why people visit heritage attractions, such as motivations. They note that little research at the time of their writing had been done into latent demand, particularly understanding of why people may choose not to visit. Although this is twenty years ago it does not appear to have been followed up.

2.4.8 Marketing

Looking at the role of experiential marketing for cultural attractions Conway and Leighton (2012) highlight the tensions between commercial objectives and curatorial goals. They suggest that the development of an experience space is possible in the heritage sector with an integrated experiential approach.

"The model integrates dimensions of product/market/experiential/integrated experiential focus with dimensions of communicative staging and substantive staging to produce a diagnostic tool for use by practitioners" (Conway and Leighton, 2012, p.46).

Conway and Leighton make two case studies, The Royal Exchange Theatre and ss Great Britain and find clear differences in their service offerings and experiential approaches. The Royal Exchange is inherently more experiential since the product takes the form of a performance. Despite this and counter intuitively, it uses a more formal approach and a rational appeal to actual and potential audiences, whereas Brunel's ss Great Britain uses a more informal and emotional appeal. They suggest this is indicative of either an established convention in the performing arts or a conscious strategy of audience retention rather than development. Whilst the Royal Exchange could develop a more experiential approach, which could give it a competitive advantage over other theatres it might risk alienating its current more traditional audience.

Also, the educational nature of the Royal Exchange's product tends to be communicated in a factual tone and directed at adults, whereas Brunel's ss Great Britain targets different visitor groups with tailored communications. Perhaps most usefully for looking at the National Trust, Conway and Leighton suggest in relationship marketing terms, season ticket holders or "friends" may be conceptualised as advocates. The loyalty level of those visitors to Brunel's ss Great Britain that go on to become volunteers could be conceptualised as beyond advocates to actual partners. This takes the integrated experiential approach to a different level of involvement beyond that of co-creation and creates an interesting set of new possibilities in terms of actor interaction in service delivery. The National Trust as a member organisation which relies on a large body of volunteers could be seen in the same way.

Brunel's ss Great Britain can be seen to use both communicative and substantive staging to achieve an integrated experiential focus. The Royal Exchange uses substantive rather than communicative staging and therefore achieves an experiential rather than an integrated experiential focus. By using communicative staging such as individualised promotions and events, it could, according to Conway and Leighton, move towards an integrated experiential approach, helping to differentiate it from its direct competitors in the performing arts sector. Using interpretative material, marketing communications and the wider visitor offer in terms of price and perceived visitors can obtain individual experience within the curated space. This demonstrates that through a carefully planned approach, the application of management, a visitor attraction that might seem to be of limited appeal can be attractive to visitors.

We can often see that marketing in this sector will inevitably focus on niche markets and repeat visitors, however, Conway and Leighton believe that their study has clear implications for innovative experience design in other parts of the heritage and wider cultural sector in terms of the success of the integrated experiential approach. They suggest that in seeking to achieve this position, organizations must clearly pay attention to visitor/audience expectations and satisfaction, alongside those organizational and environmental factors they have identified.

2.4.9 Postmodernism and Representation

Stanish (2008) uses a Postmodern critique of anthropology to suggest that it has not served non-western peoples well. Creating dominating colonialist narratives. Stanish suggests promoting local site museums, where social scientists can help to create spaces where ethnographic and archaeological objects can be properly housed locally and controlled by the people whose ancestors made them. “We are a modest component in a larger process of people around the world reclaiming and controlling their own proud past (Stanish, 2008, p.149).

There is also the question of representation to address with British heritage. Writers such as Hirsch (2018), Eddo-Lodge (2017) and Olusoga (2016) have pointed out the lack of representation of black British history. Fryer (1984) points out that black people have been born in this country for around 500 years and subsequently it would be reasonable to expect that their presence would be more commonly reflected when stories of places are told. As Hirsch (2018) says the stories that are told about the British Empire link the legacy of the empire with wealth but generally ignores the stories of the people involved in creating this wealth. She points out a further confusion between immigration and race, where people of certain race are seen as immigrants, but white migrants are classed differently. Olusoga (2016) points out that Black British history is “as global as the empire and is intertwined with the cultural and economic histories of the nation” (Olusoga, 2016, p.xxi) and Eddo-Lodge (2017) points out that slavery and colonialism created much of the British wealth, which was then used to build the heritage that the National Trust is now the owner of.

So, the final point to be made here is about the need to represent multiple stories, and to give weight to a range of different experiences. In terms of theory this relates closely to Lyotard (1984) and the distrust of grand narratives. We should expect that heritage organisations such as the National Trust represent more than one version of British history but reflect the multiple voices and stories that combine to create a shared history. This also connects with the discussions about power and who makes decisions about which stories are told and the new museology desire to examine and represent a break of a more traditional approach to heritage.

2.5 Literature Review conclusion

Having followed the model set out in 2.1 with the four areas of interest we can see that authenticity is an important concept for the creation of visitor experience. The areas of volunteers and co-creation are important for the National Trust.

We can see from the literature that has been examined in this chapter that there is a dearth of specific research into visitor experience and management practice within the National Trust meaning that to fully meet objective 1 of this research (identify current management practice in the National Trust) that this can only be achieved through empirical research. Authenticity, which features in objective 3 of this research, has been shown to be an important concept in the management of heritage visitor experience. Therefore objective 3 was developed and it will feature within the collection of research data during the active interviews, enabling the concept to be examined in the analysis and discussion in chapters 4 and 5.

Having discussed the relevant literature for the development of this research project the following chapter will examine the methods used to carry out the study and why they are the most suitable to meet the aim and objectives of this study. The use of post modernism will be discussed as it allows the closest method to allow the cracking of the postmodern veneer and an opportunity to explore the lack of certainty identified in section 2.1.5 relating to new museology.

Having explored the key concepts of power, structure, postmodernity, and experience it is time to examine the research philosophy and methods used in this thesis.

3 Research Philosophy and Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the postmodern research philosophy underpinning this thesis, it also describes how the research has been carried out and the way in which the data has been analysed.

To reiterate the aims and objectives and objectives of this research are as follows.

Aim: To investigate how the National Trust creates visitor experience.

Objectives:

1 To identify current management practice in National Trust properties.

2 To explore the power dynamics between the staff and volunteers in the creation of stories that are told to visitors.

3 To understand how 'authenticity' is used to communicate with the visitor.

4 To develop recommendations about how managers can enhance the visitor experiences.

The research methods, as described in this chapter have been chosen as suitable to achieve the objectives of the research. The methods are appropriate to discover the workings within the organisation and with analysis to enable us to discuss the power dynamics within the organisation. The organization being studied is the National Trust. The National Trust as a heritage organization uses storytelling as a core part of its operations. Whilst ostensibly the organization is one concerned with preservation, of buildings and landscapes it is also in the business of heritage visitor attractions and one of the principal ways that it can attract visitors is using storytelling. People are attracted to visit in the first instance by the story told in marketing materials, printed, and online, and then are entertained by the stories they experience during their visit. Following the work of Boje (1995) stories from within the National Trust were gathered as research data and then analysed to develop understanding of how the National Trust develops visitor experience.

Much of the business in terms of income is from membership fees. This means that there are many return visits, in turn generating income from gift shops and catering.

To keep visitors interested the National Trust needs a range of experiences for visitors. This research investigates how the National Trust creates visitor experience.

The visitor experience and the experience economy are important concepts in visitor attraction management Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Torkildsen (2005). Over the past 20 years there has been a focus on the experience as the product that makes customers want to visit. This concept was discussed in greater detail as part of the previous literature review in section 2.4.2.

Storytelling has developed as a way of looking at organizations. This research will look at the stories that are told within the organization. Boje's work on Disney as a storytelling organization has been highly influential to this research (Boje, 1995) and will be discussed later in this paper. Boje's methodology is a postmodern one. A considerable part of the rest of this chapter will look at postmodern research, with a discussion of the merits and features of postmodern research methods and address the potential difficulties of subjectivity and reflexivity and the contribution of the research to professional practice.

The data for this research was collected from interviews or perhaps more accurately for this project, active interviews and the merits of this method will be discussed. Sections 3.5 and 3.6 of this chapter provide detailed explanation about why this is a suitable approach for this project.

The collected data was analysed using deconstruction techniques derived from Derrida with examples taken from Martin (1990) and Boje (2001). A detailed examination of deconstruction is undertaken looking at how it can be used and what the merits of this form of analysis whilst also acknowledging the limits of claims that can be made for this type of analysis.

This chapter concludes with a discussion of why the chosen methods are the correct ones for this project, in terms of being compatible with the researcher's epistemology and ontology and the needs of the research question.

3.2 Philosophy – postmodernism

This section will explain the philosophical position of the researcher and the standpoint from which this research has taken place. As this section will discuss postmodernism as both epistemology and ontology it will be helpful to first define the terms, Epistemology and Ontology. Epistemology is knowledge about knowledge. It is explained by Johnson and Duberley (2000, p.2) “the word derives from two Greek words: 'episteme' which means 'knowledge' or 'science'; and 'logos' which means 'knowledge, 'information', 'theory' or 'account'. Epistemology is then used to define what knowledge is and how it is legitimately developed as knowledge. Ontology is "derived for the Greek words 'ontos' (being) and 'logos' (theory of knowledge) …. Hence to consider the ontological status of something is to ask whether it is real or illusory" (Johnson and Duberley, 2000, p.67).

There is also the question of the utility of postmodern research. How can it contribute to management practice when it seems to be so subjective and concerned primarily with its own reflexivity? Foucault’s use of genealogy has been suggested as a way out of the postmodern black hole by Hunnicutt (2008). Hunnicutt sees Foucault as being critical of the academics that use deconstruction because he sees them as engaged in a power play where they maintain their status by controlling the means of cultural production. However, Hunnicutt (2008) says “One possibility is engaging because it may serve the active creation and practice of culture in deconstruction’s project of decentring and multiplicity. I have recently discovered that Walt Whitman’s Democratic Vistas offer wonderful possibilities. Whitman passionately describes the opening of the democratic practice of culture as the ultimate achievement of civilization” Hunnicutt, (2008, p.439).

Foucault writes that “instead of serving the democratization of culture, the cultural elite directed its critical powers at weaker truth-groups to enlarge its domain of social and economic privileges. In the process local ‘knowledges’ were subjugated, and the practice of local culture trivialized” (Hunnicutt, 2008, p.440). For Foucault “it is through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges …that criticism performs its work…what emerges out of this is something one might call a genealogy or rather a multiplicity of genealogical researches…Genealogical projects entertain claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science…Genealogies are precisely anti-sciences" (Foucault, 1980, p.85). As will be clearer following the results and analysis chapters, this was what was found at a venue such as Nostell.

Hunnicutt (2008) concludes "Surely, if they do anything, the postmodernists and deconstructionists demonstrate the utter futility of business as usual; the endless, self-contradicting academic "production of new Knowledge…. leisure studies is one of the few and perhaps the only modern profession that might see and implement a genealogical, positive way out of the postmodern black hole (Hunnicutt, 2008, p.441.) If we are permitted to substitute the term leisure with a broader cultural management discipline Hunnicutt's statement fits well with this research project.

Issues of reflexivity need to be addressed and the question of why a researcher would take an epistemological position which is difficult to explain in terms of how it can be of use in management if one account is the equivalent and equal of other accounts need to be discussed. The aim of postmodernists is to disrupt and to open all certainties to question. The challenge that this research faces is to stay within the realms of management theorists who can make positive contributions to the development of organisations whilst using a postmodern epistemological approach. This researcher has found, thorough experience that much that is done within organisations, particularly in the cultural sector, by management consultants is quick fix or providing a solution to a problem that they as consultants rather than the organisation have defined. Significantly the staff in previous work organisations have been varying degrees of sceptical or cynical about organisational change with a common complaint being that they haven't been listened too. The benefit of a postmodern approach is that it gives these voices an opportunity to be heard. One of the acknowledged features of the postmodern approach is that it gives voice to the marginalised, and maybe the possibility that any change that comes after that might be supported by these staff members. Whilst not being about radical step changes organisations might benefit from internal discussion, a listening to these voices.

There is value for Alvesson and Berg in postmodern writing that uncovers different points of view and different representations within organisations but there is still the issue of reflexivity and the authority or credibility of the writer/researcher to be considered. “Postmodern discourse – if used in the right way – may help us to question the taken-for-granted or given assumptions about the world and to replace them by genuine reasoning. Reasoning is seen here as the logical discourse in which we are not only responsible for what we say but also for making sure others understand what we say. Reason as opposed to truth implies that the parties involved in the discourse do not only agree upon the rules or logic of the reasoning, but also upon the conclusions drawn from it.” Alvesson and Berg, (1992, p.223).

The credibility of an account is important in postmodernism where truth has been rejected as part of the deconstruction of the grand narratives of history. “There is great comfort to be derived from following the well-trodden paths; hypotheses testing is an activity open to all; there are numerous outlets for its expression, and abundant promises of professional advancement” (Gergen, 1982, p. 208, in Johnson and Duberley, 2000) The postmodern view is that science is storytelling. The role taken by postmodernists is to deconstruct these stories. “The epistemology approach centres Derrida's deconstruction methods to “deconstruct” organizational discourse. It relies mainly on the work of Lyotard (dissensus, local narratives, and performativity), Derrida (difference and undecidability), Foucault (censoring function of discourse and his adaptation of Nietzsche's method of genealogy) and Deleuze and Guattari to differentiate a postmodern organizational discourse" (Boje, Fitzgibbons, Steingard, 1996, p.60).

Boje, Fitzgibbons, Steingard propose a middle ground of critical postmodernism which sits between or in their term’s “dances” between epoch and epistemological postmodernism. “From a critical post-modernism position, environmental sustainability is superior to non-sustainability, participation is better than nonparticipation, and although everything is related to everything else, some relationships have more hegemony than others" Boje, Fitzgibbons, Steingard, (1996, p.64). They cite Gergen as an example of a writer working in this way and quote Parker's 1992 note that Gergen doesn't appear to recognize a difference between epoch and epistemological postmodernism. Parker's comments seem to be critical of Gergen as sitting on the fence. Boje et al don't offer much in the way of convincing reasoning of how a critical postmodernism works and do admit to the likelihood that "once a postmodern construction becomes a formula that organisations implement, it is transformed by modernist discourse into a pattern for exploitation" (Boje, Fitzgibbons, Steingard, 1996, p.64). Hardly a ringing endorsement of the mid-range position.

With postmodern epistemology we see the world or truth as being nothing more than language, discourses, and metaphors. If all accounts are equally valid then the postmodern writer might, following consistently with his or her epistemological position decide not to write anything at all since nothing we write matters. Alternatively, we need to find a way out of this impasse. Whilst from a postmodern perspective there may be no final true version of any story this doesn't have to mean that there is no purpose in having multiple stories and therefore versions of the truth. This storytelling is a way that we can both organize and seek to understand the social world. As Parker says "The truth that I am sketching becomes the attempt to sustain agreement – not the end of the enquiry but a temporary consensus on what is important in a particular situation at a particular time. Here we encounter a linguistic problem in that 'truth' is usually seen as a state, and I am arguing it is better seen as a social process" (Parker and Hassard (eds), 1993, p.208).

"One of the benefits of the arrival of post-modernism in the management field has been its focus on the multiple versions of reality which means that researchers (or anyone else) have to be humble about any claims they make to represent reality. This, it could be argued, encourages reflexivity on the part of the researcher." Johnson and Duberley, (2000, p.183) Johnson and Duberley point out the problem for postmodern scholars of relativism which would lead to silence and therefore postmodern academics have had to look for alternative ways to move forward.

Writers such as Hancock and Tyler (2001) view postmodernism as useful in having opened up areas in organisation studies for examination but in their view “ we would assert that Critical Theory, in many ways, not only pre-empted postmodern meta-theory in terms of its concerns and general diagnosis of the modern condition, but provided a framework within which critique is able to resist many of the totalizing and essentially repressive tendencies that derive from the modern valorization of a narrow conception of reality, while at the same time, seeking to avoid the postmodern descent into nihilistic relativism so damaging to critical political discourse.” (Hancock and Tyler, 2001, p.185)

McCauley, Duberley and Johnson quote Rosaldo (1989) who argues that “dismantling the objectivism of modernism, rather than supporting a nihilistic land where anything goes, actually enables organization theorists to create space for ethical concerns in an area where morals and values are rarely debated” (McCauley, Duberely and Johnson, 2007, p.274) However “What distinguishes the reflexivity that has followed in the wake of postmodernism is a greater awareness and acknowledgement of the role of the researcher as part and parcel of the construction of knowledge. The researcher is viewed as implicated in the construction of knowledge through the stance that he or she assumes in relation to the observed and through the ways in which an account is transmitted in the form of text” (Bryman and Bell, 2011 p.700).

The role of sociology in the postmodern condition offers a way forward to examine heritage/cultural organisations “To be effectively and consequentially present in a postmodern habitat sociology must conceive of itself as a participant of this never ending self-reflexive process of reinterpretation and devise its strategy accordingly. In practice, this will mean in all probability, replacing the ambitions of the judge of 'common beliefs', healer of prejudices and umpire of truth with those of a clarifier of interpretative rules and facilitator of communication; this will amount to the replacement of the dream of the legislator with the practice of the interpreter.” (Bauman (in The Postmodern Reader), 2004, p. 249). The suggestion here is that a heritage organisation such as the National Trust needs to be aware of the expectations of its audiences and be able to represent the heritage on display in accordance with these expectations. The audience expects to be presented with interpretation and the role of the heritage organisation is to provide this in line with audience expectations.

The research carried out here does not seek to offer a model for how such organizations should work but seeks to offer an understanding of what happens in the organization and can therefore undermine orthodoxies of how the organization is managed and contribute to debate around how the organization is managed. Working with a postmodern epistemology the informal, small-scale, and continual attempts at making meaning work within organisation becomes all that we can really observe and participate in. As previously stated, a further implication is that academic work must be recognized for what it is – more as words in a competing babble of voices with no voice having a particular claim to priority over others. As Burnier (2005, p. 512) says the value of postmodern analysis is "incremental progress is critical if the places where we actually live our lives are to become more democratic, more open to the telling of multiple stories when making policy, and more reflective of multiple discourses".

When starting to read postmodern theory in relation to the study of organizations the reader comes across many warnings that postmodernism is difficult to pin down and difficult to work with. It can be initially discouraging with the problems seeming to outweigh the benefits, but once immersed in the language of postmodernism it has becomes gradually clearer. In keeping with the epistemology and ontology it should be stated that this chapter has been amended several times and is still, it could be argued, open to change as the author's understanding of epistemological postmodernism deepens. The issue of relativism needs to be tackled but the ideas within this current chapter have begun to address these issues.

The view of Lyotard (1984a, in Best and Kellner) that postmodernism marks the end of grand narratives, and the positive hope of modernism feels instinctively correct to this author in the context of cultural and heritage management where there is debate about strategic management decisions regarding who work (artistic product) is made for, is it part of an artistic vision, is it to please funders/sponsors, audiences?

Clegg (1992) critiques modern management as devoting most of the time in management to budgeting but little time to ensuring that the people in the organisation are using their individual core competencies in the best position in the organisation, "Indeed, excessive concern with the former can lead to the squandering of the latter, even in organizations such as universities" (Clegg, 1992, p.38). Clegg goes on to describe postmodern systems of management where individuals are used to the best of their core competencies in the interests of the organisation. Individuals "tend to be more committed to their company than their occupations" (Clegg, 1992, p.38) This seems to relate to much of the work of cultural organisations where teams are formed for projects using the best suited and available people for a particular project, rather than bringing together workers simply because that is their regular role.

Clegg (1992) describes some of the characteristics of the postmodern organisation as being, diffused, relying on core competencies, having empowered workers who are flexible and have trust in the leadership. Other features include long term techniques in relation to planning and collectivized performance and reward. Many of these features can be found within arts organizations across a range of art forms including theatre, visual arts, music, and it could be suggested heritage organisations such as the National Trust. Clegg sees post-modern organisations as having little relation to the modernist bureaucracy. Clegg is an epoch post-modernist and may not be an ideal role model for this research project, however his work does have the resonance described above.

To further explain the use of a postmodern approach we will now examine the example of deconstruction as a technique used by postmodern theorists and discuss how this is used in the current research. Deconstruction is used in this project as a method of analysis of the data that has been collected from the fieldwork.

Martin (1990) uses deconstruction to examine a speech by a CEO of a company with a reputation for concern about employee welfare. She examines the speech for "what it says, what it does not say, and what it might have said. This analysis highlights suppressed gender conflicts implicit in this story and shows how apparently well-intentioned organizational practices can reify, rather than alleviate, gender inequalities" (Martin, 1990, p.339) From experience it can be suggested that much that determines how an organisation runs derives from the unintentional and what isn't said. The use of deconstruction is a particularly useful tool to examine this area.

A significant attraction for a researcher is the way in which postmodernism makes a clear break with conventional thinking in terms of not being limited by what is already known. Distrust of statistical analysis is caused by the way it leads to answering the questions posed by the questioner. Also, we can't measure something that we haven't already assumed to be present. "Lyotard believed that the crisis of modern-day knowledge was the result of an outlook that limited human creativity and confined the human spirit" (Drolet, 2004, p.26). This point is made by Foucault (1984) "Today when a Periodical asks its readers a question, it does so in order to collect opinions on some subject about which everyone has an opinion already; there is not much likelihood of learning anything new" (Foucault (in Drolet), 2004 p.41).

Within organizations we can often find narratives surrounding the ethos, culture, and history of the organisation, why we are here and what we do. These narratives offer themselves to researchers to be examined through deconstruction. These narratives can be seen within the organization as fixed entities but through deconstruction we are able to see and hear a plurality of voices. According to Jones (2004) concepts such as narrative and various other concepts such as language games and discourse have had a significant impact on organization studies in recent years. Jones describes the 'crisis of grand narratives', as identified by postmodernism to describe "the pluralisation of organization studies". "Science has always been in conflict with narratives. Judged by the yardstick of science, the majority of them turned out to be fables. But to the extent that science does not restrict itself to stating useful regularities and seeks the truth, it is obliged to legitimate the rules of its own game. It then produces a discourse of legitimation with respect to its own status, a discourse called philosophy." (Lyotard, 1984, (in Jones, 2004), p.507). "Lyotard is not concerned simply with narratives, but with the way that narratives justify or legitimate themselves in order to take on the status of something more than mere stories." (Jones, 2004, p.507) "In organization studies the answer to the question of where legitimacy can reside after metanarratives has often been very simple; all that we now have is a plurality of competing discourses, none of which has any priority over any other" (Jones, 2004, p. 509).

For Lyotard the goal of thought is not one of merely stating what is, which is a denotative language game, it also involves a prescriptive language game, a game of ethics, justice, and politics. Hence Lyotard's conclusion, despite his suspicions about consensus, that 'justice as a value in neither outmoded nor suspect'"(Lyotard, 1984, p.66). Jones (2004) notes that often in organization studies theory is imported through secondary readings "It is almost as if 'theory' is done somewhere safely outside organizations studies, and the best that we can do is to raid these other sources (badly, much of the time). Another way that theory is done at a distance is through a particular set of expectations regarding the citation of theory and theorists. Very often 'doing theory' involves little more than listing citations in parentheses, regardless of the relation between what is said and the book that is mentioned" (Jones, 2004, p.515).

Lyotard notes that a problem with performativity is that is leaves little or no time for reading and reflection, that is working on theory. Jones notes that the use of Lyotard (and other writers such as Derrida) is often subject to a reading which concentrates on plurality and tends to ignore other of their concerns. "Despite the continuing importance of ethics, justice and politics to Derrida and Lyotard, these are generally not the things that they are known for when they have been imported into organization studies." (Jones, 2004, p.516)

The distinction between the periodization 'post-modern' and a 'postmodern' epistemology can be explored in terms of its consequences for writing about organisations. How do we recognize postmodern organisations? Can we use postmodern analysis to see organisations in a different way?

"Modernism is described as having elevated a faith in reason to a level at which it becomes equated with progress. The world is seen as a system which comes increasingly under human control as our knowledge of it increases. The common terms for this kind of belief system are positivism, empiricism, and science.” (Parker, 1992, p.3) Postmodernists suggest that “this is a form of intellectual imperialism that ignores the fundamental uncontrollability of meaning” (Parker, 1992, p.3) ….” The role of language in constituting 'reality' is therefore central, and all our attempts to discover 'truth' should be seen for what they are – forms of discourse.”

If there is no superior standpoint, then the interpretation becomes central. "The postmodernist recognizes the fundamental instability of organisation, the sense in which language and action are never final but are only moves within a game that leads to further possibilities. The postmodern project attempts instead to disrupt our sense of normality – to make strange what is familiar” (Parker, 1992, p.5). The postmodernist must attempt to reveal these power relations to expose the fragility of organisational life and the myth of its stability.

Parker talking about Cooper and Burrell says, “postmodernity would focus on 'the production of organisation rather than the organisation of production’” (Cooper and Burrell, 1988, p.106) This relates to this research project in that it seeks an understanding of how the organisation, the National Trust, works to create visitor experience. Parker, (1992, p.6) “For postmodernists, the informal, small-scale, and continual attempts at making meaning work within organisation becomes all that we can really observe and participate in. A further implication is that academic work must be recognized for what it is – more as words in a competing babble of voices with no voice having a particular claim to priority over others”.

Burrell (1988) looks at Foucault's use of discipline. For Burrell the discipline of the organisation serves to construct the individuals within the organisation. As individuals we are unable to simply step outside of the organisation because our social world is constructed by the organisation. We are members whether we choose to be or not. For Burrell, following Foucault, we should treat any distinction between coercive and liberal organisations with extreme caution.

“Derrida's conception of language as being inherently decidable suggests that our attempts to reduce it to communication are highly suspect” (Parker, (1992 p.6). The postmodern position is that “there is no absolute criteria for truth and wisdom inside or outside any given organisation and those 'truths' that are utilized are continually subject to re-negotiation and re-encoding by others within the negotiation” (Parker, 1992, p.8). Therefore, individuals are “less a part of an organisation than participants in the process of organising; continually bringing new rationalities to bear on the process. The ability to continually speak new languages, to use new rationalities is therefore a pre-requisite for the postmodern organisation. Arts organisations can be seen to fit with the paragraph above where teams are formed for projects with working in innovative ways is something of a norm within many arts organizations.

Postmodernism does not assume a realist ontology - the world is a social construct. For most research ontologies there is a real world out there and the challenge is to find a way to describe it, but postmodernism is not trying to describe the real world. It is about challenging narratives and breaking down definitions. The post-modern organization is often seen as characterised by use of technology and having a post-modern outlook (whatever that might be). It is not about trying to exercise a measure of control - it is about the opposite. In a sense with the form of post-modernism it is about the design of organisations, “a flexible culture will become an opportunity for excellence and not a problem. The grand (modernist) narrative is still clear. Methods for organizing have to be found in an increasingly turbulent and complex society” (Parker, 1992, p.9).

Postmodern perspectives rely heavily on post-structuralism. Poststructuralism was developed by theorists such as Derrida (1976) and Barthes (1968) in opposition to structuralism. Structuralism held the view that all human activity including thought is constructed and that everything has meaning because of the language system that we use. Whilst difficult to define, post structuralism displaced the role of the author of a text in favour of the reader. So, a text had no one meaning defined by the author but multiple meanings defined by the readers. This fits with the idea of an epistemological perspective, that all knowledge is socially constructed and that there are multiple truths.

With this postmodern perspective we know the world through use of common or shared language and from discourses developed when we use language. The meaning of language is not fixed, and meaning is also not fixed within one way of describing. The aim of the postmodernist is to recognize this and draw attention to the inconsistencies and difficulties inherent in discourse. This is what Post modernism is, it doesn't make any claims to truth and therefore does not have a functional use. Its purpose is to highlight difference and contradiction.

3.3 Epistemology and Ontology

The research undertaken in this research project has both a subjective ontology and subjective epistemology. This means that the certainty of a positivist approach has been rejected, what Lyotard terms "an incredulity to metanarrative" (Lyotard, 1984, p.xxiv). Postmodernists reject the notion of rational scientific enquiry, instead the postmodern position sees all knowledge as indeterminate "what we take to be reality is itself created and determined by those acts of cognition" (Duberley, Johnson and Cassell, 2012, p.25).

The approach taken in this study, in line with postmodern thought, is that knowledge exists in the language that carries it. Truth is not fixed and is open to constant revision. It is through the study of language that we can view science not as being the carrier of an external truth, this external truth doesn't exist, but science can be a set of ideas and interpretations. These interpretations are not fixed, and their meanings are open to negotiation and there are a variety of different interpretations. "Hence for postmodernists reality can have an infinite number of attributes, since there as many realities as there are ways of perceiving and explaining" (Duberley, Johnson and Cassell, 2012, p.26).

One of the ways that postmodern research is potentially different from other research is in the attempt to highlight taken for granted truths, which depend upon the exclusion of other ideas or voices. In an organizational setting this could be the culture of the workplace “the way we do things round here”. This would be a taken for granted right way to do things which may be resistant to change. The value of qualitative work from a postmodern perspective is that it may be able to gain an understanding of “a situation at a particular point in time, recognizing that this is only one of a number of possible understandings” (Duberley, Johnson and Cassell, 2012, p.27). What this means is that the postmodern researcher is opening up a range of meanings in a particular circumstance and asking us to doubt what we know.

Cooper and Burrell focus on the postmodern and do not argue for the existence of the post-modern organisation. However, they do not explore relationship of writer, reader and text which would seem to be central to an epistemological postmodern approach. As Parker (1992, p.22) notes “if the perspective is stripped of this absolute condition of reflexivity, then it loses its uniqueness. It begins to look as if it is not very different from other 'radical' perspectives such as ethnomethodology, critical theory, and hermeneutics”.

3.4 Qualitative Research

This section examines why qualitative research is used, the relationship between qualitative research and postmodernism and the qualities of this type of research, why we need the richness of depth, and the notion of exploring, not trying to prove a hypothesis.

What are the features of qualitative research?

Qualitative research is not one homogenous whole. Whilst it is often superficially referred to as if there is a qualitative method or methods there are many different forms of qualitative research. Gubrium and Holstein (2003) have identified four traditions of qualitative research, these being, naturalism, ethnomethodology, emotionalism, and postmodernism. Briefly naturalism is an attempt to undertake research which understands social reality on its own terms. Ethnomethodology is an attempt to understand social situations using language and the researcher’s own interaction with the research subjects. Emotionalism is interested in understanding the inner thoughts of the research subjects, seeking an understanding of the subjective inner reality of the subject. Postmodernism is concerned with the construction of social reality. Postmodernism will be discussed in greater depth later in this paper.

The main research methods associated with qualitative research are according to Bryman and Bell (2011) ethnography/participant observation, interviews, focus groups, language-based methods such as discourse or conversation analysis, text and qualitative data collection and analysis.

The question of quality of qualitative research has been addressed by the UK government Cabinet Office. In a study commissioned by the Cabinet Office by Spencer et al (2003) there are 18 criteria set out as a series of quality indicators that can help assess the quality of a piece of qualitative research. Bryman and Bell (2011) provide these in summary. So, the quality of a piece of qualitative work can be assessed by how credible the findings are if the knowledge or understanding has been extended by research. Matching the evaluation at the end of a piece of research with the original aims and objectives. We can also examine if wider influences or other disciplines have been used to explain and explore the data and how clearly have these been explained and appraised. The research design needs to be explained and defensible along with a clearly defined sample, selected using recognised research techniques. Then the data needs to be well described and the data collection carried out as per the research design.

Then the data needs to be analysed with through explanation, the richness of the data needs to be retained with clear links between the data, interpretations, and conclusions, with a clear connection made between the conclusions and methods used. Ethics need to be considered through appropriate procedures and the research process needs to be adequately documented. Bryman and Bell’s list of these points is included in Appendix 1. These guidelines have been used to shape the planning, execution and reporting on the research carried out in this thesis.

There are several issues that are raised for postmodern research from this list methods of data collection and data analysis. These will be addressed later in this chapter. There is also the question of what it is about social situations that mean they should be studied differently from natural sciences. “Natural science imposes external measures on phenomena. Qualitative methods adhere to internal reasoning of the subject" (Gill and Johnson, 2010, p.148).

3.5 Questions in Qualitative Research

The chosen method of data collection for this research project is the interview or perhaps more accurately the active interview (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003). This section will look at the key features of interviews as a method of data collection and then introduce ideas concerning active interviews.

The interview is according to Bryman and Bell (2011) the most common method used in qualitative research. The two most common forms of interview are the semi structured and the unstructured interview. The semi structured interview is usually characterised using an interview guide by the interviewer with a set of predetermined topics that they intend to ask the interviewee about. This plan may or may not be adhered to during the interview. An unstructured interview is as the name suggests unstructured and therefore more like a conversation on a particular topic. Interviewing is relatively time consuming for the researcher, in terms of arranging interviews, planning, interviewing, transcribing the interview and then moving on to data analysis. The advantage of this method is that it provides rich material for analysis.

For Zeldin, (1998, p.14) a "conversation is a meeting of minds with different memories and habits. When minds meet, they don't exchange facts; they transform them, reshape them, draw different implications from them, engage in new trains of thought". This is for this piece of research closer to the aim of the research than many descriptions of interviews.

Kvale (1996) has a set of criteria for successful interviewers. These were used when thinking about what would be talked about with the respondents. Kvale's set of criteria were influential in the preparation for the active interviews in this research project. They were used to formulate a series of prompts that were used. The list from Kvale, importantly for the active interview, includes Remembering as a key attribute, this means remembering what has previously been said and referring to it along with clarifying what has been said, where necessary and displaying empathy with the person that was being interviewed.

Two sets of these prompts were developed, one for managers and one for volunteers, they were similar but reflected the different responsibilities of their respective positions. These sheets are included in Appendix 2.

Bryman and Bell (2011) add to further criteria to those of Kvale. Balanced: does not talk too much, which may make the interviewee passive, and does not talk too little, which may result in the interviewee feeling he or she is not talking along the right lines. Ethically sensitive: is sensitive to the ethical dimension of interviewing, ensuring the interviewee appreciates what the research is about, its purposes, and that his or her answers will be treated confidentially.

3.5.1 Active Interviews

Gubrium and Holstein (2003) and McNiff (2007) approach the interview from a postmodern position and view the interview itself as an active interview. In the active interview "reality is continually under construction; it is assembled using the interpretive resources at hand. Meaning is not constantly formulated anew, but reflects relatively enduring local conditions, such as the research topics of the interviewer, biographical particulars, and local ways of orienting these topics. (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003, p.74). They see interviewees as active in the construction of meaning using their previous experience both in interpretation and experience. Meaning is created "the production is spontaneous, yet structured – focussed within loose parameters provided by the interviewer, who is also an active participant" (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003, p.75). It is important to note that they view the interviewer as an active participant. With a subjective ontology and epistemology, we need to recognise the role played by the interviewer. It is not neutral and unobserved by the interviewee. Gubrium and Holstein (2003) go further on the role of the interviewer "While the respondent actively constructs and assembles answers, he or she does not simply "break out" talking. Neither elaborate narratives nor one-word replies emerge without provocation. The active interviewer's role is to incite respondent's answers, *virtually activating narrative* production. Where standardized approaches to interviewing attempt to strip the interview of all but the most neutral, impersonal stimuli the consciously active interviewer intentionally provokes responses by indicting – even suggesting-narrative positions, resources, orientations, and precedents. In the broadest sense, the interviewer attempts to activate the respondent's stock of knowledge and bring it to bear on the discussion at hand in ways that are appropriate to the research agenda" (Gubrium and Holstein 2003, p.75).

3.6 Data collection and Sampling, Fieldwork, the empirical research

The following is a description and discussion of how the data for this project was collected and analysed. First, sampling and how individuals were identified for participation and what was done with the transcripts of conversations. Before looking at each of these in detail we need to discuss research ethics.

3.6.1 Ethics

As would be expected, Bryman and Bell (2011) the need for anonymity for participants and confidentiality of what was said were emphasised to everyone who was talked to and was included in the participant information sheet. All participants were happy to sign a consent form.

Of primary importance when carrying out research is to ensure that no harm is caused to participants (Neuman, 2014). The interviews were carried out in accordance with Sheffield Hallam University ethics guidelines with all participants receiving a participant information sheet in advance and signing a consent form before the interview took place. This process allowed participants to withdraw their consent at any time, if they felt it was necessary. For some of the participants talking to a researcher was a way of letting off steam about things that they were unhappy with in their job. Care was taken not to offer any impression that the research would lead directly to any change in their work, and the complication of anonymity. If any illegal activity had been reported, appropriate action would have been taken. Nothing of this sort was expected or occurred. Several participants did make complaints about co-workers or managers and whilst participants didn't expect changes due to the meeting, they did appear to appreciate vocalising annoyances to a third party. This will be discussed in the findings and analysis. The data was collected following the ethical guidance described above.

3.6.2 Accounts and Narratives

Following the discussion in 3.5.1 about active interviews Atkinson (2014) talks about the importance of conversations to collect data. For Atkinson the importance is the “analytic use” of such materials. Thinking about the conversations, the settings were important, people in positions of power such as General Managers have office space so talk to privately, other people bring cups of tea. Volunteers were all met in communal spaces, they offered to make drinks themselves or showed where to the facilities were in the volunteer’s communal areas. One of the Operations Managers talked to was in-between, he made the tea himself and had biscuits, that he had brought in.

So, participant's status/power in the organisation is reflected in their ability to choose setting and command of others who carry out tasks such as tea making. The Project Manager at one property arranged to meet in a café, a considerable distance from the property. This was the person most frustrated in their role and willing to talk about it, but only when meeting offsite.

Interviews or conversations could be seen as a way of exploring personal experience "giving access to the individual actor’s ‘point of view" (Atkinson, 2014, p.94). Thinking about the interviews/conversations there is self-consciousness to the volunteers, they are being interviewed. Volunteers at Belton, Nostell and at the Workhouse, are all heard in the recordings saying to others “I am being interviewed”. Even though they were engaged in having a free -flowing conversation at the time and they have interrupted the flow to make this statement to others, they appeared to have no qualms about letting other people know they were talking to a researcher. This could have been a problem if the research had been commissioned by the management to research working practices in their specific property as it would have potentially breached confidentiality but as the project is looking at the National Trust as an organisation and the data has been anonymised there isn’t a problem with confidentiality.

The nature of the conversation, as constructed, meant that some participants used the opportunity to elicit sympathy or settle scores about their personal work situations. This was particularly noticeable at Nostell where there was animosity on the part of both managers and volunteers, towards each other. As described in the ethics section, 3.6.1, this wasn't encouraged and no offer of judgment about who was right or wrong in any situation was made but each time an alternative point of view was offered. How do interviewees frame, construct, share and transmit their personal experiences? Several the people who were talked to referred to their academic qualifications and professional experience, to establish their credibility. Volunteers often told of their previous experience and their working lives but when it came to research connected to their role with the National Trust there was talk of "google", "my own research", "it's all in here" (file for room guides written by previous room guides), "we don't make this up".

To be clear this research is not autoethnography, as the research is not focussing on an exploration of the researcher's experience but how the National Trust creates experience for visitors, though the researcher is present in the text. The researcher is visible as the author, but the purpose of the project is not to record the researcher's experiences but to record, in their own words, the participants understanding of their work with the National Trust.

Atkinson (2014) sees an important distinction between giving the reader a "vicarious" experience, through the writing. The important point is to produce writing from the research data "that serves an analytic purpose". For Denzin (1997) interpretive ethnography and reflexive messy texts are writing that refuses to impose meaning on the reader, the text becomes the place where multiple interpretive experiences occur. Messy texts make the writer part of the writing project. Messy texts move back and forth between descriptions, interpretation, and voice. These texts erase the dividing line between the observer and observed. The messy text produces situated knowledge about the practices of a given group and its culture.

The researcher is very much present in the research, having instigated it, set the boundaries for the enquiry, asked questions, and processed the results. But the reason to do this is to represent the people that have been interviewed. The researcher has the responsibility to represent the interviewees in the research findings. As Muncy (2010, p.3) says "The uniqueness of individuals has a fascination for me, but I concur with Berger (2002, p.176) that 'there is a huge gap between the experience of living a normal life at this moment on the planet and the public narratives being offered to give a sense of that life'. Berger claims that in this gap people may get lost and go mad and attempt to fill the gaps with stories that mirror what is going on around them, rather than official versions that they cannot connect with."

Marcus (1994) discusses the split in deconstruction between the self that writes and the self that is written. She notes that Derrida developed "a conception of writing as 'supplementary' to speech. in which the immediacy of spoken communication is contrasted with the dangerous mediations and displaces of writing". According to Derrida (1976) "the verb 'to supplant' or 'compensate for' (suppleer) defines the act of writing adequately". The spoken sentence, which is valuable only once remains 'proper only to the place where it is', loses its place and its proper meaning as soon as it is written down" Derrida (1976) not helping perhaps by being so sceptical of the possibility of communication. This is a reason to present the findings verbatim and not try to re-assign meaning. The research is allowing voices to speak.

This method fits well with the lack of fixed meaning identified within new museology, and the notions of co-creation, role of the visitor, and loss of authority for hierarchy of ideas that are discussed in Section 2.2.9 of the Literature Review.

Before we move on to look at the messy text that has been produced from the data, we should perhaps reflect on the following.

"I give my dreams as dreams and leave the reader to discover whether there is anything in them which may prove useful to those who are awake" Rousseau Book of Nature, quoted in Derrida (1976) This could be seen as counter to Atkinson who says that we must analyse text. The fact that the researcher is present in the text, as part of the active interview means that this raises questions about reflexivity which will now be discussed.

3.6.3 Reflexivity

The degree of reflexivity in postmodern research is significant. Reflexive interviewers examine the process of interviewing as well as the content. However, "potential problems with this version of reflexivism include a tendency to engage in confessional analysis that leans towards self-absorption, where researchers dissect their own positionality and performance in ways that obscure rather than inform the broader phenomena at hand" (Alvesson and Ashcraft, 2012, p.244).

Alvesson, Hardy and Harley (2008) identify four sets of textual practices that researchers in Organizations and Management have used in their attempts to be reflexive. The four are multi-perspective, multi-voicing, positioning, and destabilizing. The route used for this researcher and this research project is multi-voicing which they characterise as following. The researcher is recognized as part of the research, the researcher needs to declare an "authorial personality" and pay conscious attention to the writing process.

3.6.4 Snowball sampling Theory

The method of finding participants used was snowball sampling (Goodman, 1961) where the researcher uses one informant to identify a further sample of informants (Noy, 2008). As the participants are themselves directing the research by suggesting further participants this was nonprobability sampling (Taherdoost, 2016).

The advantage of this method was that once one contact is made, the researcher can obtain access to many more that had previously been hidden to them (Tashakkori, 2021). The major disadvantage was that the researcher has had given control of who they would talk to, the participants. During the fieldwork some time was spent talking to a few people who didn't greatly help the overall achievement of the objectives of the research because they didn't have relevant knowledge. It was also noted in the field notes that at times the research was being manipulated, that recommendations of people to talk to were perhaps chosen because they would show the particular property or manager in a favourable light. Leads for 20 interviews were followed up until, at this point it was decided that saturation point had been reached Heckathorn (1997).

3.6.5 Snowball sampling in practice

At the beginning of the data collection talking to a range of people in a range of positions within the National Trust was desirable and therefore identifying potential properties and interviewing a range of people at each one seemed an appropriate approach.

To examine how visitor experience is created a combination of intuition and knowledge gained from visiting a range of National Trust properties whilst was writing the literature review was followed when identifying some possible properties to seek interviews with staff and volunteers. This gave some understanding of how properties were organised and then following the literature review the need to talk to people responsible for curation was added.

The sample frame for this research would be all National Trust properties. A short list of properties that could be included in the sample was made, but this was relatively loose and was mostly dependent upon gaining access. The list of properties included a range of properties, mainly country houses, as typical National Trust properties but also several properties connected to the industrial revolution as it was thought that they might present a different visitor experience.

To try and find people was at first difficult because the National Trust doesn't give contact names, only general enquiry telephone numbers and email addresses. To find General Managers of properties a search of local newspapers in the locality of properties on the short list was undertaken. The names of five General Managers were found and then letters were written to them at their properties. The properties initially contacted were, Kedleston, Belton House, both typical country houses. Calke Abbey, which has an interesting curatorial approach where the house has been left largely untouched since the family gifted it to the National Trust. The Workhouse and Birmingham Back to Backs, which both represent a different approach to heritage in being bought by the National Trust to tell different stories i.e., working class lives. The General Manager of the Workhouse replied by email, and a meeting was arranged. At the end of the conversation the General Manager suggested contacting the regional archaeologist, who was someone likely to be positive about meeting. From the regional archaeologist several more contacts were gained including the General Manager at Belton House and the National Director of Visitor Experience.

Figure 9. Snowball sampling – how interviewees were found

3.6.6 The active interviews

The prompts used in the interviews are in Appendix 2, there were two sets of prompts, one for people in management positions and one for the other employees and volunteers. The prompts were derived using the guidance of Kvale (1996) as discussed earlier in section 3.5, and with reference to the main aims of this research, to discuss what the experience is that visitors experience and how this is created.

As Atkinson (2014) notes interviews are constructed experiences, not naturally occurring. For this reason, the interviews were informal and as much as possible like a conversation with participants. The same order of questioning each time wasn't used each time, the conversation itself guided the order that questions were asked and answered. The question sheet was used as a guide for conversation, in a similar way to a facilitator in a focus group, rather than a rigid structure to be adhered to. If it was deemed that a participant had already answered a question in the conversation, the question didn't need to be asked.

The following table sets out the data collected, and the contact column shows the connections of the respondents following the snowball sampling. The data was collected between January and June 2017 as follows.

Figure 10. List of interviews

Interview	Role	Property	Interview Location	Contact
1	Property Manager	The Workhouse	Southwell	Speculative letter
2	Regional Archaeologist	Regional Office	Chesterfield	Respondent 1
3	Regional Curator	Regional Office	Kedleston	Respondent 2
4	Head of Visitor Experience	Head Office	London	Respondent 2
5	Regional Visitor Experience	Regional Office	Warwickshire	Respondent 4
6	Property Manager	Belton	Lincolnshire	Respondent 4
7	Property Manager	Nostell	West Yorkshire	Respondent 4
8	Operations Manager	Workhouse	Southwell	Respondent 1
9	Operations Manager	Belton	Lincolnshire	Respondent 6
10	Operations Manager	Nostell	West Yorkshire	Respondent 7
11	Project Manager	Nostell	Leeds	Respondent 7
12	Volunteer	Workhouse	Southwell	Respondent 8
13	Volunteer	Workhouse	Southwell	Respondent 8
14	Volunteer	Workhouse	Southwell	Respondent 8
15	Volunteer	Belton	Lincolnshire	Respondent 9
16	Volunteer	Belton	Lincolnshire	Respondent 9
17	Volunteer	Belton	Lincolnshire	Respondent 9
18	Education Team (volunteers x 4)	Belton	Lincolnshire	Respondent 9

19	Volunteer	Nostell	West Yorkshire	Respondent 10
20	Volunteer	Nostell	West Yorkshire	Respondent 10

Figure 11. Hierarchy of people interviewed

Role Level	**Interview number**
Senior	4
Property Manager or Regional Consultant	1,2,3,5,6,7
Operations Manager	8,9,10,11
Volunteer	12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20

Figure 12. Relationships of interviewees in properties

Role	**Belton**	**Workhouse**	**Nostell**
Property Manager	6	1	7
Operational Manager	9	8	10,11
Volunteer	16,16,17,18	12,13,14	19,20

Figure 13. The Properties where data was collected

Property	**Visitor numbers**	**Facilities**	**Location**
Belton	450,000 per year including 250,000 to adventure playground	Historic property, gardens, parkland, adventure playground, range of shops and catering available	Close to the A1 so benefits from passing visitors going from North/South
Workhouse	60,000 per year	Historic workhouse property, limited shops, and catering	Rural Nottinghamshire, limited passing trade
Nostell	230,000 per year, of these 119,000 pass through the pay barrier and	Historic property, gardens, parkland, shops, and catering	Close to Wakefield City Centre and M1 corridor

	19,000 visit the house		

Following 20 meetings it was considered that saturation point had been reached. It was possible to anticipate the sorts of explanations received from participants based upon their role. Following Heckathorn (1997) it could be seen that saturation point had been reached as the sample community was saturated. Enough people at each property and specialists at regional and national level had been talked to, the minimum target had been met.

After the fieldwork the interview recordings were transcribed and fieldnotes were transcribed and Nvivo was used to organise the material. The transcribed data from the twenty interview/conversations resulted in around 90,000 words of data. The transcription process helped with the familiarisation of the data, which was important when trying to make sense in a way that allowed the stories to be constructed from the data. The coding was of a basic level that helped with the construction of a series of specific stories related to either themes or locations. In effect Nvivo was used to store transcripts and then sort it into categories to create the seven stories described below. Some of the transcripts appear in more than one story so Nvivo was a useful tool to arrange this data in specific categories and edit out what was considered extraneous detail. The stories presented were created to answer the specific needs of the research aim and the objectives of this thesis. The stories presented are constructed from the interview transcripts, all the words are the participants own, apart from where indicated using editorial explanations. The stories are told in the participants own words; this is a deliberate attempt to allow them to have a voice in the research. Therefore, there is an attempt to share with the participants the power and control that is often the preserve of the researcher, who is seeking generalizable findings.

Figure 14. Table of stories

Story	Title	What it is	Whose story does it tell
1	Spirit of Place	A story that examines attitudes towards the strategy for creating visitor experience at individual properties	A range of national, regional and property staff and managers and volunteers
2	Management within the National Trust	How management practice affects visitor experience	Principally the Director of Visitor Experience
3	Curatorial practice within the National Trust	How curatorial practice affects visitor experience	Principally the Regional Curator
4	How the National Trust engages with visitors	How visitor experience specialists affect visitor experience	Principally the Regional Visitor Experience consultant
4	Visitor experience at Nostell	A story that looks at how visitor experience is created at Nostell	A range of national, regional and property staff and managers and volunteers
6	Visitor experience at the Workhouse	A story that looks at how visitor experience is created at the Workhouse	A range of national, regional and property staff and managers and volunteers

7	Visitor experience at Belton	A story that looks at how visitor experience is created at Belton	A range of national, regional and property staff and managers and volunteers

What we have is seven stories. These have been developed as three stories about visitor experience at specific National Trust properties, Belton, Nostell and the Workhouse. These stories are a combination of management staff and volunteer voices. There is a story are constructed from multiple interviews about the National Trust strategy ‘Spirit of Place’. This strategy is discussed in the next chapter before the story is presented. There are also three stories constructed about the actions or functions of management, these and illustrate changes in approach taken by the National Trust in developing visitor experience over the past 20 years or so.

Participants own words are used but individual’s identity is protected by use of initials (an abbreviation of their job title or role). Where I appears asking a question, this is the Interviewer. I is the interviewer. These stories are like “thick description” Holliday (2016, p.86) and contain multiple interconnected meanings. The text is "partial and fragmentary" (Muncey, 2010, p.147). These stories could be seen as “Reflexive Messy Text” Denzin (1997) “Reflexive, messy text; texts that are aware of their own narrative apparatuses, that are sensitive to how reality is socially constructed, that understanding that writing is a way of ‘framing’ reality. Messy texts are many sited, intertextual, always open ended, and resistant to theoretical holism, but always committed to cultural criticism.” Denzin goes on, “Such texts make readers work while resisting the temptation to think in terms of simplistic dichotomies; difference, not conflict, is foregrounded” (Denzin, 1997, p.225).

This use of the "messy text" makes the researcher part of the research. The researcher is present in the text. It is important to acknowledge the attempts to be reflexive. These are multiple stories that occur at a specific site and as Denzin (1997, p.225) says "they are always multi-voiced". The aim in writing this way with "messy text" is to eliminate the distance between the researcher and the participants. So, the researcher/writer is writing for the participants rather than writing about them. The "messy text" is knowledge about their work in the culture and context. Section 3.6.2 also discusses in detail accounts and narratives. This seems an apt description of this project that uses a given organisation, the National Trust, and conveys the ideas, in words, of a number of participants. As discussed, Geertz (1988, p.147) provides a warning of multiple risks in using messy text.

“The multiple risks include narcissistic texts, texts preoccupied with their own reflexivity, good and bad poetry, politically correct attitudes, too much concern for language, and utopian impulses predicated on the belief that the recovery of the previously repressed self can produce liberation and freedom. Combined these risks can produce a neglect of ethnography’s central purpose to produce meaningful, critical discourse about the many worlds we all inhabit".

The aim of the messy text is to transcend the liabilities of both ethnography and experimental writing. Experimental writing is not an excuse “or a licence to be careless, silly or imitative” (Raymond Carver, 1989, quoted in Denzin (1997). The messy texts produced and presented here are empirical research in the sense that they present articulated experiences of people in concrete places. They are experiences of interacting individuals at a particular time and place. The individuals are aware that the conversation is being recorded for the purpose of academic research. They have signed consent forms and received information sheets about the research.

This research was co-produced by the participants and the researcher in the discussions that took place in the active interviews and this material becomes a further co-production between the researcher, as writer, and readers of the text. “Every reading modifies its object” (de Certeau, 1984, p.169) “Readers and writers are co-producers of the text that is being written and read”. What we are saying here is that even when the analysis for this thesis is completed the meaning is not fixed but can change as further readers engage with the text.

It is striking listening to the recordings or reading the transcripts how much the interviewer says. The researcher is an active participant in the conversation. A prompt sheet of areas wanted to be covered or anticipated that might be covered was prepared but this was used to guide conversation topics, not to ask a set of fixed questions. The data collected is very much a representation of what people said in their own words. A disadvantage of this approach was that it was noted during the transcription and analysis opportunities for follow up questions that had been missed, being in the middle of the conversation. The researcher is present in the research, but the reported words are very much the participants own. The researcher's own words appear in Section 4.16 taken from the field notes, this was decided upon an appropriate way to include the author's voice within the research in keeping with the chosen methods, adding a further story to the set to be analysed.

3.7 Data Analysis

This section will look at the chosen method of data analysis for this project, which is Deconstruction.

3.7.1 Deconstruction

Deconstruction is the dismantling of linguistic constructions. It is the analysis of texts to reveal their inherent contradictions, assumptions, and different layers of meaning. All texts contain taken for granted ideas which depend upon the exclusion of something. Deconstruction involves the identification of the assumptions that underpin the text, and which produce the 'fixed' truth claim. This leads to development of understanding the different layers of meaning present (and absent) in the text. However, we need to remind ourselves that this deconstruction is another social construction, one of many, and not the "truth". Fuchs and Ward (1994) offer a compatible explanation of the value of deconstruction and Baudrillard (1987, 1988) suggests that modern organizations subsume radical postmodernism and keep their power structures the same. The following quote from Martin (1990) helpfully describes the features of deconstruction.

"Deconstruction starts from epistemological premises that are radically different from those held by most organizational researchers. Deconstruction focuses on suppressed conflicts and multiple interpretations of a text in order to undermine all claims of objective "truth". The number of possible interpretations of a text is endless. A deconstruction offers a purposeful selection of some of these interpretations, but it does not and cannot claim to represent the objective truth about which interpretation is correct or what the author intended to say” (Martin, 1990, p.340).

Before continuing to look at deconstruction it would be useful to look briefly at some of the ideas that predate it as an analytical tool. Kristeva (1980) discusses the term intertextuality. Intertextuality being where the reader and writer of a text can discern meaning from a text in a way that is mediated by the influence of other texts that they have written and read previously. For example, we read a novel being aware of the literary form and able to compare and contrast what we are reading with our previous experiences of reading. Intertextuality is a form of deconstruction. Barthes (1977) takes the view that the meaning of a text does not reside in the text itself, but the meaning is constructed by the reader, both by reading the text and making connections with what has previously been read.

The value of deconstruction is that "Deconstruction focuses on suppressed conflicts and multiple interpretations of a text in order to undermine all claims of objective ‘truth’ " (Martin, 1990, p.340). Another benefit is that "In contrast to the impersonal tone of most organisational research, deconstruction requires subjectivity and reflexivity - indeed that is one of its objectives" (Martin, 1990, p.341). It is important to remember that deconstruction can be used to undermine as well as support any claim of truth "any deconstruction, can in turn be deconstructed from an opposing point of view" (Martin, 1990, p.341). "Deconstruction cannot and does not claim to reveal the truth about what the author of a text intended to communicate" (Martin, 1990, p.342). The use of deconstruction can undermine orthodoxies of how organisations are managed and contribute to debate around how organisations are managed.

Martin (1990) deconstructs a speech by a CEO of a company known for its positive attitudes towards female employees to expose the gender bias in the speech. He is celebrating this company and its positive policies by describing a product launch and a rescheduled caesarean birth by one of the executives. The executive has brought forward the date of her caesarean to not clash with a product launch. Martin uses deconstruction to expose the suppressed gender conflict in the organization.

Martin offers a set of analytic strategies that she used in her deconstruction. There are nine of these including dismantling dichotomies, examining silences, that is looking at what isn't said as well as what is, looking for contradictions and at the end rewriting to show how the text can have other meanings and therefore enable the researcher to challenge the status quo.

Derrida is often quoted as saying that there is nothing outside the text but as Currie (1998) quotes Derrida saying this is not the case. By saying 'Il n'y a pas de-hors-text' Derrida "does not mean there is nothing outside the text as most commentator have taken it. It is closer to "There is no outside-text"" (Currie, 1998, p.45). What Derrida means by text is not distinct from action. A text is not just a page in a book but can also be a series of actions. As Linstead (1993) says Derrida operates on texts – the world itself could be viewed as a text. Kilduff (1993) points out a couple of difficulties with Derrida's work that potentially limits its impact. These are Derrida's use of difficult language and the fact that "Derrida has limited himself to canonical texts and has largely avoided extensive commentary on the structures of society" (Kilduff, 1993, p.29) Kilduff believes that deconstruction could be used more widely in social, political, and organizational contexts. Boje (2001), Bauman (1993) and Derrida (1999) tackle the question of relativism and deconstruction. A positivism view of the world would contend that there is one truth, available to be discovered. With postmodernism we are looking at multiple truths, these are grounded in place and experience. These are contexts for truth based on available knowledge in social situations. The experience described in the stories analysed in this dissertation are based on multiple truths, that are equal and relative.

There isn't a handbook of deconstruction to go to and different writers offer slightly different advice, remembering that Derrida refused to offer any instructions, so it was decided to take an approach that best fitted with the intentions of the research. It was found that Boje (2001) offered the clearest way forward to achieve the aims of the research. Following on from Martin's (1990) guide to how she carried out deconstruction Boje (2001) offers his approach which is what has been used for the for the deconstruction that takes place in chapter 4. To carry out the deconstruction of each of the eight stories that had been created from the data (including the researcher field notes) the eight steps as described in the table below were followed. For each of the stories each of the eight stages was worked through. The results of each of these deconstructions in eight stages are presented in the next chapter directly after each story. There is then a summary of all eight of the eighth stages, Resituating the story, at the end of that chapter. This then forms the basis for the discussion and conclusions. Boje (2001) doesn't give advice on comparing deconstructions. Boje seems to assume we would only do one at a time. With this thesis something slightly different is being done with a series of stories and deconstructions. Direct comparison between each of the eight stages within this chapter isn't made, this is deferred to chapter 5, the discussion, where it is relevant to the overall aims of the research.

Figure 15. Boje 8 steps of deconstruction

Story Deconstruction
1 Duality search. Make a list of any bipolar terms, any dichotomies that are used in the story. Include the term even if only one side is mentioned. For example, in male-centred and/or male dominated organization stories, men are central, and women are marginal others. One term mentioned implies its partner.
2 Reinterpret the hierarchy. A story is one interpretation or hierarchy of an event from one point of view. It usually has some form of hierarchical thinking in place. Explore and reinterpret the hierarchy (e.g., in duality terms how one dominates the other) so you can understand its grip.
3 Rebel voices. Deny the authority of the one voice. Narrative centres marginalize or exclude. To maintain a centre takes enormous energy. What voices are not being expressed in this story? Which voices are subordinate or hierarchical to other voices (e.g., Who speaks for the trees?)?
4 Other side of the story. Stories always have two or more sides. What is the other side of the story (usually marginalized, under-represented, or even silent)? Reverse the story, by putting bottom on top, the marginal in control, or the backstage up front. For example, reverse male-centre by holding a spotlight on its excesses until it becomes a female centre in telling the other

side; the point is not to replace one centre with another, but to show how each centre is in a constant state of change and disintegration.
5 Deny the plot. Stories have plots, scripts, scenarios, recipes, and morals. Turn these around (move from romantic to tragic or comedic to ironic).
6 Find the exception. Stories contain rules, scripts, recipes, and prescriptions. State each exception in a way that makes it extreme or absurd. Sometimes you have to break the rules to see the logic being scripted in the story.
7 Trace what is between the lines. Trace what is not said. Trace what is the writing on the wall. Fill in the blanks. Storytellers frequently use 'you know that part of the story'. Trace what you are filling in. With what alternate way could you fill it in (e.g., trace to the context, the backstage, the between, the intertext)?
8 Resituate. The point of doing 1 to 7 is to find a new perspective, on that resituates the story beyond its dualisms, excluded voices or singular viewpoint. The idea is to reauthor the story so that the hierarchy is resituated, and a new balance of views is attained. Restory to remove the dualities and margins. In a resituated story there are no more centres. Restory to script new actions.
(Boje, 2001, p.21)

About storytelling, Boje says "being able to publish means being able to tell a good story in your research" and "after all, if we are in the genre of storytelling, then it is incumbent on us to tell the stories well" (Boje et al., 1999, p.358). Boje finds that "fuller story texts are performed in newer organizations, in which there is less shared experience. There are implicit rules in storytelling (who can tell it, to whom, and where). Further research can examine what happens, if anything, when these rules are broken, when the telling is done inappropriately" (Boje, 1991, p.124). The use of analysis of storytelling has the potential to be very interesting in this research project, with the National Trust, firstly because storytelling is a key part of the attraction of visitors and since the National Trust is a mature organization there is the potential to discover what voices are heard within the organization and what stories are told to the outside. The reason for following Boje rather than Martin is that Martin (1990) looks at power within organisations, particularly gender power differences. Boje (1991, 1999, 2001) looks at situations within organisations and gives voice to multiple voices, e.g., in a stationary supply company. This use of multiple voices in Boje's analysis makes it seem a closer fit to this project as it is multi voiced and multi cited and the research is not looking specifically at power differences although they are inevitably a part of the analysis to follow in Chapter 5.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has discussed the research approach, including the justification of Post Modernism, how the data was collected, including sampling and ethics and the use of the active interview and why this is appropriate for this research into the National Trust and how they create visitor experience and the question of the relative power of different interviewees. The data was analysed using deconstruction techniques as outlined in this chapter before the discussion, with particular care paid to the use of language as has been discussed. The use of deconstruction was particularly suitable for this project as one of the objectives is to examine the power dynamics within the organisation. The next chapter will present the findings, the stories that have been created from the data and then analysis of each story using deconstruction.

4 Stories/Findings and Deconstructions/Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The following seven stories are constructed from the active interviews, as described in the previous chapter, with the addition of an eighth story from fieldnotes. The process of creating the stories is also described in the previous chapter. The views of the participants are presented in their own words with a minimum of authorial input. It should be noted, however, that the researcher has the power as editor to select comments and the order in which they appear.

In order to address the objectives of the research, to identify the current management and curatorial practice within the National Trust, to understand how authenticity is communicated to the visitor, to explore the power dynamics between the staff and volunteers in the creation of stories that are told to visitors and to develop recommendations about how managers can enhance visitor experience various ways of presenting the data were explored, trying to find a way to present the stories that showed differences of opinion between management and volunteers, for example by presenting respondents words in columns side by side to contrast. This proved to be unsatisfactory as it made any narrative hard for the reader to follow. Also of course deconstruction as a method of analysis asks us to look for differences so this point is addressed in the analysis which follows each story. With these considerations the following rationale was used to create the eight stories that are presented in this chapter.

The first story concerns the National Trust strategy Spirit of Place. This is something that concerns all properties and directly influences the development and delivery of visitor experience. The second story is concerned with management within the National Trust and how the Director of Visitor Experience can control, shape, or influence the visitor experience at property level. The third story examines curatorial practice within the National Trust, primarily from the perspective of a regional curator. These are the people specifically employed to ensure high standards of curatorial practice at National Trust properties. The fourth story then examines the way in which visitor experience is managed at a regional level by the consultants who have direct relationships with the properties and help shape the visitor experience. The fifth, sixth and seventh stories are based around visitor experience at individual properties, Belton, Nostell and the Workhouse. These three stories allow an opportunity to look at issues of authenticity and nostalgia building on the understanding that has been gained from the first four stories. The eighth story is based on researcher fieldnotes. Each story has an introduction followed by the story, then the analysis (deconstruction) that has been carried out for each story using the 8 stages of deconstruction developed by Boje (2001) which are discussed in the methods section 3.7.1. At the end of the chapter there is a summary of points that can be taken from the deconstructions to inform business practice, including future planning.

4.2 Spirit of Place

4.2.1 What is Spirit of Place and why it is important?

This question was discussed in the previously in chapter 3. As the data, presented in this section shows there is a difference, particularly with volunteers, in the knowledge of Spirit of Place for their property. Spirit of Place is discussed by managers and regional/national staff and volunteers at one property. Spirit of Place didn't come up in the first conversation but came up in subsequent meetings. Spirit of Place wasn't asked about specifically in conversation, if it appeared it is because it was mentioned by respondents. This section is a composite of conversations with all the participants that were talked to. Not all twenty conversations are represented in this version, but all transcripts have been considered before making this selection. Spirit of Place is the National Trust strategy that gives each property an opportunity to define what is special about that place and then guide the staff and volunteers to create a visitor experience that follows the Spirit of Place for that location. The following sections will look at issues relating to the concept of Spirit of Place and how it is applied followed by the deconstruction of this story.

4.2.2 Positive comments about Spirit of Place

The Project Manager at Nostell explained how she feels about the Spirit of Place statement "I think they were just finishing it off when I came in. They had been working on it over the summer in 2015 and were signing it off in the autumn and I started in December, and I just inherited it. It would have been nice to be part of the process, but I have absolutely no problems with the spirit of place it is absolutely bang on". According to the National Trust's Visitor Experience Director "It is the spirit of the place not the accident of history that means it happens to be run by the National Trust that should be the dominating influence on how a place is presented". It should be used to guide decisions. "It's all part of, so what can we draw from this place to contribute to the cultural life rather than come and see what it was like in the 18th century. It's much more than that. Wherever we are successful it is much more than that". The regional Visitor Experience Consultant agrees, "We do talk about what is the big idea, what is the one thing you would want visitors to go away thinking, so that is often our kind of starting point".

4.2.3 Utility of Spirit of Place

So how does the Spirit of Place statement guide the work at a property. Again, at Nostell the Project Manager comments "It is beautifully written, and it just sums up who and what the place is all about. Who it is about, who it is for, where it has come from and its essence? For Nostell it is all about ordinary people crafting extraordinary things and that just seems to resonate. So, I have got that as a set of guiding principles, a structure really, parameters for thinking, which helps when you are being creative. There needs to be some barriers because if you are dealing with infinite concepts". The volunteers at Nostell are very upset that they feel the family are being excluded from the story, "the arguments were many and varied as to why we should have those photographs back out, we haven't put them back out, but it is a great example of them not understanding and also me not yet realising that not everybody understands what spirit of place is and how it can be used as a decision-making tool". She was confident that "eventually when we have done our interpretation audit and we have done this new interpretation strategy and we are thinking about, three, four, five things that we want people to hear when the visit the property the family is not going to be a major part of that, we will have to touch on it because there are certain individuals throughout the development of this properties' time that had a really key influence on the way that it was designed and made and interior design, decoration, all that jazz".

The staff at the Workhouse found the Spirit of Place a useful aid to planning work. "The guidance from the Trust is that you work to your Spirit of Place, and we spent a lot of time creating a statement that said this is our Sprit of Place and everything we do event wise is meant to fit into that and that level of authority there is why we can say we will do something away from the norm".

Spirit of Place can also be useful to decide what not to do at a property, "I had a place that said; "For Halloween we are going to have zombies" and I thought erm "Can you remind me how that fits to your spirit of place?" "Well, it doesn't really". Okay. So, it is quite a nice way of being able to point out maybe that is not the right thing for them but because you have done it all together, they know where you are coming from on it and you don't have to say, because you can't go in and say you can't do that".

4.2.4 Dissent over the implementation of Spirit of Place

The General Manager at Belton first mentioned Spirit of Place off the tape at the end of the conversation. "Of course, the ridiculous thing is that we set our own definition of spirit of place" In fact I signed off my own as the team wrote it while I was on secondment, so I signed it off at regional office. I made sure that there was a line in spirit of place about the playground in case I need to spend over my limit (can sign off £150k as general manager) to revamp the playground at a later date". This was the only instance where there was dissent from a manager about Spirit of Place.

At Nostell the volunteers were very unhappy that spirit of place "has no place" for the family (that previously owned the estate). The volunteers see the history of the house and family as inseparable. "They are turning us into a museum" (removal of family photographs) but the volunteers were actively not cooperating with the management, "We still tell people about the family".

The following exchange between the resaercher and the Nostell volunteers gives a good indication of the mood.

> "I: I keep looking behind you because it says Transform Nostell on the board up there, which is what we are talking about isn't it?
>
> S: It is yeah, Spirit of Place and all that
>
> I: Yes
>
> S: Rubbish! Anyway
>
> I: That was my next question, were you involved in that as volunteers?

S: No, and most of my volunteers do not understand what Spirit of Place means

I: That was the next question

B: We aren't to involve the family, they aren't in the spirit of the place, which is stupid

A: I tell them about the family on the tours

B: We all do

I: I have the feeling that you all do

A: We do because it has been a house that has been lived in, it hasn't always been a museum".

As will become clear the management are struggling to get the message across because the volunteers feel that they weren't involved in the process of creating the Spirit of Place statement, see section 4.2.5.

4.2.5. Top-Down Management?

Spirit of Place is seen as useful as a management tool within the National Trust because it is not the national office dictating directly to properties how they should do things, but it is setting a structure in place. However, one could be sceptical about the way in which it had been placed upon properties as a duty.

"I: In your role, when something like spirit of place is developed are people in the regions consulted about that?

J: about the?

I: about actual creation of spirit of place

J: of their own for the properties

I: No, about the actual concept itself

J: (very long pause) I think is came out of conversations with properties about the need to define what is special about a place and how you are making decisions".

It seems that rather than answer the question in this case a rationale for the decision was given.

At Nostell as has already been noted the application of the Spirit of Place was causing tensions between the management and volunteers. “From my point of view, we take a few steps forward and then a few steps back again and quite understandably I find they are not on the same page of understanding about the implications of our spirit of place and how it can be used, they don’t get why we are doing…”. This led the researcher to ask how much involvement the volunteers had had in the development of the Spirit of Place statement. “I suppose it’s not been one of the most democratic projects where there are people on the steering committee from the beginning, that hasn’t happened and that is quite deliberate on my part I think because right from start this project has been incredibly time bound. I haven’t had the luxury to follow that process because that would take much longer”. The consequence of this is incomprehension on the part of the volunteers. “There is a statement, we are doing Transform Nostell and Spirit of place and we all go…would you like to explain because they haven’t got down to the grass roots of the volunteers knowing what it is”. Understandably, perhaps, on a fixed term project the Project Manager was trying to work to a timetable but the feeling of exclusion on the part of the volunteers was causing resentment.

4.3 Spirit of Place deconstruction

4.3.1 Duality search

Volunteers vs paid staff is evident immediately, the regional visitor experience consultant suggested that it would be interesting to know how much volunteers understood about the Spirit of Place strategy. Generally paid staff were well informed, and volunteers didn’t mention it, apart from at Nostell where they were very unhappy about it as discussed in 4.2.4.

There weren’t any other dualities that seemed noteworthy. For example, Gender isn’t an obvious issue that it might be in other organisations, there are a significant number of women in management, including at the top of the National Trust. The Director General is a woman and the gender pay gap is lower than the national average at 13.1% compared to 17.9% nationally (National Trust, 2019). Two of the three General

Managers interviewed were women and two of the three regional consultants were women. Nobody talked about or even mentioned gender issues.

Differences between Regional offices vs national office could come in to play here as can be seen in the next section 5.1.2. The use of Spirit of Place as a strategy is a way of exerting some control over properties by the National office.

4.3.2 Reinterpret the hierarchy

This story contains examples of the hierarchy at Nostell, in terms of management vs volunteers and it seems that the Nostell Spirit of Place statement would be different if the volunteers were making the decision, “They are turning us into a museum”. For the volunteers it is the story of the family that should predominate, “We aren’t to involve the family, they aren’t in the spirit of the place, which is stupid”. The opposite of what managers say.

With the Regional Visitor Experience consultant talking about regional offices vs national office, it was evident with her hesitation about answer to the question about regional input into national policy.

“I: In your role, when something like spirit of place is developed are people in the regions consulted about that?

RVEC: about the?

I: about the actual creation of spirit of place

RVEC: of their own for the properties?

I: No, about the actual concept itself

RVEC: (very long pause) I think it came out of conversations with properties”

Regional Visitor Experience consultant doesn’t answer the question, instead she presents the rationale of the policy, something she is perhaps used to doing at property level as part of her job. The Director of Visitor Experience has the position of power and can be relaxed about not controlling everything from an office in Swindon (as he puts it), though of course he does.

4.3.3 Rebel voices

The General Manager at Belton is a rebel in the sense that he described himself as a cynic. He was the only paid person interviewed who gave “a jaundiced view”. He describes Spirit of Place, informally, as ridiculous because the property writes it their own and then in Belton’s case, he signed it off when on a secondment at the regional office. This was understood to mean that the management process that allowed him on secondment to regional office to sign off his own property’s Spirit of Place was ridiculous.

The volunteers at Nostell are definitely rebels, “we still tell them (visitors) about the family”. The family are no longer the focus of the Spirit of Place at Nostell and the volunteers are ignoring direct instructions about what they should tell visitors.

Clearly in the process of creating visitor experience and the consumption of these experiences the visitors play an important role. Views of visitors are outside the scope of this project. Significantly both the volunteers and the management at Nostell invoke what they see as the visitor’s point of view. They both imply that they know what visitors want from a visit. However, there is little evidence to support either of their positions. The Transform Project Manager has carried out some exit surveys but how many was very unclear, the volunteers talk to visitors during their visits and base their position on this. The Transform Project Manager was asking visitors about what they had learnt during a visit. She was trying to find if key messages were being communicated by the new display. The Transform Project Manager also quotes “We are 82 or 83% ahead on visitor numbers compared to this time last year”.

Both believe that they are doing what is best for the property and the visitor. Generally, managers seem to hear about problems, not that there are many, through the formal feedback procedure, whereas the volunteers hear complaints first hand.

4.3.4 The other side of the story

This seems to fit with the previous section on rebels. What if volunteers ran the process of developing the Spirit of Place statement would this be too slow and difficult as the Transform Project Manager says? “Right from the start this project has been incredibly time bound. I haven’t had the luxury to follow that process because that would take much longer”.

4.3.5 Deny the Plot

Is this a comedy? Rather like an Ealing Comedy, is the General Manager at Belton actually the hero of the story? He makes his way through all the management initiatives and manages one of the Trust's most popular properties with his cynicism intact. Thinking here of films such as Passport to Pimlico, Whiskey Galore and The Maggie where seemingly respectable individuals are seen to subtly play the system, so things work in their favour, but the deceptions are slight and are either not noticed or are overlooked by those with greater power, for example the quote about approving his own property Spirit of Place statement in 4.2.4.

4.3.6 Find the exception

This would have to be trying to fit zombies with Spirit of Place. "I had a place that said, "For Halloween we are going to have zombies" and I thought erm "Can you remind me how that fits to your spirit of place?". The exchange with the Regional Visitor Experience consultant whilst funny/ridiculous does illustrate that some properties, whilst having a Spirit of Place statement in place clearly don't either understand it or use it correctly. Further discussion did conclude that ghosts could, possibly, be a legitimate part of a Spirit of Place.

4.3.7 Trace between the lines

The obvious thing to state here is that people talk about Spirit of Place statements, but the researcher never actually gets to see one. The General Manager and the Transform Project Manager at Nostell talk about theirs in glowing terms but what stops them making it available? The Transform Project Manager even says, "I'll see if I have one in my bag", but she doesn't. It can't be commercial sensitivity since they are unique to each site. Everywhere visited people were happy to share information such as visitor numbers and proportion of visitors who were National Trust members. Including the visitors in the Spirit of Place discussion would mean a more holistic view of what the place means to people. Director of Visitor Experience talks about how properties are used and have meaning in everyday life. "It is the spirit of place, not the accident of history that means it happens to be run by the National Trust, that should be the dominating influence on how the place should be presented". Perhaps including external voices, such as visitors, would help the Spirit of Place process. At Nostell clearly the volunteers in the house are unhappy that they weren't part of the process, "they haven't got down to the grass roots of the volunteers knowing what it is. We are still in a fog" and Transform Project Manager admits that this isn't ideal, "I find they are not on the same page of understanding about the implications of our spirit of place and how it can be used".

4.3.8 Resituate – Restory to script new actions

So, an alternative would be a change to the Spirit of Place procedure, one that is inclusive of users of National Trust properties as well as the custodians of these special places. If places such as Nostell are to increase the use of the house, number of visitors who visit/convert parkland visitors, perhaps they need what the Director of Visitor Experience suggests, to connect with everyday lives and make visits seem to be a vital part of visitor's lives. Opening the process to volunteers and visitors alike would be a way forward to include people who don't currently feel as if they have a voice. At Nostell with the Harrison's clock display the management have asked visitors a question about restoration of the clock, should it be repaired or left in its original condition? This seemed like real involvement of visitors; however, it was made clear when talking to the General Manager and the Transform Project that they would make the decision about the future of the clock irrespective of the public's opinion. Surely engagement with the property comes from people being really involved, not just as window dressing.

4.4 Management within the National Trust

The material in this story comes from a conversation with the Director of Visitor Experience. This is a senior management position within the organisation and gave the opportunity to talk about the National Trust as an organisation and the aims and purpose of the organisation. This meeting took place in the National Trust's central London offices since the Director was working there on a project.

4.4.1 The role of senior management within the National Trust

As the National Trust's Director of Visitor Experience "we are there to provide guidance and resources and to provide strategic leadership for the direction of the type of experiences that we provide for our visitors. So, it not a delivery role it's very much a strategy and guidance role. I'm not sitting behind a desk with lever, nor do I want our experience to be the same everywhere. It is the spirit of the place not the accident of history that means it happens to be run by the National Trust that should be the dominating influence on how a place is presented". Hence the introduction of Spirit of Place

4.4.2 National Trust changes and success

Over the past decade the National Trust has grown as a member organisation significantly. "So, we will hit probably 23 million this year (overall visitors). In 2008 it was about 13 million. So, we have racked up and if you look at the increase in membership. By the time we get to 5 million members, the last 1 million members will have been achieved at a much faster rate, so the growth has been dramatic and I suppose partly as a result of that the general managers are now because of our new strategy we are now moving on from pure focus on getting visitors in and keeping visitors happy to much more focus on the experience, the visitor experience as part of, if you like, our cause".

4.4.3 Communicating with visitors

Talk extensively focusses on ways to communicate with visitors, the National Trust's printed membership handbook and online guides and marketing but "The number one method, I still feel, even after all these years I still feel that the single best method of interpreting or explaining anything or engaging anybody in anything is one human being talking to another human being and everything else is really just a substitute for that. For those moments where economies of scale mean you can't physically interact with everybody; so, the more we can, the more we can maintain physical human to human contact as part of our experience. I am anxious for us not to lose that because it feels important".

4.4.4 Access and relevance to everyday lives

Discussion followed about why people visit National Trust properties and the growing number of members. "This is my personal opinion rather than National Trust policy, but my personal opinion is that at hardly any of our properties, hardly any of our properties or certainly none of our really successful properties they don't exist as monuments to the past. People do not go to them to find out what the past, to see a monument to the dead past. Like a castle, wow cor, just think this castle, the battles they have had here, it must have been cold living in that tower, it's really interesting! All of our successful properties are successful because they are part of people's lives today". Being part of people's lives today includes being a dog walking location and a park run location, not just a heritage property or landscape to be preserved".

4.4.5 Whose stories are told?

A concern the researcher, and the research question was about how experience is managed and whose stories are told by the National Trust. There is an acknowledgement by the National Trust that the property portfolio, for historical reasons has concentrated on English Country Houses and therefore the stories the Trust tells have tended not to represent wider society. "There was a period from late nineties onwards where we thought that we could address that by acquisition, so that's when places like the back to backs in Birmingham, the Workhouse, the Beatle Houses in Liverpool, all of these new types of properties started to come in. I think we recognised, after a while we recognised, actually we aren't going to crack this. We physically can't acquire enough stuff to get that balance".

So, if it wasn't possible to address the balance through acquisition another direction was needed.

"So, one of the properties I am working with quite closely at the moment is Penrhyn Castle in North Wales. Which is a story which is only in the last couple years that we have started to face into this. It was created by; it was built off the back of West Indian slavery in the 1820's and you can still see pictures of the sugar plantations on the walls on the landing of the first floor and then it was largely furnished, the families' subsequent wealth came from slate mining. From 1900 to 1903 it was the focus of the great lockout, which is one of the bitterest industrial disputes in British labour relations history and an industrial dispute that left such a legacy of hatred and bitterness that even today 115 years later there are people in Bethesda particularly, where the slate mining community was, who have vowed never ever to set foot in the place. The hatred that local people feel towards Penrhyn Castle because of what Lord Penrhyn did. He basically spent 3 years starving them out effectively and crushed them in the end. But we have never engaged with that story and yet the story of that industrial dispute is as much about the history of Penrhyn Castle as…

I: and for the local community is the most important?

Absolutely by far and away and so it is only in the last few years that we have started to face into that. So, we are looking now at how we are going to transform the interpretation of the place that but at least the property has made a start, by working with contemporary artists and local people to addressing through programming and temporary interventions starting facing into this. I wouldn't pretend that we are there yet, but these are the kind of "where did the money come from?" is actually quite an important question". The final sentence, with "Where did the money come from" feels to me to be a key question to be asked at many Trust properties. It seems to be something that is only just starting to be addressed".

4.4.6 Feedback and how it influences strategy?

By the time of this conversation the researcher was familiar with the National Trust collecting data about its visitors but wanted to know what it did with this information and if it influenced the development of strategy, "How much does it influence the strategy is an interesting question. We have always tried to base what we do on insight. Most of our insight in the past, or so so er, we have had two main streams of insight, the kind of regular continuous monitoring that we do, which is, in the past has been a visitor survey, member survey and what we call brown tracker which is a whole population sample that tests overall whole population sample. In terms of how visitors are responding to a visit, our visitor survey which is, we get about 200,000 responses a year which is a fairly robust sample. That means at property level the samples are robust as well, a property can get 1,000/2,000 responses which is enough to make sensible conclusions even you are splitting it down into different target groups you can get reasonably sound answers. Increasingly we are feeling and that's actually been brilliant as a way of shaping our activity as a visitor attraction operator, so if what you want to know is how is visitor satisfaction going, how people are responding to the catering, are people having a great day out, how's our service doing, where are people coming from, how often are they visiting, all of that stuff is really well served by that intensive, regular high volume quant work and that has been great. But with this new agenda, how do we give people deeper engagement, actually we are bumping up against the limitations of what you can achieve with that kind of insight because actually you can't get under the skin of how people are responding emotionally to…". Unfortunately, this doesn't directly answer the question, but it does acknowledge that whilst the Trust has some robust quantitative data, they don't really know how visitors feel.

4.5 Management within the National Trust Deconstruction

4.5.1 Duality

There are many dualities in this story.

Access vs Preservation, this is discussed in greater detail with the Regional Curator in section 4.4, but as this is a significant question about the role of the National Trust it would be expected that it would be part of this conversation.

Monuments to the past vs part of visitor's cultural life, this is the discussion about the present and future role of the National Trust and how it makes itself part of everyday life. This could also be expressed as, old property vs leisure activity (modern use of NT property for walks and cycle trails)

Professional approach vs previous "caretaker roles" for property managers, looking after properties for posterity but not necessarily engaging with visitors

Personal recommendations vs marketing, the power of personal recommendation is seen as being more powerful than any marketing campaign.

Lord Penrhyn vs strikers (and the local community)

"There are people in Bethesdsa particularly, where the slate mining community was, who have vowed never ever to set foot in the place. The hatred the local people feel towards Penrhyn Castle because of what Lord Penrhyn did. But we have never engaged with that story and yet the story of that industrial dispute in as much about the history of Penrhyn Castle as …".

4.5.2 Reinterpret the hierarchy

"I'm not sat in some office in Swindon pulling levers" The Director of Visitor Experience says he is not telling General Managers at properties what to do, but he is in terms of laying out strategy. He says he is looking at good examples, best practice, and pointing them out to people but from the experience with other members of National Trust staff his name is enough to change the tone of a conversation. People took the research much more seriously if they knew the Director of Visitor Experience had been interviewed. In his role and the way that he carries it out he is highly influential, and he knows this. He was asked about how visitor feedback affected strategy quote. There wasn't really an answer "that's a good question". He said that the samples of feedback were robust (methodically), but not what influence they had.

4.5.3 Rebel voices

Two sets of previously unheard voices were mentioned in this conversation. The Director of Visitor Experience did seem to view it as important that the National Trust addressed untold stories even if some people found them uncomfortable. The project that his team were undertaking at the time, in London, was discussed, as part of the LBGTQ events that the National Trust were highlighting that year (2017). Also, in the example of Penrhyn Castle the National Trust was finally addressing the concerns of local people about the story of the strike, a century earlier. He was keen to emphasise that they weren't saying Lord Penrhyn bad and strikers good or vice versa but they were acknowledging the different voices and stories that could be told here. Previously this had not been done. "So, we are looking now at how we are going to transform the interpretation of the place but at least the property has made a start, by working with contemporary artists and local people to addressing through programming and temporary interventions starting facing into this. I wouldn't pretend that we are there yet, but these are the kind of "where did the money come from?" is actually quite an important question".

4.5.4 The other side of the story

The Director of Visitor Experience recognises that stories or tours of the servant's quarters of a country house don't redress the balance in telling stories relating to 'ordinary people'. He also says that the National Trust strategy of buying such properties as the Back to Backs in Birmingham and the Workhouse have shown that the Trust can't buy its way out of this situation, another approach is needed. The example he gives is the Penrhyn Castle story that has already been mentioned but this time he also includes the need to address where the wealth came from, the slave trade. This is also the case for many of the National Trust's properties and is not something that has been, but in his view, must be addressed. "So, what can we draw from this place to contribute to the cultural life rather than come and see what it was like in the 18th century. It's much more than that. Wherever we are successful it is much more than that".

"There was a period from the late nineties onwards where we thought that we could address that by acquisition, so that's when places like the Back to Backs in Birmingham, the Workhouse, the Beatle houses in Liverpool, all of these new types of properties started to come in.

4.5.5 Deny the plot

The Director of Visitor Experience is the most pivotal person in this study, due to his position in the organisation, this links with 5.2.8 Resituate the story. The question is the National Trust heading in the right direction in terms of visitor experience rest very much with him. He is very keen to experiment, the LBGTQ events in London are experiences without necessarily using the National Trust's physical properties, this offers a challenge to the way in which the Trust usually works and who it is for, and whose stories are told.

4.5.6 Find the exception

Is running and cycling engagement with National Trust properties, how is this different from parks? Dog walking seems to be the real growth area, is this really the purpose of the National Trust? Is this more a reflection of an age of austerity, over the past decade, and lack of affordable leisure activities?

4.5.7 Trace what is between the lines

What is not said is what success looks like for the National Trust. They have a business model that is working, increased visits, increased income but presumably this puts more pressure on conservation, landscapes, and properties. We don't know, because it isn't discussed, why the expansion is the right way for the National Trust to be going.

The Regional Visitor Experience consultant talks about managing busy times, "In November you can just rock up, that's fine we are not busy but on Easter Sunday… It's amazing how many older members will turn up on a bank holiday and be surprised that you are busy". "Most places are open so actually you could come on a Wednesday morning or whatever, you don't have to come at a weekend".

The General Manager at Belton talks about queues. "On busy days, Easter, Bank Holidays, we have got this unfortunate tendency to clog up the local roads because we can't get people in quickly enough. It backs up down the main road and it is not unusual to have a two-mile queue".

Popularity can mean that it is difficult to experience exhibitions because they are so popular, for example The Guardian reported in 2011 about gallery rage at Tate Modern at a Gauguin exhibition because it was too crowded, and people couldn't see the paintings.

4.5.8 Resituate – Restory to script new actions

What if the purpose of the National Trust changed and success was measured by quality of experience? Could there be a business model for the charity which looked at widening access without necessarily increasing overall numbers? Is cycling and running etc. real engagement with National Trust properties? What about developing a quality experience that doesn't involve large numbers and protects the property such as Mr Straw's House. Is this a sustainable model for the charity?

4.6 Curatorial practice within the National Trust

This story is based on a conversation with the East Midlands Regional Curator and took place at Kedleston Hall, whilst it was closed to the public. The Regional Curator chose the location even though he had to drive a considerable distance to meet there. It was a somewhat clandestine meeting, as if he wanted to share thoughts away from any of his colleagues. Of all the people spoken to the regional curator gave the most complete answers to any matter he was asked about, wasn't agreement on everything, particularly notions of social history and whose stories were being told.

4.6.1 What is his role and what does he do for the Trust?

"My job is to advise on and be a source of information and help for property colleagues on presentation, interpretation and sort of ethics of presentation and interpretation as well as the actual nuts and bolts of it. Be a sort of again a go to person for an understanding of the spirit of the place for making sure that whatever we do in the property is aligned on what is most important, what is most significant about that property".

4.6.2 Working with others

How does the role of a regional curator fit with the General Managers who are in control of their properties and what happens if they don't want his advice?

"We are advisory, we are very largely reactive, and we give our best advice when it is asked for. Obviously, it's not that cut and dried because we are at the properties quite often. We know the properties well, in my case certainly because I have been around far too long. I operated in a former system where I made the decisions about what happened and what the direction was, so I know still quite a lot about how things operated and so can ask pertinent questions. One can try to influence and sway things even if one isn't invited to be involved. Just simply because personnel have changed over the years and people don't know what they don't know".

4.6.3 Skills, Knowledge and Education

Considerable time was spent talking about the importance of historical accuracy and the way in which General Managers in charge of properties are employed because of their management skills rather than specific historical knowledge. The researcher wondered how this worked when they came to carry out major changes to the way in which a property is presented

"The important thing is that they are founded in good research. You will get one off things, in the press recently they got very upset that one of our houses in the southwest decided that they we going to celebrate Halloween by having Dracula in a coffin on the kitchen table, which has not got much to do with the history of that place and was rightly lambasted for that reason, we all make mistakes of course we do".

Lack of historical knowledge in visitors was also discussed, and how this can be accommodated. "There is a truth in the fact that whole generations who haven't learnt history at school obviously relate more to 2 or 3 generations back than they do to 5,6,7 generations back and that is something that the Trust is on board with and is trying to meet".

Finally, there was the question of authenticity, something interesting from the early stages of carrying out the Literature Review.

> “I: In your first answer, you partly addressed this about the thing about authenticity of what people actually see in the place being obviously something that the National Trust is trusted with, the meaning of the word isn’t it
>
> AB: Yes
>
> I: but is trusted to tell the story in a way that’s not false, not fancified in some way to make it an exciting story
>
> AB: Yes, within that rather difficult corset of trying to remain authentic, it’s a very difficult word
>
> I: It is
>
> AB: but trying to remain honest and truthful and not interpolate”.

4.6.4 Changes to the way that properties are presented

The curator understood more closely than anyone else what the research was trying to find out.

“I think the big change is the trust, it goes to the core of what your study is, the trust is moving away from the idea of a fixed presentation, which may be one period or several periods but is fixed and is static to a presentation that responds more to various themes which may be adopted and those themes are generally prompted by anniversaries of some sort, be they just within the property or national or international and so hence a centenary is an important anniversary so you will get an awful lot of early 20th century representation. The other thing is, slightly unfair but true, anything from the early 20th century onwards is much easier to do because we have got the stuff and very often the people who can tell us about it and so that make a changing dynamic interpretation an easier thing to do than one from the early 18th century”.

4.6.5 Social History, whose story is the National Trust telling?

We could agree on this statement made by the curator during our conversation, "The organisation must, it has to always reflect the society it lives in. If it stops doing that then it just ceases to exist, it won't have any support. So, that is crucial, but it is how the organisation interprets society". However, we had considerable disagreement about representation of 'ordinary' people in the way in which the National Trust presents properties. It could be argued that the Trust doesn't tell the story of working-class lives in anything like the depth that it covers the aristocracy. The curator insisted that the use of country houses as a means of representing a complete society was valid. Researcher and Interviewee agreed to differ.

"It's telling a bigger story, it's something I was involved in working on Calke when we first took it on, and it is a policy of presentation that we arrived at, not all at once and not immediately. We recognised it was an amazing story, an extraordinary story and the Harpur Crewe's were an extraordinary family and that goes back through several generations, great fun, but actually that was enough to float the place on. And the place is full of extraordinary things but some fantastic stuff that rivals any great collection but also there is all the junk that was never thrown away and that sort of stuff. So it's a good story straight away but actually I think the more fundamental, again going back to Kedleston and how that as it is helps people to understand history in the 18th century, so Calke really helps and can be made to, I don't think we have quite got it yet and we are working on it still, how it stands for the 100's and 100's and 100's of country houses that disappeared between the two wars and indeed through the 60's and 70's, were demolished, there was a big V and A exhibition in the 70's.

That's one of the great problems and I see as my job as a history graduate, many many years ago! Having a little bit of social history and certainly knows something about the history country houses is helping colleagues who don't have that background in history at all to look at the history of their places, well to take off their 21st century heads and try to look at it through the period that we are showing it in. Try to see this in an 18th century context not a 21st century context. It is so easy to say nasty toffs who built this place, poor down beaten servants who worked for them, because looking from a 21st century viewpoint that's what it is. Ridiculously obese wealth and grinding poverty and working bloody long hours, actually as the set up was then those people were considerably better off than those out in the fields who relied on a very uncertain income coming out of the soil and being chucked off the farm when the harvest was over for instance because there was no work for them and living under hedgerows. But that is something that requires an understanding of society and the changes and that is something that is possibly more than the National Trust can hope to impart to people who are just coming for a nice afternoon out".

4.6.6 Preservation vs Access

The National Trust is about saving heritage for everyone, for ever. This implies that as well as preservation the Trust is interested in access and given the increasing numbers of members and visitors this clearly put a strain on these two, perhaps, conflicting ambitions.

"At my interview in 1984 when I first started working for the National Trust, I was asked a seminal question and it's a very good one, which the National Trust is about preservation, sorry preserving and giving access to places of natural beauty and historic interest. Which do you think is most important? Preservation or access? The answer and I still think the correct answer is unless you preserve you cannot give access.

I think what the Trust is wrestling with at the moment, that was 1984 and that was the very tail on of the wave of superiority of conservation, really pinning everything back and saying you won't touch because this far too important, you can look but you are not going to touch it and what we are in at the moment, not exactly a backlash but a return wave, which is saying for people to really appreciate, understand, accept and then support what we are doing they have to be given more than just access they got to actually have a relationship with a place, an object, and that relationship can go through various levels that can be reflected in support of the organisation as well, paying to come and visit, becoming a member, perhaps becoming a volunteer, all of those things. So, hence the change in emphasis".

4.7 Curatorial practice within the National Trust deconstruction

4.7.1 Duality search

This is about access vs preservation. One of the most difficult tasks for the National Trust is to get this right. As Regional Curator describes it, he feels that in the 1980's preservation was paramount "that was the very tail end of the wave of superiority of conservation, really pinning everting back and saying you won't touch because this is far too important" and there has been a wave of access and changing priorities and during this period membership and visits have significantly increased.

4.7.2 Reinterpret the hierarchy

The Regional Curator talked about a time 10 years ago when he made the decisions about how a property would look to the visitor. Without saying so he certainly gave the impression that he was better suited, through his education to make these decisions. In his own words, "We are advisory, we are very largely reactive, and we give our best advice when it is asked for. Obviously, it is not that cut and dried because we are at the properties quite often. We know the properties well, in my case certainty because I have been around for far too long, I operated in a former system where I made the decisions about what happened and what the direction was, so I know still quite a lot about how things operated and so can ask pertinent questions. One can try to influence and sway things even if one isn't invited to be involved. Just simply because personnel have changed over the years and people don't know what they don't know". Or he is saying that he is better trained, educated and more experienced than many of his colleagues.

The people pushing increased access, and so increased visitor numbers, are General Managers, who have the guidance of specialists such as the Regional Curator to help them. The power is currently with the General Managers not with the curators, it would seem that curators such as the Regional Curator would approach presentation to visitors differently, with more emphasis on authenticity rather than entertainment and accessibility. "If people stop looking at them for a while that doesn't reduce the fact that they are beautiful and that to us, western civilisation, they are of great value".

4.7.3 Rebel voices

What the Regional Curator describes makes him, currently, a rebel voice. His insistence on historical accuracy and authenticity is out of step with the desire of the National Trust strategy to increase access. One of the most successful things that the National Trust has done recently is the centenary of World War 1, as Director of Visitor Experience describes the reconstruction of the war time hospital at Dunham Massey it was “a hit”. But as the Regional Curator says, “anything from the early 20th century onwards is much easier to do because we have got the stuff and very often the people who can tell us about it and so that makes a changing, dynamic interpretation an easier thing to do than one from the early 18th century”. The Regional Curator’s position contrasts with the dominant idea in the National Trust of looking at how to make connections, for visitors, with contemporary issues. The Regional Curator’s view also contrasts with Regional Visitor Experience consultant who mentions the hope that after training volunteers will point out that some of the stories that they tell, to visitors, are not historically accurate.

4.7.4 The other side of the story

There seems to be very much a concentration in the telling of stories in the National Trust with powerful historical figures. The National Trust is struggling to represent life for ‘ordinary’ people. As Director of Visitor Experience says in section 4.4.5, he doesn’t think the acquisition strategy, of properties such as the Back to Backs in Birmingham, the Workhouse and the Beatle’s houses has solved the issue of who is represented. In the conversation with the Regional Curator, we were debating how a house such as Kedleston or Calke is shown to the visitor, but we are always presenting a picture of privilege. Even the decaying Calke is about the declining fortunes of an ‘important’ family. The National Trust is still some way from showing the lives of people who weren’t from ‘important’ families.

4.7.5 Deny the plot

Through the conversation with Regional Curator, it seemed that he was positioning himself within his story as a reluctant hero. He was part of the old vanguard, educated in history and able to provide accurate information about the time and place of properties, who was now out of fashion within the National Trust. It would be easy to plot a film of his journey through his working life with the National Trust, from a young man “I was easily shocked in those days” to an old rebel who still sees his way of doing things as proper and correct even if it is unfashionable.

4.7.6 Find the exception

The description of Packwood as property is an exception, it was not somewhere previously known to the researcher before meeting the Regional Curator, it does leave one wondering why the National Trust have taken it on. It sounds like a rich man’s vanity project. It was left to the National Trust with strict instruction, such as “fresh flowers”. What is this telling us about? Not the person himself “he removed personal effects” What does it represent? A joke was shared with the Regional Curator about leaving the researcher’s own house to the National Trust. Thinking about it now, what if it isn’t a joke, if Packwood is important to be cared for by the National Trust why not our houses? This comes to the heart of what the National Trust is about.

4.7.7 Trace between the Lines

The Regional Curator, in common with several people interviewed, treated the researcher like a co-conspirator, “the important thing is that they are founded in good research”.

Surely, the researcher would recognise some of the sillier ideas of his colleagues, such as the Dracula story. He was confident that being a serious academic the researcher would understand that access vs preservation was something that swung between one and the other according to fashion. We weren’t left in any doubt that he believed that the value of conservation and curatorship (preservation) was paramount, and he thought that the researcher would agree. “Which do you think is most important? Preservation or access? The answer and I still think it is the correct answer is unless you preserve you cannot give access”.

4.7.8 Resituate – Restory to script new actions.

Much of the conversation with Regional Curator was about who is represented and whose story is told at Kedleston, where the meeting took place. He was very sure that telling the story of the Curzon Family at Kedleston was social history since the family had such an influence over the local area. The researcher thought that social history was about all the people who lived in the area. The researcher and interviewee agreed to differ. “Again going back to Kedleston and how it helps people to understand history in the 18th century, so Calke really helps and can be made to. I don’t think we have quite got it yet and we are working on it still, how it stands for the 100’ and 100’s and 100’s of country houses that disappeared between the two wars”.

Something that the researcher became aware of when thinking about National Trust properties during the research was where the money came from to build the properties. A few times during visits there were mentions of the slave trade or colonialism, but this was not a widely discussed point. The researcher began to wonder what the stories told by National Trust properties would be like if they considered the untold stories and followed where the money came from.

“Reassessing British history is not about race, it’s about integrity. It’s not about separating out who to celebrate for the good, and who to blame for the bad. It’s about the fact that the past is linked to the present in a smooth continuity, from slavery, colonialism, and the pillaging of resources to immigration… Seeing things differently would affect reality for everyone… It is our history, as British people. If we were able to see a different version of it – not carefully curated, highly selective, politically convenient one, but an honest one, in all its nuances – it might give us all a chance to carve our individual and collective relationship with Britain in a more realistic way.” (Hirsch, 2018, p.86)

4.8 How the National Trust engages visitors

This story is based on an interview with the East Midlands Regional Visitor Experience consultant and took place at the National Trust regional office in Alcester, Warwickshire, where the Consultant is based. Whilst the one person the Regional Visitor Experience consultant is the person most present in this conversation, by this time the Regional Manager, the Regional Curator, the Director of Visitor Experience and two General Managers had already been interviewed so the researcher was in a much more informed position when this interview started.

4.8.1 What is the role?

"I am a Visitor Experience Consultant. It is quite a broad role, it covers interpretation, storytelling, can cover contemporary art but it also covers things like service, customer service, what we call the basics, so, presentation, things looking good, putting your posters in the right place. Spirit of place, have you come across Spirit of Place? Then working with the curators to work out how you actually apply that to different areas of the property. It could cover training for volunteers, either tour guides or room guides. Erm, I am sure there are other… Thinking about the whole visitor journey, thinking about how they move around the site, what order they visit things in. Anything visitors come into contact with really".

4.8.2 Visitors and the changing nature of visits

With the background of the growing numbers of members and visitors how properties can manage visitors and their expectations was discussed. Issues such as the growth of dog walking at National Trust properties and the long-term members who are having to adapt to the growing popularity of properties was also discussed.

"In November, you can rock up, that's fine we are not busy but on Easter Sunday… It is amazing how many older members will turn up on a bank holiday and be surprised that you are busy. You just think "It's a bank holiday!" "Oh, I didn't realise" "Really, it is Easter Sunday!". So, we are trying to put the message out, you can choose, and if you don't particularly want to do the Easter egg trail you don't need to come over those 4 days, you will have a much better time if you come on another day. Most of the places in the midlands are open most of the time now so it is not like 5 years ago where they had these random opening hours. Most places are open so actually you could come on a Wednesday morning or whatever, you don't have to come at a weekend. We have gone down a Quantity model and now it is thinking about the Quality model instead, I think".

Something that was raised during this conversation as well as with the Director of Visitor Experience was the notion of the cause, the Trust's charitable status and how members could help with this.

“We have got a big push at the moment on cause. We know a lot of our members buy membership because of value for money, five visits and you have got your membership back, but it is trying to get people to see their membership as a donation to a charity. So, yes, the benefit is you get free entry but actually what your money does is help look after these places so then it is about getting them to think about how they can help us do that. So, that might be visiting at different times, that might be spending money on a cup of tea or something when they get there. It might be about buying membership even though they only visit once a year, but it is a donation to a charity that you believe in. It is trying to shift that model from visitor attraction to a charitable cause”.

4.8.3 Programming

The concept of programming was, again, something that was discussed with the Director of Visitor Experience which also came up in this conversation.

“In the past year we have been rolling out visitor programme training. This is trying to get properties to move away from big one off events like a concert or a theatre and actually think about what their visitor programme over the whole year is, so if they were doing Bess of Hardwick for a year then what actually happens in April, how is that different to what happens in June so that there is a base layer of story and interpretation so if I come in April I have got a reason to come back in June and trying to get properties to think about when they want people to come back. So if they are absolutely crammed in August, don’t put any visitor programming on because it is the summer holidays, people are going to come, you want some things for families but you don’t want to put loads of activities on whereas maybe June when you are quieter, the kids are back at school, you want something to entice the independent adults back out to your property, so that has been a big piece of work last year and this year and it is a bit of a change in the way that properties think about it and also what is new for properties, that we want them to do, is to plan further ahead. So, they will be planning now, obviously for Easter, they will have been doing, then they might plan for the May bank holiday and then they might plan for the summer holidays, and we want them in July this year to plan 2018. (Conversation was in April 2017)”.

“We have started calling it visitor programming. It seems to make sense to properties; it is your visitor programme. So, it is whatever you put on for visitors, so it can be your daily welcome talks, it can the gardener giving a 10-minute demonstration of pruning, it can be a conservation volunteer winding the clocks or it can be a yearlong programme of contemporary art or something like that. There is that core level and then there might be your themed programme for whatever story you are telling, and you can still have your theatre or whatever, but it fits in that”.

“We are trying to get properties to think about why they are doing these things as well. So, is it about making money or is it about more visitors or is it about getting more visitors to come at different times of the year? Why are you actually doing it? And quite often they are not actually clear, why will say it is about making money but then if you sat down with them and went through it and took into account staff costs you find they have lost £400. How is this making money?”.

4.8.4 Making things accessible

How did the work of the visitor experience consultant vary from the work of the curator and the property staff?

“Our specialist knowledge comes more from the visitor perspective, so it just making sure it works you have to find that balance, we have to have the access, that is what we want, that is why we are here, but I think it is about finding the right access”.

4.8.5 Accuracy

Something that was noticed when visiting properties was that the volunteers tell stories to visitors, and this raised the question if the management knew what was being said and if it was historically accurate.

“One of main ways of training new room guides is that they get buddied up with an existing room guide so obviously, they hear what they are saying so we have to periodically go around and check in. We did it at Baddesley. A question and answer with the curator, so the volunteers could submit all their, is this true, I heard this and then we did a panel and the curator was there going yes, no, this is probably what we should be saying and some of the stories are brilliant and we say, well we don’t know, it could have happened, we don't know if it is true or not, but it is a good story, that is fine, but it is just that periodic re-training or ongoing training, checking in with knowledge. So, it is about building up their knowledge, that is the key thing and making sure they are confident with what we want them to talk about. One of the biggest challenges is trying to get volunteers to not tell everything they know to the visitor, trying to get them to think, what is the really key thing in this room and also trying to get them to ask questions of the visitor, to find out what the visitor is interested in rather than just off loading everything they know".

4.9 How the National Trust engages visitors, deconstruction

4.9.1 Duality search

Several dualities were apparent in this story. Firstly, the differences between a Curator/visitor experience consultant. Given that they had equal status in the management hierarchy, and General Managers have the choice of engaging with the regional consultants it was difficult to decide who might have greater influence upon the visitor experience, probably this comes down to individual consultants and their personal approach and ability to work with both managers and volunteers.

Dog walkers/ non-dog people was a second duality, they have differing requirements for a visit. This is further discussed in section 5.4.6. The third duality is between traditional National Trust members and new members. These two groups have different reasons for visiting and different expectations of what the experience might be like.

4.9.2 Reinterpret the hierarchy

Following a National Trust strategy such as Spirit of Place the hierarchy would be National Office, Regional Office, Regional Consultants, General Managers, staff and then Volunteers. However, it was found that the Regional Consultants do Q and A sessions with volunteers. Volunteers have the direct contact with visitors and then are coached by Regional Consultants thereby missing out several steps in the hierarchy. General Mangers appear to be aware of the process but don't seem to have considered the implications of this different hierarchy, in that they don't always know what the volunteers are telling visitors and they (the General Managers) haven't always played a part in ensuring this is the message that is to be conveyed about a property.

4.9.3 Rebel voices

This is the volunteers who tell stories of dubious accuracy.

Visitor Experience and Curators run training sessions to find out about these and try to correct for accuracy or to reflect to the visitors that these might not be true.

"A question and answer with the curator, so the volunteers could submit their, is this true? I heard this and then we did a panel, and the curator was there going yes, no, this is probably what we should be saying".

4.9.4 The other side of the story

National Trust and how it manages dog walking. Visits to National Trust properties appear to be linked with dog walking. This was something that came up when lots of properties were discussed. Dog walkers used to be the nuisance, now they are accommodated, special walks are designated and if you don't like it "don't go in the parts where the dogs are! I suppose, or you know what you are getting into!"

It is almost like a takeover of certain properties by dog walkers and the non-dog people must fit in. This perhaps reflects how certain properties have built up large local followings and are working on developing the reasons why these people should return. The Regional Visitor Experience consultant mentions that Attingham is having a consultation on dog walking and access. At the start of this project, it was expected to be talking about routes around houses and how space is used to tell a story in conjunction with the placement of artefacts. The National Trust has moved on and is concerned with developing large numbers of supporters of the charitable cause and therefore developing experiences that are important to them and which they value. Maybe the marginal was in control and the majority have taken over? The marginal being the non-dog walkers, perhaps people who were interested in the property and collections. The majority now are the dog walkers, walkers and runners who want to use the outdoor "offer". She describes the traditional visitors as being the ones who are surprised when a property is busy on a bank holiday. These people are being asked to change their habits, visit at quieter times such as mid-week. Is the National Trust in danger of alienating the original core visitors? It is vital that these visitors understand how changing their visiting habits and the experience on offer is part of supporting the cause.

4.9.5 Deny the plot

This has something to do with changing the minds of the visitors. The plot presented by the National Trust strategy is progress, more popular, more happy visitors but is this at the expense of traditional visitors? More damage and stress upon properties, this works against preservation. Telling people that they should visit on a Wednesday morning instead, is this what members want?

4.9.6 Find the exception

Dogs are in charge! Discuss! This might sound flippant, but it isn't meant to. One of the most surprising things in the research was finding out how important dogs were and the need to accommodate dog walking as part of the National Trust experience. The researcher not being a dog owner failed to anticipate how import facilities catering for dogs and owners were. This can at times cause conflict with other target markets, particularly families with young children. The National Trust seems to be putting in considerable effort to create visitor offers at properties that cater for both.

The increase in visitor numbers means an increase in income for conservation but does this in turn lead to greater conservation costs because of the greater number of visitors? Is there a sweet spot with an optimum number of visitors in terms of income and preservation of places?

4.9.7 Trace what is between the lines

The Regional Visitor Experience consultant expects that there is common ground between the researcher and her in terms of professional experience and it is noticeable in the transcript that she often completes the researcher's sentences. "I: You are bringing somebody with a professional practice in, that is different than the usual skills that you have aren't you", RVEC: "and hopefully it does bring in a new audience as well".

4.9.8 Resituate – Restory to script new actions

A possible idea for Nostell based on discussion of what is important for visitors. Why not keep the house closed except a few days each year, opening then becomes a special event? The current low attendance could be exceeded with a few special days, this would solve some of the conservation issues, it also solves the dwindling elderly volunteer problem, less volunteers needed. Instead as a business plan, concentrate on the outdoor offer, walking, cycling and dog walking and the catering offer, also the wedding business that they are trying to get up and running, could this take advantage of the fact that the house is closed much of the time, are there income generating possibilities? Could the house be used as a conference venue? If access to the house is an issue it could be open just at weekends or one day a week to balance the needs of different visitors.

4.10 Visitor experience at Belton

4.10.1 Introduction

This story is an amalgamation of interviews with staff and volunteers at Belton during three visits to the property. Interviews with the General Manager and the Operations Manager took place in their offices. Interviews with volunteers took place in public areas around the site, such as the café.

4.10.2 Why do people visit?

This is a selection of reasons from a number of people. The General Manager says "the important thing about the house in conservation terms is that the house and collection go together, the collection is indigenous, it belongs to the house so everything you see there is in context. So, the quality of the collection is up there. So, that's the headline reason for coming".

A member of the staff who works on reception, "You had just asked me why people come to visit Belton. I think we have so many families coming for the playground. That is actually part of the history of Belton it is not a National Trust idea to attract visitors it is something that the owner of the house wanted".

A volunteer says "I would explain, I would say, you know, it is a beautiful parkland, the house, you know I would just go through what is here. The house is really interesting, there is lots to learn about history, the parkland, everything you know. I would thoroughly recommend it to anybody".

Another volunteer says, "It is quite a privilege to be able to share Belton House and all the lovely things here".

The operations manager gave the most comprehensive set of reasons, "I think people visit Belton because it offers a whole range of things. If you are interested in the house and its paintings and its contents, its grade 1 listing that's for you. If you are a harassed mum and dad and you want your children to go and enjoy themselves in the park, that is for you as well. Also, there is the play area and we offer restaurants, so it is a multi-layered offer. It is not just one thing for any one person so you could actually come as an entire family and mum and dad could go off with the children and granny and grandad could go off and do other things, enjoy the garden, enjoy the walks, enjoy the history and the culture of the house, so it's… it offers quite a lot".

4.10.3 Popularity

Belton is one the National Trust's most popular properties and according to the General Manager "people want to join the Trust to use this facility and out of 450,000 visits about 250,000 are to the adventure playground. So, that's a major driver for Belton and that probably makes it quite different from a lot of other properties and having got those repeat visits that then drives catering income, not so much retail and not so much house, in fact there is almost clear blue water between the people who come to use the playground facilities and those that come to visit the house. My problem is I can't really cope with many more visitors than I have got at the moment".

Maybe a quality problem to have, too many visitors but there is a specific reason as he explained. "Yeah, but I am close to capacity here, as you saw when you arrived we have only got a single width entry gate, there are two of them the main gate is single width and then the entry into the park is single width so if you imagine two lines of traffic going against each other, a lot of effort has to go into managing that and on busy days, Easter, Bank Holidays, we have got this unfortunate tendency to clog up the local roads because we can't get people in quickly enough. It backs up down the main road and it is not unusual to have a two-mile queue. So, we have got issues really in terms of our capacity so no I try to not do too much marketing".

4.10.4 Management and Staff

This research was interested in the management of the property and how much independence the General Manager had. In the current system General Managers must followed strategy and policy from the head office but are able to run their property as a separate business unit. It wasn't always this way. "When I arrived, I used to say there were 2 managers and I was neither of them. There was an area manager in charge of everything and a curator, who made all the decisions". I, "About what was on display?" "About everything down to the colour of the signposts"

With the current arrangement the General Manager described himself "as a conductor, I don't play the instruments".

The Operations Manager saw the way that they all worked in relation to visitors, "It is being publicly accountable to your shareholders and your shareholders are your visitors if you see what I mean". I, "and they are stood right in front of you whilst you are doing it", "Quite, but actually that is nice too. As I say you if have got the courtyard dug up or a bit of the roof open or something people want to know. They want to have a look. They want to see what you are doing. Why are you doing it? How long will it take?"

The Operations Manager was also keen to talk up the efforts of the whole team.

"It is a team effort; you know that when there is a large event on. The team is there pulling together. It is a beautiful thing actually, the team, everybody is there working together. It gives you a very confident feeling for example you have got 1500 people on your lawn watching an evening film or something and you can look at your team and they are looking after these people. Getting them in safely, they will get them out safely, they will feed them while they are here, they will look after them and that's full time, part time, volunteers, you name it get involved. It's a very nice feeling, very confident".

4.10.5 Staff and volunteers

It seemed that of the three properties visited and studied in depth that Belton seemed the most unified with staff and volunteers having a good working relationship. There was one comment from a volunteer who said that they were ex-military. "Like the

Operations Manager and the General Manager?". Reply "yes but I wasn't an officer" (said with a definite 'us and them' tone).

4.10.6 Volunteers stories

Volunteers painted a happy picture of visits to Belton and often emphasised the family friendly nature of the place "We see the cricket, we see the kites, the puppeteers, we see, one of my favourite things to see in the summer, you will get people coming with big trestle, foldup tables and they will put them up over there and there might be 20 or 30 people from one family all meeting at Belton for a big picnic and it is a very family orientated place because of course they come to the National Trust adventure playground and so there is a lot. It is a very big family place and I like that Grandma and Grandad come and say I like that as well. In comparison to a lot of the National Trust I think this is the family place. It is very family orientated because they have got the adventure playground, there's lots of walking and if you came back on Sunday at about 2pm you would see them settling here and they have got their Frisbees and their American footballs, and they are playing games and that is nice".

The motivation for volunteers seemed to be to share what they saw as a special place, "I want people to go away as happy as I am to volunteer. That's what I want them to do. I want them to have enjoyed the experience whether it was a cup of coffee in the restaurant an ice cream sitting on their, looking at a beautiful painting, my favourite painting or going downstairs and seeing a piece of silver. I want them to have enjoyed the day as much as I enjoy coming here and I want to put it across to them that I love this house and I want you to".

4.10.7 Experience for visitors

One of the volunteers said that Belton was a much more relaxed place than many National Trust properties, "we are more relaxed, try us, come back, keep coming back but those big, enormous properties are quite daunting". She thought Belton was a good place to start exploring what the National Trust has to offer.

Some of the volunteers said that part of the popularity of Belton was that it has been used on television many times, for programmes such as Antiques Roadshow and several dramas. "Of course, we get a lot about the Moondial, a lot coming. It was on the TV, my daughter was about 10 when it was on, quite spooky child's ghost story but we get a lot of people for that and we get a lot of people, millions, "can you tell me where Colin Firth was?" because this house was 'Rosings' in Pride and Prejudice and so I say yes. He came up the steps, came through here, up the steps in here, up the stairs and then the cameras stopped and then he came back down and wrote at the desk here. "Oh, I thought the desk was upstairs, are you sure?", so we get a lot".

The operations manager stressed the importance of making the site look its best for every visitor. He compared Belton to a theatre or entertainment venue that must be reset for each performance. "You can't have 450,000 people come across your site without some kind of degradation or damage in some areas but every morning it has to be spick and span for the next person's experience. I wouldn't want someone coming in on any day and thinking well that path doesn't look right or that grass doesn't look sharp, or the courtyard doesn't… So, every day the team have to re-present, a bit like Groundhog Day".

4.11 Belton deconstruction

4.11.1 Duality search

There are a range of dualities evident at Belton.

House and collection vs adventure playground – these are two very distinct visitor offers and the General Manager says that visitors to each are different, "clear blue water between the two". One of the volunteers, who works on reception, thinks that some of the playground visitors who buy membership to save money might become interested in the rest of the property.

National Trust customer service vs customer service in Italy. The reception volunteer explains about what for her are strange requests or complaints, such as lack of dog water bowls. In Italy she says, "customer service is nothing".

Family friendly vs non-family friendly (as for instance the Workhouse has less family appeal). Staff and volunteers all talk about how family friendly Belton is. The house reception volunteer talks about giving people a good experience, this can, she thinks, give people confidence to explore other properties that might be seen as more difficult. In this instance she is positioning Belton as a gateway into exploring the National Trust.

Reality of Belton vs Fictional versions. People visit to see Colin Firth was in the television production of Pride and Prejudice and to see the Moondial (a statue in the garden) that is the name of a book and a children's television series by Helen Cresswell.

4.11.2 Reinterpret the hierarchy

The General Manager tells the line, almost a joke, "When I first arrived there were 2 managers, and I was neither of them". He also plays down his own significance but does then say that he is the conductor of the orchestra. Conductors do have power, they set the tempo etc. and co-ordinate the work of the orchestra. He also, whilst being disparaging about Spirit of Place, demonstrates his power, how he signed off his own Spirit of Place statement whilst on secondment at regional office. The Operations Manager confirms the General Manager's power, asking the researcher to send an email to "the boss" confirming that he has helped setting meetings with volunteers. The whole place runs as if a community with no firm management but, the General Manager is very much in charge, it suits his personal management style to appear laid back, in fact he is very much in control of all areas of his operation.

4.11.3 Rebel voices

The house reception volunteer was talking about being ex-RAF and like the Operations Manager? her reply "Yes, but not an officer". She was a self-appointed rebel, "They hadn't seen anything like me". She is a sixty something with bright pink hair, so she does stand out from most volunteers. She cast herself as different to the other volunteers, but she worked as part of a team. The real difference seemed to be in her less formal and more gregarious approach to welcoming visitors. The office comment suggested conflict/different views but everything she said in our conversation was on message with the rest of the team.

4.11.4 The other side of the story

It is notable at Belton that the General Manager and Operational Manager are men, both ex-military. As has already been noted by the house reception volunteer, they are both former officers. There is a traditional look to the hierarchy here. The two most senior people are men, everyone else interviewed at Belton was a woman. This is different to the two other properties, the Workhouse and Nostell, which have women in senior positions. Would Belton be different under different management? Now, the set up at Belton seems to be continuing the tradition from the previous owner Lord Brownlow, though more successfully. Brownlow gave over the property to the National Trust after failing to make money out of Belton as a visitor attraction.

4.11.5 Deny the plot

The way that Belton runs recalls ideas such as stoicism and duty. People know their role and know their place. If it was a film the story at Belton would be very like a British 1940's film, showing how Britain was carrying on in the face of adversity. Films such as London Can Take It (1940) where people are very British with a stiff upper lip and speak with received pronunciation. The senior staff at Belton speak in the same way. Despite what was going on in the world things at Belton are under control. What this means is that Belton is closed to reinterpretation. We can see it as it is presented, take it, or leave it. In a sense the National Trust is saying this is popular, this is successful, why would we change? However much of the success in terms of numbers and income are because of the adventure playground. This might be good for business as a Heritage Visitor Attraction, but it doesn't particularly fulfil the special places for everyone remit that the National Trust says it is working to.

4.11.6 Find the exception

The exception here is the adventure playground, that the General Manager has made sure is part of the Spirit of Place statement. He justifies this because when the National Trust took on the Belton estate the adventure playground had already been started by Lord Brownlow in the 1970's. There is also a golf course that the estate owns but is run by a golf club as long-term tenants. These commercial ventures were initiated by Lord Brownlow as he tried to find ways to keep the estate going as a profitable concern. Continuing these enterprises is again the National Trust being good at making money as a Heritage Visitor Attraction manager, which as the Director of Visitor Experience noted they have become adept at running but it doesn't address the larger concerns about who the National Trust is for and whose history is represented.

4.11.7 Trace what is between the lines

At Belton the staff and volunteers present a relaxed public face. They are full of smiles and welcomes for visitors. It was when meeting the Operations Manager for a conversation, on the final visit to Belton that it was possible to see beneath the surface and how hard everyone was working to present the calm front for visitors. The interview with the Operations Manager took place in his office whilst a planned power outage was underway. This was for work being undertaken by the electricity company and affected not only Belton by the village as well. He had chosen this time to talk as the lack of power meant that several his other tasks had to wait until the power was restored. The interview was interrupted several times because he had to maintain contact with other staff over the radio during the power cut. Usually when interviewed people turned their radios off, so the researcher was never fully aware of what was going on behind the scenes. The interview with him was for about half an hour and during this time he built up 5 other people who needed to speak to him. He said it was a little busier than usual, but he was observed later in the gardens, and he was still making time to talk to visitors and answer their questions.

What could be concluded here is that the team at Belton have developed a high-level ability to present what they do as effortless to the visitors even though they are working very hard behind the scenes. On an earlier visit the Operations Manager, said "Every day is an event for the people who are coming here. It might be a major event for them to come to Belton or another National Trust property. For you it is a major event to make sure that their major event goes smoothly, and they have a nice experience, and they will want to come back or go on and see some other National Trust properties. It has got to be right and within the team there are some great characters who make sure it is right. During conversation with Operations Manager, he also said that working at a National Trust property is like working in front of your shareholders every day. Everything needs to be right for them, or they will let you know.

4.11.8 Resituate – Restory to script new actions

Something that was considered in advance of visiting properties was if the weather badly affected visitor numbers. The three visits to Belton were all warm sunny days between April and June, in contrast the three visits to Nostell in the same period were all overcast, and one was raining. Weather data was checked (Met Office, 2018) and found that the weather for Grantham and Wakefield is on average similar, Grantham is on average a little warmer and drier, but the researcher's experience seems to have been a matter of chance. What was different was the staff view of the weather and the problems it might pose, or not. At Belton the staff were confident that whatever the weather they could provide an enjoyable visitor experience, they have an indoor play area, bookshop, plant shop, gift shop, restaurant, and the House itself to visit in wet weather so didn't seem unduly concerned about rain affecting visitor numbers. In contrast at Nostell, the Business Manager, said that she had apps on her phone and listened to weather forecasts all the time because they experienced such a drop in visitor numbers in wet weather and she had to try and make the right ordering decisions for food and drink for the café. Nostell has a café and shop in the courtyard and of course the house itself but the number of visitors visiting the house is very a very small proportion of the number who visit the property. Nostell could alleviate the worry of wet weather if the indoor offer was more attractive to visitors.

4.12 Visitor experience at Nostell

4.12.1 Introduction

This story is an amalgamation of conversations with staff and volunteers at Nostell during three visits made to the property and the conversation in Leeds. The conversations took place in private for the staff, their choice, and in the volunteer's room with the volunteers. Often there were other volunteers present, who chipped in with comments relevant to the conversation. The Transform Project Manager chose to meet off site in a café in Leeds.

4.12.2 Why do people visit?

"We have an outstanding collection; we have got Grade 1 and Grade 2 aspects to our property". Nostell was described to me as a treasure house. It has collections of art and furniture, such as Chippendale and a Breughel painting. This was very much the management view, for the volunteers the story of the family who built and owned the house was the main story, as discussed in the Spirit of Place section, 4.2.4.

It was also found that Nostell, as a parkland, was very well used. Local people use it for dog walking. 80% of the parkland users were members making many return visits. Membership includes free parking.

4.12.3 Visitor numbers and popularity

The overall visitor numbers look good but it can be seen that almost 50% of visitors don't go through the pay barrier and only a small number of those visit the house. "The year before last we had 230,000 visitors on site of those 119,000 went through to the pay barrier which is the house and the gardens but only 19,000 went into the house". This is the reason that the property has undertaken the Transform project, with the new Spirit of Place statement, to encourage more visitors into the house. The first thing that has been done is to introduce temporary exhibitions, "that is the first manifestation of our thinking, and we are 82 or 83% ahead on visitor numbers compared to this time last year".

4.12.4 Transform Project

According to the Transform Project Manager, "the reason behind the project that we are doing in the house is starting look at attracting a different type of audience into the mansion. Nostell is a treasure house, the reason the National Trust took on Nostell is because of the collections within it and the architecture and interiors not because it had a particularly relevant family, history, or anything in it".

She continued "so the project we are doing is how do you bring a treasure house to life and our ultimate aim if you look at the context of the market place we are in with the Hepworth and Yorkshire Sculpture Park how do we attract in an audience who are interested in arts and interiors and sculpture and would go to an art gallery, would go to the V and A in London but wouldn't think to come here but actually we have the same offer here, just in a different context".

Using a changing exhibition programme, "hopefully starts to raise that profile and what we want to do and part of Transform Nostell is have that ever-changing programme so at least every year there is a reason to come back and see the house if not twice a year". (As discussed as programming in section 4.5.3)

4.12.5 Staff and volunteers

There was noticeable frustration on the part of the General Manager and the Project Manager about the volunteers and what was seen as a reluctance to embrace change.

“We really are learning, and we can see the shift so when we first started on this process, we moved one chair. We moved it from one side of the staircase to another side of the staircase to try and ease the flow around and you would have thought we had… you wouldn’t believe the uproar it caused”. The General Manager feels that the way to persuade the volunteers might be through reasoning, based on visitor figures. “You have to be careful; you have to respect them and what they know (radio noise) and equally there has to be a point when we have to move it on but explaining the reason why so I could show very very clearly a lot of stats. The year before last we had 230,000 visitors on site of those 119,000 went through to the pay barrier which is the house and the gardens but only 19,000 went into the house”.

It was also interesting to find out how the managers knew what the volunteers’ told visitors. It seemed that the volunteers were something if a law unto themselves. The Project Manager said , “I know some of the things that we say are accurate, some of it not and I know because I have heard and for me what is worrying is that it is so personality driven, so we have these stable tours, that area led by this group of volunteers who are so interested in our stables, but is it really a big part of our spirit of place? Is it where our narrative should be taking us, and I don’t think it is personally?”. So, a recognition of some of the problems but not really any solutions or real questioning of what made the volunteers act in the way that they did.

4.12.6 Volunteers views

The views of the volunteers about the Spirit of Place statement has already been presented in detail in 4.2. Spirit of Place. When talking to volunteers another issue, what they were not happy about was the change, by the management, to a free flow arrangement in the house, rather than a set route for visitors. “You knew where people were, but they are going backwards and forwards and in and out and that is also causing more damage”. Though curiously the same person then says, “A lot of people like it”.

Another volunteer says, “it’s difficult because you have got some people who will come in and say “I want a route, I want some arrows, I want to be told where to go because I don’t want to miss anything” and then you get others who say “I like it, I can go here, there, miss that room out because I don’t want to see it” A 3rd volunteer chips in, “Then they miss something”. The 2nd volunteer agrees, “Then they say to us “what have we missed?” and we don’t know “Where have you been?” and they don’t know where they have been”. A 4th volunteer, who says she is 91 years old, says, “I’m sorry I don’t believe in this”. A 5th volunteer chips in, “so, we tell them to keep the windows on the left-hand side. The 4th volunteer agrees, “I’m subversive. I do it all the time, tell them which way to go around”. They all acknowledged that they had been told to let visitors choose their own route and seem proud that they have collectively been ignoring the instruction.

Even though collectively the volunteers are against change they all seem very positive about the clock exhibition. “I like it I think it is good, it brings other people into the house and some people come in just to see that. They literally come in the front door and say, “I want to see the clock exhibition” and you go right, ground floor, west corridor”.

There was even the admission that, “Some of them I know they have coming particularly, they might go walking around the park and the gardens, they come in the front door, go in there, go in there and exit there, gone and they just do the clock exhibition”, So, this seems to demonstrate that the changes coming in as part of the Transform project are working.

One of the volunteers was asked about learning the history of the place and being able to explain things to visitors, “when I first started here, I thought I’m not going to remember everything, but everybody doesn’t want to know everything in the room, you know. You soon get into it and if you love history, which I do”. But if they don’t know something? “If I don’t know something, I research things on my computer, I go on Google and do whatever I need to do to find out”. It was interesting that at each of the properties visited volunteers said this, they researched things themselves on the internet. It seems that managers and curators make decisions about what visitors see and oversee professional practice when it comes to labels and guidebooks, but nobody pays close attention to what volunteers actually say to visitors.

The following exchange bests describes the conversation about how the volunteers gain knowledge that they pass on to visitors.

“I: Where do you get those stories from

A: Well, we find out about them, we research

B: They are all catalogued

I: You have a body of research amongst you

A: We are not telling porkies

B: We get to know from the family

A: Yeah, we get to know from them don’t we. The dowager is still living, she is lovely, and she tells you stories, doesn’t she?

B: She is brilliant

A: Yeah, she is a lovely lady

B: She adores this house

A: She misses living here”

We can see that the volunteers see themselves as guardians of the house and the family stories.

4.12.7 Experience for visitors, what will Transform offer visitors?

Transform is a hugely expensive (more than £1 million) and complex project and there must be questions about if the property is ready for such change. “You asked originally about interpretation and our audit will give us insight and then it will be about working with a company, working with somebody how do we, where do we deliver our messages across the site and I think it is going to take a lot of time because we are shifting everything from here to here and that’s funny because I don’t think we can achieve that in a project timeframe because this is like huge change”. This is according to the Project Manager.

The first iteration of the Transform project has been the Clockwork exhibition. The feedback from this has been good. “One thing that has been great about the Clockwork exhibition has been, I did 3 or 4 days of exit surveys myself, standing at the back door of the house listening to people as they came out and then asking them questions, what happened to them during their experience and it was fascinating listening to people quoting back to me the top 3 messages that we planned into the interpretation across that offer, “Well we didn’t know that John Harrison lived on the estate and we didn’t know that his Dad was a carpenter and we didn’t know he went on to solve the longitude problem” Fab, tick, tick, tick. So, I know if you think about interpretation properly and carefully you can do that, you can have that effect, people will leave with those things that you repeatedly tell them but the whole property isn’t that easy”. The exhibition features one of the only original John Harrison clocks, belonging to Nostell. Harrison solved the longitude problem in the 18th century creating the first reliable clock to use at sea to enable the calculation of longitude. Visitors are asked if they think the clock should be restored or left in its original condition (currently not working).

The positive visitor feedback and the higher than anticipated visitor numbers are a success for the Transform project. Given that the volunteers who, as been noted, are unhappy with the Transform project because they feel that they have been left out, acknowledge the success of the exhibition it gives the project a firm base to move onwards.

4.13 Nostell Deconstruction

4.13.1 Duality search

By far the most significant duality at Nostell concerns Volunteers vs management (or vice versa). There are different points of view here and no agreement on what the main story of the property is, is it a family house or a treasure collection (itself a duality). The following sections, 5.6.2 to 5.6.8 are all concerned with this duality.

4.13.2 Reinterpret the hierarchy

Volunteers say (their coordinator mainly) that the body of volunteers are aging, and it is proving very difficult to recruit more. The Transform Project Manager doesn’t seem to know how to manage them, as she is not experienced with volunteers. The General Manager is dismissive of them, if they don’t do what she wants they can all go, and she will replace them. It seems that the volunteers have quite a bit of power, soft power. They have direct contact with the visitors and skills and experience and are supportive of each other. Given that recruitment of volunteers can be difficult, particularly with the long opening hours that the property now operates, so a lot of shifts to be covered it could be very difficult to replace them all in one go. Also replacing them in that way would lose much of the information that the volunteers share amongst themselves and with visitors. The difficulty replacing them and the knowledge that they hold does put the volunteers in a potentially powerful position relative to the management.

4.13.3 Rebel voices

In this case it must be the volunteers. One of the volunteers, a ninety something, who doesn't toe the line, said that she doesn't tell visitors what she has been told to but what she thinks they should hear, "I'm an anarchist me". The volunteers think the family story is what is important. Also, it is noteworthy that the volunteers see themselves as custodians of the house and collections and are very worried about damage to collections. They talked about visitors found putting their bags down on Chippendale table and they attributed this to a lack of room volunteers, so sometimes visitors were in rooms unaccompanied. The management position is that the volunteers are now part of the delivery of visitor's experience, not there to police the visitor, like security guards. As has already been noted the volunteers have the direct contact with visitors so have considerable freedom to tell visitors what they think they should hear, irrespective of management instructions.

4.13.4 Other side of the story

Previous experiences. The General Manager was previously employed in HR for the National Trust and is confident she can manage people. The Transform Project Manager is a museum professional, she knows her skills and how to create exhibitions, but her experience is in a different context. The volunteers are previously professional people, such as teachers, solicitors, public sector managers but they are also individuals with on some cases 20 to 30 years' experience as volunteers at Nostell. Both sides feel that they aren't respected by the other.

4.13.5 Deny the plot

Gripes and Tragic stories in Gabriel's (2000) description. Like an Ealing Comedy where the outsider, the Transform Project Manager a museum professional, comes in to make things better and increase visitor numbers but the locals (volunteers) fight back. Resistance by volunteers takes many forms, some hidden from the management, but the volunteers have the advantage because they are a group who support each other (cakes and cards for birthdays) and they have the contact with the visitors.

4.13.6 Find the exception

The General Manager at Nostell was the most overworked person encountered whilst doing the field work. She signed the wrong date on the consent form. But she was very much at pains to say, “I am in control”. The General Managers at Belton and the Workhouse were “conducting the orchestra” and didn’t need to state they were in charge in the same way.

4.13.7 Trace what is between the lines

The volunteers expect the researcher to be on their side. “Common sense surely can see what is going on here”. They are the custodians of the family story; it has been told to them directly by family members. “Management initiatives are a passing thing to be resisted, aren’t they? Managers come and go but the volunteers have real long-term commitment.

4.13.8 Resituate the story

There needs to be an accommodation of both points of view, the mansion as a treasure house, but also how this came to be i.e., the family collected it. The family story might not be as interesting per se, but they had fantastic taste and insight to commission this work and collect it. This can be compatible with the desire to display contemporary artwork. The Transform Project Manager has shown, and the volunteers agreed with this, that contemporary art such as Luke Jerram’s installation was popular with new visitors.

Is there a way of presenting the Spirit of Pace as something that incorporates the 2 different standpoints? The precise Spirit of Place statement hasn’t been seen by the researcher, but it is something along the lines of skilled people making things, is there a place also for understanding taste and appreciation? A link between the family who bought and commissioned work and modern-day visitors to Nostell and Yorkshire Sculpture Park and the Hepworth. The volunteers don’t seem to understand their new roles in terms of visitor experience and by extension don’t understand the Transform project and Spirit of Place. The Transform Project Manager says it would be nice to be more democratic but as the project she is employed to deliver is time bound this isn’t possible. The volunteers enjoy networks that stretch back 20 or 30 years and find a new project "moving at pace" very difficult to relate to. The General Manager needs to understand that they (the volunteers) are rebellious and do what they think is right. It is unclear that the systems she describes for monitoring the work of the volunteers are giving her the same view that the researcher got, talking to them as an outsider. They were very happy to talk about how they ignore what they don't like and tell visitors what they think the visitors should hear.

4.14 Visitor experience at the Workhouse

4.14.1 Introduction

This story is an amalgamation of the conversations that were conducted at the Workhouse with staff and volunteers during three visits made to the property. Meetings were with the managers in their offices at the Workhouse and the volunteers in the volunteer's room with other people present whilst we were talking.

4.14.2 Why do people visit?

It seems that there are many school visits and some families, but the General Manager says, "our demographic is lots of elderly people as well because they have more understanding and connection with workhouses and what they are all about". So, why do they come to the workhouse? "Some of our visitors, many of our visitors, one might say they are just coming to see a National Trust attraction that they haven't been to before. I am a member so might as well and I am in the area".

One of the volunteers says, "There is a sense of history, I think a lot of people, I think that they think my relatives might have been here" and the Regional Curator describes the Workhouse as "something that is highly charged emotionally" and the property website describes it as "atmospheric". The regional archaeologist says that the new interpretation is an opportunity to open up the property to new groups of visitors "while not alienating our core".

So, while the Workhouse is interesting its history doesn't naturally lend itself to being somewhere for a day out. The visitor numbers reflect this being around 60,000 per year in comparison to its near neighbour Belton with 450,000.

4.14.3 The visitor experience

The General Manager says, “this property it’s quite unusual, for the Workhouse, the story of that because the National Trust chose 15 years ago, they had an executive decision at board level that they should be representing a diverse range of historic properties more than just the nice country open parks and historic large houses, that actually they should make an informed decision to be looking after properties that maybe told the stories of everyman”.

The Regional Curator who was in post when the Trust bought the property says, “It came to us 99% empty and that is what it remains”. It seems from talking to the General Manager, who instigated the re-imagining that this isn’t something she is entirely happy with, “when it reopened as a National Trust property the audio guide was brought into play, there were empty rooms and there was a very clear curatorial decision made about those sorts of things”.

One of the volunteers points out that the route around the property doesn’t make the most of the strange experience visiting a workhouse is. It is designed like a prison, but the people were there of their volition and were free to leave. “When we were going around it occurred to me that you don’t actually get the picture in the right sort of way. The route for me is entirely wrong. It is practical, but you don’t get that sense of separation”. Men and women and children were all accommodated separately. “That separation that was huge and then the segregation into abled and disabled. You don’t get that sense because you are you know just wandering from one side to the other”.

Another volunteer says, “what I find interesting is that we have got, what, 200 volunteers here with 200 different bits of information and every time I come in here, I learn something from somebody”. This volunteer also says that they think the property is under appreciated and that generic methods to collect visitor feedback don’t help because the Workhouse isn’t like a visit to a country house. “The questionnaires have always been a bit of a bug bear for me because the Trust wants everyone to say it was very enjoyable, enjoyable, didn’t like it, dd dd der. How many people coming here if they really get into the story, as it were, would say that it was very enjoyable? They won’t”. A visit to the Workhouse isn’t enjoyable but it is interesting and informative.

4.14.4 How the reimagining project will change the visitor experience

The General Manager explained the reasons for the reimagining and what it is hoped will be achieved in terms of engaging audiences.

“So, I think as a property team and certainly as a General Manager I think that the way that we currently present the Workhouse is poor. I think it is not particularly engaging. So, we are losing the audio guide and picking up some of those things through some different interpretative techniques.”

“Well I think it will be very bold for the National Trust, my hope is that if we can get it right that it should be bold for the whole sector because not only do we want to tell the historical story of workhouses and the site story from the 1820’s up to late 1980’s but we also want to take some of the themes within our stories of poverty, incarceration, population movement, you know, what do all these things mean and relate them to what is happening now. So, at any one day in 2 years’ time. So, in 2 years’ time when you come you will probably be given a quote from the BBC website about something topical to do with this building. So, if I give you something about the war in Syria, that is something about population movement”.

Part of the reason was practical, having to deal with old technology, “we have also got an issue with the technicality of the audio guides and it will cost us an awful lot to renew because the maintenance is with it and they are old, but we want to take them away anyway but we will have some resistance to that also because a lot of the volunteers think they are fantastic, and they are good, but they have been there since 2002, dated but still work because a lot of people say the audio guide was fantastic, so there is still a big place in some respects but we want to take it away and replace it with a more immersive experience for different reasons”.

The following exchange gives an indication of how important the story of the Workhouse is to the volunteers, “I think, slightly putting my two peneth in here, I think the concern from the volunteer side is, it’s a dramatic, it’s a strong, it’s a very serious subject this one. We can make it light-hearted when we are taking tours around because nobody wants to be preached at.

I: But that is a matter of tone isn’t it.

That's right, tone and intonation and including everybody and putting them in the position of, but we desperately don't want it to be trivialised because this is a strong story. It is a different story entirely but for example my husband and I went to Auschwitz, two years ago, and that is such a huge evil tour that you do that you can only in my view do it with one mindset and this on the same plane but at the opposite end of the spectrum". This was a common view amongst the volunteers, the story of the Workhouse is a serious one and the stories of people who came there were to be respected but it was possible to enjoy the experience of meeting visitors and interacting with them.

4.14.5 Staff and volunteers

Of all the General Managers interviewed the one at the Workhouse was the most clearly managerial, "I'm in charge of my properties, nobody tells me what to do, they can advise, but I don't need to listen to them". The role of General Manager presents the post holders with considerable freedom, "I think if you consult widely enough, and you are actually ticking the boxes that the organisation wants to tick I think that they will allow you to be relatively bold". There was a strong ethos of including the volunteers as part of the team, rather than an us and them division. "Generally, we are seen as one property team and we deliver our work as one property team so that's why I've got volunteers commenting on my plans at the moment because otherwise if they don't like them there's no point in me delivering them because they won't want to deliver them in hand with the staff team". The volunteers receive the same training as paid staff and this creates a unified team, "our volunteers are as capable and as trained in visitor services and delivering the stories of the building as much as the paid staff and in some cases more so actually. Some of our volunteers have been researching this building for 15 years and they will always know more than I do about the stories".

The General Manager did acknowledge that not all volunteers remain on message all the time "we have volunteers, not necessarily here, but we know as an organisation that we have got volunteers that want to talk about things that they want to talk about".

The Operations Manager, who must deal with volunteers when they are unhappy says, “you might wonder sometimes why volunteers are coming and you do talk and all you have got are some issues that are not right, they are not happy with this and they are not happy with that, doesn’t matter what you do I don’t like the changes. You think, well why are you here? And sometimes their approach to things they are not happy with is not the best approach because we are more than receptive. We want volunteers to have a good time here and enjoy it because it all filters through doesn’t it”. The Operations Manager had been dealing with complaints from volunteers about some of the changes that had been taking place, “some volunteers can’t see past the fact that we have limited the car parking for them, and they may at some point have to park down in the visitor car park and walk up. Now we appreciate that there are some elderly volunteers and there are access issues, and we will try and manage that in the top car park. So, regardless of the positive things that are occurring some can’t see past (1) we have reduced the toilets (2) we have reduced the car parking”. He did say that the people with complaints were in the minority and that on the whole the volunteers were very keen to help.

One of the volunteers outlined how the management keep the volunteers informed and involved with the changes that are taking place. “At the beginning of the year we have a get together where we discuss things that have happened throughout the last year and things that are due to recommence or due to be innovated in regard to the building in the following year, this year. I have also, we have also had emails sent with copies of the plans, implementation of changes to the rooms, like this room is being changed and obviously with reception going down there. So, we have had early notification of the changes that will be taking place over the year. So, as volunteers we are fully informed of the way that the Trust is developing this building and this site”.

4.14.6 Volunteers stories

The three volunteers that were talked to were very happy with being at the Workhouse. As one said, “They are a happy bunch of volunteers and everybody that I have met here has been extremely pleasant. This is not a place where you are going to get any animosity at all, people come here because they want to come here. It is like education isn’t it, post compulsory education. People are there because they want to be there”, and another “chatting to folks is brilliant, it is just lovely it really is”, a third explains “The tour guiding is great because we do a tour around the outside of the building, do the orientation and tell the tale because people are coming in with different takes on it. They are coming in with however many thousands of different bits of knowledge that they might have. Forty thousand visitors have got forty thousand different bits of knowledge in their minds”.

The volunteers had many stories of visitors that they had encountered, such as a man who had been born there and brought his birth certificate and several people who had worked on the site or visited in the past, such as a fireman who returned a key from a visit over 30 years ago. The following is an example of the type of story the volunteers had about visitors,

“Last year there was an old lady and she was telling me she was the daughter of the local undertaker and whenever there was a death, probably in one of the dormitories upstairs she would have to come in with him to help him carry the body down the stairs, and you think good grief you know. “Come on little one of we go”.

I: It is a different experience than most of us have

“Isn’t it, different childhood to say the least. I chatted to her, but she didn’t want to put that down into any kind of archive for us. She told me. That was it. That was all”.

The interesting and noteworthy thing was that the volunteers all had their personal experiences of encounters with visitors but as in the example above most are undocumented because the visitors wanted to tell somebody, to share their stories, but not necessarily have it recorded.

4.14.7 Who are the visitors?

It seems the General Manager and the Operations Manager are very interested to bring in new types of visitors and are very conscious that the re-imagining is an opportunity to do this. The volunteers were very much focussed on how the story would be told and none of them talked about different types of visitors. The General Manager acknowledged, “for many years people have seen the National Trust as a middle-class white organisation that offers a nice trip to an historic house, a nice walk in the parklands, maybe a bit of play, a good scone, a reasonable shop and then you go home. I think everybody is aware of that, but I think that we are a, well we are the largest conservation organisation in Europe, and we are also focussed very heavily on learning as well and that's not just learning about things in terms of large stately homes and massive collections that are very expensive, it's about learning about everyone's heritage in different socioeconomic groups as well".

Therefore, the Workhouse fits into the category of properties described by the Visitor Experience Director as an attempt to buy a more varied portfolio of properties to engage with and represent different demographics. At the moment as we see in 4.8.2 most visitors fit a classic National Trust profile, but it is hoped with the re-imagining looking for connections with contemporary issues that the demographic will widen.

4.15 Workhouse deconstruction

4.15.1 Duality search

Several interesting dualities appear in the story of the Workhouse. Firstly, Empty property vs furnished (re-furnished) could and should this be done? There is the view that the National Trust should conserve the property as it was when they bought it, or should it attempt to recreate the interior as it may have been in the Nineteenth century.

In terms of visitor experience a big question that has had to be asked and answered is, Headphones and audio guide vs no guide, the decision has been made to remove the audio guide, but will visitors talk to room guides more instead?

Property staff vs regional advisors, the regional advisors can advise but ultimately it is up to the General Manager to make decisions and they can override anything that the regional advisors suggest.

Historical story vs contemporary resonance. Traditionally the National Trust has tended to tell the historical story of a place, but it is now looking to use Spirit of Place to move, where appropriate, to look at contemporary resonance. For example, with the Workhouse there are questions that can be asked about the role of the welfare state, migration, and insecure working conditions in the twenty first century.

4.15.2 Reinterpret the hierarchy

This is about how the story of the property is told. Currently it is an empty property with audio guides. The challenge is to provide an authentic experience, as they do with guided tours, illustrating the separation of families etc. As the Regional Curator says there is an Ambience to the place, but headphones are isolating and stop interaction with guides and go a long way towards quashing the specific ambience. Is the visitor experience enjoyable? As one of the volunteers says if you get into the story, you won't find it enjoyable. So, reinterpreting the hierarchy would mean removing the audio guides, which have been used since the National Trust opened the property, and finding other ways to tell the story of the property.

4.15.3 Rebel voices

Rebel voices didn't seem to be present at the Workhouse, some of the volunteers had different opinions about how the story of the property should be told but they expressed strong confidence in the management to do this. It is noteworthy that the General Manager was making efforts to make sure the volunteers were included in the discussions that were taking place.

4.15.4 Other side of the story

Does buying the Workhouse mean that the National Trust can tell the story of the rural poor? The empty building came with no records. As people, particularly volunteers describe in conversation, there has been extensive research, but this seems primarily to give general dates and information about who build the workhouse and who the masters were. Is acquisition of this type of building the way to redress the balance in the National Trust portfolio, instead of it being about telling rich people's stories?

4.15.5 Deny the plot

The Workhouse does itself deny the usual National Trust plot. It is about ordinary people as well as the rich and notable. The purchase of the Workhouse was part of a strategy around 15 years ago to change the representation of the National Trust by acquisition of properties. This is now viewed by the Director of Visitor Experience as a flawed strategy. The Trust could never redress the balance through acquisition alone. The National Trust needs to look at whose stories it is telling. Even at the Workhouse the individuals we learn most about are the rich local people who set up the workhouse and the people who worked there. There are no records of the people who passed through the workhouse, the National Trust bought the property empty after a failed property development scheme.

4.15.6 Find the exception

When the researcher went to meet Operations Manager, he stood in the café for 5 minutes without any staff, or customers, present. This seemed very much at odds with everything everyone at the Workhouse said about customer service. A strangely uncomfortable experience, as if someone was doing something wrong, yet the café was open. The researcher was in the right place but alone. Pockets could have been filled with goods and the till emptied. In the end he left and went looking for the Operations Manager's office. It was a strange experience, and he didn't talk about it to anyone.

4.15.7 Trace what is between the lines

The Workhouse is unusual as a National Trust property. As one of the volunteers says the standard feedback cards used by the National Trust ask visitors about their enjoyment. The Workhouse isn't there to be enjoyed, it does inform and educate but it is a different type of visitor offer. Having to go to the workhouse, when it was in operation, would have been a grim experience. It was literally a last resort for people. Everybody interviewed there, talked eloquently about why it was important to respect the story and about telling stories of ordinary people, something that there seemed to be agreement that the National Trust needed to do more of.

4.15.8 Resituate- Restory to script new actions

The current reimagining project, at the Workhouse, is being used to address some of the issues that the Trust generally doesn't acknowledge. There seems to be a determination to reflect on the lives of the people who found themselves in the Workhouse. There is also substantial discussion about making connections with contemporary debates about welfare and how much of a safety net the state should provide. There was also the possibility of linking with contemporary issues such as migration. Many of the people who found themselves in the workhouse were agricultural workers who were employed seasonally and were not needed and not paid over the winter. There are possibilities for comparison with current debates about zero hours contracts and about migrant agricultural workers in the UK who have come from other E.U. countries.

4.16 Field Notes

4.16.1 DBA Field Notes summary

With the presentation of Field Notes as a final story I have broken from the third person to move into the first person for this story and subsequent deconstruction. This seem to be a situatable approach to examine notes that were made contemporaneously with the other field work and then the highly subjective process of deconstructing my own notes.

Bringing this research around in a full circle from where I began, this section is specifically connected to Dorst (1989). Something I took from Dorst at the beginning was about the construction of the story. He talks about multiple visits to the site, something that I did. My visits fit with Dorst's idea of autoethnography and the fact that the cultural product is the site. "The context is consumer culture, and the context is shaped by mediating institutions" (Dorst, 1989, p.103) in my case the mediating institution is the National Trust. This also fits with Foucault (1986) and the concept of the accumulation of detail. Foucault suggests that this is an important part of enquiry as it adds additional perspective, with the small details and possibly insignificant details accumulated adding to a rigorous method. The field notes provide a subjective view of the research from the point of view of researcher. This adds to the near autoethnographic account of the research process, Muncey (2010).

I also thought that it would be a good idea to take field notes, following the guidance for qualitative researchers from amongst others Bryman and Bell. I thought I would make notes to answer some of the following questions. What do people do on a visit? Are they participants? Co-creators? Passive? Looking back at my field notebook I don't seem to have answered those questions.

What I have done is something that Dorst would recognise as vignettes. These are my thoughts and impressions written while I was on site. I think that they add to the overall research project. There has been no secret that I am present in the research data, this has been discussed in Chapter 3 and I appear as an active interviewer in

Chapter 4. I have decided to include these vignettes here as they provide another dimension of insight into the three properties that were a large part of the focus of this research.

4.16.2 Belton

In brief, Belton is very successful in terms of visitor numbers and income. In part this is due to the popularity of the adventure playground with local families. The house, gardens and parkland are a quintessential English country house. The brown road signs used for country houses have an image/silhouette that looks exactly like Belton. Belton has also used the more recent history of the site as a way of generating interest and visits, with exhibitions looking at the Machine Gun Corps, and the Brownlow's (previous owners) involvement with Edward VIII and Wallace Simpson. People, staff, and volunteers, offer words of affection for the place spontaneously and it does have atmosphere. It could be said to be a special place. How do I capture that?

There is also the Moonstone, a statue in the garden that featured in a children's book by Helen Cresswell. Apparently, people who visit want to see this as they remember the book and the TV series from childhood or their children's childhood. This is nostalgia!

The house is free flow, there are guides at the door who ask if you have any specific interests and try to offer advice for individual visits, custom made for each visitor? The house was very busy when I visited, some rooms were very crowded. It was hard to tell if people were following any plan or wandering from room to room. There was some engagement with room guides who were answering questions or initiating conversations with visitors. The rooms were very traditional, stay behind a rope or look in from the doorway. "This is the room Prince Charles stayed in when he was training as a pilot". There is little interaction with the rooms or the space, the visitor is effectively told where to stand and look, rather than being able to move with any freedom in the space. I would suggest that despite the free flow of the house that a visit is essentially passive.

The gardens don't seem to have any route, there are signs to things like the boat house. The gardens start formally and become progressively more "natural". There is the opportunity to explore in the garden, look at plants, statues etc. views of the house. This has more of the feel for being able to curate your own day. The parkland seems to be used by people for family picnics. There were large groups who had set up to have big gatherings, children playing ball games etc. Deer roam freely in the park. People were using the parkland as a site for their own family events. I didn't visit the adventure playground but clearly this was the most popular part of the estate judging by the numbers of families heading that way, and the full car park. The stable yard with gift shop, café, plant shop, bookshop, toilets and outdoor catering and seating were clearly a focus for people during their visit.

4.16.3 The Workhouse

The Workhouse was bought by the National Trust specifically because the Trust wanted to add a workhouse to its portfolio. There has been a conscious decision all the way through about the need to tell stories about the people who created the Workhouse, people who used it and contrast this with contemporary attitudes to welfare and the poor. The story isn't changing here it is being retold in different ways but both staff and volunteers seem genuinely committed to telling these stories and confident of their relevance to the wider world. So, questions here are about the decision not to put in place period furnishings since none of the originals are thought to exist and to show the building as a predominantly empty shell. Things such as the outline of where beds were on the floor and the slightly worn areas where people have walked have a very specific poignancy and atmosphere.

4.16.5 Nostell

Nostell Priory, why did the National Trust take it on? I was told that it was a "treasure house" and indeed it has interesting collections but the house itself and the estate doesn't seem to have a "story". Nostell is the problem child. I can't really understand why the Trust have taken it on. It has impressive collections, but it doesn't do anything that other places don't do better. This was also the place with divisions between staff and volunteers, as we have seen. The volunteers that I spoke to hadn't bought into the spirit of place and whilst I am sympathetic to the staff, I would tend to side with the volunteers though I wasn't able to share their enthusiasm for the house.

4.16.6 Field Notes conclusion

We needed to bear in mind that each site is different so we can't make generalisations, they are postmodern in a variety of dialect variations (Dorst, 1989). However, what I am struck by is how my impressions written whilst I was in the process of data collection have strong similarities with the data presented in the stories and analysis. I think it would be too grand a claim to call this triangulation of my results, but it does provide me as a researcher with the feeling that my instincts about what was important at these sites was like the thoughts of those who worked there.

As I said at the start of this section, I had questions that I expected to answer about what people did during visits, were they passive etc. but I didn't gather answers. However, what I feel that these vignettes do is offer another perspective on the stories and deconstructions. They aren't triangulations because I am not looking for confirmation of the method of analysis that has been used, but they do fit closely with the data, in terms of what people told me. It seems instructive that the site of most conflict, Nostell, was the one which for me had the least clear visitor offer and conversely the other two sites where there was a coherence about the story being told and a level of understanding between management and volunteers were places that were easier for the visitor to make sense of the choices that they could make and the type of visit that they would experience. Dorst talks about Chadds Ford needing to continue to be an image of itself, a postmodern veneer in order to attract visitors and the same can be seen at Belton where the Operations Manager and the team do spend their time returning the property to its preferred state each morning for a fresh influx of visitors.

4.17 DBA Field Notes Deconstruction

4.17.1 Duality search

There are clear dualities present that relate to my position as a researcher, National Trust Staff/Researcher and National Trust Volunteers/Researcher but then also the position that I take in interviews where I am sympathetic to the interests of the interviewee. This was a difficult line to take particularly with volunteers and disgruntled staff who were keen to use the opportunity to share issues and problems. As is discussed in the Methodology section on research ethics I had to be careful not to give the impression that I had the power to change anything about situations that they weren't happy with. My role as the researcher wasn't going any further than documenting what participants had to say.

4.17.2 Reinterpret the hierarchy

This is where I suggest a different view of the organisation where power is with the customer and the customer facing staff/volunteers. In many cases the hierarchy of the organisational chart could be inverted, and the power be centred on the volunteer/staff relationship with the visitor and the more senior managers be supporting characters to this interaction. The complications occur where volunteers and staff are aware of this, but the management remain unaware. Through the series of interviews there were instances where the management were seemingly unaware of the possible switch in power which led to disagreement and unrest with volunteers. So power is manifested in the volunteer or staff interaction with visitors rather than in the hierarchy described in the formal management structure.

4.17.3 Rebel voices

I think that in my own mind I was a Rebel Voice when carrying out the fieldwork and data collection. I was a devil's advocate allowing the interviewees to tell me what they were thinking. A considerable number of interviewees did tell me things, in confidence and after interviews were complete. For the most part these were personal information that wasn't adding to the data in terms of helping to answer the research questions.

4.17.4 The other side of the story

The reason for carrying out the research is to show the other side of the story, or to show that there is another side of the story, multiple narratives as described by postmodern theory and to allow the other voices to undermine the grand narrative. I don't think that my own observations as recorded in the previous section offer a different story than those explored in the other stories and deconstructions. My own person feelings are that my impressions of what is happening in the National Trust are confirmed by the other interviewees.

4.17.5 Deny the Plot

I think that the plot is the story that the National Trust is telling us, and this is a story of the country that might no longer reflect the lived experience of many people. Therefore, questions need to be asked about where the money to pay for many National Trust properties came from and for the stories of working people and ethnic minorities need to be examined in greater detail. This is beyond the scope of this current project but is an area ripe for further research.

4.17.6 Find the exception

In 2012 I visited Little Moreton Hall, a National Trust property in Cheshire, on family day out. During this visit I encountered an enthusiastic volunteer guide and the conversation I had with him inspired this project. Reflecting after my visit I realised that the National Trust were an interesting and complex organisation and that they had a particular mode of operating, where they are heavily reliant upon the work of volunteers to deliver the visitor experience. I was aware that the telling of stories, by a range of people, was a fundamental part of the operations of the National Trust and therefore I could perhaps collect a series of stories and analyse these to find our something about how the organisation worked.

At this point I should mention that I have some experience in the heritage sector. My first degree was a BA(Hons) History of Design and the Visual Arts, an ideal qualification for museum curatorship and my previous work experience includes responsibility for the management of two local authority museums. I therefore had some understanding of the issues involved in the management of a heritage visitor attraction. I had also spent most of my career managing within the arts and culture sector. I felt that my background was an asset in terms of having a good baseline understanding of the sector that the National Trust operates in. Of course, this does mean that I was bringing a particular set of preconceptions about management in this sector to the research.

What about my position as the researcher? Here I also need to acknowledge experiences that influence my understanding of my data. I was very much an active and engaged researcher. I had the experience as a visitor at the three sites, where I carried out much of the field work and at other sites I visited, which are mentioned in the rest of the thesis. I found that having visited several properties meant that I understood examples that were given to me by the respondents in the conversations that I had with them. I made field notes and took a few pictures, like a visitor. I observed the volunteer guides at work meeting and greeting visitors, answering questions, and telling stories. In the conversations that I recorded they told me stories, and these form the data that is analysed in this project.

A researcher approaching this research project having a different background of knowledge and experience might well have reached different conclusions in their analysis.

4.17.7 Trace between the lines

I could as a researcher have taken a much stricter management line. If I had approached the fieldwork and data collection with a firmer view that this was simply a case of applying management theory correctly, I would have probably collected different data and arrived at different conclusions in the deconstruction. However, it must be considered that if I was to follow a more straightforward management line it is unlikely that I would have then chosen such a highly subjective method to analyse the data. The research project and the way in which it has been carried out reflect my feelings for the subject and my previous experience as discussed above in Find the exception.

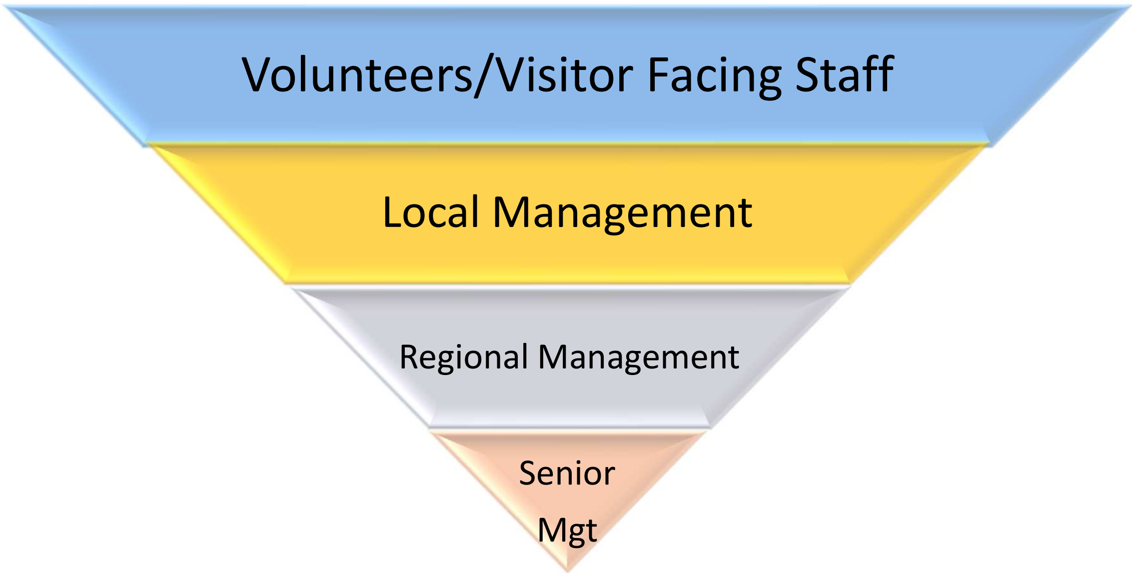
4.17.8 Resituate – Restory to script new actions

Following on from 2 Reinterpret the hierarchy, the way to restory to script new actions is to suggest that the National Trust works from a traditional understanding as the following diagram with the hierarchy developing policy and strategy and this filtering down into the experience that is offered to visitors we could instead position the power in the organisation at the opposite end of the diagram so the organisation is more fully focussed on the needs of the visitors and the organisation is organised accordingly.

Figure 16. How the National Trust is currently run

The National Trust power as it is planned, this is what management theory would tell us is happening.

National Trust power as it is exercised from observation during this study, how the National Trust could look with a reversal of the power dynamics. Where the organisation is orientated to provide support for the interaction of frontline staff and volunteers with the visitors.



4.18 Summary of findings

This chapter has presented a series of stories in the participants own words. We have thick description of a strategic concept, Spirit of Place, three stories about, Management in the National Trust, Curation and Visitor Experience and then three stories of what happens to create visitor experience at Belton, Nostell and the Workhouse, followed finally by the research field notes. These stories were then deconstructed, and the following conclusions were reached.

4.19 Conclusions

Conclusions that could be drawn from the deconstructions are as follows.

The relationship between paid staff, particularly management, and volunteers is crucial. There are examples that have been discussed where both are united in purpose and working to the same vision and occasions and locations where this isn't the case and the tensions between the two are clear.

A question that arises is how to include visitors and potential visitors in the conversation, the National Trust seems to rely very heavily on visitor surveys. The volunteers seem to have a closer connection to the visitors and as noted above, the volunteers don't always have smooth communication with the management.

There appears to be a reliance on numbers, of visitors and income as measures of success. Not getting many complaints is also seen as success, but this doesn't mean that the National Trust is measuring the quality of experience that visitors have. There were initiatives described where visitor experience was important, but it wasn't clear how the management would know about the experience that visitors had.

There is a large question about whose stories are told, who is represented by the National Trust? Is there diversity in the stories told? Are questions asked and answered about where the money came from to build some of the properties. It doesn't seem that issues such as the slave trade and colonialism are being fully explored and addressed.

The volunteers are gatekeepers to the stories that are told. Communication between management and volunteers at some locations is poor and therefore the managers aren't fully aware of what the volunteers are telling visitors, sometimes this varies from the 'official story'.

The British weather plays an important part in visitor experience, and the choice of where to visit. Properties vary in the offer they have for visitors in wet weather.

Whilst outdoor offers have increased, along with trends in outdoor activities, some properties struggle to entice visitors inside properties. There is the opportunity to rethink this and make the indoor offer something scarce, limiting the amount of time that properties are open and creating a virtue of this, making a special experience. This would help with situations with falling numbers of volunteers.

Some properties are working on linking historical stories with contemporary issues. At the Workhouse staff and volunteers are exploring connections between the historical workhouse and attitudes towards migrant workers in contemporary society.

A concern throughout this research was the lack of diversity in the National Trust membership. For five years, visiting around twenty-five properties, little was seen in the way of diversity of volunteers, staff, or visitors. If visitors weren't British, they tended to be German or Dutch tourists. Many of the people talked to during the research talked about the importance of diversity, but this didn't transfer into what could be seen.

A new perspective for looking at the hierarchy of decision making and the focus on visitors is offered in the final deconstruction on the Research Field Notes.

5.Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at issues that became apparent in the Literature Review in terms of how the visitor experience can be created. Each of these topics is examined in relation to the data and analysis in Chapter 4 in turn and then the chapter is summarised before we reach the conclusions.

5.2 Curation and Curatorial risk taking

Curation is a popular concept at the time of writing, but often misunderstood. The people who talked about this most were the Regional Curator and the Regional Visitor Experience consultant. They were the two people who were talked to who were specifically employed for their curation skills or their understanding of curation skills. The Regional Curator takes a traditional heritage approach, which values in depth historical knowledge, whereas the Regional Visitor Experience consultant has much more in common with contemporary approaches of Obrist (2015), Lowe (2012) and Tang (2006) which is not surprising given their professional background. It is interesting to note that most people spoken with at Nostell didn't really understand the Transform Project Manager's skill set and they expressed frustration with this. The Transform Project Manager's difficulties were even though everyone acknowledged that the interventions she had made to displays in the house, with additional temporary exhibitions, had significantly increased visitor numbers very quickly. The Transform Project Manager was also the person that the General Manager forgot when asked about who they managed, yet this was a post that had been set up specifically to have this impact. The Regional Curator, in contrast, talked carefully about colleagues not having a depth of knowledge which he implied led to simple solutions rather than the most sophisticated answers, they did add that one of the reasons for the popularity of early 20th century period installations was that they were easier for people with less depth of knowledge to achieve.

Lack of risk in curatorial decisions McLaughlin (2012) could be seen at Belton which presents here it is come and look, there is no set route and visitors must ask guides for their help if they want to see specific things. At Nostell the new interventions by the Transform Project Manager are risk taking. Herther (2012) content curation and sense making is what the Transform Project Manager does, and it seems successfully on the evidence at the time of the research visits. Visitor numbers were up but others, specifically didn't recognise that this was probably due to Transform Project Manager's curatorial decisions.

5.3 Space and Place

Concepts such as augmented space, as discussed by Manovich (2006) didn't feature in the data. In terms of concerns with space the most common concern was with flow through property, both Belton and Nostell having introduced free flow, no set route. At the Workhouse the re-imagining project was underway and the fact that most of the workhouse property is empty was discussed and indeed the atmosphere of the place is used as a feature of the place in advertising. Harvey (2009) structured vs unstructured space, this corresponds with the Workhouse. It is also worth noting that the National Trust has introduced smart phone apps to enhance visitor experience at properties. The workhouse uses old technology for its audio tours and this old technology is part of the reason for the reimagining, updating the visitor experience.

Place is also very important. The National Trust strategy 'Spirit of Place' sets out how to reflect each specific special place. It wasn't possible to investigate Giaccardi and Palen's (2008) idea contrasting heritage with everyday life as it wasn't possible to obtain an actual Spirit of Place statement. Perhaps this contrast is present since the National Trust manages 'special' places and infers in publicity material that a visit is a step outside everyday life. The Director of Visitor Experience talks about this in terms of successful properties being the ones who have become part of people's everyday life. Is this a contradiction? Visits to special places are a step out of everyday life but also something desirable to include as part of the visitor's everyday life.

5.4 Assumptions of Authenticity

One of the difficulties at Nostell is that volunteers and staff have different views on the thought processes of visitors. Volunteers in the house seem to fit with the McIntosh and Prentice (1999) concept of retroactive association, whereas the curator and General Manager are aiming for cognitive perception. The Workhouse is about reinforced assimilation, with debate about the place for the workhouse today. Volunteers talked about some visitors saying that workhouses should be brought back to house the homeless. According to Lovell and Bull (2018, p.51) "Guided heritage interpretation involves an information flow, largely in one direction, from "official" expert to a non-expert, sometimes reframing an interpretation of a place or an event. Guided tours are also conduits to collective authentication; the tour group can be assumed to share social memories in a two-way process”. Nostell and Belton seem to be about one-way communication as described by Lovell and Bull (2018). Nobody at either of these properties talked about learning from the visitors. At the Workhouse all the volunteers and the Operations Manager talked about learning from visitors. e.g., "Everybody has different parts of the story, and these thousands of pieces go to make up the story of the place".

D'arcens (2011) is a study of commercial heritage attractions and looks at how stimulating visitors' senses is used to create authenticity. An example of this is the "authentic" smell at Jorvik. The National Trust doesn't move beyond the visual and occasionally audio and is more focused on live interaction with guides. As several of the National Trust people talked to said, the National Trust isn't about recreating the past, it is about preserving and presenting the past but also interested in contemporary resonances. For the National Trust the issue of authenticity seems to be a taken for granted, i.e., this is an original Workhouse.

Uriely (1997) looks at authenticity of tourist experiences and the multiplicity and flexibility of experience. This fits with the ideas at the Workhouse of each person having a different experience, based on their personal reaction to the site, previous experience, and knowledge etc. This is idea could also be extended to Belton as site where the National Trust provides the venue and people create their own event, such as the description of one of the volunteers of family picnics. In contrast to this is the work of Heathcott (2012) which looks at rational order in design, this is what the volunteers in the house at Nostell are looking for in the neo-classical mansion, with a "right way" to go around. They are imposing an order to see things, even though the management have introduced a free flow system. The volunteers want everyone to have the same experience. It is worth remembering that with the volunteer's favoured visitor offer, the fixed route around the house currently only attracts 19,000 people into the house out of a total of 240,000 visitors to the site. There is no way that this could be seen as a popular part of a visit and this is one of the reasons that the Transform project has been created, to increase the quality of the visit and increase the number of visitors to the house. It seems that visitors want something different, such as the exhibition programme that the management are developing.

In terms of authenticity, Stallybrass (1998) offers some light upon the question of restoration of Harrison's clock at Nostell. The exhibition at Nostell asked the visitor to consider if the clock should be restored to full working order or left in its original condition. If we follow Stallybrass we would conclude that altering the clock so that it was not entirely made by Harrison would alter the authenticity of the piece. For the National Trust authenticity seems a more important concern than monetary value.

Nobody within the National Trust talked about the price of items, but people often referred to objects belonging to a place, i.e., they were commissioned and made specifically for that site.

5.5 Heritage stories, fixed or evolving?

The four dominant assumptions listed by Bruman (2004) seem to pertinent, specifically the idea of falsification, this is answered by the Regional Curator who insists on “good research” and petrification where several people, including the Regional Curator and the Visitor Experience Director talk about the importance of the National Trust reflecting society, as society changes the Trust must adjust to reflect this. However, when considering the work of Goulding and Dominc (2009) where they talk about cleansed heritage and manipulating history, we can look at examples such as Penryhn Castle and the strike at the start of the 20th century that still causes local people to refuse to visit the castle. As the Director of Visitor experience says, “we are only just starting to face into this”. There are also properties such as Kedleston, where the meeting with the Regional Curator took place, which is closely tied to colonial history. The Director of Visitor Experience acknowledges that the Trust hasn’t looked too carefully into “where did the money come from?”. Goulding and Domic (2009) looks specifically at Croatia and the telling of a national story, but we can see a parallel with the National Trust and British history. The National Trust have been offering a passive version of British history with an assumption of a single narrative when in fact there are many stories, as one of the volunteers at the Workhouse says, there are as many stories as there are people. “Heritage Tourism offers opportunities to portray the past in the present. It provides an infinite time and space in which the past can be experienced through the prism of the endless possibilities of interpretation” Nuryanti (1996, p.251) This is what the Workhouse is aiming to do with the reimagining project. The site also complies with Nuryanti’s notion of built heritage being able to be both unique and universal. The National Trust bought the property because it was the only Workhouse left in the country (unique) but is presenting a multiplicity of stories (universal), that have contemporary resonance with migration and insecure work. This could be contested because the site offers a view of a Victorian form of welfare which might or might not be supported by visitors. The volunteers said that they often have a straw poll of who thinks that the Workhouse is a solution to unemployment and benefits.

5.6 Reflecting Society

The need for the National Trust to reflect society as mentioned by the Director of Visitor Experience and the Regional Curator fits with Ashworth and Page (2011) and the postmodern city in a constant state of flux. The public's relationship with built heritage changes with changes to the wider built environment. Ashworth and Page's work also offers the challenging questions about when a visitor's experience of a National Trust property starts. Is it when one enters the car park, buys a ticket, enters the property? If as Ashworth and Page say that the tourist city in not necessarily a spatial entity, we could extend where the experience starts back to the visitor's journey to get to the destination.

The colonial past of the people who built National Trust properties, the "where did the money come from?" question, relates to Kodar and Zabkar (2010), Grainge (1999) and Waitt (2000) about the commodification of the heritage experience and the suppression of other voices. There are the owners/former owners of National Trust properties who are in effect celebrated for their taste in commissioning these properties and then a token, servant's quarters or below the stairs addition to cover the stories of other people. The lives of the people around the estate are poorly represented and the lives of workers in mines, factories, plantations etc., whose labour paid for the properties isn't included at all in the story. This wasn't something that was raised by staff or volunteers at properties but seems to be something on the agenda of more senor staff who are responsible for strategy and the public perception of the organisation. This is an area for further research as discussed in section 6.5.5.

Writing by Olusoga (2016), Fryer (1984), Eddo-Lodge (2017) and Hirsch (2018) has looked at lack of representation of black people in Britain even though they have been living in Britain for close on 500 years (Fryer, 1984, p.1). Throughout this project it has become clear that the National Trust doesn't particularly represent black British experience or history. What Eddo-Lodge (2017, p.3) describes "Generation after generation of white wealth amassed from the profits of slavery" have paid for a substantial part of the property portfolio now owned by the National Trust. This lack of representation of the wider story seems to be something that needs to be rectified to fulfil the National Trust remit of saving special places “For Everyone, for Ever”. As we can see neither working class or ethnically diverse experiences have been at the centre of the stories at National Trust properties in the past, instead the stories of families who built and lived there have been focussed on. As has been discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.4.5 the National Trust is conscious of the need to tell a wider spread of stories and has made attempts such as the purchasing of a more diversified property portfolio. Whilst there may be advances in looking at representations of working-class people and their history there is little evidence of attempts to represent black British experience and history. It seems that the National Trust is willing to make links between the legacy of empire with wealth, i.e., how the properties were paid for, but there is very little evidence of a move towards telling the stories of the people involved unless they were the beneficiaries of this wealth.

5.7 Visitor Experience and Authenticity

Use of imagination by visitors can be seen as an act of co-creation with the National Trust. The Trust provides content that the imagination of the visitors then works upon. Beverland and Farelly (2103) look at the interconnection between authenticity and personal experience. They support Rose and Wood (2005) and the notion of hyper authenticity where the visitors construct personally useful notions of the authentic. This fits with Gergen (1992) that the postmodern self is a relational self. People position themselves individually in relation to complexity and ambiguity.

The notion of the inauthentic is significant for visitor attractions in the commercial sector (Hede and Thyne, 2010) but it was noticeable that within the National Trust nobody talked about how visitors might negotiate the inauthentic. The assumption, therefore, must be that the National Trust considers everything that it does to be authentic.

Giaccardi (2010) is a study of pause and duration as an indication of how much visitors value objects. This couldn’t be tested because visitors were not part of the data collection. However, volunteers at Belton and Nostell did mention repeat visitors who do return and have told them anecdotally that they have favourite paintings or objects that they feel are a must see on every visit.

5.8 Knowledge and Experience of the visitor

Thinking about service encounters we can see from the work of Price et al. (1994), Price et al. (1995), Hume et al. (2006) that the National Trust meets and exceeds the expectations of visitors in terms of the basic aspects of the service encounter, thinking about ticket sales, catering, toilets, and shops. Something that was apparent and the Workhouse, Belton and Nostell was that there were very few customer complaints. The National Trust has a generic feedback card for visitors and generally has very high satisfaction rates. Thinking then about the experience that people have when visiting properties, we can see visitors as co-creators, we have families making memories together at Belton, or investigating their family history at the Workhouse. This fit in with Arnoud and Price (1993) where extraordinary experiences service encounters are embedded in relationships between service providers and visitors.

Following the literature such as Levine, Britt and Dell (2005) heritage sites need to cater for both visitors (tourists) and local communities. What hadn't been anticipated, at the beginning of this research, is the more everyday interaction of some sites with the local communities, at Belton local families buy annual National Trust membership to access the adventure playground, at Nostell they buy their membership to use the carpark to walk dogs on the parkland. Urry (1990) notes that within the tourist gaze each visitor has their own preconceived ideas and version of the story of a particular place. This was evident at a site such as the Workhouse where visitors arrive with a range of preconceptions about the purpose and function of a Victorian Workhouse. There are often misconceptions about the purpose of the Workhouse. It wasn't for punishment; it was a form of welfare for the poor. These preconceptions form part of a multiple authored narrative (Chronis, Arnoud, Hampton, 2012). The visitors ask questions, swap stories and details with the volunteer guides, slowly new pieces of knowledge emerge with each detail building up other details. The volunteers at the Workhouse were aware of the way in which knowledge was built from fragments of information. The audio guides, where visitors wear headphones, has been a barrier to this interaction but with the reimaging of the site that is taking place this barrier should be removed.

5.9 Education of visitors, during a visit

The work of Duke (2010) found that people can learn how to learn from experiences. This fits nicely with the comments of the Regional Curator who talked about people looking through 21st century eyes. If visitors can learn about what they are looking at they can learn to see them without their 21st century preconceptions. The cultivation of attention and thinking skills can also be achieved (Duke, 2010), this is what the Transform project is trying to do at Nostell, create a different experience for visitors and take them on a journey of discovery. Strange and Kempa (2003) note that intended messages are not always taken up by visitors and point out the example of Alcatraz where despite the efforts of managing and staff to tell the complex history of the site many visitors still pose in the cells for humorous photographs.

Different people experience a visit in different ways (Prentice,1998). This has been discussed in relation the Workhouse in 4.14 but it also applies to Nostell as the work of the Transform Project is delivered. The Transform project creates a range of different reasons to visit the property. It might be low level engagement, dog walking, cycle trail, visiting the gardens or it could be to visit contemporary art exhibitions. The important point for Prentice (1998) is that the management are clear in terms of objectives when looking to segment visitors into different types.

The relationship of the National Trust membership to the cause of the charity can be achieved with an experiential approach (Conway and Leighton, 2012). In relationship terms the members can be conceptualised as advocates for the Trust and the cause. Previously the National Trust has concentrated on selling membership based on good value for money, particularly for family days out. Now that the membership has grown to such high levels (over 5 million) there is a need to manage demand and use the power of the membership to further the cause. This was discussed with the National Director of Visitor Experience and the Regional Visitor Experience consultant and the General Managers of Belton, Nostell and the Workhouse.

The movement of ordinary people to reclaim their stories and heritage (Stanish, 2008) continues and the example of the story of the local community and the relationship with Penrhyn Castle is an example of this. Thinking about whose stories are represented leads back one final time to the area of discussion, representation, as discussed in 5.6.

5.11 Conclusions

There are two things going on in this research. One is trying to make sense of the National Trust as an organisation, how does the organisation successfully create visitor experience? Issues about control, “spirit of place” and strategy, developing the story of the site and the relationship that visitors have with that, and the cause of the National Trust have all been discussed along with the relative power positions of the people that were interviewed. From observation a model (4.16.7) has been suggested to show the apparent use of power and how this differs from the organisational theory.

The research has also been looking at how people develop understanding of the stories of a place. The Literature Review tells us ways in which creators work to tell a particular story with tools such as placement of objects, use of space etc. to guide the visitor. This work creates desired outcomes for visitors. These are very much in the control of the curator. They are set before the visitor is allowed to enter; these are management decisions that influence customer experience. The National Trust is changing at some properties with the introduction of free flow in houses rather than a set route. This gives the illusion of visitors deciding, but they are choosing within set parameters. At Nostell it was found that the guides are still telling the visitors which way to go through the house, even though they have been explicitly told not to do this.

We haven’t got data from visitors, neither has the National Trust, to know what visitors think. The National Trust has feedback cards for visitors. Rich data on this was collected at Belton. There seemed to be very few complaints. In some ways we could say that the National Trust doesn’t know enough about visitor’s experience and the Director of Visitor Experience did acknowledge that and talked about pilot projects that he has set up. He also pointed out that visitor numbers keep rising so they must be doing something right. It seems, but not necessarily supported by evidence, that the increase in visitors is to do with the change of emphasis by the Trust. For example, the outdoor leisure at Nostell is driving visitor numbers, not visits to the house.

This research is not assessing the ability of the guides as storytellers. We are interested in the actual stories they told. When volunteers were interviewed, they were asked about how they learnt the stories. How did they know they were accurate? There was an interesting answer to this at Nostell, about being told stories by the dowager duchess. The implication was, if information came from her, it must be true. At Belton House and the Workhouse, volunteers talked about the history group within the volunteer body, whose members carried out research. At both Belton and the Workhouse there seemed to be method to this. They had regular history group meetings where research was presented and discussed. Also, individual volunteers said that they had done their own research on the internet to follow things up from the book (that was shown) that the guides at the Workhouse used as a basis for their information.

Of the General Managers, the General Manager at the Workhouse was very involved in the new presentation of the story there. The General Manger at Belton House didn't seem to find it too important but at the same time he talked about lots of detail about the estate, it's role in the war effort and used a map on his office wall to illustrate points. At Nostell the General Manager and the Transform Project Manager seemed to be locked in a battle with the volunteers, about who controlled the story? The volunteers had the face-to-face contact with the visitors. Both managers hinted that they might have to get rid of lots of volunteers who weren't buying in to the "spirit of place". The volunteers spoken to claimed that they weren't consulted, they certainly felt that they weren't listened to and were unhappy with the new approach as a Treasure House. Volunteers wanted to tell the story of the house and the family "not be a museum". The Manager's point that the family story wasn't a reason to visit was clearly explained. Indeed, the visitor figures for the house are very low, compared to the Estate as a whole and the gardens. The interventions that had been introduced to the house by the Transform project had demonstrably increased visitor numbers. The volunteers acknowledge this but weren't happy. In summary there was a great deal of hostility between the Transform project and the house volunteers that were spoken to.

A constant theme at Belton and Nostell was the difficulty of getting new volunteers. Demographics were often talked about. Many volunteers had taken early retirement and then spent, often, 20 years as a volunteer. There was a lack of people following this route. Possibly in the last decade less people are in the same position of early retirement and no childcare responsibilities. It was felt that many who didn't volunteer were looking after grandchildren. Several paid staff talked about the need for new ways to volunteer.

The research data does indicate "issues/problems" with communication between staff and volunteers. This is important for the creation of visitor experience because volunteers, for the most part, have the face-to-face contact with visitors. At Nostell the problems are connected to change. "They" are doing it to us. There was lots of dissent from volunteers in the room when interviews were being carried out. We can compare that with The Transform Project Manager, one of the people the volunteers were angry with. She didn't want to talk at Nostell. The meeting was at a railway station and then a coffee shop nearby. She was very cross, and she felt in the volunteers didn't respect her professional skills. She felt that volunteers were rude to her. The volunteers felt under informed and that they had had change imposed upon them. The issues for volunteers were generally about validation. Almost all volunteers talked about their work (or previous work) away from the National Trust. This issue of retired people and status could be important in attracting volunteers in the future.

At the Workhouse, some volunteers had worries about respect for the story of the place with changes taking place, but there was plenty of evidence of volunteers being involved in the new project. One of the volunteers had been on visits with staff to another workhouse and talked about how Southwell is more original and authentic. There was also evidence of how the story of the Workhouse has been developed by volunteers, with new information gathered and disseminated to visitors.

5.12 Summary

Having reached the end of the discussion of issues raised in the data that are pertinent to the ideas presented in the literature review we will move on in the final chapter to look at conclusions and make recommendations for professional practice.

6 Conclusion

6.1 What this research set out to do

This is a restatement of the aims and objectives of the thesis and an explanation of how the aim has been met through the delivery of the objectives.

The Aims and Objectives of this thesis

Aim: To investigate how the National Trust creates visitor experience.

Objectives:

1 To identify current management practice in National Trust properties.

2 To explore the power dynamics between the staff and volunteers in the creation of stories that are told to visitors.

3 To understand how 'authenticity' is used to communicate with the visitor.

4 To develop recommendations about how managers can enhance the visitor experiences.

So, have these objectives been achieved? The first objective has been met and is evidenced by the stories and deconstructions in chapter 4 and the recommendations for practice presented in this chapter.

The second objective has been achieved using deconstruction which has shown, for example at Nostell, that there are significant differences between the views of volunteers and management and not always a clear understanding of where power lies in relation to the experience that the visitors have. The volunteers have been shown to have considerable power to influence the visitor’s experience even when expressly acting against management initiatives. The use of deconstruction proved to be a useful method for discovering underlying power structures in the organisation.

The third objective is more difficult because “Authenticity is a fluid, permeable concept” (Lovell and Bull, 2018, p.45). Authenticity is discussed in the Literature Review and then within interviews, some understanding is reached about how authenticity is used to communicate with the visitor and the Literature Review reached the conclusion that staged authenticity is necessary to create the visitor experience. It is clearly an important part of the work of the specialist staff such as the curator and visitor experience consultant. It is also important at properties, where staff and volunteers were very keen to tell the story of their property.

The fourth objective is met by the section 6.3 contribution to practice.

6.2 Summary of results

How does the National Trust create visitor experience? By examining stories collected from within the National Trust, we can understand how the National Trust creates visitor experience. A greater understanding of how the National Trust works to create visitor experience leads to a breaking through the postmodern veneer of the corporate National Trust. The data for this thesis has been collected through a series of active interviews with senior managers, specialists, property managers, visitor facing staff and volunteers at a range of National Trust properties. Deconstruction has been used for the analysis of this data to investigate the internal workings of the NT, power relationships and positions and how this creates the visitor experience.

There is agreement within the National Trust about what constitutes a good experience for visitors and about key messages that visitors should take away, but there is not always agreement about how this should be achieved. There is also a question about who visitors are and diversity of visitors and within the trust, this is manifested in the question whose story is being told?

The current literature is about professional practice but, not specifically within the National Trust. What the collected data uncovered was that we have several different types of professional practice working in conjunction with each other, often not recognising the differences in approach and validity of the varying positions.

6.3.1 Contributions to practice

This research suggests the following implications for professional practice, the need to define success to develop key performance indicators, the need for the National Trust to address issues of inclusion and representation, review of management and recruitment of future volunteers, introducing a standard approach to curation, as per Objective 4 of this thesis (To develop recommendations about how managers can enhance the visitor experience). Each of these will be examined in greater detail.

6.3.2 The need to define success to develop key performance indicators

Some managers were asked what success looked like to them. Generally, they said that it was a good question. Sometimes discussed visitor numbers and income generation were discussed, but usually there wasn't a very good answer. Often the answer was about visitor satisfaction but then there wasn't a way that this was being measured. The standard measure of visitor satisfaction seemed to be lack of complaints, this is further discussed in Section 6.4. It seems that pilot projects were taking place at some properties to develop methods of collecting feedback that could become standard practice. As it stands most properties seem to have little data that tells them about the experience that the visitors have, so they have little to work with in terms of improving and developing the visitor experience. The National Trust needs to develop procedures for defining success and measuring it as discussed in section 4.17.

6.3.3 The need for the National Trust to address issues of inclusion and representation

After seeing what an important issue this is, it is imperative that the National Trust acts to address these issues. The lack of ethnic diversity amongst volunteers and staff is something that can be addressed through thinking about recruitment practices and changing the face of the organisation, which is seen as a white organisation. This links with the need for managers to have access to information that will enable them to make decisions, as discussed in Section 6.4 on the adaptation of the Servicescape model. There is also the issue of whose stories are told and how they are told. The National Trust in common with many organisations is in denial of the role that colonialism and the slave trade have played in the development of British society and its heritage. There is an urgent need to tackle these issues and the National Trust can play a leading role in the debate about what it means to be British and how we deal with issues from our collective past. It is important who is represented, and whose story is told, it affects who visits National Trust properties and the ability of the National Trust to fulfil its remit of being for "everyone" as discussed in section 5.6.

6.3.4 A review of management and recruitment of future volunteers

As has been highlighted there is a growing difficulty in recruiting volunteers. There are a great many volunteers working within the National Trust who have been working for a considerable time and are aging, in some cases limiting their ability to carry out roles.

It has been observed that with societal changes there are two main reasons for the difficulty of recruiting volunteers from the pool of early retirees who have made up a considerable number of the National Trust's volunteers. This is discussed in section 5.11. Over the past ten years early retirement, which was becoming a norm for those born in the mid twentieth century has changed. With longevity increasing and house prices rising people are having to work longer before retirement. Therefore, there is a smaller pool of potential early retirees and then of those early retirees several of them are now involved on a regular basis with childcare, usually grandchildren because both parents work, and childcare is expensive. This means that the National Trust needs to develop other models of what volunteering can be.

At the moment people volunteer on a monthly rota, often working on the same day or days each week. For the future the National Trust needs to become more flexible about patterns of volunteering to make the opportunity open to people who can't commit to a regular day each week but might be willing to take small blocks of holiday to volunteer, as people do for wildlife and outdoor charities, even paying for a working holiday and looking at the opportunities presented by companies who as part of their corporate social responsibility programmes allow employees to use a block of work time to volunteer.

A considerable number of volunteers mentioned the way that they are sometimes treated and viewed by managers and staff. Many times, people referred to their status in previous employment and it was clearly an issue for them that they didn't feel as valued as they would like when carrying out their voluntary duties. It was as if as unpaid workers they were undervalued. Clearly not all staff treat volunteers in an inappropriate way, indeed it is probable that it is a very small minority but given the difficulty of recruiting volunteers the National Trust certainly wants to do everything it can to retain them. It might be that some staff training about the ways in which to manage volunteers is needed.

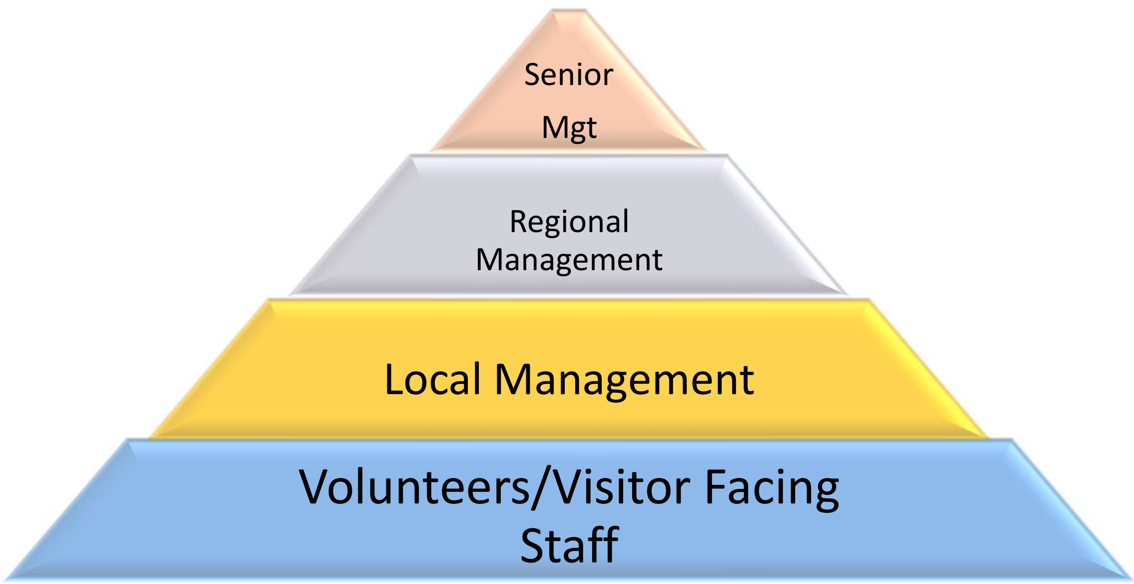
We should also consider that there are stories that are told to volunteers, by visitors that go un-recorded. These are a private exchange between visitor and volunteer that is an exchange valuable to both. It emphasises the connections that the volunteer's value with the visitors and seems to be one of the things that the volunteers particularly enjoy. The volunteers should be seen as the attraction and an asset. As the frontline members of the team, they have direct contact with visitors and can make considerable difference to the enjoyment of visitors, and therefore visit satisfaction.

6.3.5 The inversion of power in practice

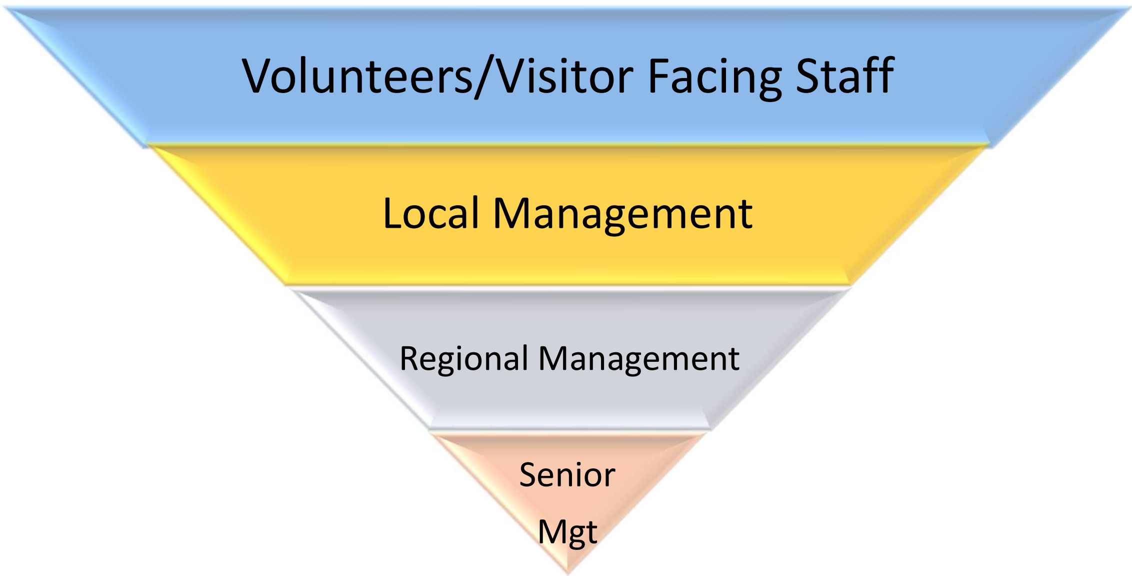
As discussed in 4.16.11 The National Trust works from a traditional understanding as the following diagram with the hierarchy developing policy and strategy and this filtering down into the experience that is offered to visitors, we could instead position the power in the organisation at the opposite end of the diagram, so the organisation is more fully focussed on the needs of the visitors and the organisation is organised accordingly.

Figure 17. The Inversion of Power in practice

The National Trust power as it is planned, this is what management theory would tell us is happening.



National Trust power as it is exercised from observation during this study, how the National Trust could look with a reversal of the power dynamics. Where the organisation is orientated to provide support for the interaction of frontline staff and volunteers with the visitors.



6.3.6 Introducing a standard approach to curation

Curation whilst clearly important within the national trust seems to be less of a priority than visitor experience. Visitor experience seems to be very much the priority, particularly when linked to numbers of members and audiences as discussed in 6.3.2. The skills of curation seem underappreciated and are in danger of being lost in the pursuit of visitor numbers. As is discussed in chapter 4, the recreation of twentieth century interiors, such as those to mark the anniversaries of the Two World Wars is relatively easy to do. The is a considerable amount of material available including photographs and film to help research twentieth century topics but as soon as one moves back into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries things become harder. This is when skilled curation is needed. The added problem of the current success in terms of visitor numbers is that it creates greater potential for wear and tear and more serious damage. This again calls for imaginative curation skills, to present interesting displays that vary what is seen and work to preserve as well as grant access. A way to ensure that curatorial standards are upheld would be to have a standard approach to curation and use the skills that are available within the National Trust to be fully realised. At the moment the Regional Curators operate in the same way as consultants, they do not get involved in projects unless they are invited by General Managers. This means that they are often not involved in the early stages of projects. By using the curators at an earlier stage, the opportunity is there to explore a wide range of possibilities and ensure that projects are carried out to the highest curatorial standards more fully. If the National Trust were to adopt a system of including curators at the earlier planning stages, it would also require curators to have open minds to the possibilities presented by the property teams.

6.4 Academic contribution

6.4.1 Servicescape and volunteers

The research also suggests the following academic contribution, development of the concept of the servicescape (Bitner, 1992). Currently the servicescape (as shown below) includes input from employees and customers. In the context of the National Trust, there are volunteers who play a vital role in creating the service environment, they also need to be included in the model. So instead of a two-way view of the servicescape it is necessary to consider the contribution of a third group of players, volunteers, in this context. It seems that within the National Trust that volunteers are neither employees or customers in a traditional sense and so don't have a place in the Servicescape. It seems that the academic concept of the servicescape if it incorporates volunteers as well offers a new perspective and a new dynamic for managers to understand and analyse their visitor offer. If volunteers are brought into the equation and thought about as co-creators, then it makes a radical change to the way in which the servicescape is viewed. Servicescape isn't usually used in a heritage context but introducing it allows us as academics to explore the way in which the visitor interacts with the heritage environment. The volunteers are present in all of the same parts of the model as the employees and the customers, holistic environment, internal responses and behaviour.

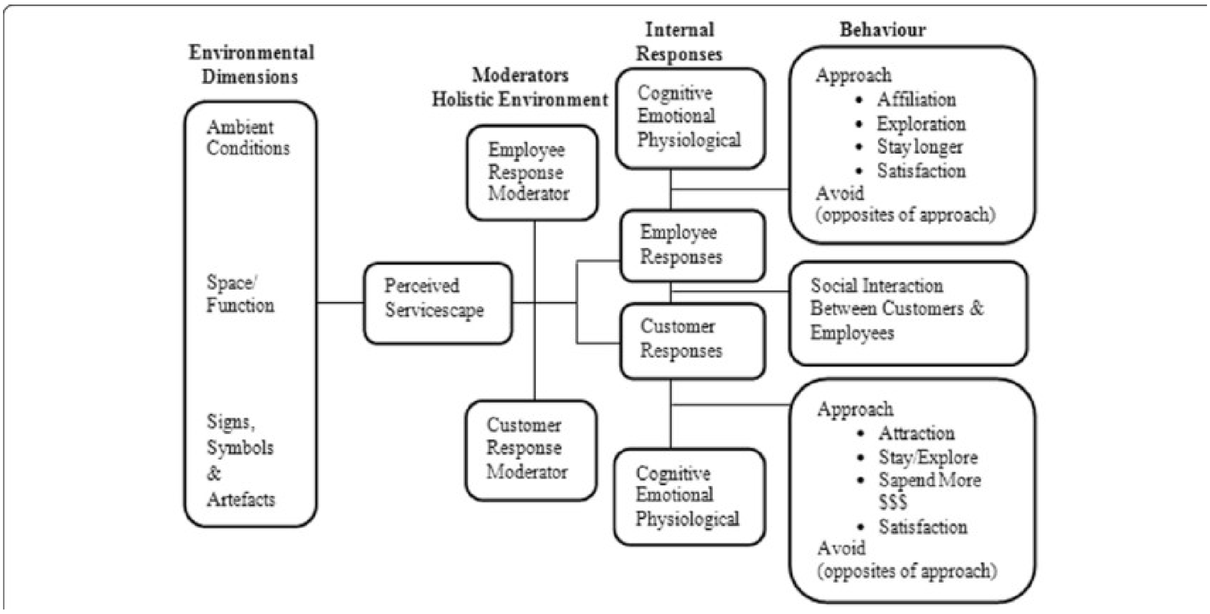


Figure 18. Bitner (1992) Servicescape model

An amended model with the Volunteer responses in between the Employee Responses and the Customer Responses is shown below.

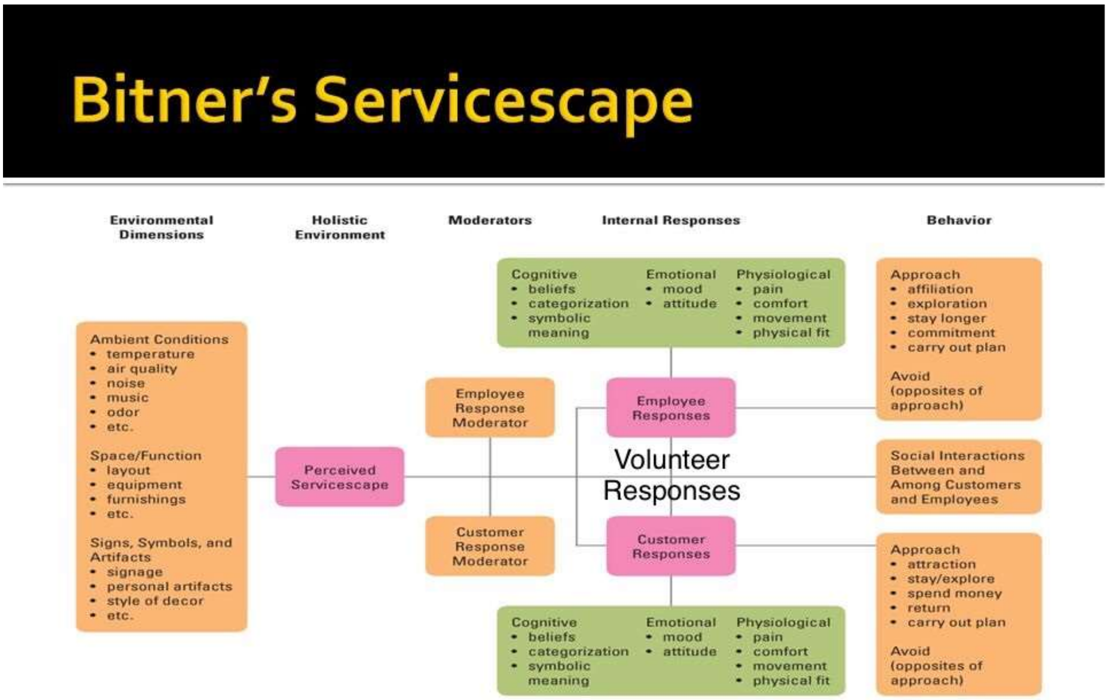
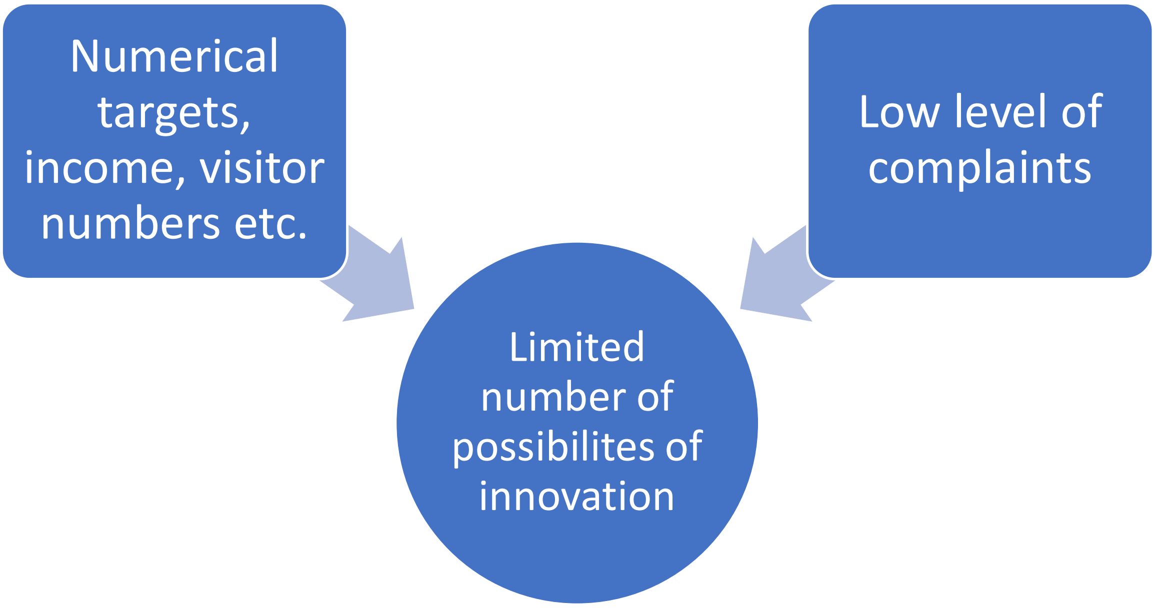


Figure 19. Amended Servicescape model

A further model is offered as follows that includes the inputs for managers to understand the heritage servicescape and allow them a greater chance of understanding the experience that is being offered.

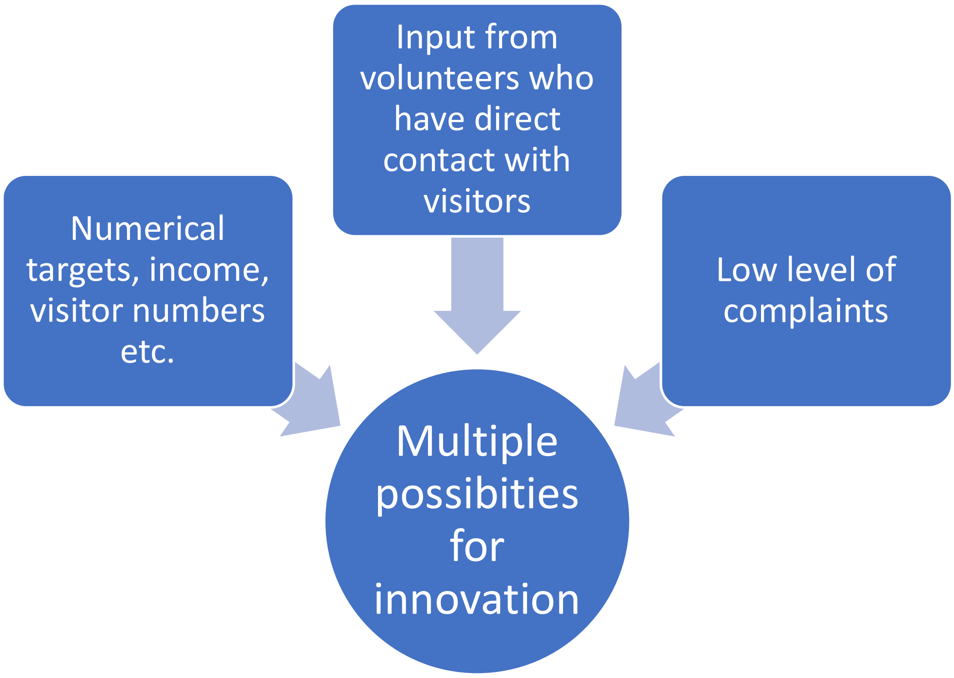
Current National Trust information used by managers to understand and improve visitor experience. The most likely changes to come from the current input of information is the incremental improvement of what is already done.

Figure 20



Addition of input from volunteers adds a new dimension to the available information for managers and contributes to innovation. The input from volunteers who have direct contact with visitors is on open source of potential new ideas and innovations.

Figure 21



6.4.2 The method as theoretical contribution

The methodology for this thesis can be seen as an academic contribution. The combination of a Post-Modern approach and the use of Deconstruction as a method of analysis which were appropriate to the subject where undocumented voices were being heard along with the use of Snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a useful tool for accessing research participants that are hard to access, such as in an organisation like the National Trust where details are not readily available from outside the organisation. Typically snowball sampling has been used as a method of obtaining participants who are difficult to reach because of social factors but there is definite potential for organisational researchers working from outside the organisation. Although of course there are the questions around the composition of the sample as discussed in 3.6.4 the researcher can set the sample frame but then must allow an element of control to be passed to the participants who refer the researcher on to further participants.

As is discussed in 3.7.1 the use of deconstruction is particularly suitable for looking at situation where power relationships are being studied. Often those with hierarchical power dominate the discourse. The use of deconstruction counteracts this situation allowing participants with less hierarchical power to have points of view represented.

6.5 Areas for further research

6.5.1 The five areas of further research

There are five areas of further research that have emerged from the work in this thesis.

6.5.2 Power relations between roles

The research that has been carried out could be further focussed on specific posts within the National Trust and further investigation could be carried out to locate the exact development of the experience. Whilst it is clear from this research those certain roles such as curator and the volunteers who have face to face contact with the visitors, there is still work to be done on understanding the power relations between the professional expertise and the proximity of contact with visitors. This is something that is now apparent because of the research carried out in this thesis.

6.5.3 Visitor Feedback

This thesis was always about the internal workings of the National Trust, the method was chosen to look inside, to break the postmodern veneer. One of the things therefore that was not going to be included was how visitors felt about their experience. As has already been discussed the National Trust appears to have a limited understanding of how visitors receive the experience that has been created. The level of feedback on satisfaction is set low, if people aren't complaining then they must be happy. Further research could focus on the visitor and perhaps work with National Trust properties to develop a deeper understanding of visitor engagement with the experience offered and develop a standard method for collecting feedback from visitors.

6.5.4 Volunteers

Volunteers have been shown to play an important part in the delivery of the visitor experience and as is acknowledged by the National Trust they provide a vital element in keeping the whole organisation running. However, as has previously been discussed where are they going to come from in the future? Changes to longevity and retirement ages mean that there are less early retired people who are fit, health and willing to volunteer. It appears that this could be a significant problem over the next decade and raises concerns for many organisations that require volunteers as a significant part of the workforce. Lack of volunteers in the future, changes in working patterns demands on the time of people who have previously volunteered. Solutions to this might include different types of time commitments. Currently people seem to volunteer on a regular basis i.e., each Wednesday, moving to a more flexible approach so that people could pick and choose when to volunteer would be an area to research.

6.5.5 Representation

This study wasn't designed to look specifically at representation but as has been described in Section 5.6 Representing Society there is an apparent issue in this area. This presents an opportunity for further research. The National Trust has instigated a review of properties to identify links with slavery since the field work for this thesis took place. Could the National Trust play an important role in developing an understanding of the legacy of the slave trade and the way these fits into the narrative of the UK? There is also a question about representation in terms of staff and volunteers. Is this an issue for the National Trust as an organisation? If it is working to preserve national heritage for everyone forever, should the workforce reflect society? Further representation questions could be examined in terms of visitors, how does the National Trust attract a more diverse audience? Does it need to tell stories that reflect a more inclusive past, present and future. This wasn't something that interviewees seemed concerned about. It seemed generally that the story of the specific place had been found and was then presented. This may be a feature of the demographic of the volunteers, elderly, white, British. A change of demographic within the volunteers would possibly change the view of what stories need to be told.

This further research could also include issues around disability. A challenge for heritage visitor attractions is the physical nature of many old buildings that don't make access for people with physical disabilities easy. This is a topic that wasn't discussed with interviewees in this study. There are also questions about how the National Trust might cater for a whole range of visitors with varying needs. Many innovations in recent years have successfully attracted family audiences and the changing nature of visits (outdoor offer) but not specifically looked at different ethnic groups and their heritage or people with disabilities who often describe themselves as being invisible.

6.5.6 Covid 19 Pandemic

How has this affected the National Trust? During the pandemic properties were closed following UK Government restrictions from March to June 2020 and then a phased reopening took place with numbers limited and advice for the public to visit properties close to home. The initial reopening was highly popular according to the National Trust (National Trust, 2020). The National Trust portfolio including so much outdoor space means that they were able to offer a solution as a "safe" outdoor space. This then links with the area for expansion that the National Trust has been exploiting as an area of growth, with trails for walks, runs and cycle rides. However, in July 2020 the National Trust issued a statement (National Trust, 2020b) outlining potential £200 million losses for the year and 1,200 redundancies. From the research carried out in this thesis it would suggest that the National Trust was going to have an even greater reliance on volunteers, again emphasising the need to have wider societal appeal and innovations necessary to replace the aging volunteers that they currently rely on. Further research could also look at organisational resilience and the effects upon recruitment of staff and volunteers.

By 2021 the National Trust did use the rise in staycations following the pandemic as an opportunity (National Trust, 2021) by making clear the range of experiences that they offered visitors. At the time of writing, it is not clear how successful the National Trust has been at making up for losses during the pandemic period and how this will affect the organisation in the future.

Appendix 1

The question of quality of qualitative research has been addressed by the UK government Cabinet Office. In a study commissioned by the Cabinet Office by Spencer et al (2003) there are 18 criteria set out as a series of quality indicators that can help assess the quality of a piece of qualitative research. Bryman and Bell (2011) provide these in summary.

1 How credible are the findings?

2 Has knowledge/understanding been extended by the research?

3 How well does the evaluation address its original aims and purposes?

4 Scope for drawing wider influences – how well is this explained?

5 How clear is the basis of the evaluative appraisal?

6 How defensible is the research design?

7 How well defended is the sample design/target selection of cases/documents?

8 Sample composition/case inclusion – how well is the eventual coverage described?

9 How well is the data collection carried out?

10 How well has the approach to, and formulation of, the analysis been conveyed?

11 Contexts of the data sources – how well are they retained and portrayed?

12 How well has diversity of perspective and content been explored?

13 How well has detail, depth, and complexity (richness?) of the data been conveyed?

14 How clear are the links between data, interpretations, and conclusions – i.e., how well can the route to any conclusions be seen?

15 How clear and coherent is the reporting?

16 How clear are the assumptions/theoretical perspectives/values that have shaped the form and output of the evaluation?

17 What evidence is there of attention to ethical issues?

18 How adequately has the research process been documented?

(Taken from Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.400)

Appendix 2

These prompts were used for the active interviews

Manager Prompts

What is your role? How long have you been here?

How is the management of properties structured? You manage who?

Why do people visit the property?

What is the story of the property? E.g., NT involvement, previous history

What is your role in attracting visitors?

What are the main features of a visit, do you think?

What do visitors find out on a visit?

Do you think this attracts them to come?

Do visitors return? Often? Is there evidence for this?

How do you know what guides do/tell visitors? Training?

Do you think that the story of the property is important? How? Why?

Does the story of the place stay the same or does it change over time?

Is this organic or a strategic decision to attract visitors?

How do you know what people think about visits?

Is feedback collected? By whom? Is it acted upon? Who makes these decisions?

Does the NT website attract visitors to come?

Does direct email encourage visits? Repeat visits?

Non-Manager Prompts

What is your role? How long have you been doing this role?

What do you enjoy about your role and about the property?

What do you do in your role in terms of interaction with visitors?

Why do you think that people visit? Do they revisit? Is it the stories that you are telling them?

Does the property have routes that the visitor chooses or is there a correct way to go round?

How do you know the details about the property? How did you learn these?

Do you tell stories to visitors?

Do you know that the details are historically correct?

Do you check details?

Do you gather information yourself to tell visitors?

Is there an official story?

Do you play a part in the creating of stories?

Do visitors tell you stories? Give feedback?

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