IDENTITY, CULTURE AND BELONGING IN THE IRON MINING LANDSCAPE OF THE CANIGOU MOUNTAIN, FRANCE

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Declaration sheet

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Abstract

This research examines the relationship between place, culture and identity in a population which lies at the heart of a long history of iron-mining. Known as *Catalonia du Nord* (North Catalonia) or French Catalonia, the region is a blend of French and Catalan cultures and the Canigou mountain, which is at the heart of this study, is the symbol of Catalans on either side of the border. Situated in a rural location at the eastern end of the French Pyrenees, the area has witnessed demographic change and industrial decline since the last mine closed in 1985. Consequently this research was designed to explore the ways in which the local population embed their sense of belonging in this mountain landscape.

An inductive approach allowed for data to be generated from fifty-seven participants from five former mining villages. These numbers included a significant proportion of incomers to the area, including a variety of European nationalities, who had settled in the communities. The importance of place emerged from the interviews as a potent feature of the cultural environment. The region has links with the Catalans south of the border with Spain, whilst at the same time is part of the French nation. Investigation of this duality reveals regional and national identity sit side by side but that strong local feelings emerge when this regional identity is threatened. Local cultural practices embody the present-day identity of these communities in the landscape. Rather than portraying culture as a fixed feature, this study also highlights the concept of cultural flow which accounts for the way in which people can cross cultural boundaries.

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Therefore I dedicate this thesis to past and future generations: to my late parents, Waldo and Dorothy Jenkins who gave me a love of landscape and the ability to appreciate the wisdom in each and every one of us, and to my grandchildren, Aria, Darcy, Louie, Ruairi and Bethan.

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

"The Canigou is a symbol for us, of our homeland. And it contains riches of iron which have maintained us over the generations" (Participant R.30).

1.1 Research subject

This thesis is about how landscape informs a sense of identity and belonging. It argues that the affective bonds which tie people to places are intimately linked with memories and a range of personal meaning-making processes, and are used by people to create a sense of 'being' in the physical environment. Consequently this research occupies a distinctive position through its analysis of an underexamined case study: the iron-mining villages of the Canigou mountain region. The study investigates the relationship between people and their mountain environment and considers how memory and identity interweave with the landscape to give rise to a 'sense of place'.

This thesis takes one Pyrenean mountain, the Canigou, to demonstrate how it plays a central role in the identity of the local population and, by paying attention to the surrounding environment, demonstrates how it provides an important entity from which to consider how people and landscape shape each other. I examine the importance of a 'sense of place', how people experience places in meaningful ways, as well as the distinctive features of a place which together define its character. I pick up on the concepts of New Materialisms (Attala and Steel, 2019; Bennett, 2010; Coole and Frost, 2010; Govier and Steel, 2021) and natureculture (Haraway, 2008; Descola and Pálsson, 1996) which, as the latter implies, renegotiate the divide between nature and culture and signals that they co-exist as parts of a whole. As a processual relationship, I explore the agency of landscape in the lives of the local population whilst a phenomenological approach gives an account of the emotional connection with the landscape.

Commentary on the local/global dialectic of place identity and culture is an important aspect of my analysis. Situated in France and bordering Spain, the research area of *Catalonia du Nord* (North Catalonia), provides an opportunity to analyse the cultural impact of living in border country (Williams, 2014c) and to engage with the discussion that local identity is a product of global influences (Massey, 1995, p. 183). The processual

nature of identity as a sociological concept, first voiced by Mead (1863-1931) and echoed by many (Goffman, 1990; Calhoun, 1994; Somer, 1994), provides a framework for my analysis into how wider influences are reconciled with local identity. The border location also contextualises the work of Goodhart who highlights the importance of allegiances to one's locality in his analysis of people's feelings about their identity (2017). I present the argument that whilst local traditions consolidate the identity and heritage of the locality, the testimonies of incomers to the villages illustrate how they too can identify with the values and meanings of these celebrations and become embedded in the local culture.

The research took place between April 2016 and March 2020 and was undertaken in five villages, namely Baillestavy, La Bastide, Corsavy, Escaro and Taurinya. Situated in the south-eastern end of the Pyrenees, France, these five communities have a long history of iron mining. A shrinking population since the mine closures in the last century, there is a relatively recent community-led interest in mining heritage. The remains of the mining activity are embedded in the landscape: the mine entrances, offices and sleeping quarters, roasting furnaces and elements of the system for transporting the ore are striking industrial vestiges in a rural and remote landscape. How people engage with these material remains presents the opportunity for me to consider the interplay between living memory and collective memory (Coupland, 2012) and how Nora's concept of commemorative sites, *lieux de mémoire,* places of memory, sits alongside *milieux de mémoire*, or evolving, living memory in the present (Nora, 1989).

Firstly however, I wish to highlight my own subject position with regard to the research area. I have spent many summers walking on the Canigou and was familiar with the significance of the mountain for Catalans before I embarked on this study. It became evident that the communities held a rich body of knowledge about the mining past and that people who moved into the villages from elsewhere were drawn into the story. As a result, I was inspired to determine the role the landscape played in co-creating inhabitants' identities. Thus, I set out to capture the inhabitants' insights into their relationship with this place and how it impacted on their sense of identity. It was thus essential for me to choose a methodology which gave me direct access to participants in their own environment. I therefore embarked on immersing myself in the lives of these communities through participation in village events, socialising and involvement in

discussions on the issues facing the world in general over a period of six months, giving me access to the culture and social dynamics in the specifics of the setting. Having first-hand insights allowed me to gain an understanding of the ways in which my research participants see and interact with the world around them, and to give a rich account of the narratives of identity and belonging in this place and in this time.

1.2 Research context

My research focused on a particular mountain, the Canigou, in the south of France, at the eastern end of the Pyrenees (Figure 1.1).
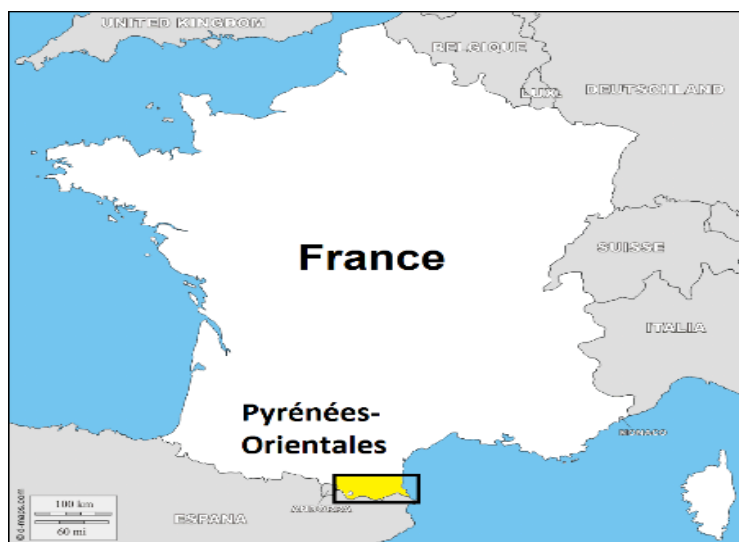
Figure 1.1 Map of France, highlighting the department, Pyrénées-Orientales, lying at the eastern end of the Pyrenees. The research area lies within this department (source: P. Claughton).

Situated near the French border with Spain, the Canigou is the source of rich iron ore deposits which have been worked almost continuously for over two thousand years and supported the remote mountain villages which grew up near them. The mountain has an emotional impact and physical presence for Catalans living on both sides of the border and is regarded as a symbol of their identity, meriting investigation of the term 'sense of place'. Known as *Catalonia du Nord*, (North Catalonia) the area has links with the Catalans south of the border with Spain, whilst at the same time is part of the French nation.

The Pyrenean mountain range, which delineates the political border between France and Spain acts as both a dividing and a unifying feature. A geographical barrier, there are few border crossing-points; however, "instead of merely separating people the mountains also represent a cultural link between the Spanish and French Catalonias" (Häkli, 2004, p. 60). As Häkli (2004) points out, the European Union policy of regionalisation, which fosters cross-border cooperation, has resulted in some economic and governance initiatives, such as links between towns either side of the border, promoting the Pyrenees as a space of mutual communication between north and south Catalonia. However, an analysis of a 1990 survey, carried out to ascertain an understanding of the border held by Catalans both north and south, revealed that "despite the role of the Pyrenees as an element of cultural integration, and the strong historical relations between *El Principat* and *Catalunya Nord*, there is not yet a strong cross-border identity in existence in the Catalan borderlands" (Häkli, 2004, p. 64). And yet initiaitives such as the high-speed train (TGV) which links Barcelona to Perpignan (Walker, 2023) reflect the policy of the Catalan government in Barcelona which "stresses the connection of Catalonia to the north, rather than to the rest of Spain" (Häkli, 2004, p. 62) and questions the role of the national border in defining identity.

As borderland, my research area, *Catalonia du Nord* is therefore ideally placed to explore how people embrace the tension between differing identities, in this case, French and Catalan, and how locals and incomers alike arrange their past and present identities in a region which is expressing its local identity in a national context. The location also presents the opportunity to investigate how people construct a distinct and coherent space in which collective and individual identities are realigned, and narratives of 'otherness' congregate alongside feelings of belonging. This has increasing relevance in today's 'global' world where we witness the interconnectedness of ideas and cultures, particularly through the medium of the internet, and yet borders still present obstacles, whether political or geographical. Crawford quotes a refugee who fled his home country: "The world has become really really borderless-yet there are still borders within this borderlessness. So many borders" (2022, p. 355). In addition to those seeking asylum from persecution, Crawford describes how climate change will increase diaspora as people are forced to leave increasingly inhospitable parts of the world leading to

consequent pressure on those countries which are not so affected by flooding and desertification. Rather than closed borders, his research leads him to the argument that we need to rethink what we mean by borders, and consider how to "weave societies together", for the good of humanity as a whole (2022, p. 372). Geographically and historically a crossing point between region and state, and between two states, as well as witness to movement of people today and over the centuries, traced in Chapter Three, *Catalonia du Nord* offers an opportunity to examine how the local population reconcile the notion of borders with Marty's expressed aim of a 'portable cultural outlook' (Marty, 2019, p. 197).

The originality of my research lies in its holistic examination of how memory, culture, heritage and identity interact to create a sense of place in this unexamined border landscape. Despite interest in the iron mining history and archaeology of this area (Izard, 1994; Verna, 2017; Izard and Mut, 2007; Dabosi, 2000), research has tended to focus on the early and medieval periods, while how the mining past forms part of the present-day identity of the local population has not been the subject of detailed consideration or examination. In respect of this, I build upon Orange's (2016) research into the meaning of sense of place in the Cornish post-mining landscape in which her analysis of the meanings attributed to the phrase by her respondents leads her to identify that those born in Cornwall are more likely to attribute sense of place in terms of belonging, whilst those not born in Cornwall "are more likely to define sense of place in terms of cognition" (2016, p. 115). My analysis considers the term through the lens of New Materialisms and how an understanding of sense of place, as articulated by both those moving into the area and those families with long-standing connections to the mining past, emerges through physical engagement within the landscape. Whilst any internet search engine brings up plenty of references to Catalonia (Bastie, 2018; Canga, 2016; Crameri, 2000; Llobera, 2004; Marty, 2019; Venetia, 2019), the results focus in particular on Spanish Catalonia and in proportion to this, the Catalan area on the north side of the border receives little attention. Häkli has examined the cross-boundary regionalism in terms of cross-border co-operative schemes of the Catalan lands and concludes that there appears to be little appreciation from the regional population of these efforts and that "Even in cases where it is possible to point at historical, cultural, and linguistic affinity across

state borders, as in the Catalan…border areas, spatial identities based on the sovereignty of the state appear to prevail rather than yield to new regional identities" (2001, p. 98). Whilst in part, my research upholds this, I contribute to the academic dialogue by examining more closely the fine distinction between regional and national identities and how these overlap and layer, and consider how the border area provides a meeting-space for various cultures and identities to congregate. With a blend of families who have lived in the area for generations and others who have moved there relatively recently, its original contribution also lies in how incomers create a sense of belonging and how the communities "weave together" a variety of cultural strands to create a coherent local and, at the same time, global village.

1.3 Research background

Having given an introduction to the context of my research and highlighted its original contribution, I now turn to an outline of the concepts and definitions which underpin my research, namely: sense of place, phenomenology, New Materialisms and natureculture, taskscape, identity and memory. These all tie together the various strands which emerged from my study into a coherent whole, embedding the voices of the locals in the Canigou landscape.

The term 'sense of place' is a concept which refers to people's relationships to particular geographical settings. It describes either the special qualities and characteristics of a place which make it unique, referred to by Geertz as the 'specifities of place' (Geertz, 1996, p. 260), or the feelings and perceptions which people hold. Defined by Feld and Basso as: "the experiential and expressive ways places are known, imagined, yearned for, held, remembered, voiced, lived…" (1996, p.8), this phenomenological perspective of sense of place emphasises the sensory aspects of 'lived experience' and being in place (Relph, 1976) whilst Anholt argues that sense of place resides in those qualities which make it distinctive, including physical and cultural, which he terms the 'DNA of a place' (2009, p. 30).

Relph contends that sense of place arises from a combination of this lived experience together with the physical qualities of the location (Relph, 1976, p. 20). Writing in 2007,

he presents three interwoven ways in which places are experienced: the physical setting and characteristics, activities that take place there and the territories of meanings that arise from living in these places (2007, p. 18). He refers to the physical qualities as 'spirit of place' and one's ability to appreciate these qualities as 'sense of place' (2007, p.18): "The depth of meanings that places have for us are informed both by the qualities of their settings, which I will refer to as spirit or identity of place and by our sense of place, or ability to appreciate those qualities" (2007, p.18). His thoughts that "somewhere with a strong spirit of place is more likely to engender a strong sense of place" (2007, p. 19) is of particular interest to my research as the Canigou mountain has a distinctive outline and holds a prominent position in the landscape, standing at the end of the Pyrenean mountain chain and overlooking the Roussillon plains. Moreover, the material remains of the iron-mining industry are an integral and particular part of the landscape and are instrumental in engendering emotional connections and memories of the past. Hence the interaction between the local population and their distinctive surroundings merits attention.

The above description of the term 'sense of place' leads on to consider how people perceive their relationship to their surroundings. A phenomenological approach explores the experiential, subjective means of knowing landscape; landscape is objectified by the person-subject who brings it into existence through their lived experiences (Tilley, 1994). Heidegger's 'dwelling perspective' removes this divide between subject and object; he addresses the way in which people are imbricated in the physical world through their engagement with, and in, their surroundings (2013, p. 143-159). Cloke and Jones describe it thus: "Dwelling is about the rich intimate ongoing togetherness of beings and things which make up landscapes and places, and which bind together nature and culture over time" (2001, p. 651). Recognition of a dwelling perspective involves a shift from "seeing the relationship between people and the environment as a 'building perspective', where ideal human mental constructs are imposed (built) on the world, to a `dwelling perspective', where any act of building, living, or even thinking, is formed in the context of already being-in-the-world which, in turn, affects that forming" (Cloke and Jones 2001, p. 651).

Ingold illustrates how this concept is embedded in the processual formation of landscape itself. He refers to people's activities in the act of dwelling or 'being in the world', as Taskscape and that "through living in it, the landscape becomes a part of us, just as we are a part of it" (1993, p. 154). The forms of the landscape arise alongside those of the taskscape, within the same current of activity (1993, p. 162). Landscape unfolds; it enfolds the lives of those people who have lived, and live, there (Ingold, 1993, p. 152).

This sense of embodiment in the landscape is encapsulated in the New Materialisms movement and in the term 'natureculture'. These approaches argue that people and organisms exist in symbiosis and that it is artificial to make a hard distinction between what is natural and what is cultural. In addition, these movements claim that every thing is part of the living, dynamic world of matter and regard the flow of energy as constitutive of all relationships. New Materialists seek "to move beyond anthropocentric discussions of people's responses to, and manipulation of, the natural environment" (Steel, 2018, p. 1). Instead, the movement bases its investigative approaches on 'matter' as the basis of everything, animate and non-animate, and that people are "simply one of the myriad things/matters that emerge to coproduce the material world" (Steel, 2018, p. 1). Proponents of the New Materialisms movement "seek to displace human privilege by attending to the agency of matter itself. Far from being passive or inert, they argue, matter acts, creates, destroys, and transforms—and, thus, is more of a process than a thing" (Keller and Rubenstein, 2017, p. 1). Humans are entangled within this 'landscape of matter', the vitality of which is forthcoming from human, and non-human materials (Steel, 2018, p. 1). As Keller and Rubenstein describe: "we are materializations entangled within other materializations" (2017, p. 1).

The term natureculture similarly dissolves the binary division between the human and the non-human world. Elucidating the co-constitutive relationship between the material and the human world of New Materialisms, Haraway argued that sociocultural and biological phenomena are implicit in both nature and culture. The two cannot be separated (2003). The relations between humans and non-humans are thus reimagined and realigned along the continuum of natureculture.

Central to my inquiry is the question of identity, of how people see themselves in relation to the world around them. There are many definitions of identity, reflecting its complex nature. The term can apply to national identity, group identity, professional identity, political identity, corporate identity, gender identity, to name a few. These seemingly well-defined groups mask the fact that within each, there are a variety of sub-groups and that individuals and communities align themselves to a number of these at any one time.

The complexity of issues involved in defining identity is present in Orange's definition. Orange defines identity as "consciousness of what one is and what one is not. It encompasses ideas of being special, different or unique and is about the ways in which we represent ourselves and are defined by others" (Orange, 2012, p. 75). In this definition identity is considered to be the internal recognition of the feelings that people carry about themselves. It refers to the way in which we present ourselves to others and how our sense of self is affected by the affirmation of others. Although Orange refers to ideas of being different or unique, the role of the social group in conferring feelings of belonging or otherwise is implicit in this definition.

Another angle on the question of identity focuses on the idea that a person has multiple identities which correspond to their various roles in society. The deconstruction of the individual is implicit in the emphasis placed by Stryker and Burke on the importance of these roles: "parts of the self, composed of meanings that people attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary societies" (Stryker and Burke, 2000, p. 284). Lawler takes this further by implying that a person is divisible into many persons: "Any discussion of identity always means we are in the presence of not one but many persons–or perceptions of persons" (Lawler, 2014, p. 8). My research concurs that identity formation is a social and cultural process. However, it rejects the notion that identity consists of disjointed parts or a series of ever-changing roles. This perspective makes identity seem superficial and interchangeable, whereas the testimonies offered by my interviewees attested that individuals regard identity as a common and consistent narrative which progresses throughout their lives and shapes their sense of self. Rather than multiple identities, my research presents the individual

with layers of identity, each layer contingent on the other and drawing on memories from other times and places.

The relationship between memory and identity has been documented by both Halbwachs (1992) and later Lindt (2008). In his seminal work, "On Collective Memory" (1992) Halbwachs wrote: "We preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated" (Halbwachs 1992, p. 60). Linde echoes his statement by describing how identity and memory are necessary bedfellows. In support of the power of memory, she writes that "An identity of this moment, not related to the past and not remembered in the future, hardly counts as an identity at all. Memory is thus central to the concept of identity" (2008, p. 222). There are two main facets to memory: individual or autobiographical memory and collective memory. The latter can incorporate events which are outside lived experience and are often confused with more abstract forms of commemoration (Halbwachs, 1992; Coupland, 2012). Nora writes about *lieux de mémoire,* as places or points in time where living memory has disappeared and is replaced by symbolic acts of commemoration in the form of physical memorials and events (Nora, 1989, p. 12). He compares *lieux de mémoire* with 'true memory', *milieux de mémoire*, which he argues is an evolving living phenomenon in the present (Nora, 1989, p.8).

The above concepts and terms are all relatable to the myriad of ways in which we position ourselves in the world around us and hence their descriptions provide a background to the following aims of my study.

1.4 Research aims

Two key research aims were produced from consideration of the impact of the mountain, its border location and its features, on the local communities:

- to examine the relationship between the communities and the Canigou landscape and how this informs identity and a 'sense of place';

- to analyse the manner in which a local sense of belonging is embedded in the physical landscape.

These aims prompt further objectives and questions for this research, namely:

- To investigate how layers of identity accrue in the landscape and the changing nature of collective identity;

- To investigate the part played by the landscape and specific features in recalling memories and creating new ones;

- To explore how memories engender a 'sense of place';

- To investigate how the villagers perceive their relationship between themselves and their surrounding environment, with specific attention to the flow of energy implicit in the framework of New Materialisms;

- To investigate how Ingold's concept of Taskscape has any significance in the lives of the villagers and their place in this landscape;

- How do incomers embed themselves in this landscape, with particular attention to their relationship with the past mining activity and the emotional significance of the Canigou?

- How does participation in cultural activities enable incomers to integrate in these communities and connect to the surrounding environment, and to what extent are they able to absorb it as part of their cultural identity?

- In this border space, how do the villagers reconcile their French/Catalan identities?

Together, these aims and objectives set the wider context for exploring the issues of identity in an ever-changing world. They lead to important considerations of the ways in which people are able to identify with the society in which they live, the importance they attach to maintaining an environmental and historical identity, and the role that landscape plays in securing a sense of identity and home. I was particularly interested in how the many layers, evident in the remains of past activity and present engagement

with the surroundings, were reflected by the participants during the course of our conversations, as former selves mingled with present musings through memories, prompted in a large part, by interaction with the surrounding landscape.

Of particular interest is the change in demographic aggregates since deindustrialisation. With a large proportion of incomers into the villages, there is the opportunity to understand how these people integrate and embed themselves in this symbolic Catalan landscape. With no prior memory of the mining past in these surroundings, the number of incomers who have embedded themselves in these communities is an interesting line of inquiry. They bring with them memories of other places and other pasts and in this respect, carry an identity that has no relationship to the mountain environment. However, incomers are heavily involved in the mining heritage projects, indeed initiate many of them (see Chapter Five); they want to engage with the mountain and its' past in order to understand and connect with their surroundings. Their journey into the Canigou landscape enlightens the relationship between memory, identity and 'sense of place'.

The material remains of the iron mining industry, which are a distinct feature of this landscape, provide a focal point for analysing how the past defines the present identity of these communities. They are also places where individual memories coalesce, enabling investigation of the nuances of a changing collective identity. Hence there is a feeling of continuity in terms of the relationship with the landscape, evident in local initiatives to preserve the mining past. However, no longer of economic importance, the physical and symbolic significance of the mountain itself and its industrial past in the lives of the villagers merits attention.

The framework of New Materialisms is a useful tool for examining how memory and identity congregate to elicit a 'sense of place'. The focus on the physicality of engagement with their surroundings, highlights how people and landscape co-shape each other, their co-dependency, "each in a constant process of 'becoming' through the other" (Mcpherson, 2010, p. 1); they are entangled, resulting in mutual layers of form and identity. Given the inductive nature of this enquiry, my methodological approach, addressed in the following chapter, is designed to allow the participants to lead on the conversation, providing them with space to reflect and draw on their memories and to

articulate the various ways in which they engage with the culture and landscape of this border country, informing their sense of identity and their place in it.

1.5 Thesis structure

This thesis provides a short introduction and then turns to describing the methodology employed in the collection of data before presenting an overview of the historical and geographical background of the research area. The following three chapters then go on to examine identity in this landscape, the mining remains and heritage projects, and the implications of living in border country. The concluding chapter brings together the emergent themes and considers how future research can take these forward.

Chapter Two explains the qualitative research methodology I used to collect the subjective and phenomenological information required to understand the inhabitants' experience of the landscape. Qualitiative methodologies allow researchers access to interpretations, feelings and thereby are able to produce deeper insights. To understand how my interlocutors felt about the landscape required methods that encouraged dialogue and discussion. Conseqeuntly, I settled on the type of informal interviews used by ethnographers, which allowed my respondents to lead the discussion, to deviate into unexpected areas and for novel material to be liberated as a result. In this chapter I also examine similar studies in order to demonstrate the value of my approach and explain my reasons for focusing on the five named villages on the mountain. I also explain how I accessed my participants, the interview protocol and data processing before outlining the ethical implications of my study.

Chapter Three begins with a brief outline of the study area, highlighting the research villages on a map of the region. The significance of the location of French Catalonia is situated in its historical and geographical context, before discussing the importance of the Canigou mountain for the local population. The chapter continues with an outline of the development of the iron mining activity on the mountain, focusing on the smelting processes and specifically the Catalan Forge which is considered as a marker of Catalan identity by the local population. The chapter also charts the changes in population

aggregates as demand fell for the high-quality ore of the Canigou over the course of the twentieth century.

Chapter Four explores the relationship between the landscape and the local population, and the extent to which it endows the villagers with a sense of belonging. A brief outline of identity theories highlights the processual nature of identity formation in a social and cultural environment. The chapter draws on the theoretical approaches of New Materialisms to discuss the agency of the landscape, and Tilley's (1994) phenomenological approach to investigate feelings of embodiment in the environment. Particular reference is made to the significance of the Canigou mountain, and the importance of the mining remains as markers in the lives of the research participants. I illustrate how people read the landscape, and pick up on Ingold's (2011) argument that places are defined by people's movements rather than their geographical position. Places and their features are important because they act as reference points, enabling people to navigate the landscape.

Chapter Five considers the initiatives for keeping the mining past alive for future generations. It examines how community-led heritage initiatives enable locals to make their own decisions about the nature of their village identity and at the same time allows for individual meaning-making. It begins by considering the argument for local involvement in heritage projects, supported by examples in which a top-down approach can lead to loss of identity. This sets the scene for examining the features of the various heritage initiatives in the research area and the rationale behind them. It investigates how the material remains of the industry and participation at the various sites support the appropriation and creation of memories and the interplay of collective memory and individual memory.

Chapter Six investigates Williams' (2014a) statement that 'culture is ordinary' by analysing some of the iron-mining villages' cultural traditions such as the dance, the *Sardana*. In doing so, the chapter emphasises the impact of the Canigou's geographical location on the articulation of cultural boundaries. Goodhart's (2017) argument that people either align themselves to their community interests above all else, or they have a more global sense of identity, is considered in the light of the emergent theme of the importance of

the identity of the locality. Despite seeming contradictory, I will argue that the two positions of fluid boundaries and boundedness are not incompatible by illustrating that the emphasis placed by research testimonies on local identity and culture actually reflects a dynamic engagement which both transcends and consolidates boundaries.

Finally, Chapter Seven presents the overall conclusions of the research and discusses how memories, meanings and landscape coalesce, enabling the local population to embed their identity as part of this place.

CHAPTER TWO: Methodology

"The Canigou is a part of our lives, and always has been. She has always been here, long before us and so our story is her story" (Participant R.2).

2.1 Introduction

Before presenting an account of the historical and geographical background to my study area in Chapter Three, this chapter explains my research methodology and how it was implemented. The chapter begins with a brief outline of the theoretical framework underpinning qualitative research methods in order to justify the reasons for a qualitative methodological choice. This is followed by a discussion on my choice of unstructured interviews for data collection, and a comparison of the methodology used by similar research projects. Interview procedure, organisation and analysis of data will then be contextualised, with specific reference to their execution. The last sections consider the ethical implications of this research.

However, I wish firstly to explain how, by immersing myself in community life, I was able to position myself as an observer and trusted recorder. Known as Ethnography, such an approach to research covers a diverse set of information gathering scenarios. It is distinguished from other methodologies because it assigns an active role to the "cognitive modes of observing, watching, seeing" (Gobo and Marciniak, 2011, p. 103) and covers a variety of research tools such as interviews, field studies, participant observation as well as the study of diaries, letters and newspaper articles (Gobo and Marciniak, 2011, p. 104). The focus is on people, the ways in which they see the world in this moment in time. Polit and Beck provide a succinct definition of the term: "Ethnography provides a framework for studying the meanings, patterns, and lifeways of a culture in a holistic fashion" (Polit and Beck, 2010, p. 72). Within this wide-ranging ethnographic remit, my aim was to talk to the villagers in order to create an account of how they situate themselves in this landscape, rather than focus on a detailed descriptive account of the 'lifeways' of the communities.

In light of my intent, outlined in Chapter One, section 1.1, to capture how my participants' view their place in this landscape, this chapter therefore presents my arguments for

adopting a qualitative approach, using the unstructured interview as my research method.

2.2 Research method

This section focuses on the reasons why a qualitative approach was considered the most suitable for my research. It explains my choice of the informal interview as the main methodological tool for data collection. The following brief explanation highlights the effectiveness of this particular form of interview.

Qualitative research is concerned with the ways in which people perceive and experience the world around them. Hence, this form of information gathering is able to capture the story of the individual, and at the same time reflect the multiple realities offered by a variety of people. The focus is on subjective understanding, rather than statistical description (Robertson, 2001, p. 21) and involves gathering personal unstructured accounts (Weiss, 2004, p. 44), eliciting stories (Romanoff and Thompson, 2006, p. 310) and learning about meanings, relationships and emotions (Weiss, 2004, p. 44) through various methods, including different types of interviews, participant observation, case studies and discussions (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 3). It is driven by the need to find out what happens in the real world, what Hammersley calls 'spontaneous understandings' (Hammersley, 2013, p. 9).

I wanted to capture the many ways in which people experience the world around them and through that understand their emotional connection with the landscape. This was achieved through collecting accounts of their memories, feelings, values and beliefs, which revealed the underlying processes involved in creating a sense of place and belonging to these former mining communities. From a phenomenological perspective, understanding how the landscape is 'known' to those who "inhabit its places and journey along the paths connecting them" (Ingold, 1993, p. 154) synthesises those experiences and emotions which illustrate how the world emerges alongside the person of the perceiver (Ingold, 2000, p. 168). In other words, following Ingold (2000, p. 168), the world comes into being, or is 'known', through one's engagement with one's surroundings.

The framework of New Materialisms also provided an opening into capturing the relationship between people and the physical materiality of this environment. Given that many participants spoke about how their lives were entwined with that of the mountain and its iron mining past, attending to the notion of agency, and mattering and energy flow proved to be relevant concepts for analysing the ways in which people embed themselves in the landscape and provided insights into how they regarded the mining features in their present state in the landscape (Attala and Steel, 2019; Bennett, 2010; Coole and Frost, 2010; Govier and Steel, 2021).

In order to provide an interface for these various constructs to become visible, it was necessary to utilise a methodological approach which would provide a space for the participants' perspectives to emerge. Given that this research sought to uncover the layers of engagement with identity and landscape, it was deemed most appropriate to stay within the boundaries of an inductive and subjective methodology which would highlight the dynamic processes involved in the above remit. Hence, a qualitative approach to data gathering based on individual experiences and beliefs, rather than an approach which generated numerical data, was best suited to meet my research aims. The core argument for the singular approach adopted, rested on a desire to listen to and capture the many voices of the participants. There was no one single truth to capture, but rather a variety of threads which feed into, compliment, resist and assist the stories told by others. By conducting fifty-seven interviews, I argue that the data gathered corroborates itself in providing sufficient content for systematic analysis. This approach is voiced by Shenton who describes how triangulation, (three data capturing methods which collaboratively support the research findings) may in fact be achieved by the involvement of a wide range of informants: "Here, individual views and experiences can be verified against others and ultimately, a rich picture of the attitudes, needs or behaviour of those under scrutiny may be constructed based on the contributions of a range of people" (Shenton, 2004, p. 66).

Qualitative research would therefore yield the most insightful and perceptive results in an inductive study. With a variety of research tools to consider, it was important to decide on an approach which would provide access to an in-depth and reflective conversation on an individual basis. Consequently, interviews were chosen as the primary research

method because they provided a means for the participant to explore and explain their thoughts and experiences, and to speak in their own terms (Fontana and Frey, 1994, p. 368).

Interviews take various forms. Semi-structured interviews are designed around a broad list of questions which need to be addressed during the course of the interview. An informal interview, by contrast is characterised by the lack of structure to the conversation, allowing the participant to determine the content. There is no preconceived view of the flow of the data to be gathered (Polit and Beck, 2010, p. 341) and the informal interview is characterised by "a minimum of control over the people's responses" (Bernard, 2011, p. 157). But the researcher maintains a clear plan for the interview: "The idea is to get people to open up and let them express themselves in their own terms, and at their own pace" (Bernard, 2011, p. 157); both researcher and participant are aware that this is more than just a "pleasant chit-chat" (Bernard, 2011, p. 157). It can be difficult to manage as the lack of guidelines may lead to feelings of insecurity in the participant as to what is expected from them. However, the skill of the researcher in setting an appropriate tone for the interview can alleviate this and a certain amount of personal rapport can allow for ease of conversation. It was possible to explain the focus of this research to my participants so that they had expectations of the framework of the interview. I also emphasized that the conversation was to be as free-flowing as possible. As a result, this approach was able to capture the spirit of each individual participant in enabling them to tell their own story within the informal structure.

2.2.1 Comparable qualitative research methodology

Having considered the appropriateness of unstructured interviews for data collection, this section examines the methodological approach in similar studies which will be discussed in Chapter Five section 5.3, and thereby consolidates and confirms the reasons for my research methodology choice.

For the purpose of comparative research studies, Robertson (2001) and Skeard (2014) focussed on community persistence in post mining towns of North America, and in the UK, consideration has been given to research by Coupland (2012), Orange (2012) and Wheeler (2015) who examined heritage, memory, and public perceptions in post mining

landscapes, whilst Dicks (2000) investigated the process of heritagisation at a former coal mine in South Wales. This cross section of research programmes touches on various aspects of the investigation undertaken in the Canigou, and discussion of their various methodologies highlights the reasons for this choice. The interview approach was the pivotal qualitative method used by all of the above researchers.

Informal or unstructured interviews were used as methods of data collection in similar studies by Wheeler and Coupland for the following reasons:

- they are recognised as a source for enabling the researcher to get underneath the official public discourse (Coupland, 2012, p. 62);

- they enable the interviewer to elicit perceptions and feelings from individuals about mining heritage (Wheeler, 2015, p. 94);

- they allow the participant to explore the past and how it is affects their present day lives (Coupland, 2012, p. 61; Wheeler, 2015, p. 94).

Within the framework of qualitative research interviews, the term oral history is sometimes used to describe spoken accounts which capture people's experiences of the past and the present (Wheeler, 2015, p. 94). Referring to this process as a 'human document', Wheeler acknowledged the role of oral histories as a means of "addressing the multifaceted, intricate and nuanced themes and relationships" in all their complexity (Wheeler, 2015, p. 94) and used this method of data collection in the context of unstructured interviews.

Skeard (2014) and Coupland (2012) also used the term oral history to describe their research methodology. They both described the possibility of revealing unexpected narratives through the use of oral history interviews. Coupland described how the in-depth interview gave her an opportunity to get behind the public voice and to examine the perceptions of heritage and memory from an individual perspective. This provided her with the resources to analyse the relationship between institutional narratives, living memory and the broader cultural memory.

Whilst there are aspects of oral history which are relevant to my research methodology, such as giving the interviewee space to develop a "reflective account of the past"

(Shopes, 2011, p. 452), I did not set out to guide the participants in the narration of their own story, through a "planned and scheduled, serious and searching exchange … that seeks a detailed, expansive and reflective account of the past" (Shopes, 2011, p. 452). Nor was the data generated through collaborative exchange, "in which the researcher and research participant are co-creators in the knowledge-building process" (Leavy, 2011, p. 6). My focus is on this mountain landscape as it is experienced in the here and now, rather than on the personal biography of the participants. This is pertinent given the insights of incomers involved in the heritage projects, who do not have a past narrative which is embedded in the Canigou region.

Skeard used semi-structured interviews to collect her data. These interviews appeared to follow a set format of fifteen questions and in that respect, would seem to be more akin to structured interviews, but Skeard acknowledges that as the interviews progressed, she realised that her original list of questions was not broad enough and so she expanded the number of themes. She also used different questions for different target groups in order to address varying backgrounds. She explains that this allowed her to target specific issues, (Skeard, 2014, p. 19). However, this carries the risk that in an interview led by questions, respondents may well try to work out what the interviewer is looking for and give answers which they believe may support the research, rather than an intuitive, subjective response which may open up the research further. This was an outcome which I wanted to avoid. Rather than target specific issues, I wanted the participant to determine the course of the conversation as this would allow them to prioritise events and issues and to vocalise their thoughts concerning the impact or relevance that they themselves deemed important.

Coupland's approach recognised the need to be flexible from the outset. She used pre-determined questions as prompts where she felt necessary, maintaining some consistency in order to be able to draw comparisons with data. Robertson used non-directive interviews to obtain his research data as this approach "assumes that it is not already known what the interview will uncover" (Robertson, 2001, p. 24) whilst Wheeler similarly drew up a list of prompts to be used if necessary and in no predetermined order (Wheeler, 2015, p. 102).

Both Orange (2012) and Wheeler (2015) utilised 'emplaced' interviews, as well as the more conventional form of interviewing in a mutually convenient place such as a home or a café. Emplaced interviews involve walking within the environment which is under discussion. Wheeler relates how the information elicited from both forms of interview technique complimented each other, the indoor interview tended to result in information which focused on perceptions of the community whilst the walking interviews tended to focus on "how the village space was used and on the surrounding landscape" (Wheeler, 2015, p. 97). Whilst acknowledging the potential of 'walking interviews' for revealing the intricacies of place identity construction, the nature of the mountainous terrain in this research and the average age of the participants meant that mobility was in many cases restrictive. There was an exception with two of the interviewees who were able to refer to features in the landscape whilst walking within it during the interviews, and this gave them a particular feeling of being at home. However, I acknowledge the benefits of being in the landscape with the participants and would have ideally pursued this situation in which to carry out my research but, as well as the physical constraints mentioned above, the interviews were arranged at a time and place chosen by the participants. Hence I am aware that walking with my participants would have enabled me to gain further valuable insight into their embodied experience within the landscape, and to their emotional and physical responses to the actual sites as they were experienced in that moment.

Nevertheless, the villagers themselves lived in rural locations, with aspects from their homes overlooking the mountains and the mining artefacts present either in their original situation or placed in the village. Figure 2.1, (see section 2.3.1), is an example of one of the many mining artefacts which are prominent in the villages. These interview locations in themselves enabled participants to engage with their past and present, informing their feelings about their identity and how they know the landscape (Basso, 1996, p. 54) which is the focus of this research.

Orange used a triangulation of different data types to conduct her research. She argued that the different data types serve to reduce bias and enable comparison of the different perspectives. She used interviews and observation, questionnaire data and archival research, with a lesser focus on observation as she felt that it did not inform on perception of place (Orange, 2012, p. 106). Her use of both quantitative and qualitative

approaches enabled her to corroborate different perspectives in support of the research themes, whilst I wanted to focus on people's thoughts and reflections, rather than on numerical information and quantities, which would illuminate how they engage with this place, in this time.

Researchers investigating issues around the heritagisation of the mining industry have also used qualitative methods, primarily in-depth, unstructured interviews, as part of their data collection. Their aims were to enrich the understanding of identities and communities on how societies function (Robertson, 2001; Ballesteros and Ramirez, 2007) and to investigate attitudes and perceptions towards heritagisation of the mining legacy (Dicks, 2000; Harvey, 2008; Power, 2008). Dicks used the informal structure in order to get the miners to tell the story of their lives so that their representation in the heritage sites could thus be revealed. Interviews enabled participants to speak about intangibles, such as community spirit (Power, 2008, p. 166), to explore how residents identify with the mining industry and the community, and how these identifications relate to the concept of community resilience. Power also used questionnaires alongside the interviews but it is unclear whether the 'intangible findings' were the result of the questionnaire or the verbal consultation. However, Power does acknowledge that "the findings are inevitably influenced by the original intentions" (Power, 2008, p. 166) which leads one to the criticism of a hypothesis-led methodology.

The above research programmes justify their use of the interview (using various terminologies: narrative, oral history, story, verbal consultations) for the purpose of data collection. Given the nature of this research I deemed such an approach pertinent for understanding phenomena which cannot be easily quantified, such as emotion, identity, sense of place, and notions of belonging. My focus on unstructured interviews as a means of data collection allowed me to gain an appreciation of how these villagers see themselves and tie this in with their memories, their behaviours and their sense of identity. Moreover, the process of the telling itself gives rise to reflection, thus giving space for the unexpected and the unpredictable to emerge.

2.3 The interview procedure

The following sections explain the actual process of gathering data in this study: a description of the reasons for the choice of villages, the interview itself, access to prospective participants and any adjustments made in response to the issue of demographic change. The discussion demonstrates how the chosen methodology was tailored to regional demands and constraints with the purpose of obtaining the best possible range of available data.

2.3.1 The villages: Sampling

The decision to focus on the five villages, namely, Baillestavy, Escaro Corsavy, La Bastide and Taurinya was based on several factors. These ranged from their community involvement with the preservation of the iron mining heritage, to the availability of the living mining memory of some of the older residents and to features displaying their heritage, as illustrated below in the village of Baillestavy (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Photograph of iron mining features, village of Baillestavy (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

This photograph depicts the statement of mining heritage of the village of Baillestavy. It is a visual focus, deliberately situated at the entrance to the village with the clear message that this was a mining village and that this past still has an important role in the identity of the village today. All of the five chosen sites demonstrate a range of initiatives which engage with this past industrial activity and features of their mine sites are still clearly in evidence on the mountainside.

These chosen villages, Baillestavy, Corsavy, Escaro, La Bastide and Taurinya, also represent a geographical spread, from the north side of the mountain, around the eastern side, and down to the south. Other villages on the mountainside had been part of the mining concessions, but the decision to focus on those villages which housed the heritage projects in their various forms was deemed appropriate for research purposes. Initial investigations on my part revealed that there was evidently a good proportion of villagers involved in the heritage programmes who were willing to talk to me.

All of these case study villages retain their rural aspect and are situated in scenic landscapes. They lie in altitudes ranging from 545 metres (Taurinya) to 881 metres, (Escaro) (map-france, 2019). There is still a sense of isolation felt by the villagers from the more populated areas in the valleys to the north and the south. Although people do travel down to the small towns occasionally for provisions, they do not undertake the winding journey lightly.

2.3.2 Research participants

The initial aim was to interview a similar number of participants in a variety of representative groups which would cover age range, gender, incomers and long-time inhabitants, in order to gain a range of perspectives in each of the villages. However, after early investigation of demographic changes in the area, it soon became evident that the majority of the population in each village were aged sixty and above, and either retired or semi-retired. Hence, most of the participants were aged fifty and over, with 36 men and 21 women interviewed. This age group was split into fifty to sixty years of age, over sixty, and over eighty years of age. The aim in doing this, particularly with regards to the first two mentioned age groups, was to see if there were any perceptible differences between those still working, and those who were retired.

The lack of age range representation was initially disappointing. But on reflection, the emphasis of the research lies with individual narrative and perception and how "individual people experience and make sense of their own lives" (Valentine, 2005, p. 111) irrespective of age. The potential advantage of the age bias lies in the fact that the older generation had a longer period to reflect back on, can compare with the present, and had thoughts and feelings about the sort of values that they wished for the future generations. The results of this research are therefore reflective of, and applicable to, these age groups. Other variables included: incomers and long-term residents; those with a background or familiarity with the iron- mining tradition; and those who had not experienced the industry until they arrived in the region.

Rather than approach possible participants in an impersonal manner, initial contact was made by becoming visible in the iron mining communities, explaining to event organisers on arrival that I was engaging in research into their relationship with the mountain and its history of iron mining and would they mind if I attended. Everyone was welcoming and showed pleasure in my interest in their communities. Participation at various village events proved useful in gaining local trust and gave me an insight into the cultural atmosphere of these locales. I visited Arles-sur-Tech for the weekend of their bi-annual gathering of iron workers in October 2015. As well as a way into the community of iron working in the area, this and attendance at other events in the region, enabled me to contextualise the heritage in present day commemorations and traditions and also allowed me to gain some insights into the community initiatives and social concerns of the villagers.

I also visited the mining museum in Escaro, a former mining village on the north side of the mountain. This is a small but very informative museum, full of memorabilia, ranging from the narrow-gauge steam engine, to carbide mining lamps. It is run by volunteers from the village and I visited the museum on two quiet separate afternoons in order to talk to those who were involved in its running. I signed up as a Friend of the museum and attended the inauguration of the iron sculpture which I had seen fashioned the previous October at the gathering of ironworkers in the town of Arles-sur-Tech, in the Tech valley (see Chapter Five, section 5.6). I also participated in some of their organised events and attended some of the villages' markets; these are small markets intended for the locals

and so again, I was able to make myself visible and connect with people on more than one social occasion. As a result, some of my participants were already familiar with me and greeted me in the traditional informal manner, rather than a formal handshake. By attending these events, I was able to achieve recognition and acceptance and gain the trust of the villagers. In two of the villages, I revisited the local cafe after a break of over a year and was welcomed and remembered by the owners who introduced me to their customers, giving a full explanation of who I was and why I was in the area.

During the early stages of my investigation into the nature and extent of the heritage initiatives in the mining communities, I contacted Olivier Moulai who was in the process of producing a film about the process of iron mining on the Canigou. His perspective, as an artist coming into the iron mining communities, gave me invaluable insights into his philosophy of artistic representation of this heritage. After meeting him, he invited me to the premiere of this film, *Renaissance*, where I was able to gauge the level of interest in his research and work, and the involvement and commitment of the communities.

I had two main ways of gaining interviews: after my initial immersion into some community events, I asked the organisers if I could meet with them and talk about their relationship with the Canigou and their involvement in the heritage aspect of iron mining. I approached the village mayors by telephone, explained myself and asked if I could come and talk to them. In both cases, the initial contacts acted as a snowball effect and other prospective participants were suggested, together with contact details.

Many of these interviews were held in the participant's home, either indoors or in the garden. The familiar environment allowed the participant to comment on their surroundings; the views from the terraces or gardens allowed for the emergence of the poly-contextual relationship of the participants with their immediate landscape. Similarly, some of those interviewed produced objects from cupboards, such as photographs, or family mining memorabilia, which prompted further memory recall. Some of the interviews took place in public spaces such as cafes, or village squares, whilst others were engaged during a walk. These gave me insights into the affective relationship of the participants with space and place and the way in which they interact with the social and landscape environment.

One of the problems with this means of accessing participants, is that people tend to nominate those who they know have an interest in my area of research. Those who are not so involved in community life, especially those aspects which revolve around the mining heritage, were not included in recommendations by willing participants. With this in mind, during the months spent in the villages in 2017, I tried to approach people whose names had not been suggested to me. I sat in cafes in some of the villages (this is in addition to those cafe situations where I was able to conduct arranged interviews) and talked to people in the local markets.

I promised anonymity to each of my research participants. As agreed, I noted information which I deemed necessary for reference, without disclosing their identity. This included gender, age group and village of residence (Appendix 1). In order to maintain anonymity, I refer to each participant with a number, preceded by either I. or R. These initials represent incomers to village life and long-term residents. In the latter group I included those people who had grown up in the villages, moved away but then came back as residents. A cut-off figure of twenty years' residency was adopted to clarify the difference between incomers and residents. I felt that it was simpler to work with two groups, rather than create further subcategories, as this would inhibit analysis of the several converging, diverging and overlapping strands of emergent data.

With their agreement I therefore use only relevant quotations to illustrate my findings; to include whole texts could reveal the participants' identity through their stories and jeopardize their anonymity. The discussions were held in French, but because the thesis is written in the medium of the English language I have decided to translate the participants' quotations into English. In accordance with the advice of Halai, I was aware that my translations "should make sense, should convey the spirit and manner of the original and should have a natural and easy form of expression" (Halai, 2007, pp. 351).

2.3.3 Interview protocol

An informal, unstructured interview design was implemented to create a free-flowing discussion in which the participants felt comfortable. By eschewing the formality of the interview setting, participants were put at ease and less inclined to adopt a formal response. Furthermore, the impact of participant responses based around what he/she

thought that I wanted, was reduced as a consequence of a more relaxed atmosphere, thus minimising the potential for researcher influence on the course of the conversation. Known as response bias, this can be initiated by a leading question and can counteract the aims of qualitative research. The balance between eliciting relevant and pertinent information, without creating a rigorous template requires the skill of the researcher in maintaining an element of control over the direction of the conversation, without dictating it. The advice of Bernard proved to be helpful: "The rule is: get people on to a topic of interest and get out of the way. Let the informant provide information which he or she thinks is important" (Bernard, 2011, p. 160). To illustrate this, I refer to my introductory comments at the beginning of each interview. I began by outlining my general background information, including some personal details about where I am from and my family before expressing my interest in the area and in the Canigou mountain in particular. The following example shows the response of Participant R.41 to my introductions. He began with his name and continued immediately with his love for the Canigou, explaining in further detail about his hikes in the mountain:

"Living here, I too feel a such a connection with this mountain. It gives me a sense of peace and of appreciating every moment whenever I go hiking" (Participant R.41).

The interviews varied in length from between twenty minutes to an hour and a half, with the majority being in the range of forty-five to sixty minutes. It also transpired that whilst sitting in some of the village cafes, conducting an interview, other locals would be drawn into the conversation and an interesting and informative discussion ensued. With permission, the conversations were recorded, ensuring that each person had the opportunity to answer and elaborate on the questions. All of the fifty-seven interviews were conducted face-to-face and for most of the participants, was the first time that they had taken part in such a discussion.

The interviews were all recorded using a hand-held digital voice recorder. Permission was sought in every case and the device was usually placed on a nearby table where it would be inconspicuous, or carried discreetly if walking. Nobody objected to this and all the conversations were recorded clearly.

2.3.4 Data saturation

Before considering the processing of the data in section 2.4, it is expedient to explain the rationale behind the chosen number of participants as this has relevance for the research design. This section therefore explains the reason for the number of participants involved in the research, as highlighted above (see section 2.3.2). Known as data saturation, this term refers to the point at which themes become repetitive or redundant and "no new information can be gleaned by further data collection" (Polit and Beck, 2010, p. 79).

After spending a total of five months interviewing in the area, I became aware that the thoughts which I had provisionally formulated from the early interviews, were consolidating into a number of themes and that continuing my research was in fact providing me with no new data in respect of these findings. Respect for the miners, for example, was a recurrent topic of conversation. This developed into a theme which was linked to the Canigou itself: the 'Canigou constitution' (see Chapter Four, section 4.3.4; Chapter Five, section 5.6) a term which many of the participants used, and referred to the qualities of toughness and strength, derived from the mountain and the miners. This was certainly the case by the time I had reached fifty interviews, and the further seven served to strengthen my case for data saturation.

2.4 Data processing

Having given attention to my method of data collection in the previous sections, consideration is now given to the processing of the research data. This occured as soon as possible after each interview, whilst I still recalled the content including non-verbal signs from the participant. The interviews were downloaded from the voice recorder onto a laptop and subsequently transcribed in full, word-for-word, simultaneously translating the French into English. Everything was transcribed by hand, and then typed up on a laptop; incomplete sentences were not rephrased to avoid the introduction of another layer for researcher interpretation into the data.

Having translated and transcribed the interviews, the principal objective of analysis of the data was to identify underlying themes in relation to the aims of the research as outlined in the introduction. Given that my research aimed to reveal and explore perceptions and

meanings rather than to test an existing theory, an inductive approach allowed for the open-ended emergence of data (Thomas, 2006, p. 2). Such an approach focuses on detail; this leads to identification of patterns followed by the emergence of more abstract theories and concepts (Wheeler, 2015, p. 110) and was therefore appropriate for the personal and multi-themed nature of the research data.

I re-read each transcribed interview several times and conducted a conceptual content analysis whereby I identified and highlighted recurrent and notable concepts and themes and trends in trains of thought. These were coded into a number of categories. I followed this up by re-reading the information and distinguishing those phrases which directly related to these themes and concepts. I was also mindful of those phrases where the concepts were alluded to, but not necessarily made explicit. Careful consideration of the context, of where the participant 'was coming from' in their narrative enabled me to ascertain the relevance. This iterative process enabled the identification of convergent themes which were pertinent to corroborating evidence for the research questions, whilst at the same time, allowing an option to discard those which offered little, or diversionary insights.

With such a free-flowing format for data gathering, a framework for a systematic analysis of the interview content ensures that interpretation of the results is focussed and relevant to the research aims. Through examination of previous research carried out by Izard (1994), Izard and Mut (2007), Pinto (2003), Verna (1991, 1994, 2005, 2011, 2013, 2017), I had been able to identify themes which provided me with a picture of an industrial society in the region during the medieval period. Substantiated by their references to the archival material in Perpignan, Izard and Pinto's archaeological data and Verna's historical investigations (see Chapter Three, section 3.3) highlighted iron mining as the economic mainstay of the region and how the industry attracted iron workers from other parts of Europe. The data also revealed the importance of the mountain environment for the development of this industry, in particular the mountain streams which were instrument in the evolution of the Catalan Forge, and the high quality of iron ore present under the surface of the Canigou. During my own analysis of key phrases which had emerged from my study, I was able to identify if there were any similarities or continuity to these themes.

It was evident that my approach to information gathering for the purpose of this study liberated a different kind of relationship to iron mining. Whereas the main thrust of the archaeological and historical record pointed to a relationship with the landscape based on economic activity, my information indicated the importance of a sense of place for my participants. Thus as a part of my analysis, I was able to pick up on the themes which had arisen from the previous archaeological and historical data and relate how they emerged in the modern era, to highlight identity in the landscape and the importance of belonging.

2.5 Ethical considerations

These final two sections before the conclusion to this chapter summarise the considerations given to ethical issues in order to ensure that nobody felt compromised during the course of this research. This also includes the implications of my own situation as researcher.

Before beginning each interview, I asked the participant for their consent to a number of procedures:

- to participate in the imminent interview;

- to acknowledge that it was for the sole purpose of my research;

- to being recorded;

- to allow me to transfer the verbal contents of the interview into written format;

- to allow me to use their information in conjunction with other interview discourses;

- to allow me to retain the content of the interview.

Having obtained consent by the individual participants, I assured them that they would be referred to anonymously in the transcript. If other personal information were to emerge during the course of the discussion, I reassured each one that it would only be included in my written analysis if of relevance to my findings and in such a way as to protect their personal story.

Recorded interviews and transcriptions were stored on my laptop with the consent of the participants. The laptop is password protected and has anti-virus protection which is kept up-to-date. I have sole access to all the data. I gained consent from the participants for others to access the data in its interpreted format, once published, respecting anonymity and with the correct referencing.

2.5.1 The interviewing lens

As an important corollary, I must acknowledge my own position as researcher. In the process of spending time in these villages I became close to the cause in which my participants were engaged. I knew something about the mining context before embarking on my research but their enthusiasm was infectious and I developed friendships with many of those I interviewed. In particular, I spent hours with the older residents, was invited into their homes for coffee and meals and spent many days hiking the mountain footpaths and walking around each of the former mining sites. These insights have allowed me to consider my own perspectives on the big issues facing us and so I acknowledge my own position with regard to my research results. Nevertheless, my results led with the participants' own words and the diverse variety of voices was captured from an outsider's perspective. My choice of relevant quotations is a reflection of this diversity and is not intended as an exercise of control on my part as to what to include. Finally, I was aware of my own situation, as an outsider, as a foreign national and from a seemingly privileged background. Fusch and Ness stress the importance of recognising that one's own perspective must be acknowledged when considering interpretation of phenomena (Fusch and Ness, 2015). Sensitivity to the fact that this may have influenced the responses of the research participants, despite all efforts to be neutral during the course of the interview, was continuously borne in mind. This included avoidance of bias towards my conceptions of landscape, heritage, culture and identity when a specific point was raised which potentially complimented my own personal journey.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has validated the choice of research methodology tool in the context of the theoretical framework which underpins it. Consideration of qualitative research methods

and of the methodologies of previous research projects justified the choice of the informal interview approach. The implications of the interview process allowed for the emergence of inductive themes which formed the basis for analyses of the data. The processes involved in setting up and carrying out the interviews were explained and the sampling cohort bias justified in terms of available demographics and perceptual nature of the research.

Finally, this chapter has demonstrated awareness of the issues and addressed the attendant implications of my position as researcher. Ethical issues have also been dealt with. This has ensured that the voices of the participants are the salient voices. As a result, the choice of methodology has generated a wealth of rich information, the findings of which will be presented and discussed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER THREE: Geographical and historical context of the iron mining industry on the shoulders of the Canigou

"To live in this part of the world is to be rich. We live at the meeting point of various nationalities, and we can watch from the mountains and across the sea and enjoy the fruits of this experience. We are connected" (Participant R.3).

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the geographical and historical background of the Canigou region. It begins with an outline of the location and the history of the region, with particular reference to the Catalan lands which lie either side of the border between France and Spain. The significance of the mountain, the Canigou, as a feature in the landscape and in the lives of the local population is then highlighted. A background to the long exploitation of the iron on the Canigou embeds the narrative of mining into this landscape and provides the context with which to explore the relationship between the communities and the impact that the remains of the industrial activity have on their lives today. This provides the framework for this study to address the relationship between people, their sense of identity and culture, and this mountain landscape.

The villages which lie at the heart of this research are indicated in the map below (Figure 3.1) in relation to the mountain summit: Escaro, Taurinya, Baillestavy, La Bastide and Corsavy (La Batère mine). The town of Arles-sur-Tech, which plays host to several iron working events today, is also highlighted. The village of St Marsal is also marked; it is the site of one of the earliest known iron mining exploits according to archaeological records.

These villages all recognise and engage with their mining history in various ways and although there are some regional grants available, the heritage projects are conceived, financed and carried out by the villagers themselves. The region itself is also strongly Catalan in its culture but at the same time, it acknowledges its role as a part of the French nation. This intersection of identity and language makes the study of these local heritage initiatives in this landscape all the more relevant as we witness the global movement of peoples across national borders, whether for work, lifestyle, or to flee from hardships.
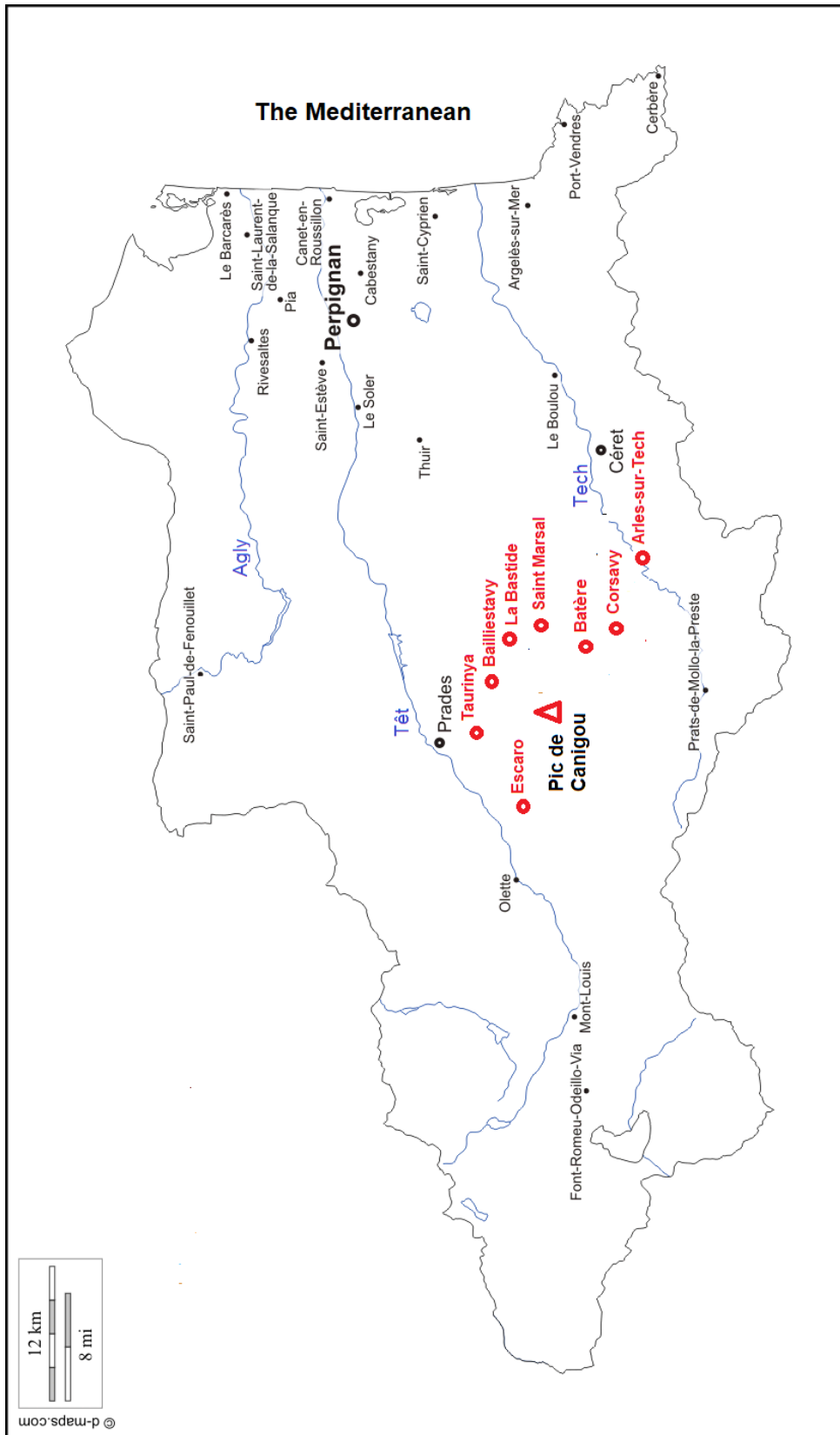
Figure 3.1 Map of the department, Pyrénées-Orientales, with the research villages identified in red. The Canigou is flanked by two river valleys: the Têt to the north and the Tech in the south (source: P. Claughton).

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Hence the fifty-seven individual portraits of life experience gathered during the course of my research, locate the local narratives of French Catalonia in time and place and enable this research to build a picture of what is important to people and how they wish to define their place in society today.

3.2 The research area: A geographical and historical crossroads

This section considers the importance of the location and landscape in the history of the population of the region. This will provide a rich background from which to explore the impact of a changing landscape following deindustrialisation, on the culture and identity of the local population.

3.2.1 Geographical location

The research area is located in the region of the South of France, at the eastern end of the Pyrenees, known as *Catalonia du Nord*. It is important to take into account the various significant features of this location in order to gain an appreciation of the social, political and historical factors which have impacted on the area. The map below, Figure 3.2, shows the Canigou on the edge of the mountain range, overlooking the Roussillon plains and flanked by two valleys. The roads marked as the N116 and the D115 run alongside the rivers Têt to the north and Tech to the south of the summit of the Canigou and two of the five research villages, La Bastide and Baillestavy, lie on roads linked to the D618 which connects the two valleys.
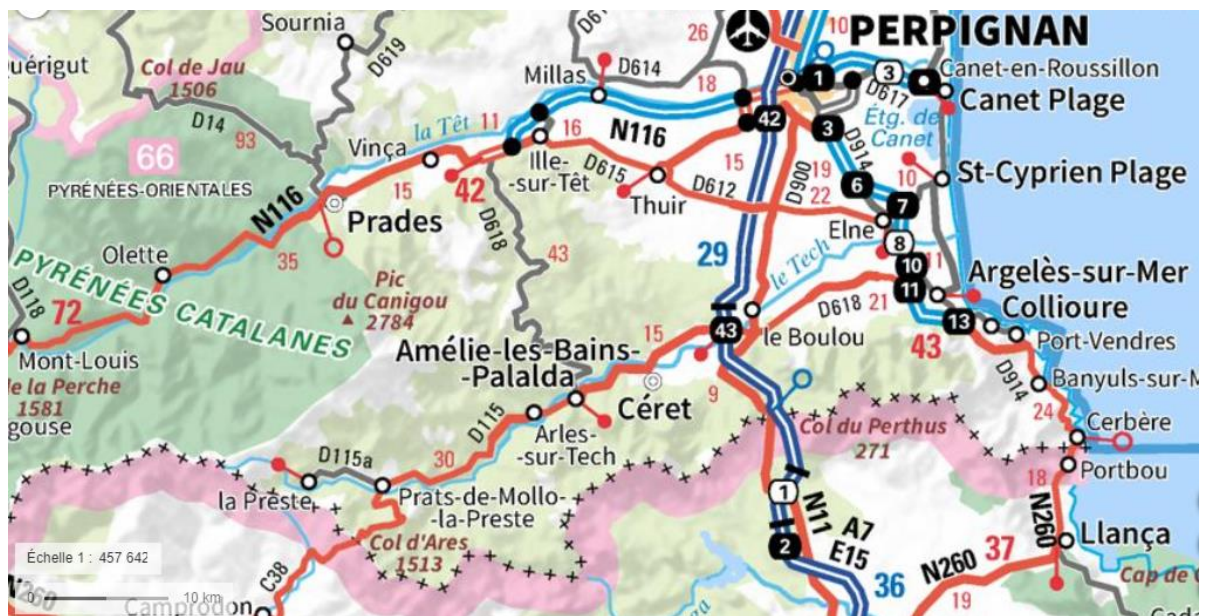
Figure 3.2 Map of the research area showing the proximity to the Spanish border, delineated with crosses (source: carte IGN, Géoportail, 2019).

Adjacent to the border with Spain, the Pyrénées-Orientales administrative department borders the Mediterranean and covers the eastern end of the Pyrenean mountain chain. Its main city, Perpignan, sits on the A9 motorway into Spain, linking it to Barcelona, and has a population of 121,681 out of a total departmental population of 472,452, according to census figures of 2017. With an area of 4,116.02 square kilometres, these figures confirm the rural nature of the department (Insee, 2017)**.**

The coastline is remarkable for its miles of sandy beaches and many lagoons. The region itself is sharply contrasted between the coastal hinterland, known as the Roussillon plains, and the dramatic backdrop of the mountains. Three main valleys, the Têt valley and the Agly valley in the north and the Tech valley to the south, sweep down from the mountain range and into the Mediterranean. Viticulture, farming and tourism are the economic mainstay of this predominantly rural region.

The climate is particularly mild, although the wind known as the *Tramontane* can blow up suddenly and last for several days. The region is considered to be one of the poorest in France (Blackwood and Tufi, 2015). This is important as it brings into question the reasons behind the promotion of the culture and heritage of the region, and to what extent these

reasons are determined by economic considerations, with the main purpose of attracting tourists, rather than for the intrinsic cultural benefits for the local population.

3.2.2 Historical crossroads

Having considered the geographical location of the research area in the wider landscape, this section gives a brief account of the history of the region. This is border country, and over the centuries has been under the sovereignty of various rulers due to its importance as a route connecting the Iberian Peninsula to the rest of Europe. Historically the mountains of the Pyrenees, in particular the Canigou massif, have been a place of refuge: from the Moorish incursions, for the Cathars in the Middle Ages, the flight from the Spanish Civil War, the hiding place of the Maquis resistance group and the route to safety during the Second World War. The mountain range was also witness to banditry and village rivalries caused in part by French and Spanish ambitions to secure their position in this border country. The political history of the region is thus complicated and reflects its strategic importance, as outlined in the following paragraphs.

At various times over the long centuries, the region formed part of the sovereignty of the Kings of Majorca, the Kings of Aragon, the Counts of Barcelona, the Counts of Toulouse (the Counts of Barcelona were also the Kings of Aragon by dynastic descent). During this period, strategically, it was seen as a buffer zone to threats of Moorish incursions from the Iberian peninsula, which forced a part of the invaded population to seek refuge in the mountains of the Pyrenees (Häkli, 2001, p. 115).

Despite the Spanish influence, Charlemagne's successful reconquest of Girona (785) and Barcelona (801) from the Moors, opened the region briefly to the idea of Frankish influence but after initial acceptance of Carolingian authority, the Catalan regions were left to themselves when the Capetians came to power in France. The marriage alliance of the Count of Barcelona to the Aragonese heir in 1137 was a significant point in the history of Catalonia, creating a Catalan-Aragonese crown (Sasor, 2021, p. 7).

However, the region was still subjected to incursions and violence, whether political or religious in intent. The Middle Ages saw the rise of the heretical group, the Cathars, who rejected the Catholic Church and its sacraments and were supported by many in the South, including the nobility. Rome ordered their persecution and ultimate destruction.

The Cathars sought refuge in their various strongholds in the mountains, until the last castle, Quéribus, fell in 1255 (Martin, 2014, p. 114). Perched high on a rocky outcrop, the castle epitomizes resistance and fortitude. Its commanding position is a reminder of the resilience and determination of the people of this landscape.

Figure 3.3 The Quéribus Castle (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

By 1640, tensions in Catalonia concerning the presence of the Spanish army on their soil during the warfare against France, combined with attacks on Catalan institutions led to unrest and revolt. Initial efforts to invite the French King to become the Count of Barcelona were overcome by the Spanish forces (Marty, 2019). The region was formally annexed by the French King, Louis XIV in 1659. He believed that the Pyrenees formed a natural border for France and as part of the 1659 Treaty of the Pyrenees, the Spanish King relinquished the territory north of the mountains to France (Ashley, 1965 p. 24), splitting Catalonia in two between the Spanish and French monarchs. Having negotiated the accession of the area of Northern Catalonia to France, Louis XIV ordered the upgrade of fortifications along the new border with Spain. Administrative and linguistic strategies

were employed to integrate the region into the rest of France. In 1662 the first Jesuit college opened in Perpignan, with French the sole language of instruction, followed by a decree stating that all church sermons in North Catalonia were to be given in French. McPhee points out that this was unattainable as few clergy knew French (1980, p. 403).

However, despite these initiatives, by 1789 the villages of North Catalonia were still relatively untouched by the centralising and unifying policies and political horizons were limited to their village, valley, or church steeple (McPhee, 2010, p. 405). Village boundaries held sway despite the Treaty of the Pyrenees and the actual border was not finally defined until The Treaty of Bayonne, 1868, which laid down the official boundary stones (Sahlins, 1988, p. 239). During this period the mountain villages continued the right to bear arms in order not only to defend themselves from wild animals, but to repulse incursions from neighbouring villages and valleys. A network of watch towers, castles, churches and fortified villages defended the populations of this border country from enmity between the French and Spanish monarchies (Pojada, 2018, p. 42). I quote Pojada:

> A border location directly threatened the villages in the event of war between the monarchies, but also in the event of any attack, livestock raid, retaliation or similar act from the neighbouring valley (Pojada, 2018, p. 41).

After the revolution of 1789, administrative and linguistic strategies to impose unity continued. McPhee notes that the depth of this *francisation* was limited and that it was not until the decades 1815-1855 that Catalan culture and way of life was seriously affected. The two main sources were commercial exploitation of viticulture through involvement in the national market economy which impaired their agricultural way of life, and the demarcation of the Franco-Spanish border. Political volatility in Spain led to tightening of the border to prevent smuggling of arms and munitions and to stem the flow of political refugees into North Catalonia (McPhee, 2010, p. 410). Perpignan now found itself a border town of strategic importance and "for the first time, Barcelona ceased to be their metropolis and gave way to Paris" (McPhee, 2010, p. 410). Reliance on state intervention to protect the region's growing wine industry and dependence on the economic link with north France contributed to "a gradual but decisive change in

collective consciousness" amongst the North Catalans toward acceptance of the French nation state (McPhee, 2010, p. 410).

Cross border banditry and smuggling however was still commonplace. In the nineteenth century, bandits known as the *Trabucayres* would attack passing coaches, take prisoners and demand ransoms. Establishing their headquarters near the Spanish border for ease of smuggling, they terrorised those using the mountain passes. One particular incident in 1845 led to their eventual capture and execution, not before they had attacked the Perpignan to Barcelona coach, taken three prisoners, one of whom died trying to escape, and a second one died of exhaustion. Their third young hostage was hidden away in a cave in the mountains, but the ransom demand was not met. The bandits were warned that their hideout had been discovered; they fled after killing the 16-year-old but were eventually captured, tried and executed (P-O Life Mag, 30 01 2023).

The early years of the twentieth century were marked by growing unrest as the viticulture industry which was, by this period, the mainstay of the region, suffered a collapse. Over production, imported wines into France from other countries, disease, poor harvests, competition from cider production and fraud were all cited as reasons for the economic depression of the region (Sagnes, 1978, p. 6). I quote Harvey Smith's analysis:

> The general belief among wine-growers was that the slump had its origins in a massive, illicit industry in adulterated wines flooding the market - that is, in "fraud". Villagers were suspicious not only of wine-merchants, traditional enemies of many growers, and of northern industrial interests, seen as profiting from the sale of commodities used in adulterating wines (sugar, chemicals, alcohols), but also of the landowners (Harvey Smith, 1978, pp. 115-116).

Viticulturists worked at a loss and the region's population as a whole suffered from this downturn. A better harvest in 1903 saw an improvement in wine prices, but the large wine landowners refused to raise wages. Strikes ensued in many areas although Harvey Smith notes that the villages in the mountains were not affected (Harvey Smith, 1978, p. 105). Whole villages supported the demands of the wine workers and their pressure resulted in restoration of wages. However, the unpredictable wine market led to further falls in wages and general discontent and hardships. Syndicates were formed, meetings

organised and by 1907 landowners had joined in with grievances. Harvey Smith explains why these diverse parts of Languedoc society came together:

> Doubtless different interests hoped for various results: large landowners and conservative political groups generally hoped to discredit the republic and bring about the fall of Clemenceau (he survived a vote of confidence easily). Vine- workers seemed to view the revolt as inaugurating the organization of communal governments which would be dominated by small producers, would control production, employment and wine-making in the communities and would impose collective agreements on the landowners. The wine-growers, who comprised the majority of most *comités* (committees), however, wanted the government to intervene on their behalf to restore the market for their harvest (Harvey Smith, 1978, p. 120)

Discontent was manifest in all spheres of northern Catalan life; political dissatisfaction, claims for decentralisation, and appeals for central government support brought together all levels of society in the region. Demonstrations began in Narbonne and spread to other towns in the region. On 19 May 1907, 170,000 were recorded as amassing in Perpignan (Sagnes, 1978, p. 3). The leaders of the revolt gave orders that payment of taxes be suspended and demanded the resignation of the members of the municipal councils including the mayors, "thereby cutting the region off from Paris entirely (Harvey Smith, 1978, p. 118).

The government in Paris under Clemenceau came down hard on the region, killing six demonstrators in Narbonne, imprisoning the leaders and enforcing military occupation. By the end of June, the two sides reached an agreement; those imprisoned were released and collection of taxes from the three previous years was annulled (Sagnes, 1978, p. 4). The legacy of the years of discontent leading up to and including 1907 involved a reaction against the centralising interventions of the state and provoked one of the first, if not the first, defences of regionality in twentieth century France (Sagnes, 1978, p. 30). As Harvey Smith notes, the villages of the Canigou were hardly affected by the strikes in the early years of the twentieth century. However, they were directly affected by the impending mine closures in the 1960s and miners took to demonstrate in the nearby town of Prades

in the Tech valley. The strikes were to no avail and one by one the industrial sites were forced to close (see section 3.3.6).

The region was not spared military occupation during the Second World War. In August 1942 the German troops arrived in Perpignan, and within days took over the whole region (Bailey, 2009, p. 222). A 15-kilometre exclusion zone was established at the Spanish border and the harbour at Port Vendres, near the frontier with Spain was barricaded. Access to the heavily defended beaches all along the coast was forbidden. Bailey gives an account of the nature of life in the region under the Vichy regime, and the pockets of resistance that developed during occupation (Bailey, 2009, p. 204-268). Known as the Maquis, the first such groups in the Pyrenees were formed by the Spanish. Sabotage became an important method of attacking the Vichy regime and the German occupiers, with attacks on railway lines, bridges and the mining infrastructure: "The iron ore transport cable from the Canigou was cut, interrupting ore supplies for a month" (Bailey, 2009, p. 253). This mountain range provided the route to safety for those fleeing from the Nazis during the Second World War. Safe houses were established along the Mediterranean coast and in the mountain villages. As well as Allied service personnel, the local network helped many of those wanted by the Nazis to safety. The Maquis based themselves on the mountainsides, living in caves, deserted mine buildings, and abandoned remote farmhouses. Many of their hiding places were discovered before the war was over. The Maquis did manage to escape from their hideout at the mine above the village of Valmanya, known as La Pinouse, although their leader was shot. The refuge below the summit of the Canigou, Cortalets, was also burnt to the ground once the Germans discovered its purpose. Again, the Maquis knew the terrain and were able to escape (Bailey, 2009, p. 301).

The Pyrenees-Orientales became the first department to be liberated in August 1944. Resistance fighters came out from the mountain hideouts and were welcomed in the streets of the villages and towns. Sadly, in Perpignan, many were killed by the Germans who had not yet retreated from the city.

The modern period is characterized by the continued flow of people across the border with Spain. For example, every February since 2002, the plight of refugees fleeing from

Franco in 1939, following the fall of Barcelona is commemorated. Catalans from both sides of the border walk the route that 250,000 Catalans took in late January, early February 1939, before arriving at the small French border villages. They waited there for three days until the French opened the border. Many were forced into camps on the beaches in the freezing winter, whilst those who made it over the mountains by more circuitous routes, were helped by local villagers (Bailey, 2009, p. 17-40).

Many of the historic paths taken by people seeking refuge are now hiking routes. The chalet Cortalets was rebuilt after the war and today is a hostel for walkers. The Cathar Way is a long-distance footpath connecting the Cathar castles, whilst the tracks of those who escaped persecution and war can be traced on lower wooded slopes, through gorges and waterfalls used as hiding places, of the Pyrenees. I have hiked many of these routes and in so doing I feel a part of the past, as well as enjoying the moment in the present. I can personally relate to the feeling of being in the landscape through an embodied connection with the layers of stories of these parts.

Today expressions of regional identity are part of the landscape of North Catalonia. Manifestations of Catalan identity of the resident population are very much in evidence as illustrated by the sign above the front door of a residence in one of the research villages (Figure 3.4). The plaque above the door states in Catalan, *"Aqui hi viu un Català",* (Here lives a Catalan) and is illustrated with a painting of one of the abbeys of the region. These abbeys are features of the Catalan cultural landscape and the accompanying portrayal of an abbey on the sign here serves to reinforce their importance as part of the distinctive landscape of Catalan identity.

Figure 3.4 Photograph, the plaque above the front door to a house in the village of Baillestavy (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

In 2016 the area underwent further changes as a result of administrative reorganisations imposed by the French government. The traditional region of Languedoc-Roussillon is subdivided into five departments, the most southerly one, the Pyrénées-Orientales, consists of Capcir, Cerdagne, Confluent, Roussillon, Vallespir and le Fenouilledès, the latter being associated with the Occitan language. Apart from le Fenouilledès, these Catalan-speaking areas are known collectively as *Le Pays Catalan* (Catalan country*)* but links to Catalonia in Spain, traditionally associated with the area centred around Barcelona are tenuous and individual in nature, with the distinction between *Catalan du Nord* (North Catalans) and *Catalan du Sud* (South Catalans) held by the Catalans themselves.

Controversy surrounding the renaming of French regions has ignited some Catalan passions in the north. The chosen name for the Languedoc area is *Occitanie*, to the consternation of those who maintain their Catalan identity and wanted it to be renamed *Occitanie Pays Catalan*. Despite demonstrations by the French Catalans in Perpignan, the name change went ahead in accordance with the majority vote from the Occitan regions. Furthermore, the independence claims of *Catalonia du Sud* have been watched with

interest from those living north of the France-Spain border but the feeling is that it will not affect the Catalan region of France (Hadden, 2012). The region does not have the economic weight of the Catalan area around Barcelona (Häkli, 2001, p. 112) and many people in *Catalonia du Nord* (North Catalonia) bear a commitment to France. The distinctive identity of those who live in the region is illustrated by the following participant in my study who clearly states that he is a Catalan but also implies that he regards himself as living in a foreign country, France.

"I am Catalan but I live in France" (Participant R.8).

The implications of this interface between regional identity and a sense of the homeland inform the research discussions. Movement is part of the narrative and incomers in the past contributed to its sustainability through the new energy which they brought. The region always was, by its geographical situation, an intersection for exchange and movement of peoples, goods and ideas. Despite the remote location of the ore, people of other nationalities came to work in the mines (Verna, 2017, p. 294; Pinto, 2003, p. 325). Documents relating to the medieval period refer to Genoese, Arabs, Portuguese, Catalans from the south, as well as Basque and Navarrese, who lived and worked amongst the mining operations for varying lengths of time in a variety of capacities ranging from miners and blacksmiths to forge owners. The frontier location of the Canigou region and its proximity to the Mediterranean allowed for connections with the wider world, and trade was also the conduit for the spread of ideas (Hilaire-Perez and Verna, 2006, p. 548). 'Comings and goings' are thus a part of the story of the area and illustrate the impact of global influences on local place identity (Massey, 1995), considered in Chapters Four, Five and Six (4.3.1; 4.3.5; 5.4; 6.1; 6.4.1; 6.5). Today, incomers continue to contribute, and their input enables the communities to change and adapt.

3.2.3 Changing population

There have been significant changes in population numbers in the iron mining villages of the Canigou: a noticeable decline in most cases, with a proportionately high number of recent incomers. The effect of deindustrialisation is evident in the change in population with very few people of working age now in the villages. Hence, as well as capturing the insights of those elderly residents who remember the mining days, my study is also

informed by an aging population who have moved into the region for their retirement years. The implications for this research lie in how these incomers identify with the mining heritage and use it as a means of embedding themselves in the landscape. The following table and graph show the change in population size in the last 176 years, up to the year 2017. I have omitted the town of Arles-sur Tech from the Graph 3.1, in order to highlight the data in the mountain villages themselves (Table 3.1; Graph 3.1).

	1841	1856	1876	1901	1906	1975	1982	1990	1999	2006	2017
Arles-Sur-Tech	2375	2267	2462	2386	2351	2945	2889	2837	2700	-	2705
Baillestavy	346	355	307	287	277	55	50	53	58	-	117
Corsavy	1007	950	787	689	778	263	190	194	204	198	237
Escaro	359	295	344	435	375	92	85	102	84	87	107
Fillols	299	293	340	423	412	141	163	141	141	150	192
La Bastide	563	532	453	403	408	70	65	64	61	95	74
Rabouillet	664	585	511	405	391	127	106	101	85	-	103
Sahorre	588	624	712	753	765	370	359	333	347	-	388
St. Marsal	603	554	518	444	436	108	104	77	85	-	71
Taurinya	466	447	563	466	505	225	215	248	307	-	347
Valmanya	379	358	405	409	421	29	32	30	18	26	34

Table 3.1 Table charting demographic changes in the 176 years, 1841 to 2017. The town, Arles-Sur-Tech, situated in the Tech valley, has seen relatively little population change (source: Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, 2017).

Graph illustrating demographic changes in the 176 years, 1841-2017
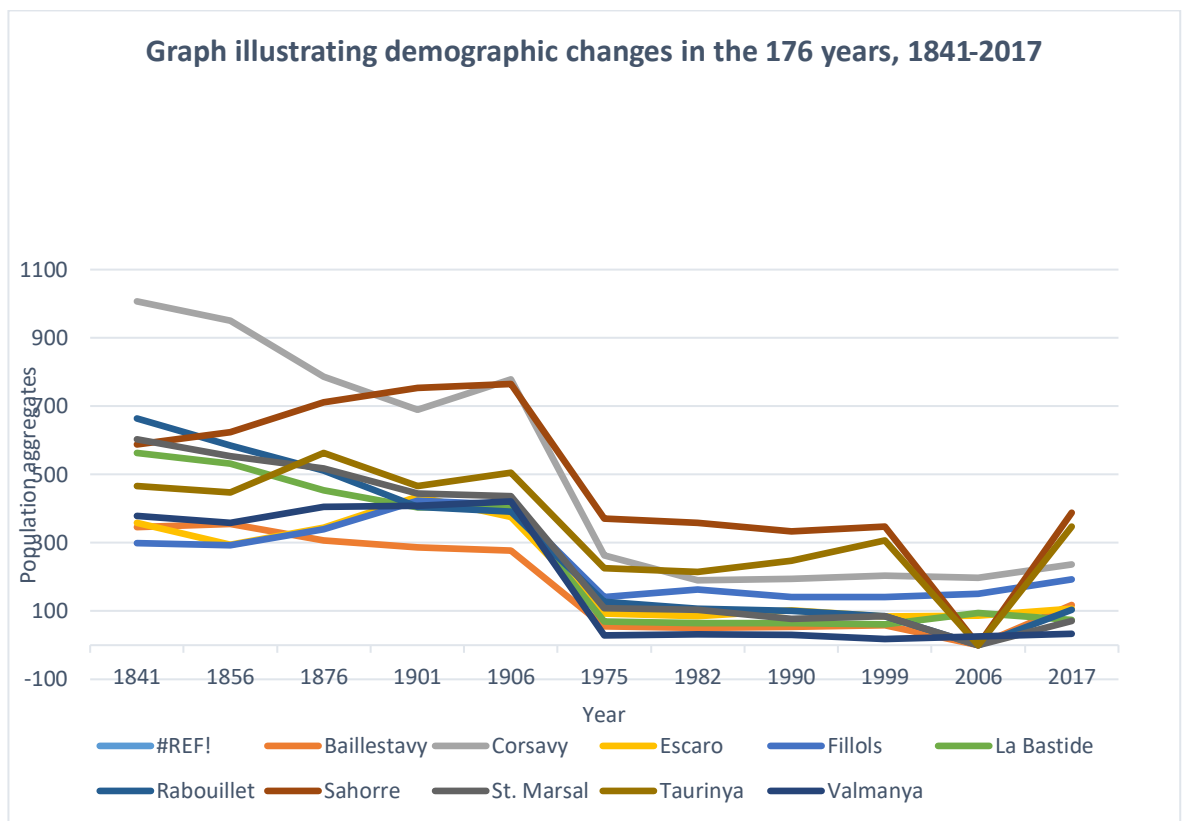
Graph 3.1 Graph of the above data, charting demographic changes in the 176 years, 1841 to 2017, omitting the town of Arles-sur -Tech because it has shown very little population change (source: Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, 2017).

The table and graph show that all the mining villages suffered a considerable loss of population in the years 1841 to 2017. Apart from Arles-sur–Tech, the total population in 2017 was 1,670; this compares with a total population figure of 5,270 in 1841 and reflects the impact of the loss of the mining industry on the population aggregates as families moved elsewhere in search of work.

There was very little difference in the population size of the villages in 1975 and 2017, with the exception of the villages of Taurinya and Baillestavy, which have seen an increase of about 100 people. Despite the continued general dip in population aggregates after the year 1975 the population did begin to rise and all the villages, apart from St Marsal, saw an increase during the years 1999-2017. The villages of Taurinya and St Marsal both have a primary school which also serves surrounding villages. For example, children in La Bastide go to school in St Marsal. Secondary schooling is in the valleys, children either go to schools in Prades, Arles-Sur-Tech, Céret, or even Perpignan where

there are boarding facilities. Taurinya is not far from the main road into Prades, which could account for its population figures as it is possibly viewed as being more accessible than the other mining villages. Similarly, Baillestavy is located fifteen kilometres from the main road in the Têt valley. Overall, from 1975 these figures reflect the changing social and cultural dynamics of the area with a similar number of people relocating to the area as those who left to seek employment elsewhere. Many of these incomers are from Belgium, Holland, Germany, and the UK.

The two tables below, taken from a census in 2017 show the number of people who have moved into the department from other countries, and the country of their birth. The age bracket 55 years and over is the largest group to move into the area whilst Spain accounts for the largest influx of people. This cannot be attributed to the *Retirada*, the name given to the flow of Spanish refugees who crossed into the French department, fleeing the Franco regime in 1939 (see above section 3.2.2; Chapter Six, 6.3.3), but it does attest to the proximity of the border with Spain and the natural relationship between these two areas.

Population of Pyrénées-Orientales 2017					
	Under 15	15-24	25-54	55 and over	Total
Immigrants	2,271	2,810	19,554	23,123	47,763
Non-immigrants	76,926	44,796	145,977	150,865	418,564
Total	79,196	47,606	165,532	173,993	466,327

Table 3.2 Table showing the proportion of immigrants to the department, in relation to the non-immigrants (source: Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, 2017).

The proportion of immigrants to the department, 11.4 percent of the total population in 2017, reflects the claim that the area sits at a geographical crossroads and has always attracted other nationalities into the area either for work (Verna, 2011, p. 294) or for

leisure and lifestyle in the present day (see Participant I.35, Chapter Five, section 5.5; Marty, 2013 p. 78).

Table indicating country of birth and age of immigrants to the department, 2017					
	Under 15	15-24	25-54	55 and over	Total
Portugal	229	241	2,191	1,275	3,935
Italy	69	46	201	732	1,048
Spain	848	272	3,493	11,304	15,916
Other countries from the EU	345	422	2.574	3,921	7,262
Other European countries	180	114	599	380	1,273
Algeria	114	306	3,006	2,075	5,501
Morocco	152	575	3,941	2,111	6,780
Tunisia	11	18	223	237	488
Other African countries	69	229	973	271	1,541
Turkey	8	52	499	143	702
Other countries	245	536	1.855	679	3,316
Total	2,271	2.810	19.554	23,128	47,763

Table 3.3 Table indicating country of birth of immigrants to the department (source: Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, 2017).

Spain accounts for the largest number of immigrants, reflecting the proximity to the Spanish border, although Morocco accounts for the highest number in the working age

brackets. Interestingly, the Dutch, British, Germans and Belgians who have retired or taken second homes, (either for retirement purposes or to work part or all of the year in the area), in the iron mining villages are not specifically mentioned in Table 3.3 but are most likely included in the section related to other countries in the European Union. (These figures pre-date the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union.) Having spent time in the research villages, I can confirm that there are no people from the African countries in these communities. I attribute this to the fact that the figures above show that the largest number of immigrants from these countries are of working age (25-54) and would therefore seek jobs in Perpignan or in one of the other towns in the river valleys or the Roussillon plains. Their impact is not visible in the wider region, but in Perpignan migrants from Africa settle in the area called St Jacques where they bring in and celebrate their own culture.

The general population decline and the number of incomers identified in my research who make up the population figures, leads one to ask whether or not the villages can still be considered as iron-mining villages and whether the current populations wish to stake their identity in these villages whose *raisons d'être* lie in the past, with which few have a direct connection.

3.2.4 The Canigou mountain

Figure 3.5 The Canigou, seen from the Têt valley (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

The Canigou mountain, which is the geographical focus for this research, is the symbol of Catalonia and a focal point for Catalan culture and identity for those on either side of the border (James, 2007; Popowich, 2018; Canigó-grandsite.fr; Ribas,1997, p. 9; Boixo, 1997, p.152). It has a towering presence over the landscape, as seen above (Figure 3.5), being the last summit at the eastern end of the Pyrenean range. The Catalan poet, Verdaguer, highlighted the beauty of the mountain in his poem *El Canigó* which he wrote in 1886 after a visit to the mountain. He saw the Canigou as a symbol of unity, and so wrote the poem in order to unify Catalans from both sides of the border in a culture which promoted the Catalan language. Dedicated to the Catalans of France, the poem is a mythological tale of tragic love involving fairies and knights, interspersed with historical episodes referring to the progress of Hannibal over the Eastern edge of the Pyrenees and the Saracens' conquest of Spain (London, 2019, p. 665). It also alludes to the *Sardana*, the traditional Catalan dance, and two of the region's abbeys, St Michel de Cuxa and St Martin's of the Canigou. London points out that the poem implicates the reader in the connections between history, territory and identity. It achieves this through references to actual place names and promotes a sense of longing for Catalonia when the fairies are banished from the mountain (London, 2019, p. 665). The mountain is depicted as a place of refuge with magical qualities and its beauty is well documented by Verdaguer. These qualities are echoed by many of my research participants who would refer to the poem to illustrate the importance of the Canigou in their lives.

All the testimonies referred to the mountain with a sense of awe and its presence in the landscape was perceived as a symbol of people's fleeting existence in geological time. The desire to leave a legacy, not just for themselves, but also for the mountain, was a recurring feature of this research and reflected the importance of the Canigou in the lives of the villagers:

> *"The Canigou is a part of our lives, and always has been. She has always been here, long before us and so our story is her story" (Participant R.2).*

This testimony describes the relationship between people and mountain as intertwined and so questions the divide between nature and culture. This will be discussed in Chapter Four (section 4.3.2). The significance of the mountain was realised centuries ago when people discovered the potential of the iron ore outcrops in abundance on the slopes of

the Canigou. It is not known exactly when the ore was first mined and worked on the mountain side, but certainly archaeological investigation has uncovered evidence of the Romans mining for the Canigou ore, and it is possible that they worked sites already known to them (Barouillet *et al*. 1989; Domergue, *et al*. 2006; Izard and Mut, 2007; Taurinya, 2011).

The long history of iron mining in the area is in fact an element of stability and continuity in what has been, politically and geographically, a disputed region with many changes of lordship. The iron deposits are the reasons why the villages are there on the slopes of the mountain and, up to the last generation, mining the ore gave structure to village life. The following map shows the relationship between the village of La Bastide, the mine, *els Menerots* and the forge at La Fargua. There were miners' quarters at the site of *els Menerots* but many men walked to and from the village. The ore was taken to the forge at neighbouring La Fargua to be smelted. The footpaths marked on the map which connect these three places are still walked today (Figure 3.6).
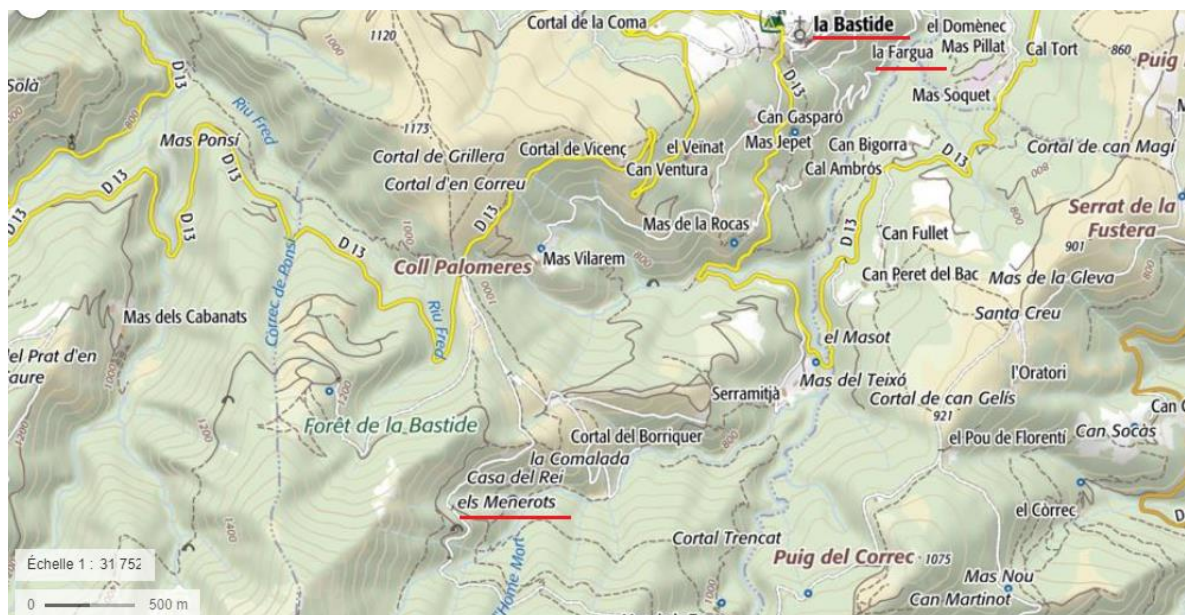
Figure 3.6 Situated at 786 metres, the village of La Bastide was a mining village (source: plan IGN, Géoportail, 2019).

With the closure of the mines, the organisation of village life has changed. Population decline, as demonstrated in Table 3.1, and the nature of dispersed employment have

brought about a different routine to community life and the focus of the villages has seemingly changed from village-centred, to a constellation of outward-looking individual foci:

> *"We would always watch the miners going to work, I would hear them first, all together, passing by" (Participant R.25).*

> *"People go to work in Prades or somewhere. There is no work here now" (Participant R.2).*

The first of these two quotations describes the cohesion of village life in the regular sound and sight of the miners on their way to the mine and their togetherness. It reflects the busyness of village life whilst the latter suggests a quietness in the streets as the participant describes how people today go their separate way to work in different places. These perspectives contrast the diverse set of social structures which exist today in these former iron-mining communities, with the integrated work and social organisation based around a single commodity in previous times. Aspects of village life and the impact on the villagers' sense of identity will be attended to in Chapters Four, Five and Six, as the participants' responses indicate the nature of their relationship with their surroundings.

3.2.5 The nature of iron ore deposits in the Canigou

Having considered the importance of the mountain, I now wish to give a brief outline of the geological components of the ore. Buried under the surface, the ore is the reason why the villages exist and has sustained them over the centuries. Moreover, the Canigou ore is of a particularly high quality, a fact which was highlighted by the majority of those taking part in this research.

On and around the Canigou massif, there are two dominant forms of iron ore hosted in the Cambrian limestone formations. Originally deposited as carbonate iron ores (spathose- crystallized ferric carbonate $FeCO_3$), some of these have been altered into brown haematites (hydrated ferric oxide Fe_2O_3). These ores also have a low phosphorous and high manganese content which produce a strong, malleable iron. They are found as discontinuous lenses of ore within the limestone which are themselves a disturbed geological horizon around the northern, eastern and south-eastern side of the Canigou massif. The complexity of the geology is illustrated for the area around Batère, Corsavy, in

Figure 3.7. At Batère the lenses of ore extend to, and have been worked to, a considerable depth below surface – as illustrated in the section of the mine (Figure 3.8).
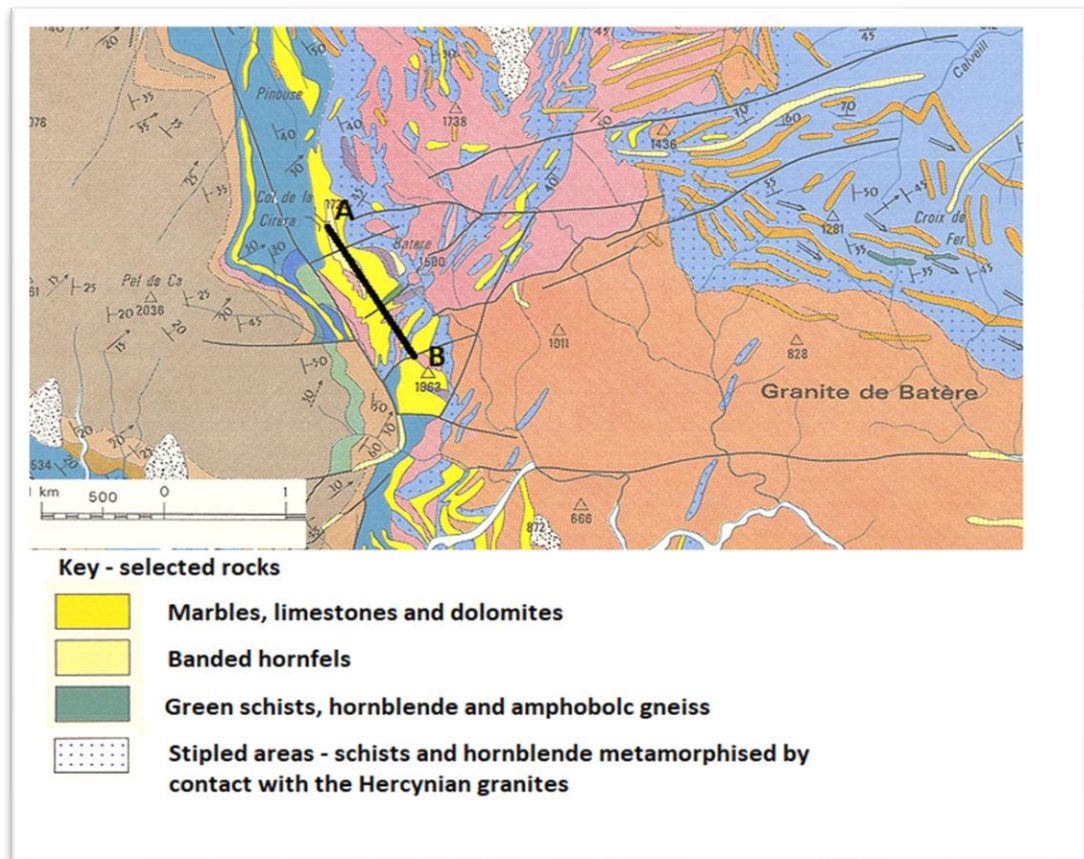
Figure 3.7 Annotated extract from Carte Géologique du massif du Canigou, showing the geology of the area around the mine of Batère, Corsavy (source, Guitard, 2014).
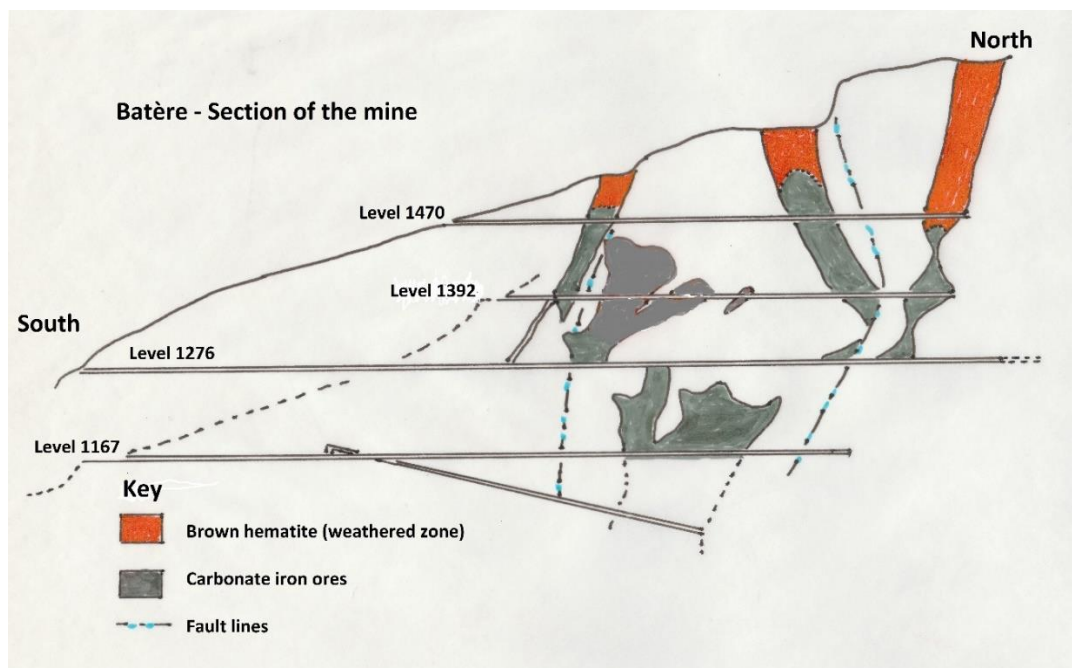
Figure 3.8 A simplified section through the mine at Batère (the line of which is marked as A-B in Figure 2.6) showing the discontinuous nature of the iron ore lenses. The iron carbonates in the lenses have weathered forming haematites close to surface (source: Association des Anciens Mineurs de Batère, Histoire et Projets, no date).

Most of those interviewed referred with pride to the quality of the iron of the mountain, within a few moments of talking about the mining past. It represented an affinity with the riches of their landscape. Whether or not people were aware of the geological component of the ore which produced such a richness of iron, is almost an afterthought to the untouchable status this fact received from the local population. It has acquired a mythical quality in that it is unquestioned and deeply embedded in the cultural heritage of the landscape. As well as the evident features of the landscape, this study therefore illustrates that heritage also lies below the surface and is not always visible to the naked eye. The veins of iron ore in the mountain are material manifestations of the 'power of place', a term which "encapsulates the human ability to connect with both the built and the natural environments that are entwined in the cultural landscape" (Hayden, 1995, p. 46). The ability of the iron to enrich lives from deep within the landscape emerged as a powerful feature of this study (see Chapter Four, section 4.3.4; Chapter Five, section 5.6).

3.3 The development of the iron industry around the Canigou

The following sections outline the processes and the development of the industry with the aim of illustrating the extent to which iron was a formative part of these communities. Section 3.3.1 describes developments in processing the ore whilst section 3.3.2 charts the decline of the mining enterprises. The importance of the Catalan Forge as a marker of Catalan identity is discussed in section 3.3.3 and the effect of changes in the mining organisation is addressed in the following two sections, highlighting the narrative of adaptability and accommodation which is the story of these parts. These responses resonate with today's villagers as they reconcile the past of their communities to twenty-first century change. Individual and community resilience featured in most of the testimonies during the course of this research, referenced by many participants as an inherited feature of this mining landscape.

The earliest iron surface outcrops were known and worked by the Romans and archaeological evidence has so far dated the sites in the village of Taurinya on the northern slopes of the Canigou, the site near St Marsal on the southern flank, and the site below the church at Baillestavy, as the oldest known Roman workings (Izard, 1994, p. 117). However, it is feasible that other early worked sites are yet to be dated. There followed a period of political instability in the region when waves of invaders swept through the landscape. It is uncertain whether the iron mining continued during this period as there is no documentary or paleoenvironmental evidence to support this, but Izard and Mut argue the case that it is unlikely that the Roman workings would have been abandoned as there was always a need for iron (Izard and Mut, 2007, p. 127).

Research to date for iron mining in the Canigou region focuses on the medieval period; there is no such detailed study on the later period and this piece of research was never intended to fill in the gap. The relevance of the following lies in highlighting that the area was a hive of industrial activity as far back as the early medieval period, as evidenced by written records held in the archives in Perpignan. These records are part of the sources of information for those involved in the iron mining heritage projects and reinforce their need to continue the narrative:

"We know that the Romans mined the iron here; archaeologists have uncovered the evidence. And we also know that this was a busy centre of commerce for the industry long before the Revolution. The abbeys were important iron masters, it is in their records. And skilled iron workers came from other parts to work in our forges, which is why we continue to share skills today with blacksmiths from other parts of Europe" (Participant R.51).

The story of the iron industry around the Canigou was linked to the mountainous landscape through its relationship with the forests, the means of transport developed to remove the ore down to the valleys, the rivers and streams so critical for the Catalan Forge (see section 3.3.3), and the resilience of the population who lived and worked in this terrain. Despite the remote location of the ore, the region was by no means isolated and archival records attest to people of other nationalities who came to work in the mines. Pinto and Izard cite notary sources that show miners from the Basque country and Navarre were present in the Roussillon mines in the first half of the fifteenth century, arriving at the same time as the charcoal makers and the forge masters from those regions (Pinto, 2003, p. 325; Izard, 1994, p. 119). The development of the industry therefore was overseen by a number of regional identities but the focus was very much on working with the constraints and benefits of the locality.

Archival documentation in the *Archives Départementales des Pyrénées-Orientales* (Departmental Archives of the Pyrénées-Orientales), Perpignan, also reveals the role of the abbeys as landowners and as early masters of the iron ore reduction process. By 1485 the abbey of Arles-sur-Tech, by 1485, owned the land and therefore the mines of Baillestavy, Castell, Corsavy, Campone, Sahorre, while the abbey of St Michel de Cuxa in the Têt valley owned four '*moulines*', including the one at Valmanya called La Pinouse (Izard, 1994, p. 119-120). They extended their lands and possessions through the patronage of the noble families such as the Kings of Aragon. For example, in 1196, Pierre II of Aragon granted mining concessions to the abbey of Arles-Sur-Tech (Dabosi, 2000, p. 3). The abbeys themselves granted mine workings and forges to the charge of individuals. St. Michel de Cuxa, Figure 3.9, was one of the largest landowners in the region up to the Revolution of 1789 and the monks were known for their mastery of the iron smelting processes. Both abbeys are significant features in the cultural landscape today.

Figure 3.9 The Abbey St Michel de Cuxa (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

Movement of iron to ports around the Mediterranean is also noted by Tomàs who refers to a manuscript of 1600 in which the Jesuit priest Père Gil highlights the extent of iron mining activity in the Pyrenees and Roussillon in his description of the importance of the iron trade to Valencia, Castille, the islands of the Western Mediterranean and other coastal parts of France and Italy (Tomàs, 1999, p. 228).

Verna's research on the relationship between rural industries and the elite members of the bourgs in Catalonia and Vallespir in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries focused on the town of Arles-sur-Tech where examination of archival material revealed the methods of deciding on the price of the iron during that period. From an economic point of view, iron was also a means of capital for exchange. The smiths paid for their food, debts and fines with iron, and so it became a currency in the town of Arles-sur-Tech, reinforced by the activity of the notable entrepreneurs in the marketplace (Verna, 2017, p. 144).

This section has set out the long continuous line of mining as a presence in the region and has highlighted the importance of the iron trade in the economy of the Canigou region during the medieval period. Iron working attracted entrepreneurs and iron workers from

other areas, and connected the mountain iron industry to regions of the Mediterranean through trade.

3.3.1 Developments in the smelting process

The implications of developments in the smelting process and the nature of the mountain landscape impacted on the social organisation of the work and the evolution of this rural industry. Smelting is the process by which iron is extracted from iron ore. There are two main processes for smelting the ore, and both impact the mining and treatment of the ore in different ways. The Direct Process is the name given to the production of wrought iron. Wrought iron is produced in a bloomery, which produces one bloom of iron, varying in size from 2 kg to 20 kg, depending on the size of the hearth. During the early medieval period, smelting of the ore took place near the source of fuel; charcoal, not as portable as ore, disintegrates if carried any distance. The bloomeries were thus temporary structures and hence the terminology '*les forges à bras'* (portable forges).

Today, the Direct Process is enacted at many sites and festivals and the emergence of the bloom is greeted with applause by onlookers. The iron workers are treated with great respect; the proceedings carry an air of ceremony, respectful of the symbolism of birth which is attached to the removal of the bloom from the furnace. This is evidenced at the bi-annual metal working fair in Arles-sur-Tech, when removal and hammering of the bloom is the much-anticipated evening event as seen below (Figure 3.10 and Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.10 Removal of the bloom from the furnace, during the metalworking fair at Arles-Sur-Tech (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

Figure 3.11 Hammering the bloom (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

During the later medieval period, the mining of the iron ore continued, but with the evolution of the Catalan Forge (see section 3.3.3) the smelting process needed water-power to drive the flow of air into the furnaces and to mechanise the hammers. Thus the relationship between forest and ore became a tripartite arrangement: forest, ore and water source. The Canigou mountain is host to numerous fast flowing streams and rivers and these were now the important features of the landscape. They became the focal point for all activity in the processing of iron and all footpaths led to and from the forges (see Figure 3.12). These forges have been recorded in the mountain villages, near the mine workings, and further down in the valley (Izard, 1994, p. 117-119). Transporting the ore from the source to the forges in the valley, such as Arles-sur-Tech, would have entailed a greater degree of organisation of resources, people and donkeys, in order to cover the distance. These forges were worked until midway through the nineteenth century when it became cheaper to take the ore to the big furnaces in south and central France, as transport to these parts became easier.

The development of the blast furnace in the later Middle Ages allowed for continuous production and could operate for several months at a time. Known as the Indirect Process, this produces cast iron. The need for mechanical power to drive the air-flow system in the machinery meant that these furnaces could only be erected near a stream or a river. Demand for the smelted product from the Canigou was curtailed; the market now wanted the unsmelted mined ore which was transported to blast furnaces in central and eastern France. Blast furnaces were erected locally in the Têt Valley, at Ria and Prades, but they were only in operation for a few years from 1858 to 1885 (Izard, 1994, p. 124).

3.3.2 The decline of the mining activity

Advances in the processing of iron signalled the final century of iron production on the Canigou. The development of the Bessemer Process allowed for a new product from wrought iron: steel. The larger convertors could convert 30 or more tonnes of iron into steel in about thirty minutes. Initially the process would only work with low phosphorous ores such as the ores of the Canigou. In the 1870s, further improvements (the Thomas-

Gilchrist process) allowed the use of high phosphoric ores such as the minette ores found in the north-east of France, Alsace-Lorraine and Luxemburg. This process was taken up on a large scale by both the French and the German steel industries. It signalled a reduction in the demand for the ore of the Canigou whilst the Free Trade Agreement of 1860, had brought increasing competition from British products (Marty, 2013, p. 66). The mines gradually closed down during the course of the 1920s to the 1960s with the exception of Batère, on the southern flank of the Canigou above Corsavy, which closed in 1985.

The Ecole National de l'Administration wrote to the Prefect of the Pyrénées Orientales declaring its decision to "*abandoner les industries condamnées par le progress et la vogue*", (abandon those industries which are condemned by progress and fashion) (Battault, 1961, quoted in Marty, 2013, p. 78). In other words, the mines were outdated and out of favour. As a result, in the early 1960s, the French government decided to invest in the coastal areas of the region in an effort to increase tourism, rather than put any more money in the decaying mining industry (Marty, 2013, p. 79).

Reports of the mine closures, as they were rumoured, caused considerable concern: the chief engineer of the mines said in 1963 "local consequences will be catastrophic. No other industry in Prades can absorb the workforce. Many families will leave the region" (Musée de la Mine d'Escaro, 2017). La Pinouse, the mine above the village of Valmanya, closed in 1936, the last of the five mine workings above the village of Baillestavy closed in 1967. The mines of the village of Fillols on the north side, closed down in 1957, although some miners were able to find work in the neighbouring mine at Taurinya until that too shut down in 1963, and from Taurinya, some miners made the journey to work in the mines at Baillestavy. In spite of protestations, the iron industry came to a final halt and many families left the villages to look for work elsewhere.

The sense of loss is apparent in the testimony of the more elderly residents. There is a feeling amongst these particular research participants that the area will lose its soul if the mining story is completely buried:

"There was always something going on, the mines were noisy places, there was a lot of coming and going. When the village lost its mine, it lost its soul, the heart went out of it" (Participant R.2).

Even though the place may seem quiet to this participant now, the past speaks loudly. It is such a feature of this landscape in physical form, place names and memories that it cannot be ignored.

3.3.3 The Catalan forge and the case for Catalan identity

Having outlined the development of the iron mining industry on the Canigou, this section considers the importance of the Catalan Forge in the landscape. Both the direct and the indirect process of treating iron were present in the region at various times over the long history of iron smelting. But the interesting development from the point of view of identity and heritage, was the Catalan Forge, distinguished by use of water-power to drive the '*martinets*' (hammers) and a large hearth for smelting the ore. This was a bloomery-based, direct smelting system which continued to be used into the late nineteenth century. These forges developed as there was a plentiful supply of water to operate both the supply of air and the motion of the hammer. Increased activity meant increased labour demands which were in part met by an influx of work force from the south part of Catalonia, as well as Sardinia and Genoa.

The Catalan Forge was worked by a team of eight men and drew in about one hundred other men in various capacities, from miners, to charcoal workers, to porters. With its necessary infrastructure, it opened up means of communication along the shoulders of the Canigou. All footpaths led to and from the forges with miners, loggers, charcoal makers, porters and blacksmiths all involved in the economic system with the forge at the heart of the activity. Commercial exchange was therefore developed through the iron mining activity of the mountain and of the Roussillon valleys. The map below shows the mines in relation to the village of Baillestavy; the footpaths marked, which are still walked today, led down from the mine to the forge at La Farga which was situated by the river Lentilla (Figure 3.12). In living memory, the ore would be transported by oxen and cart to Vinca, in the Tech valley, a distance of 14 kilometres.

Figure 3.12 Map of Baillestavy and the surrounding area (source: plan IGN, Géoportail, 2019).

As a marker of identity, the name, 'Catalan Forge', is synonymous with iron processing in Catalonia and, as such, has given the region worldwide recognition (Tomàs, 1999, p. 228; Verna, 2017, p. 200). Whether or not these forges originated in Catalonia is the subject of debate and research (Verna-Navarre, 2005), but the terminology itself is part of the journey into Catalan identity. The important point for this research however, is the extent to which the Catalan Forge forms part of the collective identity of the region. These forges were worked until midway through the nineteenth century when it became cheaper to take the ore to the blast furnaces in south and central France, as transport became easier. However, the interesting question is whether they are the defining feature of the Catalan miners on the Canigou, or whether the miners in more recent times have integrated the Catalan Forge as part of their heritage.

Verna makes the point that it was actually during the course of the twentieth century that the Catalan Forge became a focus for identity (Verna, 2017, p. 198). Is this timely, in that it features alongside the gradual closures of the mines? Research conversation with a young archaeologist in my initial visits to the area, witnessed his enthusiasm to show the site and remains of such a forge in Arles-sur-Tech. One must be cautious to assume that it

is indeed a focus of identity for the local Catalan population, bearing in mind that he was an archaeologist and as such, the Catalan Forge figured in his vocabulary. However, it was interesting to observe, during the course of this research, that the Catalan Forge is still part of the narrative for the present-day population and many participants spoke about it when referring to the contribution of the region to the iron industry.

The debate concerning the origin of the term and the process illustrates present day concerns with heritage as a means of affirming collective identity. In a similar vein, Verna draws attention to the political situation of the Catalans in Spain, following the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-1930), and sees the Catalan Forge as a rallying symbol for Catalan identity (Verna, 2017, p. 200). These industrial sites are still present in today's landscape, whether in their derelict state, or converted to homes shown in the photograph below (Figure 3.13). The heritage is still very much alive in the communities and is also carried in place names such as La Farga, meaning forge in Catalan. The various manifestations that the Catalan Forge present today illustrate the argument that forms of heritage change in the landscape and hence carry different meanings to those who view them in their contemporary manifestations. The discussion also highlights the importance of language as a window onto the world: ownership of the terminology in a specific language can drive the argument so that it becomes a quasi-fact. However, the fact that the term Catalan Forge is accepted today in the wider industry, is a reflection of the part it played in the development of the industry in Catalonia and its role as a unifying cultural feature of the region.

Figure 3.13 The Catalan Forge at Sorède, Tech Valley (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

3.3.4 Changes: From local to national

Following on from the description of the mining operations outlined in the above sections, the impact of technological improvements in the early modern period on the local populations is now addressed. A parallel is drawn between the effect of the change in investment from local to national concerns where decisions concerning the mining operations were taken outside the locality, and the determination of the participants in this study to own the story of the mining heritage. This is followed in section 3.3.5 by discussion of the changing landscape. The section as a whole concludes with the effects of the rise and subsequent decline in ore production at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.

One of the salient features to emerge from previous scholarship into the mining and industrial history of the region is the movement from local control and interest to that on a national scale. This resonates with the continued national policy of *francisiation* of the region, initiated following the acquisition of the territory in 1659 (see section 3.2.2). For example: a consideration of investment in the iron industry reveals the nature and origins of stakeholders and notes the change from decisions taken at local and regional level

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from the medieval period, to the involvement of individuals and enterprises who are based in other regions of France after the Revolution of 1789 and through to the modern era. Even though foreign investors and skilled workers from other areas of Europe are noted in the medieval period, the mining landscape remained at the centre of local interests.

This local focus, with efforts centred on iron mining, processing and exporting, took on a different perspective after 1789 when the French government took control of investment through a system of the granting of concessions. The mines were brought under national control, but the minerals did not belong to the state, and a system of concessions granted the rights to individuals or groups to run the mining operations. The proprietor, or owner on whose land the ore was found, could work the ore but not without the grant of such a concession. Any individual, or group of individuals, could apply for a concession but had to prove that they had the means to work it. In the case of a disputed venture, the government had the right to choose between the interested parties (Walmesley, 1894, p. 34). Walmsley writes that:

> The law of 28th July 1791 (passed by the National Assembly of 1789) declared that mines, both metalliferous and non-metalliferous …were subject to the disposition of the nation … could only be worked by the consent of the nation, and under inspection (Walmsley, 1894, p. 33).

The inward focus became inverted, with the efforts of outsider interests measuring the nature of their investments in relation to the interests of the national industry.

The story of the concessions concerning the mine, La Pinouse, above the village of Valmany on the eastern flank of the Canigou provides an insight into the change from local to national interest and investment (Gourbeault, 2011). Gourbeault states that the concession to work the mine at La Pinouse belonged to Raphaël Llucia of Perpignan and François Noell from Saint-Laurent-de Cerdans in the neighbouring department of Vallespir. The mine was owned by the abbey, Saint Michel de Cuxa. After the 1789 Revolution, the goods belonging to the abbey became national property and anything beneath the ground belonged to the state (Gourbeault, 2011, p. 20). In 1844, Michel Noell, who had bought the mining land in 1813, was granted the unconditional

concession to work the mines of La Pinouse. This concession was handed down through the family; interestingly by the end of the nineteenth century the inheritors were women - the three daughters of Marc Noell. The eldest daughter, Elise was married to the forge master of Arles and of Corsavy, Monsieur Pons. This branch of the family acquired the whole concession until 1906 when the concession was granted to the Valentin brothers.

These were two industrialists from Alsace; France had lost her resources in Lorraine and was in need of iron. At the same time, with the demise and closures of the forges, the Pons family had no further interest in exploiting the ore at La Pinouse. The arrival of the Valentin brothers was therefore timely and two years after obtaining the concession, they also became the proprietors. The following years saw investment in the mine: the opening up of further chambers, the construction of a small hydroelectric plant supplying electricity, and the construction of a transport system comprising of two aerial ropeways and a narrow-gauge train track to take the ore to Amelie-les-Bains in the valley. In addition, they provided a number of buildings, including lodgings, a cantine and a baker's on the site, so in effect part of the population of the village of Valmanya below the mine, moved up to the mining site itself. (This was also the case in other mines such as La Batère, above Corsavy, where living accommodation provided beds for 200 men.) But the brothers had overreached their finances and the concession was taken over by the Schneiders, of the Creusot Society. Despite the wealth of investment experience brought by the great iron mining family, the Schneiders could not compete with the recovered mines of Lorraine. The transport costs were too high, despite the earlier efforts by the Valentin brothers to improve links. Eventually the mines at La Pinouse closed down in 1933 (Gourbeault, 2011).

Thus, in the modern era decisions were taken elsewhere and this begs the question whether the mines, the places of work, now seemingly belonged to France, rather than to the locality. Decisions were taken at a distance from the locality and the actions and resolves of the concession holders concerning the future direction of the enterprise impacted on the landscape and the community.

In light of this, the heritage initiatives discussed in Chapter Five could be interpreted as local interests reclaiming these places and their 'ownership' of this industry and making decisions at a local level about the future of the mining story, as testified by the following:

"After all, this is our story, so never mind the tourists. Of course they can come and understand what went on here. But it is important that the story belongs to us" (Participant R.1).

An interesting parallel can also be drawn here in that the development of the mining heritage projects which in part inform this research was in many cases, initiated and sustained by people moving into the villages from elsewhere. Their involvement was driven by a desire to enhance the relationship between people and the land and to fix the heritage firmly in the landscape.

In spite of the changing demographics today, the general feeling amongst the former iron mining villages is one of connection with this mining narrative, in particular through the desire to keep the mining memory alive as the following testimony illustrates:

"Well I think we still feel we are a mining village, especially for those who have a mining background. But also for us too; we moved here because we love the mountains and when we heard about the iron, well we want to honour the history, not brush it away. It is the one thing that connects us here in this village. It brought people together in the past and that is how it is today" (Participant I. 20).

Reflecting the range of skills in the villages and valleys during the rise of the industry, one participant spoke of the mix of expertise in today's population:

"We have a lot of skills here, from engineers to journalists to historians and when we all come together we can provide a lot of information about what went on here" (Participant R.41).

It is evident that involvement in the heritage project not only brings the village together but takes the story of these villages into the next stage of their existence. Participant statements highlight the layers involved, and the extent to which these heritage activities give the community and the individual various pathways with which to interact and feel a part of the landscape.

3.3.5 Changing landscapes

Following discussion of changes to the iron mining industry, I now draw attention to the effect these changes have had on the landscape, before focusing on the mine closures and their impact on the population.

One of the themes which emerged during the course of the interviews, particularly amongst the older residents, was a regret for past aspects of the landscape. The Canigou landscape is always changing to meet people's needs. The demand for wood for charcoal, on account of the mountain iron industry, was a burden on the mountain slopes. Early on, the landowners were aware of the pressures on the forests and put in place various edicts to promulgate their management. The kings of Majorca and Aragon named foresters to protect their royal forests in the Conflent, Capcir, Vallespir and Cerdagne. The authorisation of the king was required in order to cut wood, collect branches and even pick leaves for animals, and various communities and individuals were granted the right to collect green wood only on certain days of the year (Pinto, 2003, p. 318). Again, it is uncertain whether these edicts were a result of the mining activities. With the increased need for charcoal to power the Catalan Forge the pressure on the forest resource increased.

However, other factors have to be considered in this change in the forestry. Technological developments considerably reduced the need for charcoal during the nineteenth century. With the arrival of the coke fired blast furnace in central and eastern France, the market demanded unsmelted ore, hence the forest has not been used for charcoal production for the iron smelting process since the demise of the bloomery in the nineteenth century (Izard, 1994, p. 124). The result was forest regrowth, although many slopes were used for agricultural purposes and only recently have naturally reforested.

Population growth and the accompanying change in agro-pastoral practices also affect land use. Historically, the increase in population over the centuries was accompanied by demand for wood for fuel and construction purposes, whilst there was also a need for land for cultivation and for pasture (Izard, 1994, pp. 122, 128). Today, the pressure on the land has changed as many of those interviewed testify. Originally cleared for cultivation, as remembered by many interviewees, the forest, left to its own devices, has regrown

over much of the pasture around the villages. For example, La Bastide, at 1000 metres altitude was surrounded by pasture fifty years ago but is now forest. There is no evidence of its previous land use as nature has reclaimed the slopes and the previously cultivated terraces are overgrown (see Chapter Four, Figure 4.7).

Forest management is part of the landscape today. One interviewee explained how once a year, the inhabitants of her village were able to cut trees from the public forests. The chosen trees are marked by the village's mayor, who determines the extent of deforestation for private household use:

> "We have our own woods and we take what we want with respect for the forest growth; for others there is one date a year which is given by the mayor and on that date you can go and cut down the trees which have a mark on them for your own use. And we all abide by this because it is the way to manage the forests. If we didn't, we would have deserts in front of our house, not these woods" (Participant R. 45).

Respect for the land as provider of necessary resources was a recurrent theme amongst participants which reflected the symbiotic relationship between the people and the mountains. This will be explored further in Chapters Four and Five.

Although forest limits are lower than in former times thus changing the appearance of the landscape, most of the research participants located the former mining features, such as the roasting furnaces, the mining offices, and elements of the transport system, as part of today's landscape although some of the older residents mourned the landscape of their youth. The responses of the local population to the changing landscape are considered in Chapters Four and Five. The photograph below (Figure 3.14) shows evidence of former adits (mine entrances) connected by mining tracks at Batère above the village of Corsavy. These footpaths linked the site entrances to the main site where the ore was loaded onto the aerial ropeway for descent to the valley below. Today the site has a different appearance in the landscape to the original working site. The paths are still walked today by hikers and villagers who view the entrances as empty, silent features on an unforested slope (Figure 3.14).

Figure 3.14 Photograph showing evidence of former adits connected by mining tracks which are used by hikers today (source: P. Claughton).

Also silent is the site of the former aerial ropeway from La Pinouse to Rapoloum (Figure 3.15). The photograph illustrates the reflections of Participant R.2 (see section 3.3.2) on the noise and the comings and goings of the mining day. There is no evidence of this structure on the mountainside today, having either rusted away or is covered with vegetation, and the slopes are no longer a hive of activity.
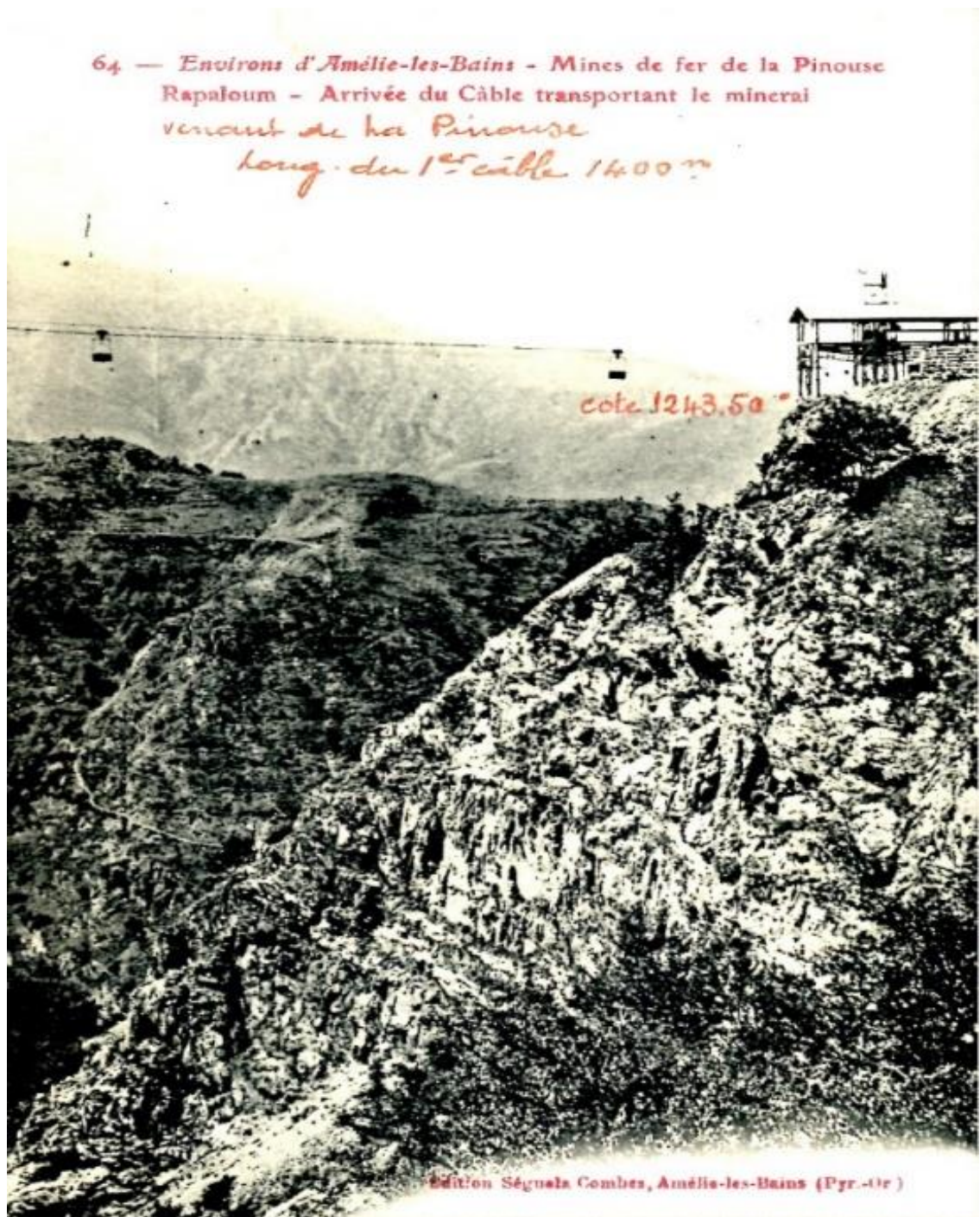
Figure 3.15 The aerial ropeway from La Pinouse to Rapoloum (source: P. Claughton, 2016, p. 519).

3.3.6 Socio-economic reality

The change in visual aspects of the landscape reflects the change in land usage, significant from the latter half of the nineteenth century. Prior to 1860 the majority of the iron ore produced in Pyrénées-Orientales was used in the production of wrought iron in the Catalan Forge, either in the department itself or in neighbouring departments (Ariège, Aude and Gard) and parts of Spain. The situation began to change after 1860. The charcoal-fired blast furnaces which were erected at Ria and Prades produced cast iron from local ore and this accounts for the steady rise in ore production from 1862, illustrated below (Graph 3.2).
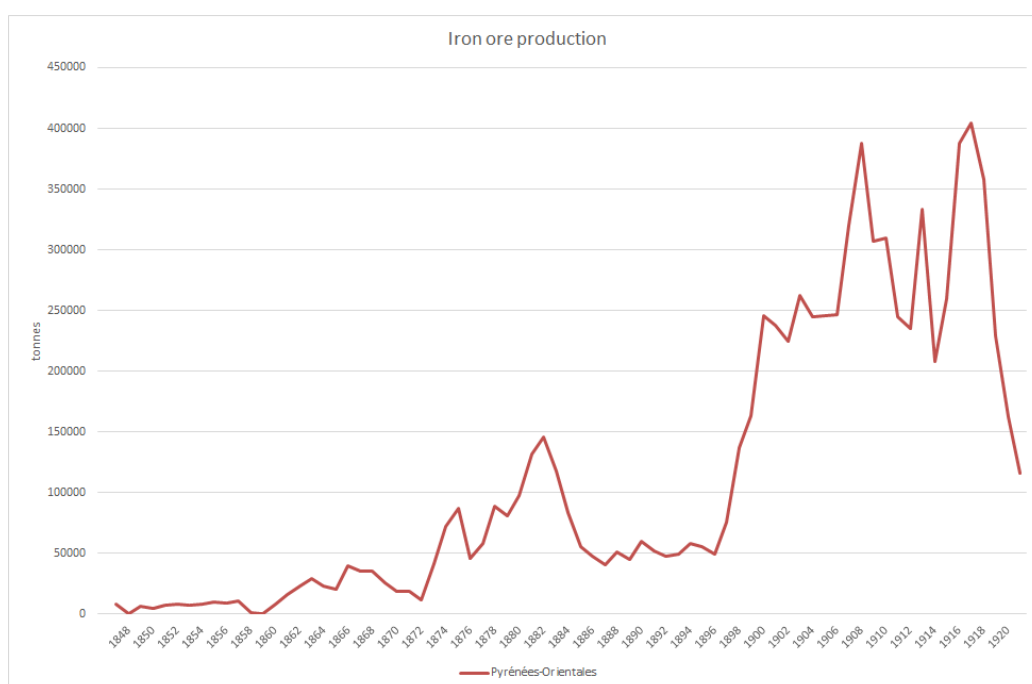
Graph 3.2 This graph shows the iron ore production for the department, the Pyrénées-Orientales, France, 1848-1920, (source: P. Claughton, 2016).

The main line railway reached Prades on the north side of the Canigo in 1877 and in 1898 the railway had reached Arles-sur-Tech, opening up the mines on the south side of the Canigou massif and linking them to the coast, both of which would have contributed to increased ore production in the late 1870s and early 1880s. An elaborate system of aerial

ropeways, wagons, inclines, and a narrow-gauge railway replaced the donkeys, women and children who had carried the ore from the mines (Le Fil du Fer, 2011, p. 33-44).

Although the mining concerns saw a period of growth through to the middle of the nineteenth century, competition from the blast furnaces in other areas of France began to affect profitability and production. The blast furnaces in both the previously mentioned locations had failed by the late 1880s and, despite the erection of a continuous chain inclined railway from the mines at Taurinya, ore production from the department declined significantly until 1900 (Claughton, 2016, p. 518). During the First World War, with the German advancement on the ore fields of Northern France, the Canigou iron was in demand again. However, the end of the war brought this production rise to an end and the mines no longer proved profitable during the following decades Strikes over the impending closures (Figure 3.16) still live on in the memory of the long-term residents of the villages who saw these protests as reflecting the character of their communities. The sign below reads "The miners want to work in the mines". It is in French rather than Catalan and is aimed at the management and the wider national audience.

Figure 3.16 "The miners want to work in the mines", protest at impending closures, Prades, 1962 (source: Michel Lloubes, 2016).

The strikes of the 1960s directly related to mine closures, have had a lasting impact on the elder residents who talk today with pride of the resilience and determination of the roles of both the men and the women as the following testimony illustrates:

"My mother worked hard to keep the family going. And she supported the men. Everyone did. Everyone played their part. It was a time when we were all shouting together" (Participant R.2).

Undoubtedly, in times of hardship the community came together in solidarity. This is the former landscape of collective memory, belonging to the group of participants who remember the strikes and their effects on the community. This study will show how, through involvement in the heritage projects, a new form of collective memory is engendered involving those with a living memory of the mining itself and those people who move into the villages, bringing their own memories and values into the social and cultural landscape.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has considered the location and background to the iron mining on the mountain, the Canigou, in the Eastern Pyrenees. Over the centuries, the area has seen movement of peoples and ideas, along the Mediterranean and over the mountains. The Catalan language is spoken by many, alongside French, and, although Catalonia has never had defined borders within France, the region is referred to as *Catalonia du Nord* (North Catalonia). The Canigou mountain dominates the landscape and is a symbol of Catalan culture.

Consideration of the long history of iron mining in the area brings together a variety of strands: mining and processing the ore over the centuries, medieval trade and finance, the Catalan Forge as part of the culture, the sense of interconnectedness with the wider world, the loss of production leading to eventual closures.

Iron does not make itself; people are needed for the transformation of the ore. The various strands of the iron mining history of the region inform the background between the mining past and the impact on the village populations today. This industrial past provides a lens through which I examine the relationship between these communities and the mountain, their identity and the past.

CHAPTER FOUR: Identity and landscape

"Identity: it is a malady of our age. We have created this. A society which doesn't give people a place. We all need a place" (Participant R.2).

4.1 Introduction

The best place to begin analysing the relationship between people, landscape and identity in the Canigou region is with the mountain itself because it provides the physical environment in which my participants live. The importance of the mountain with its industrial past and its physical and material characteristics can scarcely be overstated. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the connection with the landscape and the extent to which it endows the local villagers with a sense of being 'at home'. This is important as it provides the link between identity and 'sense of place', described by Wheeler as "the emotional and affective bonds that people create with places" (Wheeler, 2015, p. 3).

The need to belong is at the heart of human experience and social relationships (Pryor, 2015, xix; Leonard, 2013, p. 139) and landscape has a role to play in the link between belonging and identity: "Perception, appreciation and knowledge of the nature of places, play fundamental roles in the realization of an identity" writes Walls, giving the individual a sense of belonging (2022).

Throughout the chapter I draw on the theoretical approaches of New Materialisms and the natureculture concept. I also refer to phenomenological approaches of people's lived experiences of being in the landscape before arguing that this is a mutual process of agency and growth in which people are embedded in their surroundings, the latter referring to places and features in the landscape. This chapter therefore argues that place has an important role in engendering a sense of identity for the inhabitants of this area and that the people I spoke with define themselves in part to places in which they have spent time and developed attachments. The mountain, the Canigou, is key to this research because of the material and almost mystical qualities it holds for Catalans and their sense of being, and in this respect provides a special focus for the study of identity in the context of landscape relations.

Familiarity with our surroundings, with the landscape around us, brings a feeling of security and an unquestioning 'knowing', of our 'way to go about' in it. Being in the landscape is to be part of the landscape, its past as well as its present. One's relationship with the landscape is personal and unique. Tilley writes that perception of the world does not work in terms of a "blank environment slate… but in terms of the lived historicity of lived experiences in that world" (Tilley, 1994, p. 23). This research revealed two strands to the relationship between the mining history, the landscape and identity. Firstly, for older residents of former mining families, the mining past and landscape were an integral part of their identity; and secondly, the mining past engendered interest and a level of connection with the mountain environment for those who have retired or moved into the area. These two strands form part of the discussion in the following sections.

A brief overview of perspectives on identity and memory, sets the scene for consideration of identity in the landscape. This is followed by consideration of landscape definitions with specific reference to phenomenology, New Materialisms and natureculture. These concepts provide frameworks for contextualising the engagement of people with their surroundings and examining the agency of the natural world. The importance of the Canigou as a symbolic and physical presence in the locality leads on to the argument that people realise a sense of themselves through immersion in their surroundings. Section 4 focuses on the way in which people read the landscape through markers and identifying features. Identity, place and landscape are therefore foregrounded in the following discussion, which is led by the observations and reflections of the participants in this research.

4.2 Expressions of identity

The question of identity, of who we are, is the subject of much interest across various academic disciplines and across a spectrum of ancestral inquiry programmes and searches amongst the general public (Lawler, 2014, p. 5). The theme of identity has been explored in literature past and present. One memorable meditation on the importance of identity was by Ralph Ellison who wrote:

I was looking for myself and asking everyone except myself questions which I, and only I, could answer. It took me a long time and much painful boomeranging of my expectations to achieve a realization everyone else appears to have been born with: That I am nobody but myself (Ellison, 1952, p. 15).

The elusiveness of identity continues to inspire and intrigue. Malouff writes: "My identity is what prevents me from being identical to anyone else" (Malouff, 2000, p. 10). He acknowledges Ellison's position concerning the singularity of individual identity: "it is complex, unique and irreplaceable, not to be confused with any other" (Malouff, 2000, p. 17). Definitions vary somewhat in interpretation and wording, despite the common use of the term, cutting across a range of disciplines in the social sciences. There is considerable variability in the conceptual meaning of identity and the role it plays in defining one's sense of self (Stryker and Burke, 2000, p. 284), but all appear to have the common themes of individual characteristics and of the individual in society.

The individual's struggle to create a personal identity has become the defining paradigm of how we live in Western cultures: we are called upon to invent our own, and live in our own way and be true to ourselves (Rutherford, 2007, p. 19).

Rutherford uses the term 'market our identity' as he describes how, in contemporary society, people aim to accumulate status and material goods to create their personal identity in a consumer-driven society. Pryor recognises the singularity of this approach as he highlights the fact that modern day concerns of society, of persons, lie in the arena of achievement, of moving forward and of setting personal goals (Pryor, 2015, p. xv). This is all the more relevant in the digital age where the public are constantly and immediately made aware of defining trends and are pressurised by these and accompanying advertisements to change and adapt accordingly.

Goodhart highlights the importance of allegiances to one's locality in his analysis of people's feelings about their identity. He argues that for many people, a threat to cultural identity is perceived to be the consequence of free and open borders and this would account for their need to defend cultural borders, as witnessed in a variety of ways in the public arena. In contrast, he explains that people who see themselves rather as 'citizens of the world' (he uses the term Anywheres to describe this group) are more comfortable

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with immigration and integration and, in his own words, are "cheerleaders for change" (Goodhart, 2017, p. 7). Goodhart himself states that this delineation between the two categories of identification is not clear cut and that there are many overlapping views and social categories: "Even the members of the Anywhere group retain some connection with their roots", (Goodhart, 2017, p. 4). His analysis is the result of witnessing the rise in populism, expressed in the Brexit vote in the UK and the nationalist feelings in the USA, embodied by Donald Trump, and is congruent with some of the findings of this study. For example: sympathy for the cause of the Spanish Catalans (see Chapter Six, section 6.3) and the threats to regional identity imposed by national government name changes (see Chapter Six, section 6.4.3) lend support to his argument. However, the study villages are also home to people from other parts of France and other European countries who are keen to integrate themselves into community life. Following Goodhart's analysis, they would therefore be described as having an outward looking focus and yet, they are instrumental in helping the community define its identity. This contradicts Goodhart who claims that these people generally "place a much lower value on group identity and tradition" (Goodhart, 2017, p. 5). The dynamics involved here are examined in this and subsequent chapters.

Goodhart's analysis provides one window onto the role of locality and landscape in securing a sense of self. The question of interest for this research is how and to what extent the participants in the former iron-mining villages are able to ground their identity in a society which is trying to recreate itself after periods of industrial decline and collapse. With both residents and incomers providing testimonies, differing perspectives on the local/global debate were appreciable in the interviews I conducted in the Cangiou region.

4.2.1 Social identity

This section considers various perspectives on the social nature of identity with the aim of providing a background in which to consider the subject of identity in the landscape. It begins by outlining the essentialist position about identity before describing its processual nature and how it is formed in the social setting.

There is debate as to whether identity is shaped by nature or nurture (Pinker, 2004; Plomin and Asbury, 2005; Ridley, 2003). Whether identity is a given at birth and consolidated during the early years, is contrasted with the formation of identity as an on-going process combining agency in varying social environments. The former position, known as the essentialist tradition, holds that a person's sense of self, their identity, stems from the nature of that individual rather than from social relations (Lawler, 2014, p. 17). Essentialist theory claims that this inner core cannot be changed over time and may be biological, psychological or religious. Descartes, and later Rousseau, philosophising on the nature of identity, believed in one authentic self whIch is subject to self-examination. Thus, one never loses the core of one's being. However, this process of reflection led to a questioning and continuous reforming of who one actually is, invoking disquiet amongst theorists about the extent of this permanent essence (Goldstein and Rayner, 1994, p. 370).

The early foundations of identity as a sociological concept can be found in the writings of Mead and Goffman. Mead (1863-1931) was one of the early protagonists of the role of society in moulding one's sense of self. He stressed the interrelationship of all aspects of identity and that these identities are always in the process of being forged in communal life. The idea that identity is not innate, that the context of the social world determines the processual nature of identity, was voiced by many (Goffman, 1990; Calhoun, 1994; Somer, 1994). These early investigations into the nature of identity are echoed by more recent theorists. For example, Meijl writes that "aspects of persons, which were conventionally held as unchangeable character traits, may be considered as dynamic dimensions of symbolic, socio-cultural and political processes" (Meijl, 2010, p. 63). Identity can thus be described as a process of negotiation between the individual and larger social constructs (Mendoza-Denton, 2002, p. 475).

Ingold similarly stresses the role of the community in identity formation and emphasizes its position in relation to time and place: "Identity in community is thus fundamentally relational: who we are is an index of where we find ourselves, at any moment, in the give and take of collective life" (Ingold, 2018, p. 47). The statement is somewhat unsettling as it appears to give free rein to the moment in deciding one's identity and implies instability which is again contrary to the findings of this research. However, it does point to the

formative aspect of identity and the role of community in validating one's sense of self. Importantly, Ingold highlights the 'presentness' of identity, how a person is aware of their identity at that moment in time and this ties in with the themes of heritage and culture as having relevance in the here and now, explored in the following chapters. Gover encapsulates the changing nature of identity in its social context in the following statement:

> As we share our personal stories with others, fantasize future scenarios, and identify with or partake in the stories of others, we constitute and reconstitute our identities within their physical, cultural and historical contexts (Gover, 1996, Section 6, Conclusion).

Ingold also underlines the environmental aspect of identity formation, claiming that physical environmental conditions have an important role to play in personal development. There was recognition from my participants of the fact that a change of landscape can impact on one's sense of identity. This was particularly highlighted by testimonies of incomers. For those people who had moved into the villages, the process of consolidating their identity in their new surroundings was affected by layering feelings and emotions from their past onto the Canigou landscape. For older residents, their identity layers accrued with the changing landscape. The layers in the first testimony are evidenced by the sense of freedom in the landscape of early years which are tempered with caution in later life:

> *"In the summer I remember picking the tomatoes from the vines. We had so many of them and they were so sweet. We had so much freedom then. Now I am always telling my grandchildren to be careful" (Participant R.2).*

> *"I was born a miner's daughter and always will be. My grandchildren love coming here to visit. So now I am grandma who lives in a beautiful place. Of course they know about the mines but they can't imagine my past" (Participant R.2).*

This section has considered the role of the social setting in informing and validating one's sense of self. It has . It has also introduced the idea that landscape itself plays a part in validating and conferring identity and argued that a person's identity is layered, with each layer contingent upon the previous one. I now turn to a brief discussion of memory

without which, it is argued one loses one's sense of identity and becomes adrift from one's past (Linde, 2008).

4.2.2 Memory

In this section I discuss the relationship between individual and collective memory, with particular reference to Halbwachs (1992), Nora (1989) and Coupland (2012). Whilst Halbwachs argues that memory belongs to the social setting, Nora differentiates between living memory and commemorative memory and Coupland highlights how individual and collective memories work alongside each other.

The term 'collective memory' was first used by Halbwachs (1992) to describe how a group of people share a common representation of the past and become conscious of their identity through such an awareness. He argued that all memory is formed and retrieved in social situations in which people share similar memories or thoughts and perpetuated by the discourse of those who subscribe to the group. I quote from his work:

> To be sure, everyone has a capacity for memory [*mémoire*] that is unlike that of anyone else, given the variety of temperaments and life circumstances. But individual memory is nevertheless a part or an aspect of group memory, since each impression and each fact, even if it apparently concerns a particular person exclusively, leaves a lasting memory only to the extent that one has thought it over—to the extent that it is connected with the thoughts that come to us from the social milieu (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 69).

As Coupland explains, "We are dealing, then, with a very different sort of 'memory', one which can be constructed and sustained by groups, and subscribed to by individuals" (Coupland, 2012, p. 37). Collective memory is thus the framework in which our own memories are contextualised and given significance. However, given that people remember things in different ways, individual memory is present in the collective and we "begin to see the value in seeing memory as an exchange between these 'individual' and 'collective' positions" (Coupland, 2012, p. 40). The process of remembering can thus be seen to be a fluid process, affected through the social ways in which memory is shaped (Coupland, 2012, p. 33).

Nora differentiates between living memory (milieux de mémoire) and commemorative memory (lieux de mémoire) which are events or places where past histories are remembered or consecrated (Nora, 1989, p. 12). The formal nature of this commemoration, argues Nora, serves to create a 'modern history' or memory: "If we were able to live within memory, we would not have needed to consecrate *lieux de mémoire* in its name" (Nora, 1989, p. 8). *Milieux de mémoire*, or environments of memory, accommodate the affective and multiple nature of living memory and are passed down through collective or social memory (Nora, 1989, p. 7-8).

Halbwachs also drew attention to the dynamic nature of collective memory, stating that it is used in the social setting as an instrument to "reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society" (1992, p. 51). He also maintained that when collective memory changes, the group ceases to exist and a new group is formed. (1992, p. 139).

It is at this point that my study examines how individual or autobiographical memories create and shape collective group memory. An analysis of the heritage projects in the villages reveals how incomers embed themselves in the Canigou landscape by bringing their own or individual memories into the mining narrative whilst at the same time, shape the collective memory of iron of these parts. Although there are only a handful of people who could remember the mining activity, all the research participants were keen that the mining story should be kept alive and in the public memory. Respect for the mountain and its mining past, and the contextual evidence in the form of the artefacts and landscape features, epitomised the 'power of place' (Hayden, 1995) of the Canigou, and as such, attracted people to invest in and perpetuate the collective memory of this landscape. As a dominant form on the skyline, the Canigou's sheer physicality reinforces its symbolic powers as belonging wholly to the Catalan landscape and embodying the values and beliefs of Catalans. Similarly, the mining evidence scattered all over the mountainside is a strong statement of the relationship between people and the land; the past is indeed visible to incomers and residents alike through this physical presence. Incomers and those residents with no direct experience of the iron industry bought into this narrative as the dominant social context of the mountain villages which provides the villagers with a sense of continuity and a framework for their social identity in the

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present. I will now present an outline to the debate over approaches to landscape, place and space definitions before examining the locality and the part it plays in the lives and identity of the villagers.

4.3 Identity in landscape

The following sections argue that landscape and people have a mutual relationship of growth and change. Landscape is not a blank canvas for people's activities, neither is it the background for people to live their lives. People and landscape shape each other. I pick up on the ideas inherent in the concepts of New Materialisms and natureculture which, as the latter in particular implies, renegotiate the divide between nature and culture and argue that they co-exist as parts of a whole. Nature is embedded in culture just as culture is embedded in nature. Organisms and things, living or inanimate are all composed of universal vital matter, the agency of which depends on collaboration or interference from many bodies or forces (Bennett, 2010, p. 21). The concept of agency is thus re-examined once "nonhuman things are figured less as social constructions and more as actors, and once humans themselves are assessed not as autonoms but as vital materialities" (Bennett, 2010, p. 21). In this dynamic, holistic entity, people are part of the energy and flow which continually bring the world into being (Ingold, 2010, p. 21).

In line with the concepts inherent in New Materialisms, a part of my analysis of the participants' responses to their 'being' in this mountain environment relates to the agency and energy flow implicit in this flattened ontology of matter. The sections below therefore present the rationale that our identity is part of the landscape; landscape justifies who we are in the same way that we are able to take affirmation about ourselves from other people.

4.3.1 Definitions of place, space and landscape

To contextualise the research testimonies, it is important to consider what is meant by place, space and landscape and how they can inform one's sense of identity and of belonging. This section therefore provides an insight into these concepts. The conceptualisation of all three has been the point of much discussion in geography and the social sciences and is constantly evolving. Although the following segregate the terms and

consider them as separate concepts, this thesis offers a view of a dynamic dialogue between them, with one informing the other in an approach closer to that of Massey who focuses on the relational aspect of space and place (Massey, 1995, 2006). These approaches will be referenced during the course of this chapter in order to situate the research findings in the debate. Therefore, a brief outline of the definitions follows, which will serve as a starting point for further discussion and interpretations.

Place can be defined as a bounded area of geographical space, a centre of felt value (Tuan, 1977, p. 4) which has meaning for an individual or group of people (Tilley, 1994, p. 14). It is this fusion of geographical space and meaning which gives a place significance in the landscape and it is this intangible quality which makes a place special (Tilley, 1994, p. 15). However, Massey questions this concept of 'boundedness' and argues that place is in fact a fluid meeting place of social relations, flows and processes and holds a plethora of meanings (Massey, 1995, 2004). This has implications for the relationship between local, regional and national identities and is pertinent to the discussion surrounding the importance of marking the identity of the locality, addressed in Chapter Six.

Space by contrast is more fluid and abstract and could be defined as the pathways between places (Tilley, 1994, p. 16). Space provides a situational context for places and is given meaning from its particular places (Relph, 1976, p. 8). It is not limited by specific features and so can be viewed as freedom or threat, as movement, in contrast to the fixed idea of place. But once a particular space gains meaning (Tuan, 1977, p. 136), the pathway or movement pauses and it then becomes a place (Tuan, 1977, p. 6). Ingold takes a different position by arguing against the notion of space. Space, he contends exists as a result of an "inversion of logic". By considering places as bounded locations, everything surrounding them must therefore be space. However, he argues that people do not live *in* places but rather lives unfold on pathways of movement, in and around, to and from places. Consequently, there can be no such thing as space, or rather "space is nothing, and because it is nothing it cannot truly be inhabited at all" (Ingold, 2009, p. 29).

Landscape can be defined as the visible features of an area including hills and valleys, fields and forests, as well as the built environment. It has been described as a map of human history: it contains the features of centuries of exploitation and as such can be

read like a historical document (Hoskins, 2013, p. 14). However, this definition does not consider the rich meanings which landscapes have for people and the concept of landscape has been the subject of increasing debate as the subjective implications are foregrounded. A culturalist turn thereby declares landscape to be a symbolic ordering of space, whilst Ingold refers to a 'dwelling perspective'. He argues that,

> landscape is constituted as an enduring record of–and testimony to–the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves (Ingold, 1993, p. 152).

The definitions of place, space and landscape are the playing field of contested ideas concerning the nature of one's relationship with the environment. These approaches reflect the changing perceptions towards landscape in terms of agency. Massey's argument that place is a fluid concept which accommodates a range of meanings and outside influences is supported by the number of incomers in my study who feel a part of the landscape, described by Ingold as the entanglements of growth and movement in an encompassing field of relations (2010, p. 3). At the same time, the incomers speak of wishing to preserve the identity of the Canigou. The debate is important in the context of this research as it provides a background in which to consider the dialogue between people and landscape and the meanings implicit in the 'power of place' (Hayden, 1995, p. 46), which emerges as an important concept for participants.

4.3.2 The 'matter' of people and landscape

To elaborate on the preceding discussion of place, space and landscape, this section explores three conceptual approaches: phenomenology, New Materialisms and natureculture. Tracing the background to the English use of the term 'landscape' leads to an appreciation of the development of these concepts. The participants of this research regularly articulated a phenomenological connection to their surroundings which was positioned as a sense of embodiment almost within (rather than 'on') the landscape. This understanding of a connection between one's body and the body of the earth chimes with the ways that authors of the New Materialisms movement account for the living, changing landscape (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 9). A New Materialities approach to the material world recognises the intrinsic links between people and the physical conditions

they find themselves in. This perspective focuses on the fundamental physicality of being human and draws out the ways in which the matters of the landscape work with people to shape their lives, ideas and actions (Attala and Steel, 2019). It will therefore become clear that the participants' responses indicate an active and reciprocal engagement with their surrounding environment, which was suggestive of New Materialisms scholars' emphasis on the holistic entity of 'life worlds', and exhibit a phenomenological sense of 'being in place'.

The frameworks, phenomenology, New Materialisms and natureculture, contrast with the earlier concept of landscape heralded by eighteenth-century paintings of idyllic rural scenes. These provoked a romantic view of the countryside with the artistic perspective suggesting that the scene was to be viewed from the outside (Cosgrove, 1985, p. 46). This passive view of landscape was challenged in the 1970s by a humanist school of thought which rejected the positivist approach and instead, insisted that landscape could only be thought of in terms of a cultural process in which people actively engage with the environment. This can be seen in the context of a paradigm shift from the positivist view of a fixed reality to a subjective paradigm which becomes a metaphor for individual expression (Cosgrove, 1985, p. 45). Consideration of social, cultural and political agendas are also implicated in the more recent perception of the shaping of landscape.

A phenomenological approach shifts the emphasis completely from the landscape to the person. The landscape exists by virtue of the fact that it is experienced by the individual. This approach involves immersion in the landscape and allows it to permeate one's perceptual understandings of the relationship. It involves all the senses and undermines the dominance of the visual. The complexity and diversity of landscape is sensed as an emotional connection (Tilley, 1994, p. 12). It is the landscape which induces self-understanding, it is in fact a player in the process of the construction of self-identity. In her book *The Living Mountain*, Shepherd describes how she is aware of this: "I was not interested in the mountain itself, but for its effect upon me…" (Shepherd, 2014, p. 107). The relevance of a phenomenological perspective is highlighted by the impact of the landscape, by the way it acts on the emotions and feelings of people. Casey states that: "There is no knowing or sensing a place except by being in that place, and to be in a place is to be in a position to perceive it" (1996, p. 18).

Being in a place, as Casey and Shepherd highlight, is to come to know and understand that place. This is evidenced in the following response from Participant R.30:

> *"You can walk in the forests and remember our miners and think how hard life was and then you see the mine and you are proud of this history, in our mountain" (Participant R.30).*

Thoughts of the miners themselves emerge as the participant walks in the landscape and the mining remains bring the harshness of the industrial reality into his consciousness. The landscape comes to life and brings out an emotional response as the past intermingles with the present.

However, there appears to be a contradiction in this position in that landscape only exists because of the way in which people experience it and yet it has 'agency' in so far as it can affect people. According to the latter, it is therefore but a short jump to view the landscape as an entity, as a separate being with its own powers to endow feelings and behaviours in people. This does not bring the argument back full circle to the idea of landscape as something to be viewed from a distance. On the contrary, it endows landscape with qualities of a living organism able to adapt, change and influence.

Concerns surrounding phenomenological theories of landscape studies have focussed on the limitations to this purely sensory approach. Meillassoux, for example, was troubled by the affective nature of 'sensibility' meaning that landscape can only exist as a correlation, as a "relation between the world and the living creature that I am" (Meillassoux, 2008, p. 2). It follows therefore that there is no vantage point from which to consider the realms of subjectivity and objectivity independently of one another (Meillassoux, 2008) which means that you can only know something through your own perceptions. As a result, a school of thought turned to the materiality of objects as an epistemological framework to resolve this, and to find a way to link objects or things with human experience. This resulted in the development of a variety of approaches such as New Materialisms and natureculture. These consider humans, non-humans and inanimate objects in a "non-hierarchical relationship of flows and processes that all act upon each other in complex and unpredictable ways" (Wheeler, 2015, p. 6.) This position offers the vantage point missing from phenomenological perceptions, whilst at the same time regarding objects as constituent of social relations (Jackson, 2000).

Known as New Materialisms, to signify a new direction to previous accepted processes regarding material objects, this enhanced view considered materiality as relation and process. Govier and Steel describe how the material turn "addresses the importance of objects and materials to social practices and daily life, and focuses on relationality and material agency" (Govier and Steel, 2021, p. 299). People, materials and substances are co-constitutive of the matter of the world (Steel, 2020, p. 3). Properties and meanings appear from the interaction between objects and social processes, highlighting the importance of the tangible world of things in constructing social reality (Schouwenburg, 2015, p. 65).

The core concept of New Materialisms distances itself from the anthropocentric view which regards matter as an inert resource, "waiting to be shaped, transformed and ascribed meaning by people" (Steel, 2020, p. 1). Rather the focus is on conceiving matter as "possessing its own modes of self-transformation, self-organization, and directedness" (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 10). We are a part of the materiality of our world: "We live our everyday lives surrounded by, immersed in, matter. We are ourselves composed of matter" (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 1). In a brief account of developments in the field of quantum physics Coole and Frost explain our relationality within the life world of everything. They relate how cosmic or particle matter is the foundation of everything in the universe (2010, pp. 10-13) and describe how subatomic particles consist of flashes of energy. Even when vast numbers of atoms are assembled in the kind of macrostructures we experience as ''condensed matter'', their behaviour "consists in the constant emergence, attraction, repulsion, fluctuation, and shifting of nodes of charge: which is to say that they demonstrate none of the comforting stability or solidity we take for granted" (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 11). Writing in 2020, Rovelli also explains how the development of quantum theory leads to a reconfiguration of the material world. He expounds the concept that the world is made up of happenings, a "vast web of interacting entities" (2020, p. 68). Entities only exist through the way they influence others, through their interactions (2020, p. 69). This distances us from the concept of materiality as a static phenomenon which derived from, amongst others, Newton's laws of motion of the seventeenth century in which he conceived mass to be an inert substance, dependent on external forces to set it in motion (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 11).

Ingold holds a similar position to Coole and Frost and Rovelli in tackling the perception of materiality as static and inert. He is concerned with deconstructing the apparent divide amongst the non-human: things which have been formed or shaped by people, and those which have not, such as land and weather (Ingold, 2012, p. 431). In his 2012 paper entitled 'Toward an Ecology of Materials', he argues for a reconciliation between ecological anthropology, concerned with how people relate to their environments, and material culture studies, which are primarily about people's relationship with things (Ingold, 2012, p. 428). He identifies three areas which have hindered this rapprochement: the continued emphasis on material objects at the expense of other organisms, living or otherwise; a fixation on materiality which obstructs our understanding of the circulation of animate and non-animate in the "web of life"; and a consideration of material artefacts as static, rather than a source of energy (Ingold, 2012, p. 428).

The problem, he identifies, lies in an emphasis on our relationship with cultural, material artefacts at the expense of non-human forms of organisms which have not been modified by people and yet are integral to our involvement in the world around us. To effect this reconciliation between humans, non-human organisms and artifacts, he argues that we need to reposition artifacts as things that grow and develop, thus echoing Coole and Frost's concept of matter as flow of energy. He articulates that, "To do this, however, requires a change of focus, from the "objectness" of things to the material flows and formative processes wherein they come into being. It means to think of making as a process of growth, or ontogenesis" (Ingold, 2012, p. 431). Chiming with the natureculture move, he critiques the duality of approach by which "Culture furnishes the forms, nature the materials" (Ingold, 2012, p. 432). We should instead consider our relationship with material artefacts as a *correspondence* (Ingold's italics): "not the imposition of preconceived form on raw material substance, but the drawing out or bringing forth of potentials immanent in a world of becoming" (Ingold, 2012, p. 435). His approach chimes with my observations of the smelting of the ore and the subsequent hammering of the bloom which I witnessed in Arles-sur-Tech. As I mentioned in Chapter Three, section 3.3.1, the arrival of the bloom from the furnace was regarded as akin to a birth and greeted with reverence and, to use Ingold's word, the relationship between the transformation of the ore and those working it, could be regarded as one of

correspondence. Objects are now part of the living world in this respect, and materiality meanings have shifted from the concept of artefacts as products of human nature and culture (Devellennes and Dillet, 2018, p. 8). New Materialisms assertively moves away from objects and towards materials or substances (Attala and Steel 2019). For the purposes of this thesis, this requires a shift towards considering people's relationships with the landscape as a material one. Therefore, this is not about holding people or, for that matter, mountains as distinct agential beings but rather by exploring the distributed agency that flows between the inevitable interaction of materials 'becoming'. Using this framework, New Materialisms actively foregrounds how the physical boundaries of bodies and landscapes are interactive and irrefutably blended and are constantly reblending on a material or substance level. This physical fact means New Materialisms holds all engagements to be reciprocally formative regardless of any intellectual ideas that see entities as existentially separate or different, and as such provides a useful approach to understand people's claims that they are connected to their environment.

In a similar vein, the term natureculture argues that the two components cannot be separated; they are intermingled, nature is in culture just as culture is a part of nature. Haraway (2008) argued that what people term nature is the result of our cultural interpretations of the world around us.

She presents her argument in her work entitled 'The Companion Species Manifesto' (2003), showing us through the example of dogs, how our history and futures are intertwined:

> In layers of history, layers of biology, layers of naturecultures, complexity is the name of our game…I'm sure our genomes are more alike than they should be. There must be some molecular record of our touch in the codes of living that will leave traces in the world… (2003, p. 2; italics are author's own).

She also describes how cyborgs, actors which are combinations of human and technical features, bring together nature and culture, the human and the non-human: "cyborgs can be figures for living within contradictions, attentive to the naturecultures of mundane practices…and alert to the emergent historical hybridities actually populating the world at all its contingent scales" (2003, p. 10).

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Hence the above concepts provide the framework in which I argue that the relationship between people, flora, fauna and all the materials that comprise the landscape, is on an equal footing, highlighting the processual aspect of New Materialisms. All parties exist in what might be described as symbiosis. This in effect places people alongside other organisms in the living plane. Within this multifarious relationship, I am interested in the relationship between people and the landscape, exploring the agency of landscape, places and spaces on the processes of living and the conferring of meanings on identity and home. A strong sense of situatedness within this landscape and an awareness of the energy implicit in the term 'power of place' (Hayden, 1995) emerged from my research data. Whilst I have outlined how matter is the universal constitution of everything, through referencing Coole and Frost and Rovelli in particular, my participants did not explicitly refer to this but did reveal an awareness that they were entangled in their surroundings and recognised the agency of the landscape in their own lives. These ideas are discussed below, with reference to participants' responses, and provoke a dialogue about the connection between landscape and people.

4.3.3 The Canigou: a place in the landscape

This section considers the various features and aspects of the mountain, the Canigou. A brief outline of its topography leads on to an introduction to the feelings of respect it engenders from the population. The following testimonies therefore set the scene for subsequent sections' argument that the Canigou's place in the landscape, as a provider of both emotional and physical support underpins Haraway's concept of natureculture, whilst its agency in people's lives, as testified by the participants, situates the relationship between people and landscape in the framework of New Materialisms.

The landscape of the research area, as indicated in Chapter Three, is mountainous and forested. The roads connecting the villages follow the contours of the mountain spurs and rise steeply from both the Tech and the Têt valley. They trace the outline of the mountain, as seen below, in a seemingly meandering fashion. Time, in daily human terms, therefore could be interpreted to be of little importance; instead, the landscape is the dictator of time; one cannot speed up the journey, the lie of the land assures that (the notion of time and how it relates to our understanding of landscape is discussed in

section 4.4.2). Figure 4.1 illustrates the nature of the terrain, with the village of Corsavy in the distance. The road winds around the mountain spurs, intimating deference on the part of people to the materiality of the mountain.

Figure 4.1 Looking down on the Tech valley from the Canigou massif (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

The drive up from the valley floor takes approximately one and a half hours in the car, and the feeling of remoteness of the communities is very much apparent. But with every metre in height gained, the scenery affords a different angle or aspect, a shifting perspective of shadows and light, changing the face of the mountain, almost giving the feeling that it is alive. This resonates with the testimonies of the participants who refer to it in terms of its protective qualities, *"watching and protecting us" (Participant R.25)* and is explored further in the following section.

The Canigou is treated with respect by all participants, but for Catalans the mountain is treated with reverence. This is illustrated by the iron cross, a symbol of Christianity, on the summit whilst the Catalan flag is a statement of its identity as a Catalan mountain.

Figure 4.2 Summit of the Canigou (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

Participants referred to the former iron workings and buildings, such as the humble miners' sleeping quarters, on the mountain as seen below, Figure 4.3, with similar regard, showing their respect for the Canigou as well as the miners:

> "These places [miners' quarters] must be respected as they gave people work so we could provide for our families. Yes of course it was hard, but if you go into the mountain, you must have respect" (Participant R.21).

A reminder of the mining past, the building below stands near the site from which the above photograph was taken, Figure 4.1, and so its location far from the village of Corsavy can be appreciated. Built with local stone, it marks its own place as part of the landscape standing upright through the seasons and the years. It is also a fundamental visual

reminder of the identity of the mountain villagers through the absence of the miners who lived there. It can be perceived as a memorial to the past, to the lives and work of the miners who sustained these communities in previous decades and gave the villages their mining identity.

Figure 4.3 The sleeping quarters, mine de Batère, Corsavy (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

Landscape, argues Smith, is significant to people when it provides means and meaning. Viewing the landscape as a provider of basic human requirements, is a utilitarian feature of human existence: "Both our physical senses and our mental capacity are evolved towards extracting our needs from any environment we encounter" (Smith, 2008, p.123).

Picking up on the theme of the mountain as a source of sanctuary (see Chapter Three section 3.2.2), in the context of this research, the Canigou and its iron mining history are seen as giving both physical and emotional support. In the past, mining activity endowed the landscape with the means to support families, but the work was tough despite the

camaraderie. Today the picture is different. For those participants who retired to the area, and for those older participants who are descendants of the mining past, the landscape does not need to provide them with employment or the means of making a living. Instead, they consider their environment from the point of view of its significance as the holder of past memories and reinforces their values of respect and pride. These ties to the past are the essence of the meaning of home for many of the resident participants:

> *"All this history that you see around you is a part of me. It is my home, my family's home. We are part of this place and its story. My grandfather has walked to the mine every day, my mother has played here as a child and so have I. You can't take that away from me. Wherever I go this is always home"* (Participant R.2).

> *"Home is right here in the mountain because it is part of my family and has always been in our lives"* (Participant R.1).

These quotations refer to the landscape and the memories it holds rather than a particular dwelling or house as home, and underpin the idea of home as a centre of emotional significance, giving a feeling of familiarity and belonging (Tuan, 1977, pp. 3-4; Seamon, 1984, p. 757). Place, space and landscape merge as the expanse of the locale impacts on these participants, not just a particular place. The past is as much a part of the landscape as the present; not just the mining past, but the family's previous generations are also evoked in the landscape. The landscape is part of the family; their stories are intertwined and people's lives are constituent parts of the narrative of the surrounding landscape. The story of the mountain for Participant R.2 is the story of the iron mining. The mountain provided the iron, it gave them a livelihood and it provided them with the security of home. Further evidence of the power of place is illustrated below: Participant R.3 also refers to the Canigou landscape as part of his family, and the strength of feelings which he carries and vocalises as 'beautiful', is reflected in the mining remains. He indicated with his arm in a gesture of pride during the interview:

> *"For me, the mines are beautiful, it is part of my family so of course they are beautiful. And we have this mountain too"* (Participant R.3).

Locales curated by people argues Tilley, "draw on qualities of landscape to create part of their significance for those who use them" (Tilley, 1994, P. 26). The mining remains are considered by many in much the same terms as the Canigou itself. They are referred to as

attractive places not just in their physical aspect but also because of their emotional qualities. These places hold the memories of miners and families which would also account for their appeal, despite the harsh reality of life when the mines were still operational:

> *"You can't see the mines now, or hear them. They were hard times but the mines are the story of the Canigou. They are part of it. You wouldn't think rusty remains are beautiful, you would think they are dumped, they spoil the nature, but that is the beauty" (Participant R.25).*

No one mentioned the material remains of the industry as detracting from the beauty of the Canigou (see Chapter Five, section 5.7); on the contrary, the one complemented the other. For the unsuspecting rambler, these features could be seen as littering their path, but for the locals, they are part of the landscape:

> *"We are lucky in that we still have some of our history right here. They [water tanks] have every right to be here, they are a part of the story of our country as are the trees and the forests" (Participant R.4).*

This participant was describing the process of bringing the ore up to a higher level using water tanks as weight to counterbalance the empty wagons. He spoke about the resourcefulness of the mining fraternity in developing this method and how the landscape is enhanced by their presence, or rather, the relics are an affective part of the landscape, as illustrated in Figure 4.4 and Figure 4.5. Seemingly abandoned, their presence is a visual reminder of the past working life of the mountain and an element of pathos lies in the signs of regrowth and spring in the photograph below, as though time moves on regardless.

Figure 4.4 Water tanks on the route of the narrow-gauge railway (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

The water tanks lie abandoned on the route of the former narrow-gauge railway, used to transport the ore (Figure 4.4). Now a hiking track, the landscape reveals different layers of time. The truck chassis below (Figure 4.5) is located in the village of Taurinya, left in the place where it was last in use. There is a newly built house nearby which points to 'layers of living' in the landscape; once a miners' wagon track, the place is now a residential area. Both photographs illustrate an invitation to explore these features through their seemingly random abandon in the landscape. As Edensor explains, in his work *Industrial Ruins*, the derelict nature of these places and objects invite curiosity because they represent a disordering of space (Edensor, 2005, p. 16). There are no guidelines on how to approach them, or to interpret them. Their meaning or function is dislocated from their previous usage and role in this abandonment, and people can make their own interpretations in an unbounded situation where there are no rules (Edensor, 2005, p. 77). The past and the present co-habit this landscape, and the visual features embed

Participant R.4 in the landscape through his knowledge of the previous use of the water tanks, whilst enjoying the hiking route in the present.

Figure 4.5 Truck chassis, Taurinya (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

The references to the Canigou as home, *"it is part of my family"* (Participant R.1) and as being enmeshed in the lives of the villagers, *"we are part of this place and its story"* (Participant R.2), would appear to blur the distinctions of place, space and landscape as defined in section 4.3.1. Geographically it is a part of a mountainous landscape chain, yet it is also a place in so far as it holds a special significance for the Catalans: the cross on the summit, draped in the Catalan flag, is a statement in and on the landscape, as illustrated in Figure 4.2.

On the mountain itself, place and space merge as the traces of the iron mining activity connect the landscape with routes, footpaths, remains of transport systems between the

villages and the former mining sites; these routes and paths are significant features in themselves, not empty spaces. For example, the remains of 'resting stones' can be seen along some of the routes. These allowed people carrying the ore in sacks on their backs to perch and rest, the pile of stones taking the weight of the ore. Alain Taurinya, now deceased, was a former miner and wrote about his mining memories. He describes how his wife's grandmother, in her youth, would carry a weight of 44 kilograms from the mine La Pinouse, down to the forge in Llech, a journey of six or seven hours on foot (Taurinya, 2011, p.3). Although Ingold argues against the notion of space, my data also reveals the importance of moving in these spaces. The origin, the destination and the journey covering the space in between are equally important, evident in the following testimonies:

> *"We had to move to the next village, and I admire my parents for doing that, for making that decision. It was hard for them to do but then we always walked between the two and my father walked every day back to the mine with his colleagues"* *(Participant R.25).*

The journey between the mine and home, the space between the two places, held just as much significance for the participant. This is also the case for an incomer who took his children down the valley for schooling every day:

> *"I drove them down to the school twice a day. Yes, it is a long way but every time I was in this beautiful landscape. I never got tired of the views and I enjoy driving. I live up here so it is part of life, to have to drive down to the valley"* *(Participant I.7).*

All three of these above journeys, on foot and by car, involve a network of flows, between places and spaces, involving social interactions and changing vistas, depending on the aspect from which the surroundings are viewed. The landscape comes to be 'known' through the ways in which we move through it. Whilst both residents and incomers spoke about walking along these routes, either out of curiosity or remembrance, they all reflected on how peaceful the mountain side appeared, instilling a feeling of tranquillity. As part of their identity journey, they were able to attribute these feelings to moments along the path, when their attention was caught by something, a particular view, or a flower, which drew their thoughts to people or events from their own past. This reminder, they felt, marked out the particular spot in which this happening took place as

somewhere special and personal, whilst at the same time, the footpath, the walk itself left them with a renewed sense of being alive.

> *"It is so calm up here compared to down in the valley. It gives me a sense of peace. I can open my window in the morning and see the summit and I feel so lucky to live here, that this is my place" (Participant R.25).*

> *"Whenever we go for a walk, the paths lead us around the mountain and show us the beauty. And in spring in particular, the flowers are wonderful. I remember picking the wild flowers when I was small, growing up in Normandy. Of course we don't pick them now, we leave them here in nature where they belong" (Participant I.20).*

These reflections chime with Basso's analysis of such a moment of awareness. I quote:

> and the place on which it settles becomes an object of spontaneous reflection and resonating sentiment. It is at times such as these, when individuals step back from the flow of everyday experience and attend self-consciously to places-when, we may say, they pause to actively sense them-that their relationships to geographical space are most richly lived and surely felt (1996, p. 54).

> *"We often walk along the track [of the former narrow gauge railway] and have our picnic lunch at Rapoulem [the bottom station for the aerial ropeway]. My grandfather was a miner [from South Wales] and here I feel close to him. Well in a strange sort of way, it's as though his past is also here even though he worked over a thousand miles away. But they are the same people, these miners" (Participant I.7).*

This latter participant is an incomer to the area from the UK and his musings are interesting in that not only do places merge through association, but so do people. This particular place on the track would appear to become the place where his grandfather mined. The people also merge: all the miners are here. Through an emotional connection in the moment, this participant is able to reminisce about his grandfather, who *becomes* all the other miners. Cultural identity, in this instance his mining background, merges with the materiality of the landscape and the mining features to coalesce around the past and the present. The participant is looking in the landscape for signs which consolidate his sense of identity, which give him a sense of wholeness. This contradicts the theories concerning multiple identities within an individual (Lawler, 2014). Societal categories such as gender, class and nationality are inescapably present in an individual by virtue of their being a part of society which assigns these categories, but can these be equated to multiple identities? The argument is deconstructed in this research by the participants

whose testimonies revealed a need to locate their sense of self in all its wholeness in the landscape, or rather for the landscape to validate their identity, their oneness. Statements such as *"I am a farmer"* or *"I was an engineer"*, were not presented as individual, disconnected identity facets. The need for identity to emerge as a continuous thread was evident in the way in which participants looked to the landscape for confirmation of their oneness. At the same time, the overlapping layers of identity in an individual were present, as illustrated by the testimony below:

> *"I got into such trouble [playing in the wagons]. But it was exciting, and we were all doing it. Of course, as a teacher, I had to have responsibility, it was part of being a teacher. But at the same time I remembered what fun it was" (Participant R.16).*

The layered identities of the child and the teacher are stitched together by the sense of excitement and rebelliousness.

In the context of the discussion of the various facets of identity, the mountain itself can be considered as having a layered identity. Geographically, it sits at the end of a mountain chain, with a view to the sea and to Spain; it provides for its population in terms of land for food growth and mineral wealth for extraction; it provides refuge; it is a source of leisure activities; it is home to a variety of flora and fauna; personification by the participants lends it human qualities and emotions; historically it presents various layers of its story over time through the changing views of its slopes. It therefore has multiple roles to fulfil, and its identity has evolved in accordance with the needs of those it embraces. The thread which connects this narrative and provides constancy is its permanent place in this landscape. It is this sense of stability which, in part, explains people's attachment to place (Tilley, 1994, p. 18).

This section has illustrated some of the mountain features and how they are perceived by the participants. The mountain landscape was admired by all research participants; although the difficult terrain was mentioned, "*it is too tough for me now"* (see section 4.3.4, Participant R.25), it was not regarded as a hostile environment, despite references to the tough life of the mining fraternity of the past generations. This interpretation could be deemed to sit in the tradition of landscape as a place of beauty to be admired from a distance, but the fact that the mountain is endowed with human emotions and qualities of friendship, places it beyond the view of landscape as a passive receptacle to be

regarded with detachment. It is an identity-conferring landscape, which embraces people with qualities of calm and serenity and awe. People relate to the qualities it exudes and absorb them, so that they and the landscape become one. These are the moments referred to in the above paragraph, *"it's as though his* [grandfather's] *past is also here even though he worked over a thousand miles away"*. For Participant I.7, being in the landscape gave him a means to connect or reconnect with instants from his past.

4.3.4 Personification of the landscape

A revealing thread amongst the participants was consideration of the mountain as a living entity, with human-like qualities in terms of sheltering and protecting. Drawing on the concept of New Materialisms, the purpose of this section is to illustrate the manner in which humans and non-humans are co-constituents of their relationship. It does this through examination of the various ways in which the mountain is portrayed. It illustrates the mountain's physical role as a dominant geographical feature in the landscape and considers the testimonies which describe its human qualities. In expressing the agency of the mountain on the lives of the communities the participants therefore provide another angle to the phenomenological perspective which presumes that landscape only exists by virtue of the experiences of people.

Regarded as their sacred mountain, the Canigou is bestowed with the dignity of deity by Catalans. Contrary to the phenomenological proposition outlined in the preceding paragraph, the mountain can be seen to bestow existence on people. Residents spoke about the life-giving force of the Canigou and acknowledged their dependence on it:

> *"This mountain is the source of my life. My family were born because of the iron and she* [the Canigou] *has looked after us and will continue to do so" (Participant R.16).*

Therefore, this thesis argues that identity is also received from, or conferred by the landscape. Landscape is the 'other' in part of Orange's definition (see section 4.2.1) which establishes that consciousness of who we are is awarded by how we believe others to view us, as well as ways in which we feel special or unique. This is supported by participants' testimonies which refer to the Canigou as a living being, as a benevolent figure amongst the population. This approach would appear to concur with the perception of the environment in prehistory. Barrett writes of these prehistoric

landscapes: "All the indicators are that the Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age landscapes were structured around a dominant constellation of references to a spiritual or ancestral presence" (Barrett, 1999, p. 253). There is a certain correlation between the landscape of pre-history and the Canigou landscape in the sense of received spirituality and meanings from particular locations which exist as living entities (Tilley, 1994, p. 202).

The Canigou is personified by some participants who describe it in terms of a nurturing and caring feature as the following statements testify:

"The Canigou has always been there in my life, watching me" (Participant R.25).

"The Canigou is like a giant, watching and protecting us here" (Participant R.2).

The villages are dwarfed in comparison to the mountain, almost emphasising their dependence on it for survival. The following photograph (Figure 4.6) highlights the presence of the mountain dominating the village of La Bastide and illustrates the above testimonies. With no settlements nearby, La Bastide appears to be vulnerable on the mountainside. The massif itself is almost horseshoe in shape, giving the impression that it partially encircles the village.

Figure 4.6 The village of La Bastide, with the Canigou in the background (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

Other participants referred to the mountain's individual agency and perceived consciousness:

> *"The Canigou is always serene and calm, it grows as it wants" (Participant R.25).*
>
> *"The mountains are our friends up here, they have a soul" (Participant R.16).*

The affinity for the Canigou is evident in these responses. Both participants vocalise Haraway's position that there is no differentiation between nature and culture. The mountain is referred to in the same terms as one would talk about a person. The residents regard it as one of them, complicit in the way it has shaped their lives.

These responses were from long-term residents, who were born and stayed in their village all their lives. The thoughts of those who moved into the area reflected their respect for the mountain in terms of its beauty and the feelings evoked, but did not

allude to any humanising features, although the impact of the terrain on their emotions is evident in the following allusion to silence:

"It is such a beautiful mountain and the views from the top are magnificent. I felt a profound silence up there on the summit" (Participant I.10).

Although an incomer, a sense of place is invoked in the effect of stillness which the mountain instils, contrasting with the physical effort which the participant would have undertaken in the climb to the summit. Once on the top, the participant takes on the lofty perspective of the Canigou itself on the surrounding landscape. It is in these moments of 'quickened emotion', of being alive to the world around them, that "places are encountered most directly, experienced most robustly" (Basso, 1996, p. 54).

A sense that the mountain possesses an inherent personality, a certain independence of spirit and a capacity for feeling, is evident in these statements. Figuratively, the references to serenity and calmness lend the mountain an element of elder statesman or wise woman, to whom one can turn for guidance and support. Endowing the mountain(s) with human emotions and behaviours may be interpreted as a reflection of human needs, as outlined by Smith, (see section 4.3.3) but it also reflects the fact that the participants want to broadcast their affinity with the mountain; they know it so well that they are able to understand its moods and qualities. They have a certain intimacy with the Canigou which is not available to others who pass through. This was not overtly pointed out by those who had lived in the area all or most of their lives, but comments such as *"I know this mountain and she knows me"* (Participant R.16) and *"The mountain tells me when the wind is coming"* (Participant R.24) suggest an exclusive relationship with the landscape.

The emotional attributes of the mountain have two effects: they give the Canigou a status independent of human interpretation and existence, and reflect the participants' desire to receive its benevolent qualities. Furthermore, the qualities of trust and respect, implicit in their relationship with the landscape, are mirrored by the attitude of many of the participants towards the former miners, and by the younger generation towards their parents: "so out of respect for all they did, we listened, we listened to everything our parents told us, we trusted them" (daughter of a former miner, in Moulaï, *Le Fond et Le Jour,* 2016b). The landscape qualities have shaped her response. As the daughter of a

mining family, she understood how hard her forbearers had worked and how tough life was for them. So when her parents advised, she left the village for a more comfortable life with better prospects.

Similarly, references to the properties of the mountain iron are reflected in what is referred to as the 'Canigou constitution' (see Chapter Five, section 5.6). The toughness of the iron was embodied in the miners and their resilience is perceived to be handed down through the generations. The ever-present thought that a disaster could happen did not reveal any aversion for the mining sites; on the contrary, the apprehension of danger was superseded by pride in the fortitude and resilience of those who had worked in the mining enterprises. These places were marked by the character of the people who worked there, and were presented during the interviews as places of trust rather than places to fear.

Instead of people looking for meaning in landscapes which supports their sense of self, the opposite would appear to be the case: landscapes, places and spaces actively create meaning for people to receive. This approach concurs with the framework of New Materialisms which embeds people "and the social/material worlds they create, as part of the environment" (Steel, 2018, p. 1). The mountain is acknowledged by the participants as part of their social world. It could be argued that this represents an anthropocentric view of the relationship in which people ascribe meaning to their object world (Steel, 2020. p. 2). However, as demonstrated in this and subsequent sections, the materiality of the mountain and of the mining features shape the social life of the villagers and conversely, people's interactions with their environment are determined by the nature or possibilities of this landscape.

Before concluding this section, I quote an elderly resident whose relationship with the Canigou invokes a phenomenological approach and at the same time, the physicality of the terrain accounts for the energy of matter in New Materialisms:

> "I love this mountain. I have been to the summit five times. I won't go again. It is too tough now for me, but I can sit and look at the peak for a long time from my bedroom window" (Participant R.25).

The part we are able to play in the landscape defines the cultural meanings which we attribute to it. In the above testimony, the mountain is viewed as a powerful, now unassailable presence in the participant's life, in contrast to the times she was able to hike to the summit. Here, the participant 'creates' the landscape, its emotional spirit and its physical presence from the bedroom window. The mountain is the source of the participant's feelings in the spirit of Tilley's phenomenological approach and at the same time, the participant is the source of the mountain's qualities. The way to the top of the Canigou is too tough now, admits this participant, unknowingly perhaps echoing the hard life endured by the miners and their families in the past. The physicality of the mountain has defeated her and she can now appreciate its aesthetic qualities from the window.

At this point, a phenomenological approach would seemingly concur with the concepts of New Materialisms which indicate a mutual processual relationship. Her testimony demonstrates the fluxes and flows of energy between all forms of matter (Ingold, 2010) and illustrates Coole and Frost's statement that "forces, energies, and intensities (rather than substances), are the basis of matter, are the new currency of New Materialisms" (2010, p. 13). The flow of energy from the participant into the landscape diminishes as she ages. The "on-going response-correspondence" (Ingold, 2010, p.85) between materials, animate and non-animate, to which Ingold refers, was a vital part of the climb to the summit; gravity, effort, resistance, air, breathing, de-hydration and hydration are the constituent materials of person and landscape as a 'thing', coming together in movement (Ingold, 2010, p. 85). With the decline of her physical abilities, the matter of the mountain became paramount in the relationship between the participant and the landscape, and her memories recreated the 'correspondence' with the Canigou instead.

This section has presented the Canigou as a living presence with the power to impact on people's lives, both physically and emotionally. The mountain is not an inert resource; neither are people the sole protagonists in the relationship. As a framework New Materialisms gives recognition to the participants' statements about the agency of the non-human world on their lives and embeds them in the "myriad of co-constitutive elements of the material world" (Govier and Steel, 2021, p. 300).

4.3.5 Landscapes as Playscape

This section argues that people realise a sense of their identity through their ability to immerse themselves in their surroundings. It begins by considering Tilley's approach to finding one's way around the landscape and frames this in the theories of Mead and Goffman who stress the importance of receiving identity affirmation from others. Following an outline of Ingold's 'Taskscape' (1993, p. 157), the section develops the idea of 'Playscape' which indicates the effect of playing in the landscape. Finally, knowing where one's family comes from and being able to identify the family homestead with a particular place, is shown to have a bearing on people's ability to feel at ease in new surroundings.

Landscapes empower: understanding a landscape gives people the confidence to interact with it. Knowing "'how to go on' in a landscape, involves a practical mastery of space that is simultaneously a process of finding oneself and one's social world" (Tilley, 2010, p. 40). The responses from some of the participants which recall childhood, illustrate this process:

> *"I remember the entries to some galleries. When you are a child, it is an unknown world, with mystery. We used to play at the entrances, waiting for our fathers. I know where they [the entrances] all are. Many are closed off now but I always say to my grandchildren to be careful. We knew them all and our fathers were always there. It was our world. Today it is different for the young people. They have never looked inside the mountain" (Participant R.41).*

> *"My father took me in the mines. I climbed the ladders. I can still remember. It was muddy but I felt excited to go in" (Participant R.2).*

Both participants demonstrate their awareness of the world around them as children, even though the world is described as unknown in the first testimony. They knew where the adults were situated in relation to these places and this gave them reference points for constructing their own mapping of the area. The physicality of the ladders and the mine entrances shaped their experiences and led them into these places despite the possible dangers. It seems as if in pushing these boundaries the adult/child was able to reconcile the surrounding landscape with their own formation as they took on aspects of the landscape as part of their own identity. The experience in the present gave way in later years to memories; both provided strong bonds to that particular place. Exploring

the mine entrances entailed both physical discovery and self-discovery. By moving from an outside perspective of the mine entrances to an inside perspective, and experiencing these shafts from different angles, the physicality of movement engendered an emotional response to excitement, danger and mystery, which the place exuded. The body's physicality is matched by the physicality of the environment; both are in a state of 'becoming'. This is shown in the second testimony, (R.2); the body is overcoming the challenge of climbing the ladder and coping with the muddy conditions, and learning about its ability to cope with the materialism of this particular place, whilst the first testimony (R.41) refers to the sealed mine shafts where conditions inside are now changing from a hollowed out shaft to a tunnel filling up with stones and earth.

Mead examined how play in children develops the sense of self, by allowing individuals to assume different roles, to pretend, and also to anticipate the expectations of others. This develops into adulthood as individuals develop an understanding of themselves by reading how others respond to them and internalizing this perspective (Mead, 2015). Although Mead mentioned a variety of social situations in which this occurs, the role of the environment can not be underestimated. In the framework of New Materialisms, this is a three-way relationship in which the environment, whether it be landscape, place or space, acts on one's feelings which are then 'given off' (Goffman, 1990, p. 13) and read by others present. This is evident in the testimonies above. As well as being the stage on which these interactions took place, these locales were complicit in the relationship. The ladders and the mine entrances, already referred to above, literally drew them into the material world and shaped their responses to the mining environment. As youngsters, the participants recalled their understanding of the environment and adapted their play accordingly. This perceptive ability allows us to 'fine tune' our responses to our landscape and find our way in an unfolding world (see section 4.4.1).

The theme of playing appeared several times in my conversations with the participants. The older inhabitants identify with their younger selves at these locales:

> "We had lots of fun as children. We played rugby. I went in the mine; we played in the wagons as kids, even though it was forbidden. My brother got in the train. The plan incline went down from the second house above the canteen, just to the right of the cemetery. We played in the wagons there, by the hoppers" (Participant R.16).

"At Christmas we had an orange, a chocolate and a toy at the mine - at the mine office. Every year we rascals would gather there to receive these. I had an iron aeroplane, my first toy I remember. It was a big one but didn't fly" (Participant R.21).

The landscape seemed almost irrelevant as they recounted these events, they were so absorbed in the retelling of those times. However, for these adults, the play was in fact based around the mine and its materials, and these features today act as symbols of their younger selves. The participants' recollections foreground the merger of identity and landscape; both are implicit in the reminiscences. Their life-world is constructed as children during the course of playing. It represents an aspect of the 'dwelling perspective', a term construed by Heidegger to articulate our engagement in the world as a result of development in specific historical/environmental circumstances (Heidegger 2013, p. 143-159). Ingold describes the dwelling perspective thus:

> the forms people build, whether in the imagination or on the ground arise within the current of their involved activity, in the specific relational contexts of their practical engagements with their surroundings (Ingold, 2011, p. 186).

Thoughts, ideas can only occur as they do because of the way in which one is enmeshed in the environment. They are not brought into the world from a blank canvas. This is corroborated in my study: in the act of playing, the youngsters were able to build a world through imagination and the environment. They were unconditioned by acceptable behaviours in a variety of places and spaces. Their sense of freedom allowed them to explore these unbounded spaces without any preconceptions. As children, they were unaware of the distinction between nature and culture, things just were accepted as such. Bunkše captures this unquestioning acceptance of the surrounding landscape in describing his own childhood. He relates how, before he came to know about landscapes in formal, visual ways, he came to know his home environment through the senses: "they were multi-sensory seascapes and rural landscapes - experiences which were overwhelmed by the learned cultural norms of visual landscapes" (Bunkše, 2007, p. 225).

The main point here is that as children, the young village residents of the Canigou can be described as landscape creatures. Their surroundings were an extension of themselves. Through play, they had an intimate knowledge of this landscape. The world to them was an exciting mystery, and they were part of this landscape, they grew into the landscape as

they played there. Hence, in response to the term Taskscape, space defined by an array of human activity (Ingold, 2011, p. 195), this research refers to this phenomenon as 'playing in the landscape', or Playscape: space defined through play. Place and space merge during playscape. The spaces in between the significant places, for example the mine entrances in the above testimony, were just as meaningful for the children. The spaces were the means of arriving at the places and were therefore of equal significance. Participant R.16 recalls:

> "We weren't long home and then we couldn't wait to run up to the track, racing all of us, and sometimes we fell, we were in such a hurry but we were always laughing" (Participant R.16).

During the course of the conversations, all of the participants recalled childhood times and their surroundings were marked out by the games they played there. For the older residents, the play took place in and amongst the industrial remains. The recollections involved playing with other children and were prompted by talking about particular places. Referring to the narrow-gauge railway system as a means of getting the ore off the mountain, Participant R.16 remembered his early days:

> "You can't see it now. It is all overgrown, but we used to play there after school. Today it is a walking trail but we used to run as fast as we could along the rails and see who could go the furthest. They were good times" (Participant R.16).

> "We would throw stones in the wagons. You got most points if the wagons were moving" (Participant R.16).

Participant R.25 also evokes the sense of timelessness in her reminiscences:

> "We didn't have TV or all these electronic games that young people have now but we had all this. We are the lucky ones. We had the freedom. Not now, they don't know. This was our playground and we had all these amazing things to play with and explore" (Participant R.25).

By 'things', the participant is referring to the mining materials. The inherent possibilities of these sites and mining objects were party to her developing sense of identity. She felt fortunate in that her childhood represented freedom to be involved in the landscape through play, without the constraints of bounded, regulated space (Edensor, 2005, p. 4). She knows 'how to go on' in her world, and this is part of her identity:

> "It is a part of me, this past is always with me now, it is a part of me growing up and making me the person I am today" (Participant R.25).

For those participants who moved into the area from other parts, discussion always brought up memories of their childhood including playing with others. To understand your environment involves embodying its features. This is illustrated in the statement below: *"We knew where we were".* They knew where they stood in relation to their environment, they understood it and their position in it:

> *"We always went to play down by the river. We were told not to, but it didn't matter. We knew where we were, we understood our surroundings" (Participant I.31).*

Childhood recollections always drew on a hint of danger, or excitement, or the forbidden; it seems as if in pushing these boundaries the adult/child was able to reconcile the surrounding landscape with their own formation. It is in one's attachment to a particular place that shapes people through the means of their memories and experiences. It is the background for one's lives and an essential component of identity and sense of self because it directly influences people's perception of the world (Relph, 1976, p. 9). Places need to be encountered from within in order for people to be a part of them, and through this sensorial relationship, they affect one's thoughts and interpretations (Tilley, 1994). In this, identity is realised. This is highlighted by Shepherd who, according to MacFarlane in his introduction to her book, describes how the landscape of the Cairngorms gave her access to her inner spirit: 'keen ways of figuring ourselves to ourselves, strong means of shaping memories and giving form to thought' (MacFarlane, Introduction to Shepherd, 2014, p. xix) and that 'going out … was really going in' (Muir, 1913, quoted by MacFarlane in Introduction to Shepherd, 2014, p. xix). The village, the mines, the mountain are the places which give the participants a sense of direction about their lives and reasons for their being in this place in this time. Residents described how they belong in this landscape and can place their memories in the surrounding locales; their way of life is that of the mountain, whether it is through the mining activity or husbandry.

> *"I was underground for twenty years, with the same workers. I walked to the mine, there were seven of us and we would walk together. They were years of my 'formation' and so it is because of all that, that I came to be a person of the mountains. This is my way of life, all along" (Participant R.23).*

> *"My father worked in the mines, but he had problems with his lungs. He raised sheep and cows. My roots are here, in the countryside. The village has looked after us" (Participant R.37).*

Interestingly, for those incomers who had a strong sense of where they came from, this 'new' landscape gave them an opportunity to find out more about themselves:

> "My family are originally from the Ardèche, and my parents and my grandparents, in fact all my family were a big part of the community so I am always curious to find out about where I live. So when we came here I wanted to get involved in the community so helping with the restoration projects was a way in. I can bring a part of my past, my family, and at the same time this place gives me something new" (Participant I.10).

> "We come from the south [Spanish Catalonia]. My grandparents were refugees, they came in the Retirada. I love this mountain, but my family are from the south. Of course I get involved but it is different, the north to the south. I understand and can see things because we are all Catalans. I am involved in making sure we care for our world. It is all one world, I know that because I live on one side but my family come from the other side [of the Pyrenees]" (Participant R.8).

Memories of other places are recalled and embedded in the new landscape, as evidenced in the statement from Participant I.10, above and Participant I.7, in section 4.3.3. These places hold significant meanings of their own, in the form of the mining history and at the same time can impart new meanings for those who come from outside the area. The feelings of connection which the landscape engenders are born from early experiences of feeling secure. For those incomers who have a strong sense of family identity, they also felt able to empathise with the Canigou and its history and feel at ease:

> "We are not from here; my family are from Normandy. But I love this landscape, its beauty and its peace. It makes me feel at home, even though I am not from here" (Participant I.29).

However, for those with less secure origins, the mountain surroundings and its mining heritage are appreciated, but it would appear that the landscape is unable to move them emotionally. It is a more detached view:

> "I wouldn't say I am from anywhere. My father was from Paris and my mother's family were from Italy but they lost touch soon after she met my father. So I don't know. I came here from the valley and before that from Bordeaux and before that...so you see, I don't have my roots anywhere. Yes I walk here, the mountains, and I understand its history. I raise some cattle but I don't have my identity here" (Participant I.9).

The above four testimonies illustrate an outward looking sense of identity; they represent differing aspects of Goodhart's (2017) 'citizen of the world': those people who exhibit a cross-border/boundary outlook. Participant I.10 wants to experience living in a different community and is open to new experiences, but this involves bringing part of his past

with him. Similarly, Participant R.8 expresses a global outlook in wanting to be involved in world issues and yet he expresses his affiliations to the Catalans in the south, despite having lived all his life in French Catalonia. Participant I.29 has embedded herself in the new landscape through an affinity with its qualities. Goodhart's analysis does not fit exactly with these profiles. He acknowledges that people have aspects of both a local and a global profile, but the above testimonies illustrate that in fact the two perceptions are embedded, one within the other, rather than lying on a continuum as Goodhart describes. It is more than just a local/global analysis. There is evidence here of local and global being part of the same thing. The incomers do illustrate an outward looking perspective, evident in their curiosity and willingness to live in other countries or regions but at the same time they want to consolidate the cultural boundaries of this new place. They are interested in the distinctiveness of the Canigou region and through their involvement in heritage practices (see Chapter Five) they are resolved to maintain its identity. But they also bring a part of themselves and their own journey to embed in the locality. The identity of the place is therefore imperceptibly changing with the arrival of new meanings from incomers. This has affinity with Massey's analysis of place identity being the result of external factors (see section 4.3.1; Chapter Six, section 6.5):

> Their 'local uniqueness' is always already a product of wider contacts; the local is always already a product in part of 'global' forces, where global in this context refers not necessarily to the planetary scale, but to the geographical beyond, the world beyond the place itself (Massey, 1995, p. 183).

Massey identifies that 'local uniqueness' is a falsehood and that the apparent singular identity of place is the product of outside influences. She stipulates that these influences may be from nearby places, in which case the changes to place identity are rather more imperceptible than those from a wider global context. Participant I.10 states that he brings *"a part of his past to this new landscape"* and at the same time he is enhanced by his new environment. His curiosity about this new landscape suggests its uniqueness and he becomes involved in the heritage projects because "the past is seen in some sense to embody the real character of the place" (Massey, 1995, p. 183). The descendant of refugees from South Catalonia, Participant R.8 alludes to the mix of local and global when

he says that the north and the south are different and yet they are all Catalans, *"it is all one world"*.

Finally, with parents from two different cultural backgrounds, Participant I.9 has a completely open sense of identity. He does not belong anywhere. His lack of emotional bond to the landscape may well be a result of the fact that this participant does not have a strong sense of the family home, unlike the above participants. This is why he is unable to surrender himself to the landscape. This research therefore would appear to indicate that what I refer to as the Family Line: knowing where one's family comes from has an important role to play in the extent to which one is able to engage with the landscape. Is this the link between 'knowing how to go on in a landscape' and identity? If one has a 'floating' sense of where one comes from, rather than a specific place or space then it may be the case that the power of landscape does not play such a part in one's sense of identity. At the same time, I argue that Goodhart's analysis of people who have their roots in a specific locality and those who have an outward looking sense of identity, is too simplistic, despite his statement that people can have elements of both. The case of Participant I.9 shows that his identity is not linked to a particular place or locale, and despite stating his worldly wanderings, he feels that his identity is embedded in mountain ranges. He does exhibit an "Anywhere" outlook but by his own definition, it is restricted. His locality is at altitude and this is where his allegiances lie.

Many of the participants talked of their early years and so this section has analysed the role of playing in the landscape, as outlined in their testimonies. It has presented the concept of Playscape to illustrate how landscape and sense of self merge during moments of absorption in these activities. The section has also considered the extent to which incomers are able to engage with the landscape and has proposed that being able to relate to where the family comes from has a bearing on one's ability to connect emotionally with a new place.

4.3.6 The social landscape

Having considered the ways in which people receive meanings about their sense of identity in the geographical landscape environment, the importance of relationships with others in supporting the development of a sense of self needs consideration. Goffmann

(see section 4.2.1) was an early protagonist of the social aspects involved in the process. However, the key claim in this section is that if the landscape is fundamentally changed, then society will alter. The importance of family, security of the home environment, the nature of change to the social life of the study villages, are themes which are considered in my study.

The importance of the family in acknowledging and supporting a sense of identity appeared in almost every interview. Discussions almost always came back to the family, whatever course these took. The following reveal the hope that the younger generation will still regard the Canigou as home, even though they have moved away. Prades and Perpignan are not particularly far away, but there is a distance implied in these testimonies, indicating the feeling of separateness of the mountain villagers from other towns and villages in the region:

> *"Of course, I hope that my children will feel that this is their home as well as Prades. We come from Prades and they know that but they will grow up with both"* (Participant I.14).

> *"We always get together for birthdays and other events. It is important; my son works so hard, it is good to have him here to enjoy his family"* (Participant R.51).

> *"In the winter I spend time with my daughters as it is too hard for me here on my own. I split my time between Perpignan and Prades. It is a chance to spend time with them and my grandchildren. They are busy with work and school and even though they love this place they don't have much chance"* (Participant R.25).

The above all stress the feelings of centredness around the locality. Bringing children and people back into the villages is a theme which relays the message that the villages must survive, they must maintain their profile as the centre of family life.

From the perspective of the younger generation, the village still draws them back, even though they work away:

> *"I had to leave: I went to look for work in Prades but I always look to my parents for advice. My home is always here and I always look to home when I don't know what to do, my job, maybe or something is bothering me"* (Participant R.50).

No one is excluded from village social life; boules, saint days and village choirs are examples of some of the activities which reach out to, and are attended by all ages and

nationalities. However, many of the older long-term residents compared the community feeling in the past unfavourably with that of today:

> *"Neighbours took it in turns to sit with the dead until the funeral or when someone was ill. Sometimes it would be two days, sometimes a week. We have lost this today. The sense of solidarity has gone" (Participant R.25).*

Most of the older participants bemoaned this lack of community spirit. They can remember the times when the villages were busy with activities centred on the mine.

> *"I remember the village was very animated. It emptied little by little and there are not many left now. I remember in the afternoons the women would meet in the square and sit on the steps and talk. No one does that anymore. But it is still the same village for me and I was born here, my roots are here and so I am always 'at home'" (Participant R.25).*

> *"But there was solidarity between the miners. And in the village, because there was no money. We listened to each other, unlike today, and there was no TV" (Participant R.2).*

> *"We would help in the fields, the women would help each other. I always had my jobs like taking sandwiches to my father in the mine. There were others of us too, but it was part of our day, we didn't resent it. We wanted to go up to the mine to get a feel of what was going on that day" (Participant R.2).*

These insights into community life in the war years and the mid-twentieth century pick up on the centredness of village life. The mines were in full operation during these years and attracted workers from other European countries, including Germans during World War Two. The camaraderie referred to by Participants R.25 and R.2, above, included the European mine workers:

> *"There were Italians, Algerians, Portuguese. Nationality meant nothing to us" (Participant R.23).*

> *"A young German worked with me. At the end of the war he went home to find all his family had died so he came back. There were three of them and I worked underground with one of them for sixteen years. We were expecting a baby and had the baby been a boy we were going to name him after B., but it was a girl" (Participant R.23).*

However, as a parallel to the role of incomers in this study, these testimonies indicate that the Europeans and North Africans consolidated the identity of the village as mining villages (see Chapter Five, section 5.5) and were absorbed as a part of the social landscape of the area. Now the mines have closed, the landscape offers something different.

"The countryside has changed, the apple trees are no longer there. We used to play pétanque*. But no longer; it is different today" (Participant R.27).*

With employment driving people down to the valleys the community is no longer dependent on the landscape in this respect and social life, many of the older residents feel, is no longer village-centred. However keenly this is felt, they acknowledge that the younger generation have left because the jobs are now elsewhere:

"…or the world will leave them behind. They must go and find work elsewhere because they can't live in the history. We were lucky, we had the work here, we could make our own lives but young people now must go out and search" (Participant R.23).

"Our young people have to go out in the wide world and find themselves a place there" (Participant R.30).

"They [young people] don't have the support now. We had the whole village and we didn't have much money but we had everything we needed. Now it is different, you have to separate yourself from where you belong and sometimes from your family if the work is elsewhere. I think it is much harder and lonelier in the world, even though we have all these ways of communicating" (Participant R.27).

The last testimony is telling because it suggests the dissolution of family and community support as the world becomes more outward looking and people move to live and work in other regions or countries. The improved communications, this participant offers, are no substitute for the physical proximity of family and community.

Despite the assessments of community life by the long-term older residents, each village does have a social centre where villagers meet regularly. Each village has a local cafe which is a focal point and regularly welcomes residents. Village meals generally held outdoors (see Chapter Five, section 5.6), frequently mark the summer days and are occasions not to be missed:

"They are a good way of bringing the community together. Everyone comes and we also have people coming especially who have left the village. It is a way of keeping in touch and being neighbourly. Because here we have no other neighbours except ourselves" (Participant R.51).

These layered responses to social life are matched by layered approaches to the landscape. For the long-term residents, the landscape is an integral part of them, despite the changes witnessed over the years, perhaps the reason being that society and landscape were in unison:

> *"But this is my country and I can't walk away from it. The mountain and the mines and the village were all part of the same world" (Participant R.16).*

This reflection is pertinent to the concept of inanimate objects and non-humans as 'living' things which impact on people's lives. Landscape and society change together and are witnessed and conceived at different stages depending on one's perspective in time. Hence, the influx of second homeowners and retirees present a different picture of their relationship with this countryside. They admire its beauty, are aware of the mining heritage but do not identify with the place in the way that the older residents do:

> *"The landscape is very beautiful but it is not my countryside as I am from Normandy. can still admire it though" (Participant I.20).*

> *"I love the mountains but I was not born here so I don't have my roots here. I love walking in the mountains. That's why we came to live here. I know about the mining but it is not my past" (Participant I.38).*

> *"Yes, I have put down roots here but I am not rooted (*enracinée*)" (Participant I.29).*

It is interesting that the above participant (I.29) feels able to put down roots and make herself feel at home, but she differentiates between this and the notion of rootedness. This may be because her ancestors have not invested anything of themselves in this part of the world. To be rooted in a country, she feels, is '*to know your ancestors are here'*.

This is echoed by another participant, who has lived in the area for a number of years:

> *"A couple of old ladies down the road say that to belong to a place you must have your ancestors in the local graveyard" (Participant I.7).*

Landscape and society therefore have a mutually dependent relationship and impact jointly on people's understanding of their identity.

This section has highlighted that as the relationship with the landscape is fundamentally altered, then society will alter. No longer able to support the mining activity, the villages are attractive as places to live now for other reasons. Village life is held together through the heritage projects and other activities which the landscape offers, for example, hiking and skiing. This can be seen in the efforts to bring the villagers together for example, for communal meals, but the times and the talk is different. (This is examined in more detail in Chapter Five.) The mining is not part of the incomers' past, and so society reinvents

itself in tune with the activities offered and emotions aroused by the places and spaces in the landscape.

4.4 Looking for the path

So far, this chapter has examined people's relationship with the landscape and how this supports their sense of identity. In the following sections I illustrate how people read the landscape and pick up on Ingold's argument that places are defined by people's movements rather than their geographical position. It is through our ability to connect with our surroundings, to attend to those places which animate our feelings and ideas (Basso, 1996, p. 55) engendering a sense of place, which enables us to develop an understanding of our sense of self.

In the following sections I argue that places and features, such as a rocky outcrop, are important because they act as reference points, enabling people to locate themselves in the landscape. I examine how moving around on this mountain and viewing features from different aspects prompt feelings of 'oneness' with the landscape, thus illustrating aspects of both New Materialisms and phenomenology. Section 4.4.2 considers how participants relate to the changing face of their surroundings and examines their perceptions of cyclical and linear time in this context.

4.4.1 Finding our way

Ingold argues that places do not exist in defined physical spaces but rather as "nodes in a matrix of movement". He calls this matrix a region which is bound together by the itineraries of the inhabitants (Ingold, 2011, p. 219). Finding one's way around is understood as a skilled performance in which the journey-maker has no mental map to follow, but instead is able to use powers of perception and action which have been fine-tuned through previous experience. This allows for "continuous adjustments in response to an on-going perceptual monitoring of his surroundings" (Ingold, 2011, p. 220). There is no preconceived map, but an unfolding response to the environmental situation in which one finds oneself.

The ability to read the landscape was highlighted by those incomers who talked about the landscape of their formative years. It was clear that they were able to move at ease in

their new surroundings and were able to situate themselves in the landscape in relation to features which reflected the time of day, the seasons and to identify both natural and cultural (mining) attributes as compass points:

> *"The sun sets behind that crag in the summer. By winter it is lower and this side of the village is in shadow by 15.00. hours. It is another way of telling me the time"* (Participant I. 38).

To embed this in Ingold's perception of our reading of the landscape, the nodes in the above testimony are the village and the crag, and the position of the sun in relation to these features is part of the matrix of movement. In this scenario the sun 'appears' to move or make the journey. The places are located through their relationship with the sun. The incomer (I.38) can position herself in the landscape through her observations of seasonal changes. Her movement in her surroundings is relational to her observations of the changing viewpoints in the landscape. This is the context in which we can comprehend and journey in different landscapes.

Bender explores this theme of journeying and movement from a different perspective. She considers the diaspora of people today, whether from economic necessity, tourism, fear, business and entrepreneurial motives (Bender, 2001, p. 77). She argues that despite displacement, people are always 'somewhere' and that even though the journey creates a dislocation with their old, familiar landscape, they are able to create 'something out of nothing' by imposing old feelings and social behaviours on new landscapes and environments. These experiences work at different levels. Bender argues that they change according to time and place and are dependent on, and have an effect on, individual biographies (Bender, 2001, p. 79). She is clear that for those who resettle in a new landscape, there is a lack of memory and experience associated with the new world, but that in time, people are able to furnish it with a sense of belonging drawn from their previous place and their sense of identity from their previous experience of landscape. My study concurs with her argument. Incomers bring their own memories into the unfamiliar landscape and so are able to lay a part of themselves down in it, as exemplified by Participant I.7 (see section 4.3.3) who brought the memory of his grandfather from Wales into the Canigou landscape.

Rather than identity being associated with specific nodes in the landscape, Participant I.9, below, offers a different perspective. A global understanding of the factors which contribute to the whole landscape is articulated by the following testimony. For him, place identity is not in the specific geographical location. Instead, it is realised through a matrix of features specific to particular world-wide environments:

> "For me, true identity is the mountains because we are here at 850 metres altitude; we have terrible winds at this altitude, it is geography, the weather; that is true identity. Here we live as you do in Morocco, in the Atlas, in nature. It's that that is the same" (Participant I.9).

A whole collection of phenomena implicit in a specific altitude, including climate, inform his sense of being in the world, of feeling at one with the environment. It is not attachment to a precise landscape but implies an ability to 'go on' anywhere in the world at that mountain height.

In a similar vein, some participants spoke of family relocation as enabling them to be adaptable to any environment:

> "I don't believe in identity. At least not here. My parents are from Spain. They were refugees. They had to make a new life here. You never know where you will end up and so I don't make plans" (Participant R.8).

The same sense of journeying was voiced by other descendants of refugees fleeing from Franco,

> "My family came over the mountain from Franco. I am the son of refugees. I can live anywhere, as they had to leave their previous lives and start again. And they did. It was hard at first, you know, but they had courage. I respect what they had to do. I can do the same" (Participant R.45).

Here the nodes, of which Ingold writes, are embedded in the story of the family's journey. Even though the participants have never lived south of the French border, it is still a strong part of their identity. The geographical reference points are in South Catalonia but the flexibility, referred to in Participant R.8's statement, implicit in journeying allows him to find his way in unfamiliar environments.

Just as places are defined by their histories, so too, it can be argued, that a person's identity is processed through stories and that it is through the medium of these, that a cognitive pathway or itinerary of movement enables one to know oneself. During the

course of the discussions, stories and events emerged which confer with Ingold's ideas of places having stories, locating the participant in a landscape of movement. This is illustrated by the testimony of Participant I.7. From South Wales, the places in his landscape are connected by his memories from his family background. His pathway has brought him to the Canigou villages and the stories from his childhood enable him to understand this adopted landscape:

"When I came here, I knew about the iron. Everyone around here knew about it and many knew someone who had a relative or knew of someone who had worked in the mine. I understood their lives. Because my family were miners in Wales. I always remember my grandmother telling me about her worries for his safety. But she was proud of him. I take this [pride] *with me every day. So I understand this place"* *(Participant I.7).*

As Bender explains, "people relate to place and time through memory, but the memories may be of other places and other times" (Bender, 2002, p. 107). For the older residents the mining sites are defined by their histories and their stories. Recollections revolved around pride in the work of their forebears; the inherent dangers; the tough daily grind and most tellingly, the camaraderie.

"There was an enormous sense of solidarity which we don't have anymore" *(Participant R.2).*

"Iron marked our country. It marks our history. Our grandparents knew how tough life was but they all helped. It was camaraderie which we don't have" *(Participant R.25).*

"The galleries were dangerous. There was dust. Up there [gesturing to a mining entrance site] *there were accidents but we were proud of them"* *(Participant R.3).*

"We mustn't forget, our children need to know what it was like in there" *(Participant R.3).*

The messages of respect and trust and cooperation which were left on the path by previous generations emerged to instruct the younger members of the communities. An ability to utilise powers of perception allowed them to respond to and absorb new and unfamiliar environments:

"I am always interested in where I am I think because we were outside playing as children. Even though I am not from here, I respect these mountains. I know where the sun rises and the sun sets because I am always looking at them [the mountains] *and walking"* *(Participant I.22).*

Memories of other childhood places are imported into the Canigou landscape by this incomer. His testimony illustrates the participant's connection with his surroundings through awareness of the sun's motions. Interestingly, his wife conveyed the same feelings, suggesting that they follow the same pathway. This also applied to their stories concerning the people they know, the leisure activities in which they take part and their sense of place in the landscape. Other participants talked about the mountain and its heritage from differing angles, and a variety of similar and divergent perspectives. This confirms that being in the same place does not mean that we all read the messages in the symbolic landscape in the same way. Our journeys are unique and individual, although the 'family line' may contribute to similar 'dwelling perspectives' amongst participants.

The remains of the iron industry figure prominently in recollections of the descendants of former miners but theirs become increasingly a view from a distance as the demographics and the emphasis change the collective perceptions of the landscape. The last surviving generation of mining families view themselves as custodians of this past; their forebears speak to them from the past and the values which they inherited are captured with pride. Increasingly though, the younger participants are unable to relate to the spirit of the miners. They respect them, but again it is a view from a distance. They do not speak as custodians, but rather with interest in the way of life gone before their time. The stories are not their stories and it is feared that, with the death of those who can remember mining days, the industrial remains will tell their own stories to strangers, who despite interest, will not be stakeholders in this aspect of the land. Perhaps to close this section, it is interesting to consider the bond between the land and the community for the Anishnaabekwe people of North America: the health of the community is dependent on the health of the land; if the respect and feelings of connectedness with the land, its past, present and future, are strong, the health and culture of the indigenous population is part of that strength (Akiwenzie-Damm, 1996). A continuing cycle between past, present and future connects the population with the landscape and provides for the nurture of community identity. The disparate demographics of the Canigou villages, with their contrasting stories and paths in the landscape, feel connected to this mountain environment and its history of iron mining, thus ensuring community survival.

This section has argued that places in the landscape are important because they act as reference points, enabling stories to emerge which provide people with the opportunities to locate their identity in the landscape. This supports Ingold's concept of movement as a matrix between significant features in the landscape. However, whilst I pick up on Ingold's perception of these places as nodes, defined by their stories, this research argues that the nodes do exist in defined physical spaces. Their very materiality is part of the social world inhabited by people, just as the ladder enables the child to explore the mine (see section 4.3.5), the materiality of the crag (Participant I.38) allows the adult to find his place in the landscape. This section has also demonstrated the importance of being emplaced in the landscape and how participants' dispositions towards their environment enable them to read the features in relation to their own position and to other markers in the landscape features.

4.4.2 Time in the landscape

In this section I pick up on the concept of landscape as an evolving entity. Despite references to seasonal changes and renewal, I argue that the landscape layers illustrate how time is linear; time moves everything on. This section therefore refers to layers in the landscape which reflect how it changes over time, with each layer contingent upon the previous one.

The assertion that the social and historical context of a place defines its identity, fixes that place in a certain time and can give the impression of false timelessness, what Pred terms 'frozen scenes' (Pred, 1984, p. 279). The image of the rural idyll exemplifies this school of thought by portraying the countryside in a romantic, stable light. However, this notion of a fixed landscape is contested by the argument that landscape and place are in a constant state of becoming (Bender, 2002). They exist as such in that moment. Similarly, the concept of New Materialisms also challenges this notion of stasis by emphasising the processual relationship of the non-human and human world. Referring to the non-human as 'things', Kirsch defines this approach as:

> an enhanced view of materiality as relation and process, a world in which 'things' exist in transitory and unstable states as bundles of relations and embodiments of processes (Kirsch, 2014, p. 691).

For the majority of the older, long-standing village families in this research the mining landscape has changed, for some beyond recognition, and a feeling of detachment prevailed. For those who returned, place and landscape are different today and it takes them a while to get used to this, if ever they do, but the pull of childhood memories prevails, and the present is filtered through the past. This phenomenon is encapsulated in the following quotation from Bender that "no one returns to the same place twice" (Bender, 2001, p. 81). In fact, Bender is stating that people return to the same location but that the features of the place have altered so much that it does not display the same characteristics that defined it, that constituted it as a recognisable and known 'place'. This is illustrated in the following testimony:

> *"I wanted to come back from the town because I don't need to travel to work anymore. It is different now in the village, the people aren't the same, it is not busy with life, unlike before. The day feels different, we were used to the comings and goings of the mines. That has all gone now" (Participant R.18).*

It is the same village and yet it is unfamiliar to this person who has returned to find that the rhythm of life has changed and it is populated with people he does not know. The terraces of childhood, used for subsistence farming are overgrown (Figure 4.7). The slopes surrounding the villages are now forested but the remains of farming are hidden by regrowth. That part of the miners' lives has disappeared, and the following photograph and the accompanying statement illustrate the constant state of becoming (Bender, 2002). The land is no longer worked for agricultural purposes. Village life has changed; people are able to buy in their food needs and so the land is no longer worked for agricultural purposes.

Figure 4.7 Terraces now overgrown (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

> *"There were fields everywhere, lots of apple trees. Today there are none. Opposite on the mountain side, the land was worked. Everything is now covered with vegetation"* *(Participant R.16).*

The layers of landscape are evident in this photograph. The terraces are now only just visible as the vegetation takes over and trees and shrubs obscure the previously cultivated ground, marking a different phase in the landscape. Layers of regrowth in today's landscape are perceived to be negative constructs by the older residents; there is no sense of rebirth or continuity in their responses:

> *"The village is dead" (Participant R.16).*
>
> *"Here, it is finished now" (Participant R.27).*
>
> *"But once the mines closed, the lights of the village went out" (Participant R.25).*

The implication that the end of mining activity corresponds to the death of village life impacted on these participants. They felt that they could no longer relate to the present landscape but continued to think of it as in the past, a lost landscape. There is no feeling of renewal. The past is over and with it their relationship with the land is over too:

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"It is wild now. It grows as it wants" (Participant R.16).

Participant R.16 feels that he no longer has a connection with the land. He was born into this landscape and grew up there with mining a part of his childhood, his formative years. The close identification he had with the landscape started to weaken after the mines closed and other families moved away from the village until the point where he no longer recognizes it, but still sees the landscape of his earlier years as the true landscape. This sits with Urry's statement about time: "there is no past out there or back there. There is only the present, in the context of which the past is continually being recreated" (Urry, 1996, p. 48).

The following photograph depicts the former sleeping quarters at Les Manerots mine, La Bastide. With reference to Kirsch's statement, the building exhibits its transitory state as part of a changing landscape.

Figure 4.8 Sleeping quarters at Les Manerots mine, La Bastide (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

For some residents the building no longer exists because it is not in its former complete state:

> *"It used to be the building where many of the miners slept. Today this is all we have left, just a heap and soon that will have gone" (Participant R.16).*

With regard to the flow of energy to which I referred in section 4.3.4, the testimony above (R.16) highlights a feeling of resignation to the effects of time. Unable to connect with the materialism of the building in its present state, this elderly participant turns to his memories of its former use. Moreover, the vigour of the young trees saps the energy from the stone and brick work which literally crumble onto and eventually into the earth. The photograph shows matter in a state of change, of becoming. On another level, people exhibit their differing aspects of 'becoming': as a part of the decline, in the case of Participant R. 16, whilst others step into the landscape and match the energy it exudes with their own through physical activity, whether in the form of leisure activities such as hiking or engagement with the heritage projects.

In contrast, for incomers the building is recognised for what it is today and its relationship with the surrounding foliage. The trees and the walls are a visual representation of the processes of decline and renewal taking place between nature and culture. Rather than a derelict place, a symbol of decay, the site is alive with flora and fauna; it is a place of evolution (Edensor, 2005, p. 22).

The linear notion of time which is implicit in the phrase *"it is finished now"* (Participant R.27), is contrasted with the memories of childhood which referred to a cycle, daily, seasonal and yearly:

> *"You could hear the miners going to work every morning. You could set your clock to it" (Participant R.2).*
>
> *"In the summer everyone would be out in the fields, even the men after the mine; it was the time for looking after vegetables. Everyone was a miner and a farmer" (Participant R.2).*

These testimonies echo the thoughts of Alan Taurinya who wrote about his excitement at seeing the wagons carrying the ore, as a regular daily occurrence: "Every afternoon, we would come out of school to see the steaming wagons passing through on their way down from the mines," (Taurinya, 2011 p. 2). A feeling of security about the past is

evident in these recollections of daily routines and space is regulated through predictable rhythms of time. This cyclical nature of the past contrasts with the linear perceptions which these residents hold about time in the present.

Many incomers also regarded time from a linear perspective. The mining landscape was a view into the past, an insight into lives that have gone before:

> *"I walk to some of the mines, they are mainly hidden away but it is interesting to see them so that you know what happened here before" (Participant I.22).*

The villages that they live in today are related to the mining history, but they are no longer mining villages, they have a mining past and offer leisure opportunities. Incomers often voiced the need for progress, to move on, offering a linear perspective of time, illustrated in the following testimonies:

> *"The mining is part of the history of this village. But you can't live in the past. We have to look to the future as that is waiting for us, now, not the past" (Participant I.5).*

> *"I respect the miners, their work was very tough, I know. But life is different now; we can still admire them but we need to think of the future for our young people. There is nothing for them here" (Participant I.7).*

The derelict building (Figure 4.9) reflects these views. The sense of abandonment is put into perspective by the vigour of the spring growth. The photograph shows seasonal renewal with evidence of early spring but in the wider context, the landscape is changing. The mining story is giving way to the mining heritage story. A former miners' path which runs in front of this building is now a hiking route.

Figure 4.9 Sleeping quarters at Les Manerots mine, La Bastide (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

To summarise this section: these research responses paint a complicated picture of individual relationships with time in the landscape. Residents' testimonies illustrate a cyclical view of time in the past which I argue, is a means of ordering space based on their need for feelings of stability. They recall village life through their memories of the rhythms and seasons of the past, exemplified by Participant R.2 who recalls the regularity of hearing the miners go to work every morning. In the present, time presents itself differently for these residents who relate how the landscape has changed for ever. Time is represented as linear by residents and incomers alike, visible in the landscape as layers which accrue over the years. At the same time, sites which seem to symbolise decay are in fact evolving sites which point to future layers of time in the landscape.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the relationship between the landscape and the extent to which it endows the local villagers with a sense of belonging. The need to have a sense of place is a key claim of this chapter. Provided by landscapes of the past and the present, feelings of belonging were embedded in stories, places and spaces. These either related to landscapes in the present or, for older residents, to lost landscapes. For incomers, the places on the Canigou evoked memories from other regions and thus enabled them to identify with their 'adopted' home. Their experiences do not fit totally with Goodhart's analysis; they are able to settle in new localities and at the same time, embed a part of their life-story in their new place. As such, they embody Massey's point that local identities are an amalgamation of various other influences from outside (Massey, 1995).

The concepts of New Materialisms and natureculture are fitting frameworks for understanding the way in which the mountain has shaped, and still does shape, the lives of the villagers and vice versa. The merger of nature and culture is illustrated in the reminiscences of childhood days when landscape did not exist as a separate phenomenon. Love and respect for the mountain and the derelict mine sites emerged from reflection when as children the older participants played *within* the surroundings, when their 'playground' merged with their younger selves. It was not a relationship on which they dwelled at the time, being so involved in the play that conscious awareness did not exist for them. They were the landscape and the landscape was them.

Finally, this chapter has presented the notion that identity is layered. I argue that the layers of identity accrue over time and in place and therefore I describe identity as an organic sense of self which develops from our relationships and interactions with people and our surroundings.

CHAPTER FIVE: Heritage in the Canigou mining landscape

"At first it was all about the few miners still left alive and they helped us. Then gradually many more villagers joined us and have brought in their own expertise and some are from mining families elsewhere so we have those stories too" (Participant I.10).

5.1 Introduction

Insights into the communities' perceptions of the Canigou landscape in the previous chapter provides a context for investigation of the heritage initiatives in the area. The relevance of these heritage projects emerged from my research interviews as a further way in which people are linked to the landscape. Features of the mining past were considered a part of the lives and identity of the local population and the mountain and hence merited examination. Moreover, the participants in general used the terms *'l'héritage'* (heritage) or *'le patrimoine'* (patrimony), and *'la culture'* (culture) interchangeably. This was often the case during my research discussions, with the word *'l'héritage'* used more frequently than the word *identité*, when participants described themselves in the landscape context, provoking the notion that they could relate more to this concept. Smith makes this link:

> Heritage, particularly in its material representations, provides not only a physical anchor or geographical sense of belonging, but also allows us to negotiate a sense of social 'place' or class/community identity, and a cultural place or sense of belonging (Smith, 2006, p. 75).

In this chapter I analyse the heritage initiatives undertaken in the villages of the Canigou region and the participants' perspectives on keeping the iron-mining legacy alive and in the public domain. I argue that the material remains of the mining past are a dynamic part of the landscape in which people are able to embed their sense of identity through appropriation and creation of memories. The sites are important markers of the mountain identity and the story of iron mining provides the anchor between the past and the present for these communities. This relationship with the past leads on to the question of whose heritage is under consideration in the initiatives of the Canigou villages. Given the number of incomers involved in the projects, I argue that the mining

heritage belongs both to the villagers and to the mountain landscape itself and is an integral part of a 'sense of place'.

Community-based heritage initiatives provide the space for local people to make their own decisions about the nature of what and how they wish to conserve. In so doing, people are able to realise their personal memories as an integral part of the heritage experience. It becomes a process of self-knowledge, an awareness of one's sense of place in this landscape through an engagement with the past in this present. The relationship between the collective memory of the past and living memory is highlighted by Coupland who addresses the question, too often assumed, "that there is a neat point of transition between living memory and cultural memory, where memorialisation preserves ('collective') memory in a simplistic sense" (Coupland, 2012, p. 53). She concludes that "far from being discrete entities, heritage and living memory exist in a complex and often contradictory relationship" (Coupland, 2012, p. 222). This chapter highlights how the living memories of a few former miners and their descendants mingle with those who have no direct connection with the past industry, reflecting the shifting relationship with the landscape. People ascribe present-day meanings to the heritage sites which reflect their sense of place, their feelings about belonging in the Canigou region. Collective memory of the mining past is exhibited and consolidated through the heritage initiatives which include formal memorialisation events. These events acknowledge the mining identity of the village but are also the place and the occasion in which memories from other places become embroiled (see section 5.8). This ties in with the view voiced by many working in the field of heritage studies, that heritage is in fact, a product of the present, not just of the past, "a contemporary product shaped from history" (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996, p. 20) and is echoed by other academics in this field (McDowell, 2008; Graham and Howard, 2008; Harrison, 2013; Harvey, 2008).

The chapter begins with a brief outline of heritage debates, examining the reasons put forward for the role of local stakeholders in heritage initiatives and the importance of meaning-making in the process. These debates challenge the authorised heritage discourse, a term conceived by Smith to encapsulate an official top-down approach in which experts are deemed to be in the best position to determine which aspects of the past are appropriate for conservation (Smith, 2006, p. 29).

Following this, I give consideration to the processes of meaning-making and memory involved in participation in these heritage projects and their implications for realising a sense of identity. Economic concerns, resilience and symbolism are themes which emerged from previous studies, for example those carried out by Ballesteros and Ramirez (2007) and Dicks (2000), and are contextualized in the heritage landscape of the Canigou. Heritage enactments and celebrations on the part of the villagers are examined in the context of Harrison's discussion that notions about the past have a role to play in affirming identity and that these are viewed from the point of view of today's values (Harrison, 2010, p. 12). I use the example of the unveiling of an iron sculpture to illustrate how Nora's concept of commemorative sites, *lieux de mémoire,* places of memory, sits alongside *milieux de mémoire*, or evolving, living memory in the present. I also engage with Coupland's analysis of the relationship between living memory and collective memory (2012), and various heritage enactments highlight Smith's point about the importance of specific settings in appropriating heritage and cultural meanings (2006). The participants involved in this study felt that heritage appropriated a sense of belonging, and that was one of the main reasons for participating in the heritage projects. The following sections therefore argue that the heritage practices of the research area provide a space in which the communities are able to reaffirm and realign their collective identity.

5.2 Heritage discourses

The modern-day preoccupation with heritage in the public domain which arose in in the latter part of the twentieth century, is reflected in initiatives at national, local and individual levels, to conserve the past (Harrison, 2013, p. 6). Although the threat of loss of these features and practices is very real, as well as commercial and political value, heritage initiatives also have social value (Harrison, 2013, p. 7). In the ensuing sections I will focus on heritage projects which are instigated by the local people themselves who realise the importance of the mining past in bringing the present-day community together. They regard the heritage as belonging to the Canigou; it is a part of the mountain's identity and a source of cultural identity. Their motivations are not driven by economic necessity. Most of the population are retired and the need to rejuvenate the

area by attracting visitors through the projects is not a part of their remit. Participation in these heritage initiatives allows the locals to "recognise themselves in their surroundings" (European Landscape Convention, 2000, p. 46).

The European Landscape Convention recognised that environmental "diversity and cultural features are essential for the respect and safeguarding of the identity of the population itself and for individual enrichment" (European Landscape Convention, 2000, p. 31). However, the Convention also states that preservation should take into consideration the natural processes at work:

> Protective measures … should not be designed to stop time or to restore natural or human-influenced characteristics that no longer exist; however, they may guide changes in sites in order to pass on their specific, material and immaterial features to future generations (European Landscape Convention, 2000, p. 33).

In response to the above statement, the heritage projects in the research area are undertaken with a view to inform future generations of the past industrial activity and in the following sections, my research data shows that the buildings and mining features are respected in their present form. They are a part of the whole landscape whose significance lies in the symbolism of the Canigou for Catalans.

Before describing the projects in the Canigou villages and presenting the thoughts of the participants on the iron-mining past, I turn to outline the various forms that heritage takes and present the argument that heritage should also be about the lives of ordinary people.

5.2.1 Tangible and intangible heritage

This section focuses on heritage definitions and the intangible and tangible aspects of the concept. It challenges the notion that heritage is fixed and unchanging by referring to UNESCO's statement which considers how intangible heritage is constantly recreated. UNESCO's descriptions of heritage have relevance for my community-led projects and hence are referred to in this section.

"Heritage today is a broad and slippery term" writes Harrison (Harrison, 2013, p. 5). Defining heritage is not straightforward; in all its complexity, the term has given rise to

discussion over its relationship with the past, its remit to instruct and educate, and its power to construct new memories as well as consolidate past ones (Dicks, 2000; Smith, 2006; Harvey, 2008; Harrison, 2013).

Definitions of heritage focus on two aspects: the tangible, physical aspects of heritage, and the intangible aspects of heritage such as oral narratives and songs, which are inscribed in cultural values (UNESCO, 2003). Harrison's definition of heritage refers to both the material world and to intangible properties: "things and practices, the material world and the customs and habits which inform social identity" (Harrison, 2010, p. 9). He refers to the varied and diverse list of cultural heritage 'types' produced by UNESCO in 2002, which include cultural heritage sites, landscapes, natural sacred sites, underwater cultural heritage, museums, moveable cultural heritage, handicrafts, documentary and digital heritage, cinematographic heritage, oral traditions, languages, festivals, rites and beliefs, music and song, performing arts, traditional medicine, literature, traditional sports and culinary traditions (Harrison, 2013, p. 5 and p. 6). UNESCO recognised the importance and role of intangible culture, alongside that of tangible culture in its convention, 2003, with the following:

> intangible cultural heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2003).

Acknowledgement of heritage at a small local scale is thus given recognition. In her seminal work, *Uses of Heritage*, Smith presents her argument that heritage is not a 'thing', it is a "cultural practice, involved in the construction and regulation of a range of values and understanding" (Smith, 2006, p. 11), whilst Harrison's definition stresses the role of heritage in conferring identity.

UNESCO also describes how "heritage constitutes a source of identity" for those communities undergoing change. Its Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003, describes how cultural heritage changes in response to environmental, and other factors:

this intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity (UNESCO, 2003).

In response to this statement, my research illustrates how the heritage initiatives not only constitute a source of identity as the villages undergo change, but also how the impact of changing population recreates the intangible facets of the cultural heritage through the making of new memories. This was illustrated at the iron working fair in Arles-sur-Tech when one of the organisers of the event spoke not only of keeping the skills alive for future generations, but also about the changing dynamics over the years as the local iron workers found themselves in a minority.

> *"We were all local to start with but then as word spread, numbers grew and today most of the attendees are from other countries. We work together to create the iron sculptures but everyone is more competitive today to create the best sculpture. I am not saying that that is a bad thing. Of course not, but the sculptures you see today are the result of many nationalities, not just Canigou iron workers. At the end of the programme, we all sing a song about how we work the iron in peace. It is a Catalan song and everyone joins in as we hand out the words" (Participant R.17).*

Harrison and Smith both argue that heritage consists of a set of attitudes (Harrison, 2013, p. 14; Smith, 2006, p. 11) whilst Kyriakidis describes how people "acquire or develop values in relation to, about, or because of heritage through their personal experience with it" (2020, p. 36). The above testimony supports these positions through evidencing the cultural values of collaboration and peace of those involved in the iron work. The evidence also points to the importance of the heritage features themselves, namely the sculptures, the skills and the song whose survival is considered by the participant as the focus of the event:

> *"We have this heritage here and it is important that we do not lose it. What would the place be without this building [mining structure remains] and if we lose these skills? This is my heritage, our heritage" (Participant R.17).*

Tangible and intangible aspects of heritage are demonstrated as the important focus in the testimony of this participant. The tangible aspects are present through the sculptures themselves while the intangible aspects of heritage are evident in the skills involved and the communal singing of the Catalan song and the bonding between nationalities. His

testimony also illustrates the bond between collective memory and living memory: the gathering is a collective process of remembering the past even though many present had no direct involvement in the mines when they were going concerns. Living memory interweaves with this narrative as attendees focus on their sculptured creations and sense of solidarity and friendship, a dynamic present-day act reflecting Smith's analysis of heritage as a cultural practice (Smith, 2006, p. 11).

As Participant R.17 illustrates, the term 'heritage' itself implies notions of protecting and safeguarding which begs the question, for whom? The answer usually lies in the future, for the next generations, and implies therefore that heritage does not actually live in the present day; it belongs to the past and needs to be preserved as such in order to ensure its survival for people to enjoy in the years to come. Edensor writes: "At historic tourist sites, memory is increasingly organised according to 'heritage' which 'fixes' history and potentially limits the interpretative and performative scope of tourists" (Edensor, 2005, p. 133). However, the implication that heritage is an immutable entity, situates it in a state of stasis and denies that it can have an impact other than as a fixed statement in the landscape of the day. This has been challenged on a number of levels, in particular focusing on how heritage is used "to construct, reconstruct and negotiate a range of identities and social and cultural values in the present" (Smith, 2006, p. 3). UNESCO's definition of heritage refers to its importance in linking the past, present and the future: "Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today and what we pass on to future generations" (UNESCO, World Heritage, no date). Although many of the participants on the Canigou articulated the view that their heritage needed to be preserved for future generations, at the same time, their testimonies revealed the role of heritage as a dynamic feature with which they engaged in the present.

Having presented some of the discussions surrounding the nature of heritage, the inclusion of intangible heritage features in UNESCO's remit, and the idea that heritage is a source of community identity, the following section therefore traces the development of heritage discourses to reflect the lives of ordinary people.

5.2.2 Whose heritage?

This section puts forward the case that heritage must be an integral part of people's lives in order for it to endure as a living aspect of the landscape. In so doing, community-led heritage practices challenge what Smith terms the authorised heritage discourse, a top-down vision of heritage which embeds a range of assumptions about "the innate and immutable cultural values of heritage that are linked to and defined by the concepts of monumentality and aesthetics" (Smith, 2006, p. 4). She critiques the discourse's treatment of the past as the remit of experts, contending that this "disengages us from the very real emotional and cultural work that the past does as heritage for individuals and communities" (Smith, 2006, p. 29).

Contemporary scholars have argued that heritage should embrace the ordinary, lived lives of local populations (Dicks, 2000, p. 149); UNESCO recognised the importance of communities engaging with their own heritage. Referring to intangible culture, the UNESCO convention of 2003 declared that communities, groups and individuals, play an important role in the "production, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation of the intangible cultural heritage" (UNESCO, 2003). Smith argues that the authorised heritage discourse trivialised the social, cultural and political roles of smaller communities and does not reflect "the culturing or socialising experiences of subaltern groups" (Smith, 2006, p. 36). She makes the case for local, devolved heritage discourses which provide space for the construction of individual and community meanings. My research findings highlight her point. In talking about his mining heritage, Participant R.1 articulates his sense of having a voice in the locality:

> *"My father [a miner] played a big part in the mining in the Canigou. Obviously there is no more [mining] and so my place here is different. But through these projects I am still involved and follow in his footsteps if you like. This is all about the Canigou iron and it is his legacy and mine too because I was born into it" (Particpant R.1).*

Thus, it follows that heritage should also be about personal experience and local knowledge (Kyriakidis, 2020, p. 2), and at the same time, provide a sense of belonging (Dicks, 2000, p. 159). Power's (2008) research into the issues surrounding heritage of the coalfields in the UK, focused on the views of the community who were clear in their message that memories, personal reminiscences, and stories relating to special events

and occasions were those aspects of their heritage worthy of conservation. Lowenthal makes the point: "to be valued enough to care for, a heritage must feel truly our own – not something to dispose of as a commodity but integral to our lives" (Lowenthal, 2000, p. 22). My research supports Lowenthal's position and reveals a dynamic heritage discourse which is created and led entirely by the locals and is quintessential to their sense of self. Rather than an immutable entity, a dynamic heritage discourse is a continuously evolving dialogue between people and heritage which provides a forum for embedding cultural and social meaning.

'Ownership' of heritage will be shown to emerge as a key concern of this study. Before focusing on the specific heritage initiatives in the research area, it is therefore illuminative to contrast the concerns raised when economic issues drive the process, invariably by non-local interest parties, with the heritagisation process which is owned by local stakeholders and driven by more intangible returns. This has implications for the debate about whose heritage is actually being conserved and the nature of the messages inherent in the heritage and is relevant to the purpose of the heritage projects in the research villages.

5.3 Heritage, economics and community

This section focuses on the issues surrounding former industrial mining sites which are earmarked for heritage redevelopment in order to inject economic revival into an area. The reason for this focus is to illustrate that when the need for economic revival drives the process, the potential for individual and community meanings may be lost. This is an important point to consider in this research as the villages actively engage with their mining heritage in order to sustain their communities through identity and meaning making, rather than through economic revival. This section therefore describes the implications of those mining heritage projects which side-line the local community. Led by external bodies, the sense of alienation felt by people whose heritage is used as a vehicle for economic rejuvenation is evident in the following examples. The section ends on a note from one of the participants of this study who, in contrast to the examples of top-down approaches, is clear that the mining heritage cannot be differentiated from the

surrounding landscape and should therefore be the remit of local people who are best placed to understand it.

There are a variety of concerns which impact on the potential successful rejuvenation of former industrial mining sites. These concerns include environmental degradation of the landscape, the remote location of some sites which would deter visitors and a general lack of engagement by local people. Conesa *et al*. consider the environmental degradation in the area of Cartagena as a result of metal mining, and the effect of this on the possibility of mining heritage. They point out that remedial work to clean up the environment would be expensive, would need to involve regional, central and European funding, and the focus would be on financial yield, to the possible "over-development of the site and the loss of local identity" (Conesa *et al*. 2008, p. 697).

With the emphasis on tourism, lack of vision and support from local government were concerns identified by Van der Merwe and Rogerson (2013), in their analysis of the limited appeal of The Big Hole in Kimberley, South Africa. The number of visitors to the site decreased in the seven years since its official launch in 2007. As part of the wider tourism economy in Kimberley, they conclude that the region underperforms as a tourist resource because of "limitations in local tourism marketing, poor budgeting, lack of leadership, and little or no strategic planning for tourism" on the part of the local government (Van der Merwe and Rogerson, 2013, p. 167). The conclusions reached by Van der Merwe and Rogerson have relevance in my research area for a number of reasons. Namely, my interviews revealed that there is little need for marketing for tourism as the emphasis is on local consumption; budgeting is managed by local people and expenditure is discussed regularly with the knowledge and input of the local mayors; leadership and planning are led by local people who work with the remit of the best interests of the community. The following sections in this chapter illustrate that the lack of focus on financial yield as an outcome for the villagers of the Canigou, allows the communities to make their own judgements concerning the extent of the rejuvenation of the mining area. There are some financial subsidies available but by working within their own limits, both financially and physically, the villagers are able to control the process and vitally, inject their own meaning into the project outcomes. Their vision for the future of their communities drives the heritage process.

The character and outcome of the heritagisation process has been shown to be adversely impacted by the contribution of public and private bodies, which do not account for local input. With local views relegated to a 'footnote', it has been argued that heritage becomes a marketplace for consumers, reliant on 'expert' interventions and based on scientific approaches (Dicks, 2000, p. 149; Smith, 2006, p. 31). Without the input of local stakeholders, the site may be left devoid of personal and community narratives and the message may therefore be sterile and without context (Dicks, 2000; Robertson, 2001; Cole, 2004; Walker, 2011; Power, 2008; Summerby-Murray, 2008; Orange, 2008). Dicks refers to the side-lining of the miners' struggle in the Rhondda Heritage Park as such an example (Dicks, 2000, p. 157). Summerby-Murray refers to a "packaging and commodifying of spectacle" which removes the unique character of the place (Summerby-Murray, 2008, p.51). As Conesa *et al*. argue, there has to be a reconciliation between local economic development "and the safeguarding of the historic identity of the mining population" (Conesa *et al*. 2008, p. 697). This is the arena of debate for those who are intent on turning industrial sites into heritage projects and tourist attractions in order to inject growth back into the area and to halt community desertification. Discussions surround the issues of what to conserve, how, for what purpose, and for whom. On the other hand, for the research area, the purposes are clear:

> *"We want to conserve this heritage for future generations. It is important that they know that these are mining villages. They were built on the iron industry and we have a duty of care as well as a reminder to ourselves why we are here. They [the mines] are as much a part of the landscape as we are. We all belong here" (Participant R.1).*

The tension between external bodies and local interests in the instances discussed above has been highlighted by Dicks who argues that "professional demands for spectacle and 'polish', oriented to a logic of exhibition, may work to exclude the messy inconsistencies of local oral history" (Dicks, 2000, p. 149). The hand drawn maps by one of the mining sites above the village of Baillestavy illustrate Dicks' point about the need for local heritage to be representational of invested local interest. Pinned to the wire fence in plastic wallets with accurate if informal representation of the adits and underground workings, the presentation is a clear indication of local knowledge from a personal perspective (see Figure 5.2).

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Issues of loss of identity emerged from research by Ballesteros and Ramirez. They considered five mining towns in Andalucia with a view to teasing out the different strands of a genuine wish to conserve heritage and the need to generate economic potential after the closure of the mining industries. Their findings indicate that in most cases, the local mining heritage is not exploited to its best advantage to attract visitors. Initiated by independent bodies, the locals have little to do with it. They suggest that the reason for this lies in the communities' lack of affinity for this representation of their mining heritage; the locals feel that their narratives are not taken into account by this top-down approach: "local mining heritage is undervalued as a tourist resource and locals scarcely identify with this heritage" (Ballesteros and Ramirez, 2007, 6.3). Concerns that the further weakening of the mining identity would be the result of a tourist emphasis rather than an emphasis on local 'consumption' emerged in particular in the towns of Linares and Villaneuva, (Ballesteros and Ramirez, 2007, 6.3).

The approach today has now widened, with the acknowledgement that heritage is more than an information stream for the public: it is also a forum for the expression of local connections and relations which, in turn, inform the process of identity construction. Heritage sites act as receptacles for expressing and receiving affirmations of both self and community identity (Dicks, 2000; Smith, 2006). No 'body' intends to mislead, or to misinterpret, but it is maintained that heritage initiatives for community rejuvenation must involve the local population in order to embrace authenticity (Dicks, 2000, p. 148). Dicks argues that this "new vernacular heritage cannot simply ignore local people, since its experience-centred, personalized and ground-level tactics means that it needs to draw on local oral histories" (Dicks, 2000, p. 148). For Dicks, "local heritage is about ordinary local lives" and must draw on personalised local oral histories and 'ground-level' tactics in order to embrace vernacular knowledge and thus present an authentic representation of the heritage of the locality (Dicks, 2000, p. 148). My research takes this further and argues that authenticity is best served when the local community itself is in control of their heritage process. This ensures that the heritage is about them and for them and part of their personal landscape. The work of Kyriakidis in Crete acknowledged the importance of heritage work in enabling the community to achieve its own goals, to be involved in the political process of staking out its' own local identity (2020, p. 5). He was keen that the

project should form part of the local eco-system (2020, p. xxxv) and appreciated that the local community had an understanding of the landscape as a whole (2020, p. xxii). By involving the local population in his archaeological heritage work, his aim was for them to see themselves as guardians of their heritage (2020, p. 9).

A top-down approach to economic rejuvenation of an industrial area can be seen to suffocate the local community's intimate relationship with the past activity and imposes a static layer on top of it, thus stifling the dynamic agenda which, as this study argues, is the cornerstone for memory-making. In the context of this research, the expression of local narratives in community-owned heritage initiatives allowed a range of meanings to emerge which strengthened rather than weakened the relationship between the identity of the local population and that of the landscape.

> *"We wanted initially to ensure that this heritage does not disappear. So that's when we decided to start the museum. At first it was all about the few miners still left alive and they helped us. Then gradually many more villagers joined us and have brought in their own expertise and some are from mining families elsewhere so we have those stories too" (Participant I.10).*

As Participant 1.10 highlights, mining communities are the source of first-hand bodies of knowledge about their industrial past. Restoration of an industrial site should therefore be about the community's interaction with the environment and as such, address the community of the past as well as the communities of the present and the future. The present landscape exists in its current form precisely because of the relationship of past communities with the environment. Past and present communities are both stakeholders. Future generations could have a different relationship with the heritage landscape, as indicated by some of the participants of this research:

> *"I don't know what my grandchildren think. I know that they love coming here but their world is different. I am content here, I don't need anything more. But for the young people, the mining will be even further in the past. They may not even see it [the mining features] and regard the Canigou as a place for hiking only. We don't know" (Participant R.23).*

This section has shown how the purpose of heritage can be divided between a top-down version, seen to be the field of external experts, and a heritage narrative which is driven by local stakeholders. The former is driven by outside concerns, often with a remit to rejuvenate the declining industrial area and impose a top-down narrative, thereby

reducing the process of heritage to one of simple consumption. The latter involves local people and reflects their story of the locality. When the two are combined, as described in the research of Dicks (2000), the heritage site enables these stories to be heard. However, in the research villages of the Canigou, not only are local narratives an inherent part of the heritage process, but the whole nature of the project is determined by the locals and hence is a major statement in defining how they wish their villages to be regarded in the present time. The testimony below demonstrates how the mining heritage features are an integral part of the landscape and of the lives of the locals and as such, the present generations are responsible for their heritage:

> *"This is my heritage, our heritage. It is not for anyone in Paris, or Toulouse or anywhere else to decide what to do with them [the mining features]. They belong here, and so do we" (Participant R.1).*

In taking ownership of the past, the heritage becomes an integral part of the lives of the villagers but at the same time, the heritage meanings are not fixed. The wide base of stakeholders, with a majority of incomers to the area, invested a variety of meanings from their diverse cultural and personal backgrounds onto the material features of the mining past, thus ensuring its relevance for them in the present. Those with mining backgrounds were in a minority, but the iron mining is so deeply embedded in the landscape that incomers who came into the area knowing nothing about it, recounted how they wanted to find out more because it would help them to feel part of the place. In so doing, they were illustrating the important relationship between people, place and the past, which will be addressed in the following sections.

5.4 Local initiative; community-led

In contrast to the economically driven, top-down heritage projects outlined above, my research in the Canigou region strengthened the argument in favour of local ownership of heritage projects. This section therefore demonstrates how the iron mining heritage programme is driven by the villagers themselves for the benefit, first and foremost, of the local community and provides them with a vehicle to embed the identity of these villages in the landscape. With particular reference to the Catalan hammer, I then turn to

consider the importance of the material presence of these mining artefacts in the landscape and investigate the concept of agency of matter.

My interviews with the research participants revealed community initiative and involvement in heritage programmes, with local people, whether incomers or long-standing families of the villages, driving the process. Economic decline in each of the research villages is a part of the past and, apart from a few elderly residents, there is no memory of the immediate after-effects of mine closures. Those who did live through the closures as children, remembered how family members had to go elsewhere to look for work and felt that village life changed irrevocably as a result, as shown by the following testimony:

> "The men had to look for work in the valley. Times were hard but they had to do it. Then the village changed for ever" (Participant R.2).

Participant R.2 is right in that in some respects, the village did change for ever once the mines closed. Making a living no longer centred around mining, and the population plummeted.

Despite the claim that the villages in the area of research are 'dying', according to some of the long-standing members of the communities, there is a concerted effort to bring people together through community events which centre on the iron mining legacy. Although tourists are welcomed, the heritage projects are primarily for the benefit of the villagers as a means of engaging with both the past mining history and with the mining features as they exist in the landscape today. Local heritage enthusiasts do advertise some events in the regional newspaper, but again, they feel that the emphasis is on drawing people in to show them their heritage, rather than the use of tourism as an economic vehicle, and local consumption takes priority over tourist attraction. There is a tone of disregard, as illustrated below, for the official departmental signposts indicating the mining heritage. The villagers are generally cynical about the term "*Route de Fer*", which they regard as an unnecessary tourist term, having been superimposed at *Département* level, and an unnecessary delineation of the territory:

> "We don't call it that, it is a made-up phrase; we don't need to know this. It has always been so" (Participant R.3).

"It [the term] is for the tourists, but we never use it" (Participant R.4).

Indeed, the locals themselves erected their own mining signs in the form of sculptures and former mining artefacts at the entrance to their villages as seen in the photograph below.

Figure 5.1 Mining evidence on entering the village of La Bastide (source: P. Claughton).

The mining evidence photographed above can be seen at the side of the road, on entering the village of La Bastide (Figure 5.1). These mine wagon bodies have a significant presence owing to their size and their prominent position by the side of the road. They invite comment from tourists driving through and act as a reminder on behalf of the villagers that this rural location was a part of France's economic and industrial history. Local consumption of heritage was also evidenced by the informal nature of the information presented at one of the mine sites above the village of Baillestavy. Pinned up to a restricting fence near the mine entrance, the notes explain the layout and functions of the operation. These are hand drawn, protected by plastic wallets, and the level of

detail is testament to local knowledge, all of which serve to enforce the local nature of the heritage initiatives, as seen in Figure 5.2 below. The informal nature of this presentation of information gives lie to the notion that heritage is the business of experts and appears to make it all the more accessible to the lay person. The discourse is literally taken into the locals' own hands. In its informality, seemingly just left there, it appears to be as much a part of the landscape as the mining remains themselves.

Figure 5.2 Photograph of hand drawn information in situ, indicating the mine adit (source: S Jenkins Carter).

Edensor draws attention to the concept of disordered space which, he states, is an attraction of ruined industrial sites. No longer an ordered and controlled environment, he writes that these spaces are "unencumbered by assumptions which weigh heavily on highly encoded, regulated space" (Edensor, 2005, p. 4). Figure 5.2 presents an interesting angle on his statement. The area was once a clearly ordered space, as the diagrams show, but the 'order' lay mainly underground. Even though access to the actual entrances is fenced off, the space between these is unregulated and invites exploration. As Edensor states, the element of danger inherent at these mine sites invites one to explore the

boundaries of self-identity through stepping into the unknown and crossing the divide between order and unordered space. We view from the inside and "join forces" with (Ingold, 2010, p. 21), or respond to our surroundings, to reconfigure our world. In so doing, we learn something about ourselves, about our ability to handle the unknown and venture into realms which give us the freedom to investigate on our own terms (Edensor, 2005, p. 25).

A desire to keep local knowledge in the present was important for the participants, so that the next generation could benefit in their turn. The following quotations all contain the word "know" (*savoir,* to know something; *connaître,* to know someone)*,* indicating passing on of knowledge:

> *"I am so proud of the miners, I take my hat off to them. I want my grandchildren to know this, how hard it was for them, how hard they worked"* (Participant R.46).

> *"It is part of family history, the young won't know anything about all this unless we save it for them"* (Participant R.39).

> *"It is the story of this part of the world, this mountain for centuries. We have a responsibility for those who live here now to know"* (Participant R.3).

> *"It is important that we do not lose these traditions; we keep them for the young who will never know a miner"* (Participant R.2).

With respect to the few miners still alive, the responsibility weighs on those who are involved in the projects and also on those who still hold mining memories. The overwhelming feeling was that the sites and personal reflections needed to be secured whilst they are still in the living memory of some, before the connections with the heritage become removed by a second generational gap. Knowledge of the life of the miners and of the industrial processes formed an important part of the testimonies and was referred to in the context of tangible, material evidence. It was the tangibility of the mining remains which connected the stories and memories from the past to the meanings which people made of them today and provides the potential for them to be transmitted into the future. The mine entrances, for example, were often referred to by both residents and incomers as places of danger in the present, but they were considered to be places of camaraderie in the past by the older residents who recalled their male relatives entering the mine in working groups.

Smith recognized the role of place in her study of the Waanyi women in Queensland. She recorded how it was important for these women to pass on their stories, their intangible heritage, "not at home over a table, but in their cultural territory or country, and when relevant at the appropriate cultural site" (Smith, 2006, p. 46). She concluded that the sites themselves held the key to heritage meanings which existed in "the act of passing on knowledge in the culturally correct or appropriate contexts and times" (Smith, 2006, p. 46).

Following Smith's point, my data similarly stressed the importance of the heritage site as places where the meanings and memories are made, absorbed and passed on. The sites evoke memories and feelings in the participants; more than that, their materiality provokes and invites meanings. Without the materiality of tangible heritage, the meanings exist in a vacuum. Smith (2006) makes the case that she considers all heritage to be intangible in that heritage lies in the meanings people attribute to it. Given that this study of the Canigou heritage initiatives concurs with this, I also argue that my participants looked to the tangible artefacts as 'things' in their own right. Without them, the meanings would disappear. As the reference to the mine entrances above indicates, the mining features exist as part of the landscape. This is also illustrated by a Catalan hammer, housed in the church in Baillestavy (Figure 5.3). The locals were insistent that I should view the hammer, saying it was a part of their Catalan identity. The fact that the Catalan hammer is rehoused in the local church is significant. It may well be that it is the only building suitable for the purpose, but it could be interpreted as a statement of the fundamental interconnections between belief, materiality, culture and identity. To postulate further: the church was erected in the tenth century on the rock spoils from the mining activities which have been dated to the first century BC (tourisme-canigo.com). This could be seen as the imposition of Christianity on the worship of iron, whilst the presence of the Catalan hammer in the church today is the mirror image of this action centuries later, asserting the dominance of iron over Christianity.

Figure 5.3 The Church, Saint Andre de Baillestavy, situated on the banks of the Lentilla river (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

The above photograph is of the church itself. Beneath it lies the tenth century waste material from the mining activity, and inside it lies the Catalan hammer. The site evidences the layers of heritage meanings, with one layer superimposed upon another, or contained within, like a set of Russian nesting dolls. The Catalan Forge itself, the original home of the hammer, is no longer in existence but its presence is still a feature in the landscape in the form of the name of the nearby hamlet, La Farga.

The hammer was described as having lived a life of its own and was now 'in retirement', respected and looked after by the villagers. Symbolically, it represents the physical interface between culture and nature, described by Haraway's (2008) 'natureculture' (see Chapter Four, section 4.3.2):

> *"It is a magnificent beast; you must go and see it as it is part of our mining history. More than that, everyone knows about the Catalan forge; people who know, say 'oh yes, the Catalan; we are tied together"* (Participant R.51).

It is both animal, illustrated by the word 'beast', and machine. In deference to the origin of the word 'culture' meaning to cultivate (Williams, 2015, p. 49), the hammer was used to tend to the iron. It represents the agency of nature in supporting people's lives (Plumwood, 2006, p. 116). Fashioned from iron and driven by water-power, the hammer was able to work a far larger piece of molten iron from the furnace than could be worked by hand. This represented an important step in iron production in the Canigou region. The hammer was a critical part of the development of the Catalan Forge and the resultant change in iron working practices. The forge drew in about one hundred workers in various capacities as well as skilled workers from south Catalonia, Sardinia and Genoa (see Chapter Three, section 3.3.3).

Figure 5.4 Photograph of hammer from a Catalan forge (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

The dynamic nature of material matter can be discerned in the above testimony of Participant R.51, as an organic presence, living and changing with time. Firstly, the exhibit is now 'retired' from its working capacity and is cared for by the community where it is

still able to evoke stories from the past, rather like a grandparent. The acknowledgement that *"we are tied together"* bears witness to Lowenthal's claims that heritage must be integral to ones' lives (Lowenthal, 2000, p. 22) and by definition, changes along with people's changing lives.

Secondly, the references to the human qualities of the hammer brings up the debate in New Materialisms over the split between animate and inanimate non-human agents. This appears to reach a compromise in Latour's articulation of hybrid networks in which nature, material and humans are co-actors (Latour, 1996). However, as Devellennes and Dinnet illustrate, the dichotomy exists between those proponents of an ontology which considers all matter as having agency, and those who state that "inanimate matter cannot be said to have as much agency as humans" (Devellennes and Dinnet, 2018, p. 12). Drawing on the ontology of Spinoza, Devellennes and Dinnet point to the philosophical development of this position which deems that the material world is the source of all movement: "Matter is conceived as the determinant of all action, including human action, but also as the source of agency, creativity, and as a generative power" (Devellennes and Dinnet, 2018, p. 11). The evidence from this study points to the fact that the participants feel that the landscape and the mining features are complicit with people. This reflects the position of Latour: nature, material and humans are all agents in shaping each other's trajectories. The mountain is the source of iron, and of the soil which sustains them. They are aware of the impact of their activity on the changing face of the landscape and at the same time acknowledge that the landscape itself changes. In agreeing with Devellennes and Dinnet that matter is the source of agency and creativity, I also argue that matter itself has intent, although this is not *conscious* intent. In Chapter Four I referred to the work of Coole and Frost (2010), Rovelli (2022), and Bennett (2010) who describe how matter is not a static phenomenon but is composed of flashes of energy (see Chapter Four, section 4.3). Objects may appear to us to be inert but are such "because their becoming proceeds at a speed or a level below the threshold of human discernment" (Bennett, 2010, p. 58). We have a need for stability and reference points, and "in order to live, to interpret the world reductively as a series of fixed objects" (Bennett, 2010, p. 58). To illustrate the liveliness of matter, Bennett refers to the irregular shaped crystals in metals which do not conform to a seamless array but rather have 'loose atoms' at the

interface of the crystals which render the boundaries of each crystal grain "porous and quivering" (Bennett, 2010, p. 59). The smelting of iron ore is an appropriate example in the context of my research. The ore has generative power as it responds to fire/heat to reconfigure and transform itself into metal, whilst people exhibit a conscious response to its possibilities to create the conditions to effect the process in a controlled environment. Agency here can therefore be considered as a process of 'mattering' in line with the arguments set out by Bennet, 2010; Coole and Frost, 2010 and Rovell, 2020, both in the example of the ore transformation and in the less obvious or visible 'mattering' of the iron worker whose own body is transformed over the years of working with the flames and molten ore.

In this section, I have illustrated the importance of local ownership of the heritage projects for the story of the locality and argued that the features themselves are important sites because they serve to embed village identity in the landscape. The framework of New Materialisms proved to be appropriate in analysing the relationship between humans and non-humans and the concept of 'mattering', with particular reference to the Catalan Hammer. However, the number of incomers involved bears witness that the story of these parts is also a process of absorption of influences from outside. The following therefore examines some of the heritage initiatives with specific reference to the part played by incomers.

5.5 Community cohesion and the heritage landscape

This section considers some of the heritage initiatives undertaken by the villagers. It describes the involvement of incomers and illustrates that the projects, such as the reconstruction of the smelting process held annually in La Bastide, are a way for people to feel part of a community. The key point here is that despite talking about local ownership of heritage, for many of those involved in these projects, it is not their heritage. Having moved into the area, incomers wished to embed themselves in these communities through involvement in the mining legacy projects. Therefore I argue that heritage belongs both to people and to the locality ,and meanings and memories serve to consolidate this. The section also demonstrates the ways in which people take meanings

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from this legacy and enable its survival for future generations who will view the mining activity increasingly from a distance.

In those villages in which interviews took place, the extent of the heritage project is determined by the interest and commitment of either a leading individual or a group of individuals. In the case of Baillestavy, for example, the mayor is the main driver of heritage events as well as the social side of community life. He works to bring the community together as often as possible, and in particular, to bring in those who live a few kilometres away, in their isolated farmsteads. Many of these are owned by incomers, of various nationalities and he is keen to involve them too in community life as illustrated by his testimony below:

> *"You need to explain to the newcomers as they don't know about it [iron], the village is very dispersed, about forty here and eighty in the farmsteads. This gives us a chance to meet, to talk, to get to know each other" (Participant R.3).*

Interaction between the villages is testament to this local self-driven initiative. For example, every year, at the end of July, the two neighbouring villages of Baillestavy and La Bastide collaborate to produce a smelt of iron ore; villagers of La Bastide collect the wood and prepare the charcoal burn which is used in Baillestavy to smelt the iron ore collected by the locals there. This form of heritage is not mere presentation of knowledge, but instead addresses people's interaction with the environment. By immersing themselves in the activity people are able to internalise the feeling, sounds and smells of the process:

> *"It is exciting when the bloom comes out. Sparks flying everywhere and then you have this glowing ball of molten iron ore" (Participant I.6).*

> *"Yes, I think it is important to take part [in the smelt] because otherwise the skill will be lost for ever and once it is gone you have to recreate it from nothing. But at least here we have people who can pass on the skills from the generations before. We are keeping it alive. And the sound of the flames and the sparks make it quite a spectacle" (Participant I.7)*

In addition to recreating the narratives of the past, their practical engagement creates further layers of memories in the cultural landscape. For those taking part, community endeavour ensures that the skills are kept alive and consolidates people's identity as part of the continuation of the iron mining story of the Canigou. This activity therefore acts as a form of conferring collective identity. It is also a means of ensuring cohesion in the

future. The children referred to below will spend their formative years playing in this environment. As my term Playscape (see Chapter Four, section 4.3.5) indicates, they will gain an intimate understanding of their surroundings through these experiences and absorb knowledge of this landscape:

> *"It is a way of meeting people and being part of the community. It helps us to understand what it was like here in the past; it is important for the children to know this as they will grow up here even though we didn't" (Participant I.56).*

As well as being part of the collective culture of the place, heritage projects are also a means of gaining new memories and negotiating new meanings about sense of self at these sites. Although incomers spoke about a lack of emotional attachment, they did admit that the sites can provoke deep feelings:

> *"Just to be there can sometimes make me feel emotional when I think of the commitment of the men, and the women, their love for iron, their lives revolved around iron" (Participant I.48).*

> *"It is not my heritage, but I understand it. We moved here to be part of the community so we adopt it [the heritage] but it is not in our blood. This industry gives me another view of life which we knew nothing about before we came here. It is remarkable, how it has existed for so long. No wonder they call it the mountain of iron. These people were made of iron" (Participant I.49).*

> *"Life is softer here now. It must be. Miners' work is harsh, it doesn't feel harsh today, living in the village. We meet for coffee and talk about our walks in the meadows and forests. The mountain has changed because life has changed" (Participant I.49).*

These incomers all acknowledge the effect that the mining past and the landscape have on them. The first two participants, above, demonstrate how they acquire new insights about themselves through admiration and respect for the commitment and toughness of the mining populations. Participant I.49 mentions coffee and walks, supporting the statement made by Participant I.35 that the villages are now regarded as centres for leisure activities rather than places of work:

> *"It is a chance to ski, to hike and climb. Anything to benefit from the outdoors here" (Participant I.35).*

By emphasising the mountain's current leisure attributes rather than its mining past, the above testimony shows how people have different responses to a 'sense of place' and

that place identity is constitutive of evolving and changing narrative. Life is softer now; the harsh mining days are replaced by an easier way of life and the Pyrenean meadows and forests are enjoyed for the leisure activities which they offer. The residue of mining memories is still there in the landscape but new memories are now anchored in the feelings aroused by the presentness of the landscape settings. As Lowenthal explains "A heritage disjoined from ongoing life cannot enlist popular support. To adore the past is not enough; good caretaking involves continual creation" (Lowenthal, 2000, p. 22).

Even though there are some grants available from departmental sources, the local villagers themselves invest in these projects. A prime example exists in Escaro where two incomers established the *Musée de la Mine*, Mining Museum, dedicated to the mining history of the village, in a community space offered by the village. They funded the initiative themselves and went on to enlist the support of local inhabitants to furnish and run the museum. The museum also hosts many informative social functions, such as talks by locals involved in the heritage projects. The popularity of these events is illustrated in the photograph below, Figure 5.5, where attendees were a mixture of local villagers and people from Perpignan, 65 kilometres away.

Figure 5.5 Photograph of informative walk and talk, held May 2017, outside the mining museum of Escaro (source: S Jenkins Carter).

The village of Corsavy on the south side of the mountain also houses a small museum dedicated to the iron mining past. Initiated by locals, these exhibits consisting of newspaper cuttings and small mining artefacts such as mining head lamps, are housed in one of the former miners' quarters which is now a refuge for walkers. Situated towards the end of the GR 10 (*Grande Randonnée 10*) hiking route, if one is hiking the length of the Pyrenees from West to East, the refuge is a meeting place for a host of hikers of various nationalities who, mostly unaware of the region's long mining history, are introduced to the exhibits by the caretaker of the refuge whose family were miners. The mining past is physically contained in the building which, as a refuge, now carries its own story as a place of accommodation for hikers.

The relationship between the exhibits in the museums and people warrants attention. Museums, Smith demonstrates, were conceived with the regulatory role of consolidating national and cultural achievement (Smith, 2006, p. 18). Interestingly, the small museums in the Canigou can be regarded as a means of consolidating local achievement and identity but they also indicate the change in approach from a purely educative role to one which in which individuals actively engage with the material objects. Participants' testimonies consider the artefacts as living features in themselves, and highlight the interactive relationship between people and things. One incomer explained why it was important to house these artefacts together in a public space:

> *"because we didn't want to see all this social and industrial history which was in people's homes, to disappear into oblivion. We wanted to get things out of attics, dust them off and put them into a collection which told the complete story. This way we could keep the story of these parts alive, obviously with the permission of those concerned" (Participant I.10).*

In a similar vein to bringing people together, gathering all the items from obscurity and placing them in one place presents a cohesive narrative. At the same time, the above testimony of Participant I.10 illustrates the concept that heritage is a living part of the lives of those resident in the villages in the present day and without their support it would die out. If the items this participant refers to are left in the attic, they would lose their part in the village narrative. This qualifies the point made at the end of the last section (5.4) concerning the importance of sites as heritage statements themselves. The material objects are the embodiment of the human stories, they are the caretakers of the past.

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They store individual biographical memories, illustrated in the following testimony from Participant R. 25:

> *"It is good to be able to see my grandfather's tools in the museum. That way I know he won't be forgotten after I have gone. It is like he is still able to tell his story of the mines himself. And I am proud to see them there" (Participant R.25).*

The person, Grandfather, and his identity are held in his tools and confirm her narrative as the daughter of a mining family. This perspective resonates with Hoskins' research in Eastern Indonesia, in which she concludes that rather than trying to furnish one's identity through purchasing various items (she likens this to shopping in a mall), that the Sumbanese people "construct a narrative self through the metaphoric language of objects"; they are "vehicles for their own lives and identity" (Hoskins, 1998, p. 195) and that through the handing on or passing down of these objects, aspects of the self are also handed on (Hoskins, 1998, p. 191). Her research leads her to the observation that the object is not purely a "metaphor for the self", but rather "It becomes a pivot for reflexivity and introspection, a tool of auto-biographic self-discovery, a way of knowing oneself through things" (Hoskins, 1998, p. 198). Even though the museum exhibits are not personal or family possessions, the testimony of incomers indicate how these objects prompt a deeper understanding of mining life and enable them to reflect on and relate to the hardships.

Objects bring into the present the social relationships of their time, as confirmed by the following:

> *"Everything here has a story, a person who used it, who worked it. All these [exhibits] tell a story, we must listen to them and learn about the people who held them and worked them" (Participant I.20).*

> *"For me, I start to understand the daily hardships, the grind, the dirt" (Participant I.20).*

> *"You see here, it is green and fresh, the air is clean. But these [exhibits] remind me that it used to be different. Down in the mines, they couldn't breathe and they brought the smell and the stale air back into their homes" (Participant I.22).*

The important feature to emerge from these various testimonies is the variety of meanings which the participants receive from the artefacts. This resonates with the change in approach to museums in general. Rather than an emphasis on transmission of messages from exhibit to visitor, there is a focus on how visitors create meanings from

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their interaction with the artefacts (Dicks, 2016). Dicks interviewed people who had visited the museum about the Rhondda Valley miners in South Wales, the Rhondda Heritage Park, and framed her findings in the context of their individual life stories. Her research revealed that people interpreted the exhibition differently, but according to their personal history. She concluded that individual life experiences and trajectories, account for completely different messages in terms of self-affirmation in the museum experience (Dicks, 2016, p. 60). The museum encounter is the interface for a range of emotions, symbols, backgrounds, memories, and experiences with implications for the 'self'. Similar was true for my participants who take meanings from exhibits that confirm their personal history. Participant R.25 speaks of pride for her grandfather when she talks about the exhibits. From a mining family, her statement contrasts with that of I.20 whose contact with the exhibits makes him think of the hardships endured.

For incomers and residents alike, the exhibits are significant parts of the story of the people and the village. Each person adds a part to the narrative of the mining heritage through their own interpretation of the memorabilia housed in the museum. This museum collection collates the individual representations into a coherent whole; the sum of the parts reiterates the overwhelming feeling amongst participants that the story should be there for future generations. One of the older residents and a volunteer at the museum stated:

> *"I see my part in this as giving the next generation the opportunity to acknowledge this past, this heritage and to take what they want and need from it"* (Participant R.16).

This relays an insight into the underlying mechanics of participation in heritage projects: it is an open invitation to listen to the past and be selective according to individual needs. The past cannot be revisited, it has gone, but the museum exhibits tell stories of the past which are then processed in the present. Participant I.22 (above) contrasts the fresh air today with the stale air down in the mines. He processes this meaning in the present, by presuming that the stale air would be brought back into the home. Participant R.16 also illustrates this: *"the next generation can take what they want from it",* implying that they will interpret the heritage in line with the beliefs and needs of their time.

The villagers of Taurinya on the northern flank of the Canigou took a different approach to their mining legacy. Through the initiative of the local mayor, himself an incomer, together with a former miner, now deceased, they rallied locals to preserve the mining features in situ about two kilometres above the village. The meanings of the heritage narrative are experienced as people walk around the site, illustrating Smith's argument that heritage meanings take on particular force because of the specificities of the setting (section 5.6):

"If you move it, you don't know how it all worked together" (Participant I.32).

Keen to keep the site intact for visitors to appreciate the whole process, the trail around the mining site is marked with interpretive panels which explain the operation. These allow people to engage with the heritage as it exists now; the mining is a past activity, the heritage with which people engage is a former industrial site. The information and route provide people with the experience of this mining operation in its entirety and place the knowledge in the landscape (Figure 5.6).
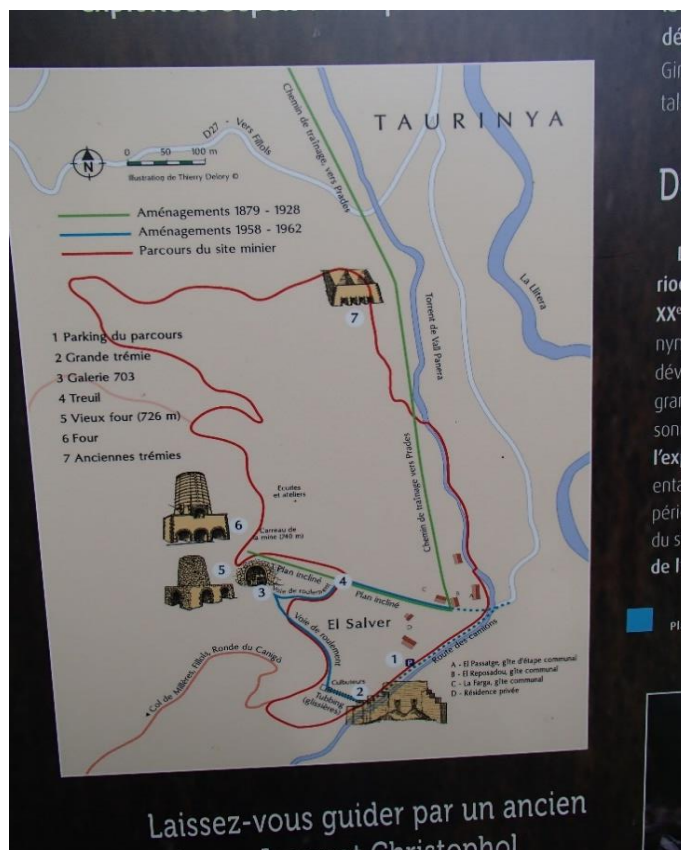
Figure 5.6 Map of walking route around former mining operation, Taurinya (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

Figure 5.7 below, shows the former gallery entrance which is supported by information concerning that particular part of the mining site. This is repeated for all the visible features on the mining track. The mine entrances are all blocked off for safety, but the panel alongside illustrates the workings of the adit.

Figure 5.7 Former mine entrance with interpretive panel alongside, Taurinya (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

However, practical considerations dominated this part of the discussions:

"It is too big to move and we couldn't house it anyway" (Participant I.32),

Concern centred around preservation as illustrated below:

"We do what we can to maintain these buildings but it takes organisation and manpower and also money" (Participant I.32).

On this score, opinion was divided as to the extent of repair: should the buildings be maintained to either reinstate them or to prevent further degradation:

"It's nature's way. We must let nature reclaim them as we have finished with them. They must then go back to nature. We must not interfere with the process" (Participant R.51).

"We have duty of care for ourselves, for our safety, and for those miners who lived and worked there. It is a form of honour" (Participant I.29).

Although Participant R.51 expresses a divide between nature and culture, seemingly contrary to Haraway's concept of natureculture, I argue that this process of reclamation is in fact still illustrative of the reciprocity between nature and culture. If we understand that the concept refers to the way in which nature and culture co-shape each other as argued in the framework of New Materialisms, the above reference to nature 'reclaiming' indicates that the process is not a static one, nor necessarily an equal one at any one time.

Working groups form an active part of the life of the research villages and come together to work on site clearance, repairing weather damage, and improving access to the sites. Incomers and residents alike spoke of a sense of duty to the community and are willing volunteers in weekend gatherings to clean up the sites:

"It is important not just for safety but also for the history of the iron here. You can't acknowledge its importance and yet do nothing about it. If you are a part of a community, then you have to look after its history" (Participant I.31).

"We need to look after our past, whatever it is. Places like these are so important. They are part of our journey, they tell us why we are here and what we must give our grandchildren. They are even further away from this past, they won't know unless we keep it for them" (Participant I.29).

The most recent big restoration project to receive funding from regional and national agencies is the mine of La Pinouse, above the village of Valmanya. This initiative was identified and conceived by a collaboration of villagers from Valmanya itself, along with those in the nearby villages of Baillestavy and La Bastide. The mine has emotive connections to the past, having sheltered members of the French Resistance movement known as the Maquis, during the Second World War. Work began in 2020 to secure the safety of the site and to maintain the crumbling buildings (Grand Site de France: Le Massif du Canigó). It is considered a symbol of strength and courage, not just because of its mining background but because of its association with the Maquis. Commitment to this project was very much in evidence in the research villages. Incomers felt that involvement

would enable them to take on a part of the identity of the Canigou, so much is the story of the people embedded in the landscape. This is demonstrated by the testimony of an incomer who expressed a desire to be involved. The quotation below illustrates his feelings about his wish to connect to the story of this landscape:

"I have walked up to the mine several times. It holds a special place in this landscape, all the more so because of the part it played in the War. Of course, I will be involved because it will then be a deeper part of my life here" (Participant I.10).

Figure 5.8 The former mine site of La Pinouse (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

This was a large mining site but is dominated by the peak of the Canigou in the background. The photograph (Figure 5.8) illustrates the remains of some of the buildings. Taken in May, there is still snow on the summit, and during the winter months the snow covers this mining area. The buildings stand erect in the landscape, a visual

representation of the courage and strength which the mine symbolises. The site stands as evidence for past lives and evokes the presence of the miners and the Maquis through its symbolic stance on the mountainside.

Whilst this section has further argued that local ownership of heritage is key for survival of community meanings in the landscape, it is important to consider that the heritage initiatives are initiated and run by incomers, with the support of long-term residents. The incomers do not own the story of the mining past, they have no past family history of involvement with the mines of the Canigou. However, they are keen to engage with the heritage initiatives in order to keep the mining narratives alive in the landscape and through their participation in these projects, they endorse the relationship between themselves and place, manifesting an accruing layer to their sense of identity.

5.6 Visualisation and enactments

Following on from discussion of some of the heritage projects and the part of incomers in their development, the role of various events, such as the *Nuit des Mineurs* (Night of the Miners), as a means of making memories and taking meanings will be examined. The aim is to show how these enactments and celebrations allow people to express their individual interpretations and to realise their part in the cultural heritage. This further supports the argument that community heritage allows people to become entangled in their surroundings through a sense of the past which becomes a discourse with the present, taking us into the realm of layered memories and identities. The section also picks up on Smith's (2006) notion that heritage has to be experienced for it to be meaningful and considers how setting, people and heritage co-shape each other.

I begin with the museum in Escaro which places emphasis on intangible as well as tangible heritage, celebrating stories and traditions through focused and themed events. An illustration of this is *La Nuit des Mineurs*, when the Association of the Mining Museum organised an illustrative walk around the village by lamplight, the lamps ceremoniously lit by two elderly miners. The procession of villagers and outsiders are led around the village by the miners, and, at strategic points, are met by villagers in costume who relate tales from the village's past (Figure 5.9). For those who take part, this is an opportunity to

listen to mining stories in their actual setting. The setting and the stories were brought together in the person of the former miner who was the physical embodiment of the mining past.

Figure 5.9 Former miner leading heritage walk (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

Smith argues that heritage has to be experienced for it to be heritage. As I outlined in section 5.4, her research demonstrated that cultural identity is reinforced by locating it in a particular place of performance: "The Waanyi women undertook a range of heritage acts or actions that in themselves conveyed and carried meaning, but took on particular

force because of the context in which they occurred" (Smith, 2006, p. 47). The *Nuit des Mineurs* illustrates this point. This enactment forms part of the oral cultural heritage, with the narrative emphasis reflecting the need to 'place' feelings of social identity in the specifities of the setting and the telling. The narrative of mining is passed from the miner (Figure 5.9) to those present. Participant testimonies demonstrated the importance of hearing the miners' stories in situ:

> *"It helped me to put together village life as it would have been experienced during the mining days. Things like the arrival of the tramway. We walked along it for part of the way. Then also at the woman's house where she talked about the strike and the effects on the village. To hear it from her at her front door, I understand all the more the hardships" (Participant I.20)*

As an incomer the participant is able to relate to events of the past because he experiences them at the site of their happening. The woman referred to in the above testimony was the daughter of a mining family. She was waiting at her front door for the group walk to pause there and spoke from a prepared script about her experience of the support women gave to the striking miners. Her memories chimed with those of Participant I.20 who related how his mother ran the household in order to support his father:

> *"She was a determined woman who always sacrificed her needs for ours. She supported my father and ran the house, knowing that his work was important for our family" (Participant I.20).*

His testimony illustrates how participation invoked personal memories. Listening to the former miner's daughter invoked thoughts of his own mother and her role in supporting the household. The memory of his late mother rested in the past until this particular moment layered it onto the present situation.

The number of attendees, illustrated in Figure 5.10, all brought their individual and collective social mores to the telling, resulting in a nexus of varying interpretations:

> *"My father was a miner in Normandy. He had tough times, just like here. My town was made from coal. It is a part of my genes and I am proud of it, even though he wanted to forget. It was over and life had to change and move on. Yes, we remember and we are grateful but my village is different now. Coal brought us jobs and sustained us but now we have other means" (Participant I.29).*

"I want my grandchildren to understand but they will have tough times too; life is not easy all the time. We cannot always reminisce about how hard it was, you have to give them [grandchildren] optimism" (Participant R.27).

"I don't remember my father complaining. I am sure he must have, but we just got on with life. After all, we were lucky, there was work and the land gave us food" (Participant R.4).

The above quotations were all reflections after the event but had been prompted by participation in the evening walk. Both personal and social place-related memories were recalled and individual narratives were empowered by being present at the sites of heritage. The performance aspect of these heritage projects brings about the construction of meanings through the physical experiences of 'being in a place' and emerged from the tripartite arrangement of setting, story or narrative and involvement. As outlined in the previous section, this also demonstrates that heritage belongs in the locality; it is a part of the identity of the surroundings, albeit past identity lying in layers with present identity. People are stakeholders but ultimately, and to varying degrees, they are only a part of the relationship which exists between them, place and heritage.

Figure 5.10 Heritage walk, *Nuit des Mineurs*, with the Canigou in the background (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

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One of the themes to emerge from the data reflects this relationship. The tenacity of the villagers in the face of past adversity was often referenced and has shaped their sense of identity today. This aspect of mountain character, embedded in the iron ore, was regarded by the present villagers as an important part of their children's upbringing:

> "The miners were tough and had to endure hard conditions. We respect that and it is a part of us too. Ok, so we don't work in the mines but we have the same mentality because that is what they gave us. And it is important for our youngsters to feel this too, that they have the strength of their ancestors to deal with whatever life throws at them" (Participant R.2).

> "Our grandfathers did not strike for nothing. They all made sacrifices, the women supported them. Luckily they could live off the land. We have to go back to that. Our children must learn to be able to look after themselves, to be resourceful" (Participant R.16).

> "We wanted to bring up our family here because the mountains made my father, they made me so I want my children to carry the same courage" (Participant R.39).

The belief in the value of hard work and toil is evident in the above testimonies and reflects present preoccupations with such qualities in order to succeed in life. Hence, at the end of the documentary *Le Fond et Le Jour* (The Darkness and the Daylight) (Moulaï, 2016b), the former miner's daughter refers to her respect for the work ethic of the past miners and reflects that one has to work hard in today's society in order to 'get on'. In a similar vein, one incomer said that:

> "You have to work so hard today. You can't stand still. The world is moving so fast that you have to go with it. It is no good resisting" (Participant I.36).

In part, the need to connect with the past reflects this movement and the accompanying unannounced fear of the transient nature of identity. As Hewison points out that "The impulse to preserve the past is part of the impulse to preserve the self" (Hewison, 1987, p. 47). This resonates with the concept of identity as a process of negotiation, (see Chapter four, section 4.2.1) between the individual and larger social constructs (Mendoza-Denton, 2002, p. 475) and illustrated by the need to be part of a changing world in the above statement: *"The world is moving so fast that you have to go with it"*.

Both incomers and long-term residents expressed their respect for the dedication of previous mining generations and wished to preserve this legacy for the next generation to

appreciate their strength and toughness. Long-term residents carry an emotional bond to these qualities. One participant suggested that their mining forbears bestowed later generations with a 'Canigou constitution':

"It is so important for me and my children and my grandchildren to know why we have this strength, this courage - it is the constitution of the Canigou" (Participant R.21).

Inner strength therefore, feels this participant, is given by nature, by the landscape; the participant recognises that these personal qualities are particular to those who have grown up on the mountainside and importantly for the outcomes of this research, speak about it as their heritage. Hence the heritage has been interpreted in order to confer with the present-day values of those who wish to use it to justify their feelings or their behaviours. This verifies Lowenthal's claim that: "Heritage is never merely conserved or protected; it is modified-both enhanced and degraded-by each new generation" (Lowenthal, 2000, p. 22). My research takes this statement further by illustrating how in fact heritage is layered over time, as evidenced in the landscape photograph of former mining tracks which are now hiking routes (see Chapter Three, Figure 3.14), and so people interact with the heritage as it exists in their time, in its 'presentness'. The former bottom station of the overhead cable wagons in Arles-sur-Tech is another illustration of this (Figure 5.13); people relate to it as it appears now, rather than as a functioning station which is how their forbearers would have viewed it.

Initiated by the locals, iron workers come from all over Europe to this working fair on the former cable wagon station site to participate in individual and collaborative pieces. As one participant stated:

"We have always had a tradition of people coming to work from all over the place, here in our region-from Italy, South Catalonia, Ariège, Portugal for example. We want to maintain the links, iron has no frontiers; we acknowledge the skills of fellow men/women. Our region was famous for these skills, we want to maintain and celebrate this" (Participant R.17).

In the context of Goodhart's analysis of people with a local sense of identity contrasting with those who have a more global outlook (see Chapter Four, section 4.2) this is an interesting quotation. The participant demonstrates the wider outlook of the iron mining community, both in the past and today and welcomes those from other countries to celebrate and share their skills. However, the focus is still very much on the locality. The

message in this testimony is on reinforcing the identity of the region by continuing the tradition of openness to others who contribute to the iron mining skills for which the location is well known.

Figure 5.11 The iron-working fair at Arles-sur-Tech (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

The villages all have pieces of iron sculpture made at this fair and they are situated at the entrance to each village (Figure 5.12). These sculptures give weight to the description of heritage as a dynamic part of the changing identity of the landscape. They converse with the past as symbols of previous mining activity and at the same time, are open to interpretation in the present, by virtue of their form and their role in the landscape.

Figure 5.12 Iron sculpture situated at the entrance to the village of Taurinya (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

Another event which also presents this view of heritage is the annual September village meal in Escaro, organised by the Association of the Mining Museum, which celebrates another year of work in recovering and restoring material mining artefacts. The whole village arrives for the meal, which follows a meeting with a guest speaker who talks about aspects of mining history. Celebratory meals are a tradition in all of the villages, usually held in the main squares. They not only bring villagers together in this commemoration of the past, as can be evidenced by the following photograph, but also are a means of connecting the villages. For example, in the village of Baillestavy an annual village paella is held with the residents of neighbouring La Bastide to celebrate the building of the kiln ready for its firing.

Figure 5.13 Village meal in Escaro, held annually after a mining heritage talk (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

These meals are chances for villagers to come together and celebrate the heritage, an occasion to strengthen their collective identity. I attended the meal in the above photograph and was interested to hear how discussion centred very much on the heritage projects, what they should do next and how, rather than on the past mining itself, reflecting the accruing identity layers of a changing landscape.

In addition to the practical projects of management of the material memorabilia, both large and small, and the organisation of events to bring communities together around the mining heritage, heritage initiatives have also focused on the retrieval of stories, photographs and memories. These have been collated by a few individuals: the work of Olivier Moulaï, with the acknowledgement and participation of local people, resulted in the film *Renaissance* and the documentary, *'Le Fond et Le Jour'*. Both capture the story of iron on the Canigou and portray the mining narrative as a triumph of human endurance and tenacity. The film's central narrative is about iron, from mining the ore through the process of smelting and working the finished iron product. The miners themselves have a quasi-mythical status as heroes, working with the elements of fire, earth and water, in tune with their secrets, against a background of flames and sweat. The message of

emotional connection with the landscape and with the mining work itself is celebrated in the images. The resulting effect is to depict the harmony between the miner and nature and the mutual respect. There is a sense of acceptance of man's place or role as part of the processes of nature, reflecting their interdependence.

Through descriptions of various events, this section has further illustrated that heritage belongs to this place and is a part of the identity of the Canigou. The projects and the meanings which people take from them, all serve to reinforce this collective memory of the mining landscape. At the same time the sites are important places where new memories can be made on a personal and collective level, thus implicating the individual in their surroundings.

5.6.1 Biographies and photographs as a record of Canigou life

This section provides a brief overview of resources which focus on the lives of those involved in the iron mining past in the twentieth century. The aim is to provide an insight into current local interest in the region, with iron a particular focus.

Brigitte Fort has collected various photographs and stories concerning the mining past and these have been catalogued by archivist Ruben Molina and are held at the premises of the Syndicat Mixte Canigó Grand Site in Prades. The collection contains her own photographs of features of the industry on the face of the Canigou in the twentieth century. She has also photographed some of the former miners who were involved in the early days of the heritage projects, for example Alain Taurinya, (see section 5.7 and Chapter Four, section 4.3.3) and Jeannot Christofol (see below) who was the joint author of the published book, entitled *Taurinya*. Pere Vergès, a local author, has published two tomes of stories concerning families of the town of Arles-sur-Tech and the surrounding area, which focus on incidents from the past, including iron mining related events (Vergès, 2005-2007; Vergès, 2016). He opens with the epigraph: "The countries which do not have any memory are condemned to die of cold". His collection gives an insight into all sides of life ranging from the anecdote of a local person who was caught up in the floods of 1940 one night, to the story of the miners, who before the Second World War would walk up to the mine at Corsavy from the valley, every Monday and reappear at the end of the working week covered in white dust of the granite. Interestingly, the text

appears in both Catalan and French throughout, the Catalan on one page and the French on the facing page. The memories are preserved through the written medium by Vergès and give a picture of the variety of events and happenings that made up daily life in the Twentieth Century. They are humorous, thoughtful, descriptive, sad, reflecting a range of human behaviours and responses.

Similarly, the story of the village of Taurinya is told in a published volume by the mayor and a former miner, Christofel, now deceased (Cathala-Pradal *et al*. 1999). The miner's personal accounts give a vivid picture of life in the mining village. The book describes the nature of the interview with Jeannot Christofol, whose stories and reminiscences form part of this book. As a preamble, the interviewer cautions: "We weren't looking for historical truth; however it unfolds according to experts, we were looking for reality as it was felt, collected and expressed by a man who has lived and worked all his life in this village" (Cathala-Pradal *et al*. 1999, p.46). This acknowledgement contextualises the argument for heritage of ordinary people put forward in section 5.2.2. It stresses the personal and subjective focus of the nature of culture and heritage; these concepts are not facts or fixed statements but are viewed from the perspective of people's interpretations of the world around them.

The memories of other past residents can be read through the volumes of the *Fil de Fer*, a monthly publication by the group known as *Les Amis de la Route de Fer*, (*Le Fil de Fer*). The *Association des Anciens Mineurs de Batère* has published an account of the history of the working of the mine, above Corsavy, where there is also an informative account of the mining strikes housed in the former mine dormitory, now part of the hostel for walkers on the hiking route, the GR10 *Association des Anciens Mineurs de Batère* (no date). Finally, social media plays a part now in communicating the past: the Facebook page of Escaro is dedicated to informing people of mining related commemorative events and talks, as well as highlighting the discovery of new resources (https://www.facebook.com/Musée de la mine d'Escaro).

These resources are all collated by local people with the principal aim of keeping the stories alive as part of the physical and cultural landscape of today. Without these memories, the thread with the past is lost and the relationship between people, place

and heritage breaks. People will be side-lined from the narrative. The heritage will still be there as part of place, but for people the trajectory will be different and they will have to start again with a new discontinuous story. Hence the significance of Vergès: "The countries which do not have any memory are condemned to die of cold".

5.7 Romanticising the past?

Having considered the character of the heritage projects on the Canigou, this section picks up on changing attitudes to industrial sites once considered as ugly and a blot on the landscape (Edensor, 2005, p.8). Edensor describes how the aesthetic appeal of ruins for those people living during the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century lent an air of melancholy to the sites. Artistic representations portrayed the cycle of life and death as "the inexorable processes of nature dispassionately took their toll of all things" and were a reminder to people of the transience of life (Edensor, 2005, p. 11). At the same time, the rise of industrialism was accompanied by nostalgia for a "revered past" (Edensor, 2005, p. 13) which consisted of an idyllic vision of country life. Industrial ruins did not conform to this vision but over the course of the twentieth century, attitudes changed and industrial ruins were considered as unbounded areas of potential, rather than representations of decay (Edensor, 2005, p. 15). Edwards and Coit describe a redefinition of the value attached to attractiveness as "the scale of values of the concept of beauty is modified as time passes" and the aesthetics of a former industrial landscape becomes a part of the individual and national psyche (Edwards and Coit, 1996, p. 343). Certainly, for today's Canigou population, the industrial vestiges have an aesthetic appeal and are regarded by many as a part of the natural landscape, provoking sentiments of empathy and appreciation from both residents and incomers. The material remains of the industry are regarded with respect and are deemed a source of pride for the part they have played in the story of this landscape, despite their derelict state. However, the question remains: to what extent has this legacy been romanticised?

To begin this section, I quote an incomer who felt the past was treated selectively. Participant I.47 stated that people see though filters. He felt that local talk of camaraderie during the mining era was actually a way of regarding the past through filters which blanked out the harshness of life:

"You can't stay in history. They say it was better before, but the young don't want to come back. And we can go out and buy food and people have money to live on and still their own gardens for growing salad and vegetables. We have water in the houses and electricity. They see through filters" (Participant I.47).

His view as an incomer declares the present lifestyle as having so much more to offer as he considers the past from his comfortable perspective in the present. There is evidence here of the possibility of a different perspective arising in the collective memory surrounding the mining past, to reflect a different way of life in the mountain. This strikes a chord with Halbwachs' observation which I referred to in Chapter Four, section 4.2.2, concerning changing social and group dynamics and accompanying changes in collective memory (1992, p. 139).

A selective use of the past is illustrated in the writings of Alain Taurinya. A former miner and the son of a mining family, he recalled the sights and sounds of the mining past with joy and pride. The memory was still vivid in his later years:

I remember every day at the same time, coming out of school in Vinca to see the wagons, pulled by oxen and laden with the ore still steaming after roasting. Just imagine the noise of these three heavy carts and the hooves, and animals snorting and blowing. We would run down the road with our school bags and wait for them to pass (Taurinya, 2011, p. 2).

He did not remember the dirt and the sweat. It is a much more romantic reminiscence involving an image which engendered his excitement and thrill of seeing such a convoy. These were the images which, as he recollected, gave him his lifelong passion for iron:

I remember to this day the sight and sound of this extraordinary convoy, which had such an impact on me as a young child that I believe it gave me this lifelong passion for iron (Taurinya, 2011. p. 2).

It may be the case that family members would have provided a different reason for his becoming a miner. However, it is his story and he presents the villages as places of happenings and excitement, rather than harsh environments. These are the memories which give the place meaning for him today.

With regard to Edensor's (2005) assessment of the aesthetic appeal of the melancholic air of ruined sites, there was general agreement amongst the participants that wherever possible, the mining features should be left on the mountainside as a continuing part of the landscape, just as the day the miners walked away, a kind of living memorial as described by Participant R.54, below.

> *"They were just left when the mines closed. People walked away from everything and so they should be left there just like the day lives changed. It is a sad reflection and they are abandoned just as the lives were abandoned" (Participant R.54).*

There is a feeling of pathos in this sense of abandonment, certainly a sense that people were left to fend for themselves when the mines closed. That the villages have survived is a testament to the resilience of the communities. Leaving the mines just as they were on the day of their closure reflects a moment frozen in time, rather as a sepia photograph, and the testimony reveals scant regard for those who were complicit in the closures. As a statement in the landscape, the former mining buildings are therefore a material reminder of the past, but also exist in the present as landmarks today. They are a non-negotiable part of the landscape and mark out a comfort zone for many people:

> *"Every time I drive into town I can see it [the remains of the aerial ropeway station] and I know I am coming home" (Participant R.45).*

> *"They [the mining buildings] are like old faithfuls there behind the village. In fact they are the village" (Participant R.46).*

> *"They [mining features] have more right to be here than we have. They are much, much older than me and have sustained people for far longer than anyone else. They made the place" (Participant R.44).*

The relationship between '*standing guard and protecting the past*' (Participant I.55, below) also implies protection of the village identity in the present. The need to be able to identify with a specific place lends further weight to in Goodhart's analysis of those people who identify with their locality and wish to preserve it from any threat of change:

> *"They [the mine buildings] are beautiful, just as they are. If nature takes them back, we must let that happen. That is their charm" (Participant I.49).*

> *"I find them beautiful, standing guard and protecting the past" (Participant I.55).*

Not only do these mine buildings, offices and iron mining features stand guard and protect the past, in their physical aspect, but they are also to be perceived as symbols of longevity in changing times.

In the following statement Participant R.2 regards the former mining sites as part of her identity. She grew up alongside them in the same way as she was born into this mountain landscape. These features are memory banks for her past, hence her feelings of attachment:

> *"Of course things have changed but for me the mines have been the constant part of my life. I have grown up to look out of the window and see the mine in the landscape, and I have played on these sites as a child and looked for the ore myself as we pretended to be miners. Maybe we were trying to help, or just playing, I don't remember exactly" (Participant R.2).*

These physical traces of the mining industry never carried the negative connotations suggested by Edwards and Coit (1996). For the locals, their presence was an accepted part of the landscape and their physical decline was appreciated in the context of the dialogue between nature and culture.

This is illustrated by Figure 5.14. Often used as markers in the landscape, the larger remains, such as the roasting furnaces in the photograph below are remarkable for their size and, to a visitor such as myself, stand out in the landscape. However, for those who live in the area, they are integrated features of the region and are synonymous with the natural landscape. Their continued presence on the mountainside were regarded to be as much a part of the landscape as the mountain itself, an extension of the natural landscape:

> *"These furnaces have always been here in my lifetime. I don't see them as different to nature, for me they are all the same. If they were taken down it would be the same feeling as if part of the mountain was cut away overnight" (Participant R.16).*

Many participants referred to the most visible of them, such as the bottom station of the overhead cable transport system in Arles-sur-Tech and the roasting furnaces (Figure 5.14) as points of reference when talking about the landscape. This is evident in the following testimony:

> *"As you came down the road past the roasting furnaces, the hillsides opposite were mined..." (Participant R.51):*

Figure 5.14 Roasting furnaces near the village of Valmany, often used as markers in the landscape (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

For the locals, these roasting furnaces and other similar structures from the mining past represent stability in the present-day landscape as the villagers are witness to regional restructuring involving changing the region's name (see Chapter Three, section 3.2.2). To lose these structures, as the above testimony of Participant R.16 implies, is to lose a part of one's emotional connection with the surrounding landscape.

This is also the case for the huge structure in the small town of Arles-sur-Tech (Figure 5.15). The remains of the aerial ropeway station loom large at the entrance to the town but are regarded as part of the charm and an integral part of the built landscape. Participant R.45 could not imagine the town without the structure:

> *"It is a part of the town. I know people drive through and they say 'what is that?' I know it stands out but for me it doesn't in a way. I can't imagine the place without it"* (Participant R.45).

The cultural meanings which the structure embodies override its industrial character. The former ropeway station is also the site of the biannual blacksmith's convention and provides a fitting and symbolic background to the reuse of this historical mining-related space illustrated in Figure 5.15, below (see also section 5.6 and Figure 5.11). Previously the station's purpose was for receiving the iron ore; today it is the place of creative iron working. Heritage is not about being in the past, these are present-day interpretations of the industry, and the site and the iron-working practice themselves are visual illustrations of layers of meaning in the landscape.

Figure 5.15 Biannual meeting of iron workers and smithies at Arles-sur-Tech (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

This section has illustrated the importance the participants attach to the mining features as elements of stability and longevity in the landscape. For a minority of incomers, they represent the harshness of the past mining life but for the majority of participants, their aesthetic appeal lies in their ruined state as an integral part of the landscape. They are also viewed as living testaments and memorials to the mining activity, standing guard over the past and therefore, by implication over the lives of the present villagers.

5.8 Community resilience, memory and symbolism

Before concluding the chapter, this section addresses the effect of the heritage projects on the resilience of the local communities to respond to change, particularly as a large proportion of incomers now populate these communities. It does this by addressing the role of memory at a specific event, the unveiling of a sculpture in the village of Escaro which highlighted a potential shift in collective memory with the attendance and input of incomers at the ceremony. The section also continues the argument presented previously that the construction of meanings at heritage sites emerges from the combination of setting, story or narrative and participation and highlights how these provoke layers of memory.

For the majority of long-standing families in the Canigou, the signs are that village life has changed and some expressed regret that the sense of community is dying. This research argues that even though they may feel this to be the case, it is the expression of regret for a previous layer of community identity, pertinent to them. Today the villagers have a sense of community, but it has a different structure and existence. Rather than a rigid and fixed phenomenon, the mining projects enable the communities to redefine their relationship with place and to ensure community survival. Community resilience manifests itself in its flexibility to respond to change through the provision for individuals to impart and import their own meanings from these industrial features. This was evident at the unveiling ceremony of the iron sculpture in Escaro, where testimonies below revealed how people were able to take their own meanings from the event. Through the heritage initiatives, the locals in my research were able to build new memories as well as identify with the mining past. In this respect, my research concurs with Wheeler's findings which highlighted the importance of heritage features as sites where individual and collective memories are realised and realigned. In investigating attitudes to Goonhilly's satellite dishes in Cornwall, she points out that if the site does not allow the process of memorialisation, then these places can lose their significant meanings and become redundant in the landscape as stimuli of social memory (Wheeler, 2015, p. 214).

Robertson presents an interesting angle on the link with the past by stating that "place attachments are rooted in the past and are strengthened by community solidarity"

(Robertson, 2001, p. 266). Robertson argues that even though the mining is finished, the physical and social legacies remain "and it is through these that the internal value of place is sustained" (Robertson, 2001, p. 280). Testimonies from the Canigou concur with this but go further in illustrating how place attachments to features as they appear in their *present* form are significant. In this, my findings concur with Wheeler who argued that constructions of place identity can be reshaped to accommodate change:

> Time was found to have a positive moderating influence as changes became incorporated into 'natural' attitudes, personal memories and embodied experiences of place. New social memories and meanings are attached to new structures and situations (Wheeler, 2015, p. 287).

This is apparent in the celebration pictured below which proved to be the site for evolving place identities, as well as the occasion for consolidating those identities which are rooted to the past. The heritage sites under consideration for this research are not formal memorials in the sense of having national commemorative status. Yet, the nature of the activity undertaken by the villagers to preserve them and the commitment to particular acts of locally organized celebration formalise their status for local memory. An obvious example of this rests in the unveiling and presentation of the iron sculptures to the villages on the '*Route de Fer*'. These are further examples of commemorating heritage and identity in the landscape.

Figure 5.16 Photograph of sculpture at Escaro (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

Produced during the Blacksmith Festival at Arles-sur-Tech (see section 5.7), this sculpture (Figure 5.16) was the result of a collaborative international effort in 2015. It is the design of an English blacksmith and is photographed in Figure 5.16 as it is officially received and situated at the entrance to the village of Escaro. The lower spiral represents the hardship

of the mining work underground, and the upper spiral represents the work of the miners above ground. At the base, there are a number of snails: "We have plenty here in Catalonia and we are very good at cooking them" announced the local dignitary officiating at the unveiling. This reference to snails reinforces regional identity; it places the heritage into a wider arena by acknowledging the Catalan element (this will be discussed further in Chapter Six). A dish of snails is a traditional Catalan fare and is a common meal to share with friends (Andrews, 2005). Known as *Cargolada*, or *Cargalade* in French Catalonia, (*cargol* is Catalan for snail), the snails are commonly cooked with tomatoes, garlic and olive oil and are served at the region's various festivals.

Participation in community singing, led by a local ensemble, concluded the ceremony. The words referred to the 'togetherness' engendered by the mining heritage, and the tune heightened the emotional atmosphere. Singing always brings people together and invokes a feeling of communal spirit and goodwill (Weinstein *et al.* 2016), which I experienced as a bystander; not knowing the words or tune, I enjoyed the song and could resonate with the feelings it evoked (see Chapter Six, sections 6.4 for further discussion).

The unveiling of the sculpture photographed above, Figure 5.16, initially would appear to represent the point in time, where memory gives way to history, described by Nora (1989) as *lieux de mémoire* (see Chapter Four, section 4.2.2). The sculpture is the focus of commemoration. But I argue that it is also a *milieux de mémoire* in that the break with the past is not complete. The past intermingles with the present and those in attendance experience 'true memory'. As a commemorative act, the ceremony formally acknowledges the industrial history of the village and brings people together in a collective acknowledgement of this. But this does not give the ceremony, nor the actual sculpture, fixed meanings. On the contrary, participants stated differing reactions to these events and lent their own interpretations. These ranged from personal memories unconnected to the actual industry or event, to feelings of solidarity in the presence of others. Individual reminiscences included remembering other previous gatherings, often with family and friends long gone, personal mining stories for older participants, and thoughts about the surrounding landscape. Many spoke about the impact these events had on them emotionally, invoking a sense of connection with other people around them. Whether or not they had been long term friends, or new acquaintances, the feelings of

connectivity were strong in that moment of commemoration, as evidenced in the following statements. The following testimonies indicate the range of emotions and feelings evoked during the process, ranging from being part of a significant moment (witnessing history), bringing up memories of childhood in that locality, an act of remembrance and at the same time thoughts of the future:

> *"Even though I am not from these parts, to be able to participate in the unveiling [of the sculpture] was a significant moment for me and my wife. We both felt that we had been witness to the history and that made us feel just a little bit part of it"* (Participant I.20).

> *"It reminded me of when we used to meet up with friends and play in the square; we used to play at being mothers and fathers. I loved covering myself with dirt and pretend that I had just come out of the mine. Like my father"* (Participant R.25).

> *"For me, it is a meaningful act, it is an act of remembrance but at the same time, a statement for the future of the village. Don't forget!"* (Participant R.17).

> *"And then afterwards we all sang a song, it was quite emotional really"* (Participant I.20).

The unveiling ceremony brought both attendant incomers and residents together in sharing emotional responses. It represented a moment when, despite differing journeys and pasts, the occasion suspended them in time and gave everyone present a sense of embodiment in a collective narrative. At the same time, the meanings taken from the ceremony were many and various which gave the heritage event and the sculpture itself a resilient, broad-based foundation which enables collective memory to adapt to a changing environment.

I have already referenced data which romanticises the mining features as memorials to past miners there in the previous section. For those who are involved in restoration of the sites on the mountainside, participants compared their work to a re-enactment of the mining activity. For example, the walk up to the mining site was referenced to the walk of the former miners and an air of conviviality was mingled with an air of respect:

> *"The way up to the site is not easy. You have to have respect for them [the miners]. They walked all the way up to the mine, and back again after a tough day. Our day is much easier. Of course we have ground work to do and we work all day but we can take it easy if we want. We don't have the pressure, the necessity, we can enjoy the company"* (Participant I.10)

The industrial remains are a constant reminder to the more elderly residents and those descendants of mining families of their relationship with the mountain and the village. Memories are preserved by the presence of these sites which commemorate their forbearers:

> *"My uncles and my father walked up to the mine every day that I can remember. For me, these mines are still here so they are still here in a way" (Participant R.25).*

The sites themselves are living and active; they hold the heritage meanings, *"the weight of history"* (Participant R.52 below). Revisiting a site can invoke further memories which may affect the symbolic significance of that particular space or place. With these layers of memories, the significance of sites is continuously remade (Atkinson, 2008):

> *"Each time I come here [the site of the former forge at Baillestavy] I can feel the weight of history. Sometimes it is the nature of the work, sometimes it is the people, sometimes I wonder about where I would be if I hadn't come back. Would I still feel like this?" (Participant R.52).*

These thoughts give an insight into the fragmentary nature of memory. Each return visit elicits a different angle of thought about the meaning of the place and the memories are different every time. Edensor writes about the unordered possibilities which an abandoned industrial landscape provides, a "plenitude of fragmented stories, elisions, fantasies, inexplicable objects and possible events which present a history that can begin and end anywhere" (Edensor, 2005, p. 141). The above testimony provides another aspect to Edensor's 'unordered possibilities' by illustrating the unexpected and varied memories which the site provokes. Participant R.52 explains how he does not know what to expect each time he revisits the site but that every time, the memories and thoughts provoked reveal another aspect of himself. As Crang and Travelou explain in relation to their work on cityscapes, the heritage sites act as "theatres of memories" where sense of self is constructed in a nonchronological and fragmented form (Crang and Travelou, 2001, p.163).

Although the incomers interviewed were happy to participate in acts of remembrance and commemoration, they explained that their purpose lies in perpetuating the memories for others:

"It is not my history but I find it very interesting. I always like to find out about the area where I live and here I am helping those long-standing families to recover their heritage," (Participant I.22).

"It is interesting work and I like to help, you learn so much from the others about the history of the area" (Participant I.20).

"I didn't think it was for me but I came along out of curiosity and now I understand a bit more about how it was to smelt the ore. There were quite a few of us who did not know much and so we learnt and now we come every year" (Participant I.55).

At the same time, however, by investing a part of themselves in the process incomers were able to take their own meanings from the heritage features. The following statement by an incomer highlights this. He reflects on his own background as an engineer as he investigates the remnants of the overhead cable on the mountainside:

"I think that my training [as an engineer] was very thorough. I remember how we investigated movement [of vehicles]. It was a project and I learnt so much from working on it with other students. Gravity, now that is interesting" (Participant I. 22).

In examining the rusted parts of the cable, his thoughts took him back to his training days and the knowledge he gained then. His perceptions are linked to his life story and exemplifies the extent to which sites provoke specific meanings to individuals.

On both a collective and an individual level, involvement in heritage initiatives is symbolic: in the very act of taking part, participants spoke of their personal affinity to their heritage. For example, whilst walking along the former narrow-gauge railway to participate in clearing the brambles from a former mine building, one participant felt able to relate to the miners as they made their way to work:

"It brings it back to me, how they walked every day to work. I felt as though we were doing that, all of us as a group; I felt their camaraderie, their support for each other. It was almost as though I was watching the past, the walk in the past" (Participant R.27).

Sometimes the actual word 'symbolises' was used:

"These [mining] places symbolise the years, the centuries. I think they will be here long after me, I am not the story, I am just a part of the story" (Participant R.23).

"Of course, we want to preserve them for the next generation, because they are not just history, they are symbols of man's endeavours" (Participant I.31).

The legacy is referenced as an enduring feature which is endowed with more permanence than fleeting human lives. It has outlived those who worked in the mines in the past and

yet without the miners, there would be no story. The mines themselves are the interface between people and nature. As Participant I.31 explains, they are symbols of the miners working the ore.

Features in the landscape also have symbolic meaning which can allow people to understand more about themselves,

> *"I can see myself waiting at the mine entrance with my father's lunch; there were lots of us there. We all have a place which defines us" (Participant R.25).*

Participant R.25 vividly recalls the features and the atmosphere surrounding the mine entrance as she waited for her father at lunch time. This place symbolizes her role in the mining village history. It also symbolizes her relationship with her father. The place is thus charged with emotional content and conveys meaningful purpose to the participant in her role as a child. Resilience is also a feature to emerge from the search for continuity of personal narrative as it is interwoven with the village narrative to preserve both individual and community identity:

> *"I need to remember the contribution of my father and my uncles who worked every day of their working life in this mine; it is their history and so it is my history. I own my story" (Participant R.1).*

Ownership of their story ties the locality into their sense of identity. The narrative thread binds the generations together in the context of the working occupation of the mines. It is therefore no coincidence that the resilience of the miners is an enduring characteristic: personal strength which is represented by the symbolic messages presented by the mining sites and in particular the iron itself:

> *"We know who we are, it [iron] is in our lands, under our farms, and we take its strength to make us strong so that we can face the future" (Participant R.1).*

Again, this is another example of the connection between the landscape and the ongoing story and the way in which human and non-human co shape each other. But memory can be fickle over time:

> The places we have known belong now to the little world of space on which we map them for our own convenience, none of them was ever more than a thin slice, held between the contiguous impressions that composed our life at that time (Proust, 2019).

Proust masterfully wrote about the fleeting nature of time in his epic *'A la Recherche du Temps Perdu'* and how the reality that we once knew, no longer exists in the present: "the memory of a particular image is no more than the regret for a particular moment…" (Proust, 2019, radio broadcast). But if these moments are indeed ephemeral, the questions beg: how and for what purpose are the chosen memories realised? The answers lie along the story lines, or the narrative journey that we take individually and collectively. People want to make sense of their past and their destination. Just as heritage is viewed from a present perspective, so the story of the self is present-centred. We need to contextualise our lives in order to help us to understand the time and place in which we find ourselves. Memory serves to collate previous experiences and events, and indeed selves, into a coherent narrative. It reinforces one's sense of purpose. Without memory, a sense of self is lost. Heritage closes the gap between what is remembered and how it is remembered. The choices are part of one's (re)construction and highlight the cultural context of living memory:

> *"This is my daughter. She lives in Perpignan with her husband and two children. There is work for them down there. They do come to see me but not often. I know they are busy and I understand. But the children love it when they do come, they have so much freedom here. They go out to play, just as my daughter did when she was their age. It's nice to see. And nice to hear them outside. It brings the village back to life"* (Participant R.25).

Village life is being recreated in the moment, through the arrival of the grandchildren, returning the village poignantly to its original life. This is a vivid representation of the presence of the past in the present. A similar scenario took place when I was invited to lunch by one elderly participant. Her son was there also and at one point she expressed her satisfaction that the table was 'almost' full again, by my being present:

> *"It is almost like when we were all here and ate together. It is so quiet now when it is just me. I like having everyone round my table"* (Participant R.2).

Inevitably she showed me photographs of her family, explaining where they all lived now. It felt as though we three were recreating a tableau, ready for a photograph. The emotional content of the present situation, prompted by the tangible setting, provoked the retrieval of her former self. Moments are portrayed as tableaux, but it is in the present, or by imagining them in the present, that they are brought back to life. By

revisiting these past events, the participants were able to locate these moments in their immediate environment. This can be related to Ingold's idea that places do not have geographical locations, but instead are defined by their histories (Ingold, 2011, p. 219). It can be further argued that these histories are defined by the people in one's life. One journeys with people, and to and from people. Their stories lie in the landscape of memories which are drawn upon, modified or reconstructed depending on the nature of the narrative at that time. For many of these resident participants, the collective narrative centres around the 'glorious mining past' and the heyday of the village, which, as they describe, still lingers almost ghost-like in the village today.

A former life was also recreated in the moment by the presence of personal memorabilia which prompted a string of memories. The former miner (Figure 5.17) claimed that his old coffee tin and sandwich box which he took to the mines still smelled of coffee. His wife claimed otherwise, said that it had been well washed and put away many years ago. Again, the relevance of this lies in the effect it has on the former miner. Maybe he can smell the coffee, or thinks he can. Just as Proust wrote about combination of the madeleine cakes and tea triggering memories from earlier times, this former miner was obviously reminded of the comfort of coffee and the time to down tools and have a lunch break. The said items were battered and unremarkable in appearance but their symbolic significance as a reminder of past working life, camaraderie, endurance, was evident in the way in which their appearance in the kitchen seemed to prompt more animated memories concerning the nature of the work and in particular the friendships made:

> *"We worked in pairs and looked out for each other. There was a great deal of camaraderie including many who came from Italy, Portugal, Spain, Germany"*
> *(Participant R.23)*

He continued with the story of his great friendship with his German companion, referred to in Chapter Four, 4.3.6.

Figure 5.17 Coffee can and lunch container, a former miner (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

The testimonies in this section have provided evidence for the argument that community resilience is supported by memory retrieval at heritage sites and the meanings prompted by the heritage itself. It is during formal memorialisations, such as the presentation of the sculpture at Escaro, that a community's identity is consolidated or reaffirmed, at the same time as prompting a variety of emotions and memories in individuals present. Rather than a static phenomenon, community resilience lies in this flexibility to accommodate and to disseminate this spectrum of meanings and enables collective identity to respond to change.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that heritage sites are important places where the processes of meaning-giving and meaning-receiving are enabled, providing individuals and communities with an awareness of 'sense of place'. This is particularly demonstrated by

incomers who have no connection with the mining past of the Canigou but through importing memories from their past onto their adopted landscape and through physical engagement with the heritage projects, as well as enjoying leisure pursuits such as hiking, they feel a part of the mountain landscape. As such, I have also demonstrated how layers of memory and meanings accumulate as living memory interacts with the collective memory of the past. At the same time, through participation in heritage activities a new form of collective memory is nurtured as a continuously evolving dialogue between the people and their sense of place. I have also highlighted how community-led heritage projects enable locals to make their own decisions concerning what is important to them about the identity of their locality and provide the space for the construction of individual and community meanings.

Finally, the agency between the locals, the landscape and its features has emerged from the research data and through the example of the Catalan Hammer and the transformation of iron ore, I have illustrated how a state of flux exists in everything, animate and non-animate, through the energy implicit in all matter, in 'mattering.'

CHAPTER SIX: *Catalanité* and culture

"Culture is buried in the soil of our region and you absorb it or rather it absorbs you" (Participant R.27).

6.1 Introduction

So far, this thesis has concentrated on the importance of the Canigou residents' relationship to the physical environment. In this chapter, I will shift attention to how other social and cultural factors besides iron mining shape their singular sense of identity. Undoubtedly, the mining past has a large visual and material presence on the mountainside and in the villages but, given the fact that there are few mining families left, it is important to consider the wider influences of Catalan culture and how these impact on the lives of the participants. The themes of non-human agency, inherent in the concept of New Materialisms, and the dynamic face of heritage identified in previous chapters, will be shown to have purchase in the analysis of the cultural features of the Canigou region. I will also argue that the Catalan language, as well as a means of communication, embeds the Catalan identity in the landscape through its visual impact in the form of Catalan language signs.

During the course of this chapter, following the lexicon of my participants I refer to the French term, *Catalanité* to describe the feeling and expression of being Catalan, rather than the Catalan term, *Catalanitat.* This choice of terminology on the part of my participants indicates the recurrent tensions between French Catalan and Spanish Catalan identities explored throughout the chapter. Residents were protective of their borderland identity, claiming that its distinctiveness was a combination of being part French and part Spanish, but belonging wholly to the landscape of *Catalonia du Nord* (North Catalonia*).* Incomers sensed the depth of connection between the landscape and the identity of the Catalan families, although their lack of proficiency in the Catalan language proved to be a main obstacle to their integration.

In particular, I will focus on the cultural and political implications of living on the border between Spain and France and how this affects the identity of the Catalan population. This is important because it provides insights into the specificity of place identity in the

Canigou region and addresses Goodhart's (2017) analysis of how and why people align themselves in a local, national and global context. In this respect, the outward signifiers of Catalan nationalism prevalent in the region, such as the prominence of the Catalan flag, do not necessarily constitute a support for Catalan independence that is so central to the identity of the *Catalans du Sud* (South Catalans). I argue that allegiance to the locality is more important for the locals when broader concerns, such as the imposition of regional name changes by the French government, impact on the identity of the community. My analysis of local Catalan traditions, such as the dance, the *Sardana*, and the building of the human towers, the *Castells*, as well as the support for the local rugby teams, will illustrate how cultural events are used to consolidate the identity of place. Whilst culture will therefore be shown to link people, the past and the environment, I also highlight that its relevance lies in its very state of 'presentness' as a living construct. Lowenthal's quotation in Chapter Five, section 5.5 claiming that to be pertinent heritage must involve continual creation and be part of ongoing life, has purchase for culture also (Lowenthal, 2000, p. 22). Culture is embedded in the environment and values of the day and its sustainability lies in embracing and reflecting these. Hence I take up Williams' stance that culture is ordinary, (Williams, 2014a) and illustrate how Tilley's notion of 'being in the world' supports the argument that culture is expressed in the meanings by which we imbricate ourselves in the world around us (Tilley, 1994, p. 12).

The chapter also moves us beyond the idea that culture is exclusive (Bourdieu, 1989), by illustrating how people can access new cultural experiences. This picks up on Marty's position about cultural fluidity. According to Marty one important aim of every Western democracy is to reconcile two polarisations in society: those who are completely local in their outlook and those who have a portable cultural outlook and feel equally at home anywhere in the world (Marty, 2019, p. 197). This chapter argues that for both individuals and groups, culture is a process of experiencing shared values, beliefs and ideas at various levels. These experiences enable people to live on cultural boundaries, and for culture to flow between groups and places. In this respect, the mining heritage projects illustrate the idea of living on boundaries through the involvement of incomers and the changing face of the mining features themselves, expressing the idea developed in Chapter Five that heritage is a dynamic part of the landscape. The former sleeping quarters described

in Chapter Four, Figure 4.9, offer a different perspective in their crumbling state, to their appearance in previous times. Older residents remember when they were fully functional whilst incomers relate to these buildings as they appear in the landscape today. They are places where a range of meanings from a variety of sources, congregate. However, at the same time this chapter will continue the argument presented in Chapter Five that the projects are conceived to reinforce the specificity of the identity of the mining locales and to fix the mining past in its surroundings. The chapter will therefore show that the notion of cultural fluidity and of culture being particular to a locality are not incompatible. Indeed, local identity in the Canigou is to a large extent defined by the region's status as a meeting place of different national and cultural traditions that flow across national boundaries.

As I stated in the introduction to Chapter Five, the participants in general used the terms *l'héritage'* (heritage) or *'le patrimoine'* (patrimony), and *'la culture'* (culture) interchangeably, with the word *l'héritage'* used more frequently. However, I believe it also related to the difficulties in defining 'culture' discussed below. Moreover, heritage begins on a personal level with many participants relating heritage to their own personal narrative. The word '*patrimoine*' (patrimony) provides a window onto the idea that heritage begins at 'home'. It implies biological heritage from the father and thus is more personalised than culture. Heritage provides people with a narrative. Collective culture which is engendered by participating in the mining heritage projects in this study is a form of acknowledgement of similar values, interests and beliefs.

The chapter begins with an overview of the term 'culture', contrasting the approaches of Williams and Bourdieu, before analysing some of the cultural traditions of the region such as the dance, the *Sardana*, with the intention of illustrating how incomers are able to access these customs through shared value systems. The importance of this analysis lies in highlighting that culture is not exclusive to a particular group, but that a society grows through new experiences and contacts which are "written into the land" (Williams, 2014a p. 2). Situated between France and Spain, the effect of this border position on French Catalan identity and culture throws light on the allegiances of the population which leads onto a discussion of how the Catalan language, as well as a symbol of belonging, also acts as a marker in the landscape. Massey argued that local identity is actually a product of

global influences (Massey, 1995, p. 183). The testimonies of some of the participants demonstrate their hesitancy in reconciling the local with the global. They talk about the wine growing in the region which can be seen as an analogy for the larger issue of wider influences on the community.

6.2 Cultural definitions and boundaries

This section outlines the reasons for using Williams' (2014a; 2014c; 2015) approach to culture as a framework for considering my research data. I begin by looking at Kroeber and Kluckholm's (1963) various descriptions of the term culture before contrasting Williams' approach with the ideas inherent in Bourdieu's term 'cultural capital'. The latter implies that culture is stratified according to social class and people are limited in their cultural outlook by their background, whilst Williams' interpretation offers a less bounded view of culture. Although this research does not attempt to provide an overarching concept of culture, it does highlight facets which are deemed to be of relevance for the twenty-first century.

The term 'culture' means different things to many people and there is no fixed definition which can be applied to all. Kroeber and Klukhohn highlighted the problems inherent in pinning down the meaning of culture. They collated numerous definitions and categorised them according to emphasis: enumeration of content; social heritage or tradition; ideals or values; culture as a problem-solving device including learning and habit, patterning or organization; culture as a product or artefact; symbols (Kroeber and Klukhohn, 1963, pp. 81-140). These categories epitomise the variety of approaches involved in defining culture whilst the contrasting viewpoints of Williams and Bourdieu highlight the range of this discourse. Both academics reached different conclusions about its concept. Williams (1921-1988) argued that 'culture is ordinary', whilst Bourdieu (1930-2002) stressed the role of social class in enabling one to access a particular culture.

Bourdieu developed a theory which he called 'cultural capital'. In the same vein as economic capital, cultural capital provides people with leverage in occupying a particular role or place in society. Bourdieu identified the acquisition of culture through the medium of knowledge, material goods and social standing. These are secured through, for

example, educational qualifications, accumulation of goods which reflects one's cultural outlook such as artwork and could be illustrated by a person's use of language (Bourdieu, 1989, p. xxiv-xxx). Bourdieu demonstrated that a person's cultural trajectory is determined particularly through early family influences and education and he explored how one is defined by these with respect to access to certain social layers. He uses the term 'dispositions' to describe one's tendencies or inclinations towards culture and which "designate a way of being, a habitual state" (Bourdieu, 1989 p. 555). He argued that dispositions "inculcated in the earliest years of life" are "reinforced by calls to order from the group, that is to say, from the aggregate of the individuals endowed with the same dispositions, to whom each is linked by his dispositions and interests" (Bourdieu, 2013, p. 15). He maintained that these ingrained dispositions allowed one to navigate a particular cultural environment and he referred to this intuitive response as one's Habitus. This demonstrates, he argued, how the accumulation of cultural capital is used to reinforce class differences as, by definition, groups of people are exposed to different sources and forms of behaviours and knowledge. Kroeber and Klukhohn emphasize this: "Culture not only markedly influences how individuals behave toward other individuals but equally what is expected of them" (Kroeber and Klukhohn, 1963, p. 308).

Williams came to a different conclusion about culture. In his essay written in 1958 entitled "Culture is Ordinary" he makes the point that culture is not an exclusive club, rather it is a "whole way of life" (Williams, 2014a, p. 6). From a working-class mining background in the South Wales valleys, to an academic at Cambridge University, his personal journey exemplifies this. He begins the essay with a description of the bus journey which he made, starting at the bus stop outside Hereford cathedral where he had been looking at the Mappa Mundi, and opposite a cinema advertising a cartoon version of Gulliver's Travels. The bus journey takes him out of the city, into the farmed countryside in Wales, past the steel-rolling mills, the Norman castles, the Black Mountains, the gas works, the pit heads and the rows of terraced houses. By taking us on his journey, Williams is showing how manifestations of culture are all around us and exist in many possible forms. Culture, he writes, is not limited to the exclusive enjoyment of a few. He objected to the view that culture should be accessible to a certain section of society only, questioning "this extraordinary decision to call certain things culture and then separate

them, as with a park wall, from ordinary people and ordinary work?" (Williams, 2014c, p. 4). He argues that culture belongs to everyone and exists at any level of a society which shares the meanings that bind it: "human society has its own shape, its own purposes and its own meanings" (Williams, 2014a, p. 2). He identifies three categories of culture today: "a process of intellectual, spiritual or aesthetic development"; "a particular way of life"; "the work and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity" (Williams, 2015, p. 52). However, he did not see culture as a static phenomenon. Rather, he believed that through enquiry and experiences, a society is able to grow, change and adapt. He claimed that: "The making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and its growth is an active debate and amendment under the pressures of experience, contact, and discovery, writing themselves into the land" (Williams, 2014a, p. 2). Williams' ideas were rooted in a sense of place and having been brought up on the border between Wales and England, he refused to accept that boundaries, whether these were geographical or boundaries of time and class, were fixed. Given that my study of the Canigou identity and heritage takes place in border country, Williams' arguments about the nature of boundaries are particularly apt as the mining landscape accommodates new meanings, in particular a landscape of leisure, which write 'themselves into the land' (Williams, 2014a, p. 2).

In many other respects, Williams' position also resonates with the findings of this research. Specifically, his emphasis that culture is ordinary surfaced in many of the interviews:

> "Culture is my way of life. It is the food I eat, the produce which I buy at the markets, the books and newspapers I read, yes, it is the way I go about my life" (Participant I.29).

> "My parents, my family taught me what to appreciate in life. So culture for me is good friends, conversation and discussions and being able to appreciate what others can offer us" (Participant I.56).

These testimonies give weight to his position that culture is a way of living, of being a part of the conversation, in the broadest sense of the word, which informs the structure of society, *"of being able to appreciate what others can offer"* (Participant I.56). Both participants refer to the way in which this structure is built on one's interactions with others and, in Williams' terminology, 'the findings of common meanings'. Participant I.56

has suggested that people can be receptive to the culture and ideas of others, suggesting that culture evolves. This opens up the idea of fluid cultural boundaries which contradicts the restrictive nature of Bourdieu's cultural classifications. The notion of cultural flow is one of the central areas of investigation in this chapter.

The participants' responses in this study also provided another window onto the limitations of Bourdieu's descriptions of cultural capital. The heritage initiatives brought a variety of individual backgrounds together with a wide range of cultural capital in the form of expertise, knowledge, memories and value-systems. The cultural environment was accessible to all, irrespective of the confines of education and family upbringing which defies Bourdieu's analysis of the limitations of access to culture by class. By contrast, the participants' statements correspond with Williams' position. Williams stresses the processual character of culture which is continually created as people come together to form new meanings, "acting sometimes as individuals, sometimes as groups, in a process which has no particular end, and which can never be supposed at any time to have finally realised itself, to have become complete" (Williams, 2014c, pp. 99-100). In support of Williams, my data reveals that new common meanings emerge as the villages recreate themselves after the end of the mining activity:

> "We need to move forward because the world is changing. The [mining] skills are redundant here but that doesn't mean that we should forget them but at the same time we need to make sure that the village is part of the present. It is not a relic, a museum in itself. Today people want to come here to enjoy the outdoors so we must reflect that also" (Participant I.29).

The communities change and adapt to accommodate their new purpose and direction which embraces the contribution of incomers. The following testimonies illustrate the inclusive approach of the locals. The second testimony differentiates between culture and a club, by implying that a culture embraces everyone who is able to connect at a deeper level than just a fleeting, superficial coming together. Culture, according to Participant R.39 is fundamental in defining the identity of the region and of the people who live there; it is the bond between people and landscape.

> "For me, the important thing is to be able to share ideas with everyone, to work out what is the best way to involve everyone. To hear everybody's stories so that they all have a part in this [heritage event]" (Participant R.37).

"Our culture is for everyone, if people don't feel a part of it, then it is not our culture, it is more like a club. Culture is right here, it makes our region what it is and it makes us who we are" (Participant R.39).

Interestingly, Participant R.39 identifies culture with a particular place, which would seem to contradict the idea of cultural flow. Certainly, the testimonies illustrated that the traditional Catalan cultural features, such as the *Sardana* dance, mark the cultural identity of the Canigou region. Similarly, the iron mining past anchors the cultural heritage in the landscape. Phrases such as *"it belongs to the landscape",* (Participant R.16), *"it is a part of the landscape"* (Participant I.29) and *"we must not lose this past as it is our cultural heritage"* (Participant R.1) highlight the collusion between nature and culture. The mining activity and the Canigou landscape exist in symbiosis. Their identities are intertwined; the mountain carries the past mining story and the development of the mining activity over the centuries reflects the mountain's past.

However, supported by the statements of the participants, this chapter argues that it is in fact possible to reconcile place identity with the position of cultural flow. In describing how the boundaries of the heritage culture are fluid to allow everyone to contribute and to feel a part, the study substantiates Marty's point (see section 6.1) that a local cultural outlook is not necessarily self-limiting. At the same time, this idea of flow also illustrates Ingold's assessment of boundaries. Writing about places, he states that boundaries, natural or man-made, are not a "condition for the continuation of the places on either side of them; nor do they segment the landscape" (Ingold, 2011, p. 192).

The places which these boundaries mark out are an integral part of the landscape and come into existence through the movement of people and other organisms. They become creative cultural spaces for experiencing the landscape. Borders mark places of growth and development, rather than lines of stasis:

> life will not be contained within a boundary, but rather threads its way through the world along the myriad lines of its relations, probing every crack or crevice that might potentially afford growth and movement (Ingold, 2008, p. 1808).

As a symbol of Catalonia, the Canigou exemplifies a boundary space which carries distinctive cultural meanings. The mountain is the meeting place for Catalans on either

side of the border. Every June to mark the *Fête de Saint Jean*, a bonfire is lit on the summit, and Catalans from both north and south of the border hike up to the summit to light a torch from the flames, carry these torches back down to their villages and light the village bonfire. The event celebrates both the Canigou and the coming together of Catalans to consolidate a cultural identity specific to this borderland.

This section has considered the limitations to Bourdieu's concept of culture and contrasted his approach with that of Williams. In light of Williams' mantra that culture is ordinary, that it is processual, the section has presented the notion of cultural flow, rather than culture as a bounded concept. However, the participants in this study were clear that both culture and heritage were embedded in the locality. I will argue that the two positions of fluid boundaries and boundedness are not incompatible by illustrating that the emphasis placed by research testimonies on local identity and culture actually reflects a dynamic engagement which both transcends and consolidates boundaries. The following section picks up on the notion of boundedness as the overriding feature of the landscape by analysing the implications of political and social happenings in both Spain and France and by illustrating the idea of *Catalanité*, the feelings and expression of being Catalan.

6.3 Culture and *Catalanité*

To set the scene, this section begins with two images which illustrate the visual statements of *Catalanité*. The Catalan colours, red and yellow, dominate the landscape and provide visual cross border continuity with Spanish Catalonia. The relationship between the French Catalans and those in Spain is not straightforward and the section continues by analysing the allegiances of the region and the sense of identity implicit in living in border country. The testimonies of the participants provide an insight into some of the issues involved.

The research area is particularly interesting in that despite being part of the French nation, Catalan culture is dominant. The two photographs below are an illustration of the ever-present Catalan flag and colours in the towns and villages. The first one, Figure 6.1, shows Catalan flags flying in the twice weekly market in the Catalan coastal town of

Collioure. A tourist hot spot, cynics may claim that this is for the benefit of the visitors but the French Catalans are very proud of their flag and its presence is a marker of strength their regional identity. Participant R.8 explained the flag's significance:

"It signifies our fortitude. The four red stripes represent the blood from battle, courage. I feel proud to be Catalan when I see it flying everywhere" (Participant R.8).

Figure 6.1 Catalan flags flying in the twice weekly market in the Catalan coastal town of Collioure. (Source: S. Jenkins Carter).

The second photograph, Figure 6.2, is taken at the annual cherry festival held in the Tech valley. As well as promoting and celebrating the cherry harvest, the market is a show of Catalan colours. Here the table is draped in the colours of the flag; the sunshades in the background are the Catalan colours and similarly even the claufoutis (a form of cherry bake) for sale in the foreground are red and yellow.

Figure 6.2 The annual cherry festival held in the Tech valley is a show of Catalan colours (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

Having illustrated that Catalan colours emphasise the identity of the locality it is important to situate the cultural context in a wider framework. The research area occupies a distinctive position on the boundary between France and Spain and this has implications for the sense of identity of the research participants and how the border position ties in with their cultural dispositions. An examination of how the participants view their identity in national and regional terms revealed a strong allegiance to the locality, especially when the political implications of identity became subject to scrutiny.

The photograph below, Figure 6.3, shows how regional identity has equal prominence with national identity on government buildings. The flag is flown alongside the French one at all public institutions in French Catalonia. This exemplifies Goodhart's (2017) analysis that the importance of identification with the locality must not be overlooked by national bodies. The French flag, below, symbolises the presence of the national

government in the building, whilst the Catalan flag signifies the voice of Catalans in decision-making. Regional or local identity is just as important as national identity.

Figure 6.3 The Catalan and French flags fly side by side (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

National identity was an accepted component of individual identity for many research participants. However, the political fact of the state border between France and Spain raised complications for those with a strong sense of Catalonian identity. The following testimonies throw into relief the identity peculiar to *Catalonia du Nord* (North Catalonia):

> *"My identity, well I have been brought up with both French and Catalan influences but the state is strong and so I would say I am French first of all but my sympathies lie with the Catalans* [In Spanish Catalonia] *and I can see the power of the state* [Spain]. *In the end, I don't know how it will be resolved but the state must not be allowed to swallow a population and deny them their identity" (Participant R.21).*

> *"I am Catalan, my grandparents came over the border in 1939. We have always been fighting for recognition. We are squeezed between the Spanish and the French state. But I am not either; I am Catalan, I told you. I live in France, I went to a French school and we sang the anthem* [the French nation anthem] *and we have holidays to*

celebrate France and its saints but for me it has no impact. I will always be Catalan, it is the land of my family" (Participant R.8).

"These issues become bigger and stronger when the voice of the people gets together. I know that the Catalans have a voice and it is important to be heard but the more they shout, the stronger the states [Spain and France] *become in their response. They* [Spain and France] *have an agenda and that is not to fragment their nation"* (Participant I.11).

Despite declaring to be French, Participant R.21 draws attention to the idea that identity is not determined by the state, that identity is something deeper than that which the state can offer. The state can, however, confer nationality but the implication in this testimony highlights the divide between this concept and that of identity. The second testimony above supports this argument by referring to an identity which is outside the realm of the two recognized nations and gives credence to the fact that identity does not necessarily include nationhood, but rather is related to the idea of place. The testimony proves the point made above concerning the questioning of national agendas by raising the profile of regional identity as a response.

Regional adherences also surface in the political arena when attempts are made to supress the voices of the Catalans. The Catalan president was exiled from Spain following the 'illegal' vote for independence in 2017. Unable to set foot across the border, Puigdemont was welcomed back onto Catalan soil to Perpignan in February 2020 (see map, Chapter Three, Figure 3.2), where he was greeted by a crowd estimated to be about 100,000.

Figure 6.4 Photograph of front page of regional newspaper, L'Indépendant, 29 February 2020 (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

The photograph of the front page of the regional newspaper (Figure 6.4), dated 29 February 2020, was dedicated to the return of Puigdemont to Catalan soil. The newspaper is called *L'Indépendant*, which could be interpreted in a variety of ways, ranging from independent journalism to independence for the region. The article raises the issue that Catalan allegiances are seen to be more important than national politics: Puigdemont is described as to the left of centre, a social democrat, whilst the mayor of Perpignan at that time, Pujol, was to the right of centre. The newspaper quoted Pujol who defended his welcome to Puigdemont as a gesture of "humanity and solidarity", stating that:

> For us freedom of speech has no borders, and this is one of the elements of Europe that we love the most; being free, protecting those who are in trouble and backing those who are persecuted is an element of freedom, of which Perpignan will always feel proud (Pujol, 2020).

However, for some participants, despite their overriding sense of *Catalanité,* the border appeared to be more relevant in terms of political issues:

> *"Of course I understand the issues [in Barcelona] and yes we are all Catalans but here in the north we have French institutions and so we do not have the same problems. For the Catalans of the south, they must come to an agreement with Spain as that is where their problem lies. We here do not have an argument with Spain" (Participant R.1).*

> *"We are French Catalans; it is different you know to Spanish Catalans. We have not had the same upheavals and disputes with our government as they have in the south. Just remember the* Retirada*, all those Catalans fleeing over to France from Franco. Our history is different, we do not have these memories. Of course we helped them as best we could but the experience is different" (Participant R.4).*

The intensely local perspective of identity is evident here. Despite consistently declaring themselves to be Catalan, the above participants reveal that there are limits to their association with the Catalans in Spain. It may well be that they feel that the disputes over the border could threaten their own relatively secure identity as Catalans in France. This runs in part contrary to the support Puigdemont received from the *Catalans du Nord*. However, the issues belong to the *Catalans du Sud* as Participant R.1 states, and support is for the position of Spanish Catalonia vis a vis its relationship with the Madrid government. The peculiar *French* Catalonian *(Catalan du Nord)* identity of the Canigou

region, is defined more by the specificity of the landscape and its cross-cultural interaction, than any inherent belief in a Catalan state. Goodhart's (2017) analysis of the intensity of popular feelings for one's locality and one's communities in the face of possible threats to their way of life is relevant here, but he does not account for communities who live on borders. As described in the above testimonies, the border is both a bridge and a boundary. It is a crossing point for people, illustrated by the reference to the *Retirada* (see below, section 6.3.3), and also a boundary in so far as the problems of the South Catalans stop at the border. Borderlands are spaces or meeting places in which allegiances and local identities are rearranged. Referring to the different memories of the recent past, Participant R.4 highlights this Catalan border country of contested Catalan memories. The twist here lies in that there is no suggestion in the testimonies of positioning themselves as French citizens but rather as Catalans. These testimonies also highlight the importance of the local community boundary. Borders can be transparent and ignored when they disrupt regional interests but local community boundaries are to be defined as much as possible, evidenced by the erection of village signs stating that these are Catalan mining villages. The importance of local community boundaries is documented in this research which shows how incomers also realise the significance of the identity of the locality, through their initiation and involvement in heritage projects.

Regional and national issues are therefore present in the narrative in this part of France and hopes that the profile of French Catalonia would receive special attention were raised when Castex, former mayor of Prades in the Têt valley, became prime minister (July 2020-May 2022). A Catalan speaker, in 2015 he referred to the department of the Pyrénées-Orientales as being part of '*Les Pays Catalans*', signifying its position as *Catalan du Nord*. Every summer his hometown welcomes a symposium of those wanting Catalan sovereignty, although Castex himself has not declared his position on this (Salvado, 2020).

6.3.1 Cultural Traditions: *Sardana, castells, pourrou* and rugby

Following the outline of support for regional agendas when national issues affect the identity of French Catalonia, the following sections illustrate the importance of the idea of *Catalanité* in the locality and its cultural manifestations as an important feature of landscape identity. Although I use the term 'traditions', these cultural manifestations are

representational of the 'presentness' of the cultural mores rather than an enactment of purely past values. They are a physical embodiment of *Catalanité* as expressed by the population of today. The level of engagement will be shown to be different for everyone but through their physicality, the traditions bring about a kinaesthetic awareness of one's sensibilities. The cultural practices will be shown to acknowledge the links with Spanish Catalonia, but also manifest the underlying diversity which incomers bring to the events.

This section begins by presenting the role of tradition as a means of consolidating Catalan identity. I identify two traditions, the *Sardana* and the *Castells*, which inform how communities embed these in the cultural landscape as a statement of their distinctiveness. These traditions transmit the message of solidarity and are a physical enactment of the resilience of the Catalan French. Although these customs are an active part of life in the region, I pick up on Schein's (1991) argument that they are the observable manifestations of culture; culture actually resides in the behaviours, perceptions and cognitions of individuals and groups. These traditions are the material embodiments of *Catalanité*. The *Sardana*, for example embeds the expression of personal and collective affinity with the Catalan landscape, its past and its present. I argue that culture exists at the interface of a community or an individual and its environment and draw on Williams' description of the indefinable spirit of culture to illustrate my argument. It is in the exchange of shared values, which this study terms cultural flow, that enable people to feel part of a cultural experience and to demonstrate this I draw on my own experience to support the testimonies of the participants in illustrating how people engage with the meanings of the cultural landscape. Finally, the section challenges Bourdieu's ideas concerning how one's dispositions limit access to culture by illustrating how the iron mining heritage projects are a forum for the exchange of values and ideas.

The traditions and customs in French Catalonia are relatively modern in appearance, most having origins in Spanish Catalonia where they are aimed at promoting Catalan solidarity in the face of what Catalans believe to be Spanish (Madrid's) encroachment on their distinct culture. These traditions connect the French region to Catalonia south of the border, emphasising the cross-border relationship, rather than connecting with French cultural identity. The dance, the *Sardana* and the human towers, the *Castells*, demonstrate regional political allegiances and carry messages of defiance and mutual

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support. Both are marked by a coming together of people and are performed in open public spaces. They represent a visual drawing in, as people join in with the *Sardana*, and those who support the base of the *Castells*, to consolidate Catalan values of strength and support.

The Catalan dance, the *Sardana,* is a statement of identity with political overtones. It existed in various forms until it was standardised between 1840 and 1850 by Josep Maria Ventura. It was and still is taught at various dance schools and *Sardana* societies throughout Catalonia and therefore defies the traditional folklore category where traditions are learned and transmitted through informal processes. This is in keeping with Hobsbawm and Ranger's concept of the "invented tradition" in the belief that "it is a society's need for stabilizing cultural anchors that cause traditions to be created during periods of rapid socioeconomic or political change" (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). Brandes points out that this fits in with the era when Catalonia went through a period of rapid industrial growth (Brandes, 1990, p. 33). The turbulence of the ensuing decades which continues today sees this dance tradition play a pivotal role in defining Catalan identity in the face of encroaching forces questioning its existence. The Spanish authorities under Franco tried to ban the dance in the 1940s, although its continued performance was not pursued by the Spanish authority, given that it was believed to be a relatively unthreatening form of protest.

Symbolically, the *Sardana* embodies harmony, brotherhood and democracy. A circle dance, in which hands are held and raised together at a specific height, it represents equality and sends a message of defiance to the past when Catalans were repressed under the regime of Franco (Brandes, 1990, p. 31). Although the *Sardana* is a physical performance, participants are investing their sense of fraternity into the dance. As Schein points out, the dance is the physical manifestation of the shared values and beliefs of the performers who argue that the sentiment of solidarity is an integral part of the dance (Schein, 1991, p. 312).

Weig's research revealed that dancers feel that this uniquely Catalan dance is a way of preserving their relationship with their land and country (Weig, 2015, p. 437). It is danced in all the villages in French Catalonia and often takes the form of an informal gathering. On traditional celebration days such as the *Fête de Saint Jean* (23 June) every village holds a

Sardana, a simultaneous affirmation of the Catalan identity of the landscape. As such, the dance represents the distinct marking out of Catalan territory in this part of France and, in highlights Williams' position (2014a) as a cultural tradition for ordinary people to demonstrate their connectedness with the landscape.

Unity and democracy are the themes of another Catalan tradition which is spreading into French Catalonia from the south: the building of human towers known as *Castells* now form part of the Prades summer festival in the Têt valley. The tower is a physical symbol of the democratic ideal of elected responsibility, and is particularly pertinent as the repression endured by the Catalans during Franco's era is not far from living memory. This tradition was first recorded in 1801 south of the border and declared an intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO in 2010. Again, the theme of fraternity is represented in the trust and care involved in organising the feat: "We saw it as a poetic reflection of the society. You have the elders holding the weight of the younger community on their shoulders" (Warsley, J. quoted in Wolters, 2019). Those responsible for importing the tradition into the French town wanted to ensure that the local population do not forget that the area is Catalan and has connections with Catalans on the Spanish side of the border. This form of Catalan celebration is limited at present to one town in the valley below my research villages, but several participants had attended the event. The human tower was likened to the mountain landscape by one participant who stated that:

> *"It seems like we are acknowledging these mountains around us but in human form. You see the Canigou peak is like a triangle, and the tower rises to a sharp point with the smallest child on top" (Participant R.8).*

Although they had not participated themselves, the participants agreed that it represented unity and reminded them of the importance of 'belonging'. The following statement draws on the role of the past in anchoring culture in the regional landscape, with its allusions to resilience in the face of subjugation:

> *"You have to understand that it is more than a circus act for us, a feat of gymnastics. It reminds us of our strength and that we all belong to this family" (Participant R.8).*

This was also echoed by incomers:

"It is not just a show but a symbol of unity. It is marvellous to watch and respect these traditions. They are part of the population and remind them of what they share. I am not Catalan but I can feel their enthusiasm" (Participant I.14).

Although this participant did not feel that it was part of his own culture, it can be argued that in the very act of watching the performance, he in fact brought his own appreciation into the frame and at the same time, his lively interest and response became part of the performance. This is an example of what this study refers to as cultural flow. The participant indicates that he is able to respond to the values implicit in building the tower. As he states, this does not affect his feelings about his identity with regard to where he comes from on a regional or national level. But he is able to cross the cultural boundary and absorb the importance of marking the identity of the landscape through this celebration which demonstrates the affinity with *Catalonia du Sud* and the mountainous landscape. Rather than a tangible object or a tradition, it is the focus on the feelings aroused during the process which defines culture. These feelings are enmeshed in lived experience; they are the intangible markers of cultural understandings representing the spirit of the time. Williams argued that this indefinable quality was the cornerstone of culture which linked together the various parts into a 'solution', rather than a 'precipitate'. He argued that by studying the arts and other cultural elements of a particular period, "there is still some important common element that we cannot easily place" (Williams 2014b p. 33). He described how particular ways of thinking and living emerge from this indefinable quality of life which he terms 'structure of feeling':

> We learn each element as a precipitate, but in the living experience of the time every element was in solution, an inseparable part of a complex whole. The most difficult thing to get hold of, in studying any past period, is this felt sense of the quality of life at a particular place and time: a sense of the ways in which the particular activities combined into a way of thinking and living (Williams, 2014b p. 33).

Relating his thoughts to the present, it is interesting that the incomers in my study became involved in the mining heritage activities in order to bridge the gap between simply knowing about the mining past and being able to identify with the connectiveness between the material evidence and its embodiment of the story of the Canigou landscape. For example, Participant I.6 refers to the impact of witnessing the smelting

process, "*Sparks flying everywhere and then you have this glowing ball of molten iron ore*", (see Chapter 5, section 5.5). Being present at the smelt brings about an understanding of the power of the transformation of iron, an inextricable part of the narrative of the Canigou:

> "*To witness the red hot bloom is to be able to connect with the Canigou. The ore came from inside the mountain, and the miners took the ore and transformed it into something beautiful. It is a gift from the mountain and to be part of this [the smelt] is to understand*" (Participant I.6).

Participation in cultural traditions could therefore be interpreted as the social process of making sense of our world, "the making and communication in the world and about the world" (Kirsch, 2014, p. 699). In describing how the *"miners took the ore and transformed it into something beautiful"*, Participant I.6 sees the smelting process as a creative activity. The connection between the ore and the resulting bloom becomes something vivid and comprehensible as a consequence of his participation. The appearance of the "*red hot bloom*" provided Participant I.6 with the visual impact which enabled him to connect emotionally with the mining past. Indeed, cultural experience is different to each and every one, a position voiced by Kroeber and Klukhohn: "Each individual selects from and to a greater or lesser degree systematizes what he experiences of the total culture in the course of his formal and informal education throughout life" (Kroeber and Klukhohn, 1963, p. 309). The hunting of the boar, related by Participant I.6 (see section 6.3.2) depends on cooperation amongst the hunting community. More than that, there is an indefinable level of understanding about the principles of the hunt as part of the living in the mountain landscape. On his own admittance, Participant I.6 felt unable to appreciate the emotions of the locals in participating in the cultural activity, and yet he was able to process the meanings of the activity according to his own inclinations. This is how Williams saw culture. Although he stipulates that this sense of living is individual in nature, it is the basis for community cohesion:

> I do not mean that the structure of feeling, any more than the social character, is possessed in the same way by the many individuals in the community. But I think it is a very deep and very wide possession, in all actual communities, precisely because it is on it that communication depends (Williams 2014b p.34).

My own personal example is a case in point: I am not Catalan, or French, or Spanish, but I can relate to the values implicit in other cultures in accordance with my own system of beliefs. The Catalan culture interacts or resonates with a part of my feelings about my identity. This was evident to me when I attended a French rugby match during my time researching in the Canigou region. Coming from Wales, I am a supporter of the Welsh national squad but I was able to enjoy attending a local rugby match (Figure 6.5) even though I felt that the Perpignan side were not my team. During the course of my research interviews we inevitably talked about rugby, especially when the participants knew I was from Wales. It was a common meeting point for our cultures but we all had different levels of experience of the game. General discussions invariably involved the latest match results or team news. It was during these discussions that both I and my participants were able to realise, in part, our sense of identity, through our allegiances to the spirit of rugby and our shared experiences.

Rugby is an important part of life in the region and the home grounds in the city are places of pilgrimage where local identity is celebrated. Whether for the league team, the Catalan Dragons, or the union team, Union Sportive Arlequins Perpignan (USAP), the match reports often figured as headlines in the local paper, *L'Indépendant*, and team colours, yellow and red, Figure 6.5, reflect the colours of the Catalan flag, and are visual reminders of the team's *Catalanité*. This is particularly striking as they are one of only two foreign team to play in the English Super League. They thus carry their local identity, through the team strip, and place it in all the away league grounds in England.

Figure 6.5 USAP, the rugby team based in Perpignan (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

It is through the collective participation and raised emotions at such cultural events as the rugby match that a sense of identity is heightened:

> "We have these traditions, they are Catalan traditions and I feel them in my soul. Just by being at the Dragons [rugby league], it brings me much emotion. Even if we lose, I feel moved" (Participant R.3).

While I participated in this cultural experience, my experience was different to those of Catalans in attendance. As Williams argues, we do not all experience culture in the same way nor to the same degree of intensity but by investing a part of oneself in the cultural environment through common values, we can cross cultural boundaries.

Identity though does not have to equate with participation in cultural traditions. One respondent stated that to be Catalan you had to climb to the summit of the Canigou, go to the rugby matches, dance the *Sardana* and drink wine from the *pourrou* (a drinking vessel). In the photograph below, the image of the Catalan drinking from the *pourrou*

illustrates the collective spirit of the act. It is a social event; the *pourrou* is passed around friends who each try to outdo the other by holding the vessel as far away from the mouth as possible, Figure 6.6. The image is on the beaded doorway of a house in La Bastide. Dressed in Catalan costume and drinking out of the *pourrou*, the man is a visual statement of *Catalanité*. The image is a declaration of the Catalan identity of the occupants of the home and marks out the cultural landscape in a pictorial manner, similar to that of the language signs stating that this is Catalan country (see section 6.4.3):

Figure 6.6 The drinking vessel, the *pourrou* (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

As I pointed out to my participant, I can claim to have taken part in all of the above but it does not make me a Catalan. His response implies that I cannot take on the identity of a Catalan because I am unable to access the emotional implications. His references to a

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'bond' and 'camaraderie' suggest Williams' analysis of the indefinable spirit which lies at the heart of all cultural experiences. As he explains:

> *"It is part of being Catalan. It makes me proud and at the same time I can relate to my friends, we have a bond, a camaraderie which we share as we pass the* pourrou*" (Participant R.16).*

His statement does indicate his feelings about the exclusive relationship between people and the places to which they belong:

> *"Of course not, because for you they are gestures but for us, it is an emotional reply to our lands" (Participant R.16).*

The heritage of iron mining provides a context in which to explore the cultural experience further. Firstly, as a collective process, the categories of cultural accumulation as described by Bourdieu are rendered invisible. The heritage focus levels the cultural field in that incomers and residents alike are looking to embed the mining story in the locale, the focus being to consolidate the identity of the locality. Talk of "*shared destiny*" and "*learnt to look with the same eyes as the locals*" in the following statements, illustrate the blending of different viewpoints and personal biographies into a new whole:

> *"I asked some of the locals to help me when I decided to draw up the interpretive diagrams of the site. We walked around together and I was shown where the various buildings used to stand and how it all came together" (Participant I.22).*

> *"I came here knowing nothing but now I have learnt to look with the same eyes as the locals" (Participant I.29).*

> *"It was an experience to be there and to help* [site restoration]*. We all had something to give and I learnt so much from the others, not just about mining but about their lives, in particular growing up here" (Participant I.20).*

> *"Oh I know that it was hard in other parts of France. They had the same problems as we do here, with closures and everything. But it is a shared destiny and we can appreciate each other's feelings for the future" (Participant R.46).*

These considerations reveal a constellation of dispositions from varying backgrounds which together make up the cultural forum around the iron legacy. Secondly, the example of involvement in heritage projects illustrates how individuals become enmeshed in the world around them through being able to take their cues from others in the group. Schein writes: "what is shared is by definition culture" (Schein, 1991, p. 314). The three incomers in the above statements illustrate his point. They recognize the power of

learning with and from others, which enables them to share the experience of the mine sites. The testimony of Participant R.46 acknowledges the commonality of experience of mine closures wherever these occur. Her testimony illustrates how such projects bring differing cultural discussions and backgrounds together and provide a space where various values and beliefs can regroup. In this way, new cultural groups can be formed which cross original group boundaries. Finally, the above testimonies illustrate that culture belongs to a place. Traditions always take one back to a particular place, even if they are enacted in countries other than that of their origin. They mark the identity of the area and provide a message of stability with which people can engage. This is particularly relevant in the context of Goodhart's (2017) analysis of communities who feel that their identity is threatened by fluid boundaries whilst Edensor's argument that a lack of spatial and cultural fixity "can provide a discursive and affective focus for reclaiming a sense of situatedness" (Edensor, 2002, p. 28) is also pertinent. Edensor argues that with "vast, expanding cultural networks" (Edensor, 2002, p. 27), identities are "thus becoming stretched out in proliferating locations in diasporic, political, and cyber networks". The corollary to this lack of situatedness, he argues is the need to fix identity on "terra firma" (Edensor, 2002, p. 28). Enlightening Edensor's position, the testimonies illustrate a coming together of a variety of backgrounds to redefine a space which was previously the embodiment of the mining fraternity. The space is reclaimed as a focus for heritage in its 'presentness' and marks out this identity in the landscape through visual signs and sculptures, such as the sculpture unveiled in Escaro (Chapter Five, Figure 5.16).

To summarize: the key claim of this section is that culture consolidates the identity of place. Cultural traditions and celebrations are a manifestation of the cultural community's values, beliefs and attitudes. The cultural community is not exclusive however and my own example has illustrated that through shared values and beliefs, individuals can relate to aspects of other cultures. The following section demonstrates how incomers to the research villages can identify with the cultural environment by embracing the landscape and argues that cultural boundaries are fluid and accommodating, rather than fixed.

6.3.2 An embedded culture

This section considers the specificity of the local cultures of the Canigou region and the implications of this for people who move there from elsewhere. Many of the residents related that their culture was embedded in the region, even in the mountain itself, and this leads to an examination of how incomers identify with the cultural environment.

Following Williams' definition that culture can be envisaged as a particular way of life, (see section 6.2), involving immersion in the common meanings of a society, this section takes his argument further by illustrating how culture can be thought of as a way of 'being in the world'. The phrase was originally articulated by Heidegger in 1962 to explain how people are imbricated in the physical world (Heidegger, 2013). Tilley takes a different angle and explains that "Being-in-the-world resides in a process of objectification in which people objectify the world by setting themselves apart from it" (Tilley, 1994, p. 12). He explains that to be human is to "attempt to bridge this distance through a variety of means", through perceptive engagement and bodily movement with the world as well as awareness and emotions (Tilley, 1994, p. 12). In this section I engage with Tilley's perspectives and contend that people actively seek ways of integrating themselves in the world around them through a process of physically engaging with their surroundings. The materiality of the cultural features prompts meanings and feelings which enable people to connect with their environment. The following statements of two incomers, I.6 and I.22, demonstrate how their involvement in the customs and heritage initiatives of the mountain enable them to embed a part of themselves in their surroundings. Collective culture serves as a framework for rooting their individuality in the community. Culture connects individuals to these places and provides a forum in which they are able to embed their identity. The section further illustrates Williams' argument that people take on different aspects of culture and considers how cultural boundaries are fluid, rather than fixed.

The starting point is the testimony of R.27 which asserts that culture belongs in the landscape and its materiality. For R.27, the soil has agency in people's perceptions of the world around them.

"Culture is buried in the soil of our region and you absorb it or rather it absorbs you" (Participant R.27).

The evidence of this study indicates a cultural identity which is specifically linked to the immediate environment. This was pertinent to many incomers who felt that through immersion in the landscape, they were able to access the cultural values of the region:

"Now I feel that part of me belongs here because of this work [maintenance of mining machinery in the museum at Escaro]. I can say that I belong, that I am part of this place. This [machinery] has worked with me, together we have got it going again. It told me its stories as I told it mine as we worked. So now I understand the importance of the Canigou in life here. I have learnt to love the mountain, and everything it offers" (Participant I. 22).

Emerging from this testimony is the way in which culture is realised while engaging in an activity which articulates the identity of the place. Rather than something which is accessed as an observer, involvement in the heritage work has enabled the incomer to feel that he belongs, he is a part of the landscape. By working with the materiality of the machinery, he has come to understand and love the mountain. As he learnt about the intricacies of the technology, his understanding developed into an emotional attachment with the project and its place in the landscape. In the vein of Tilley's analysis of 'being in the world', he has become a part of the Canigou mining story as he relates to the values implicit in looking after the machinery of the mining past. This has delivered a feeling of rootedness for the participant by providing him with the opportunity to engage with the past and the present of the mountain landscape.

However, the following testimonies from other nationalities living in the research villages illustrate their feelings of partial detachment:

"I do feel a part of the place and yet I don't. But it is hard to explain. Take the hunting of the boar for example. It is a big part of the culture around here. They invited me to take part. It was tough, up and down the hills after the boar. I think I was being tested out. I enjoyed it, well afterwards I did. Then we ate and drank and they were very keen to make sure that I was part of them. It was like an initiation I suppose and I am grateful to them for inviting me to take part. It is a big thing for them. Yes and it was for me. But it still does not make it my culture. I have adopted it but that is different" (Participant I.6).

His closing comments on this subject are particularly pertinent because they highlight the argument posited by Participant R.27 above, that culture is firmly embedded in the locality:

> "I think that for them it is also a symbolic act and I can't get into that. Maybe it is something handed down to them through the generations, that feeling, oh I don't know for sure, from the past, that is a part of this landscape, that it is their heritage, and they are part of the chain which links people through the centuries" (Participant I.6).

Although Participant I.6 talks about his inability to feel the emotional charge implicit in the hunting activity, he has embedded a part of himself in the locale through this activity and through the rituals that take place after the hunt. For him, the meanings in the landscape have changed during the hunt. He has seen the landscape from the perspective of the chase, has pushed his endurance as he struggled up the steep inclines, and immersed himself in a different story concerning the boar. Previously, the boar would have been a creature to avoid in the forests, but during this exercise the boar is the objective of the hunt.

Participant I.7 loves the people and mountain life but acknowledges that he cannot fully integrate. Although he feels that he can only partly understand the cultural mores, he has embedded himself in the community in various capacities from local supplier of logs to a member of the village council.

> "I came here because I wanted to enjoy the mountains. I love the people and the culture and it is a good life. But you can never wholly integrate. I help out for example when it snows and I use my tractors to help clear the roads. But you can never totally become part of the place. There are things now that I can't understand. It is a different culture and I have learnt about it and try to understand it, or at least partly" (Participant I.7).

> "There are former iron mining sites on my land. Up on the hillside, one of the oldest workings I believe, over two thousand years of history. My forest does not reach up there, but I am conscious when I am working not to disturb the past. It's like a sacred part of my land that I must protect at all costs" (Participant I.7).

He sees his role as protecting the identity of the landscape and is careful not to disturb the archaeological features when he works the land. He is able to connect with local values about the importance of the mining past and the reverence that it engenders in the local population. He recognises that this past is an integral part of the landscape itself.

These examples illustrate Tilley's account of 'being in the world', of the way by which people objectify the world around them and "attempt to bridge this distance through a variety of means" (Tilley, 1994, p. 12). Both incomers, I.6 and I.7 endeavour to become a part of the communities into which they have moved. They seek to understand and feel an affinity with the cultural mores and connect with the world around them through active involvement in village life. Chasing the boar gives Participant I.6 an opportunity to experience 'being in the landscape'. Participant I.7 bridges the distance between himself and the world around him through his community activities, particularly his forestry work which impacts on the iron mining past on his land. He attaches the same importance to the value of protecting the mining past as those who were born in the mountain villages. In both these examples, culture acts as a link between people, the past and the locality, and in this capacity, it delivers a sense of rootedness to the incomers. But at the same time, it is culture 'of and in the moment', a living tradition of the present rather than a pure re-enactment from the past. Again, the materiality of the cultural environment is an active agent in prompting feelings of engagement with the landscape. These examples also give an account of Williams' mantra that culture is ordinary (2014a). Culture, he says is not just about art and intellectual work, but is also found in the "forms through which members of the society communicate" (Williams, 2014b p. 29). They reflect a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values "not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour" (Williams, 2014b p. 28). The tradition of hunting the boar and the protection of the features of the mining past are undertaken by the local people as a continuation of their way of life on the mountain. The unwritten meanings and beliefs of these cultural manifestations are shared by the community.

These testimonies reveal some interesting facets regarding cultural integration. Both participants are keen to be part of the culture of the villages and yet acknowledge that they will never fully integrate. However, it is evident that they can embed a part of themselves in the cultural activities. They place their own meanings onto the cultural experiences, illustrating Williams' argument that people take on different aspects of culture (Williams, 2014c, p. 99-100). The following testimonies further illustrate how a tradition specific to a locality can accommodate wider meanings. For Catalans, the *Sardana* dance is the medium which conveys something unique about themselves and

about the sanctity of their place in the landscape. But the dance is also able to evoke feelings in these incomers which they can relate to dances in their homelands:

> "We have such dances back home [in Normandy] and yes I have learnt the steps and can join in the Sardana and I know it is not the dance of my region but by dancing I can relate to my dances and remember the feelings I have" (Participant I.48).

> "I love the dance. It has so many messages on all levels and I can relate to these from the perspectives of my own country [Germany]" (Participant I.56).

The dance still belongs to the region in terms of its themes of solidarity and fraternity which reflect the resilience of the landscape, past and the present. But its cultural boundaries are not fixed. In transposing their emotions these incomers bring their personal cultural background into the performance, crossing class and ethnic boundaries, without usurping the traditional meanings for Catalans.

Culture is not the same for everyone. This is evident from Participant I.56's statement in section 6.1, which described culture as 'good friends, conversation and discussions.' For I.56, then, culture is a dialogue rather a fixed entity: he enjoys taking on board others' perspectives, and his discussions with friends contribute to the creation of new meanings and values. Culture can therefore be seen to be continuously "produced, reproduced, and revised in dialogues" amongst group members (Tedlock and Mannheim, 1995, p. 2).

Individuals take part in a variety of overlapping cultural groups, ranging from local cultures, such as leisure and workplace, to regional and national cultures. These cultural boundaries overlap, move, change shape and flow. People are part of the cultural flow as they cross cultural boundaries. Bourdieu argued that culture serves to reinforce class differences: "That is why art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. xxx). However, rather than limiting us, as Bourdieu argues, I argue in line with Williams that our dispositions enable us take on differing aspects of culture in our own unique way (Williams, 2014c, p. 99).

The key point of this section has been to highlight the view that culture is embedded in place, but this does not mean that it is exclusive to the people of that locality. In order to bridge the feeling of separateness people feel from the world around them, implicit in Tilley's evaluation of 'being in the world' incomers have testified how they physically

immerse themselves in landscape activities. In this way they can connect with the cultural values of their environment and place their own meanings. Cultural boundaries are reconfigured as cultural flow, as culture evolves and changes in line with these new meanings. However, language proved to be a barrier to complete cultural integration in the Catalan landscape:

> *"We are both [husband and wife] learning it but there is something which we can never learn and that is the attitude of the words" (Participant I.47).*

Before analysing the role of language in embedding the notion of *Catalanité* in the region, the following section considers *Catalanité* from the perspective of the participants who are descended from families from South Catalonia. Their testimonies provide another perspective on the notion of borders.

6.3.3 The *Retirada*

Another important layer in this French Catalan society which impacts on the notion of *Catalanité,* defined as the feeling of being Catalan*,* is that of the descendants of those who arrived from Spanish Catalonia in 1939. In February 1939, following the fall of Barcelona to Franco's troops, 250,000 people left their Catalan homes south of the Pyrenees and massed at the border, waiting for the gates to Le Perthus, on the French side, to be opened. After two days, the French government agreed and the department was flooded with refugees from Spain. Today the region still bears witness to this influx but only recently have stories of the atrocious conditions which met them been openly acknowledged. Three of my participants were descendants of the *Retirada* (Retreat)- their grandparents had made the walk across the border - and discussions illuminated the importance of what I termed 'the family line' in Chapter Four. For these participants they defended the Catalan language as their mother tongue and their identity was firmly embedded in their linguistic heritage. Their view of French was utilitarian; it enabled them and their children to live and work in France, to participate in the economic and social platforms offered to them by France. Despite having grown up in the French education system and being exposed to all that is French from an identity-conferring position, these participants were clear in that their heritage and identity was Catalan and discriminated between French and Spanish Catalan by insisting that they were from *Catalan du Sud*. All three participants had family in Spanish Catalonia and crossed the

border regularly. They said that they felt comfortable in the Canigou village in which they lived and referred to it as home, but were insistent that their true home was in the family heartland of South Catalonia:

> *"My home is here, yes I know because I live and work here and I grew up here but my heart lies in Catalonia du Sud, that is my ancestral home and I will always say that is where I am from" (Participant R.42).*

> *"Some of my family went home* [to Catalonia du Sud]. *But we stayed, why I don't know. I think it was work and also to build a new life. Here is also Catalonia you know; so it feels like home but it is not actually my family home. That is always in the south" (Participant R.8).*

The border is an enigmatic presence in these statements. References to *Catalonia du Sud*, and *''build a new life"* suggest a sense of distance between both regions. But for Participant R.8, the French region still *feels* like Catalonia. Border country can be somewhere and anywhere at the same time. For these descendants of the *Retirada*, home is both sides of the national border. They live in these borderlands, through work, home, family ties and language. The border is the point at which their identity is contested: the forced exile of their grandparents has left a lingering legacy of regret, loss and exile which has been handed down through the generations.

A brief outline of the *Retirada* and the effect on the descendants of those Catalans fleeing from Franco has foregrounded the border as a space which highlights issues of identity and belonging. For these Catalans the border is both visible and invisible. It is a fixed mark in the landscape and is also a creative space for defining a sense of self.

6.4 The language question

In line with the agency of the environment considered in previous chapters, research testimonies placed the language in the landscape. The following sections address the significance of the Catalan language as an integral part of the landscape, embedding the notion of *Catalanité* in the surroundings. A short background to both Catalan and French languages highlights their different roles in establishing a sense of belonging. Consideration is given to the participants' attitudes towards the French language before analysing the role of the Catalan language as not only a system of communication but also as means of asserting regional identity through visual symbols in the landscape.

6.4.1 French and Catalan as unifying languages

For different reasons, the histories of the French and Catalan languages reflect unity and a common purpose. This section outlines the background to the social and cultural factors which were behind the spread of the French language and the survival of the Catalan language. Both languages are spoken in the region and as well as defining the identity of the locals, the research testimonies indicate how language enables participants to feel part of the wider world.

The French language was perceived as the language of national unity in spite of statements and feelings for the Catalan language:

> *"But even though Catalan is the language of my heart, I don't want to say that we should never speak French. Of course we should. That is what brings us all together, all of us from whatever part of France. It's what we have to hold us altogether"* *(Participant R.21).*

> *"It is the language of our nation and as long as we have Catalan at home. I can't go to Paris and speak Catalan. Where would that get me?" (Participant R.13).*

Both of these participants echo the insistence of one national language as a main unifying principle of post-revolutionary France. The policy of imposing the French language on a host of regional dialects after the revolution of 1789 was perceived as a political move designed to eliminate the feudal structure of France and to "confirm the powers of the emerging new class of leaders based in Paris" (Harrison and Joubert, 2019, p. 5). The national language is deeply embedded in Republican values and the constitution. As Harrison and Joubert explain:

> The anchoring of Republican values in the French language, and culture more generally, seems to offer some stability, perhaps reassurance, to citizens and institutions. At least, this is the belief that has been passed on from generation to generation, and from Republic to Republic (Harrison and Joubert, 2019, p. 4).

This is endorsed by Participant R.21 who claimed that the French language unites people. At the same time, others mentioned the influence of French in other societies, pointing out that the French language carries the cultural values of liberty, fraternity and equality which resonated with the European courts:

"It was once the language of your country [UK] and more recently in Russia was also the language of the court. It is respected as the language of culture; it is France. We have many great philosophers who have expressed their ideas in French as only our language can" (Participant I.10).

"French was the language of the great courts of Europe. It is not for nothing that it was adopted by institutions to reflect their values, and at the same time ours of liberty, equality and fraternity. These are our national values and they go together in our language" (Participant I.11).

The Republican ideal fostered the idea that unity of language could deliver stability. The superiority of the French language resulted from the belief that it was party to this social ideal and therefore its 'nationalisation' can be seen as a cultural construct. To this effect, the power of the national concept can be read in the above quotations which concur with the creation of a cultural construct based in part on language. The institution of the French language therefore still leaves regional languages on the side-lines today.

In contrast to the imposition of the French language the Catalan language can be regarded as a language of survival against encroachment and subjugation. This is particularly the case in the modern era when Franco banned the use of Catalan in Spain during and after the Spanish civil war (1939). Although intended to suppress the language, Franco's policy helped to encourage a resurgence of Catalan and its continuation became a rallying cry against the Spanish regime (Marinzel, 2014, p.3-4).

"It is the language of these parts and still is despite pressure from Spain and France. It is a survivor and so are we" (Participant R.3).

The term 'survivor' acknowledges the agency of a language in holding local and regional identities together. Participants' testimonies show that it is in the ability to relate to the communicative power of a common tongue which transcends borders and political structures.

The survival of the Catalan language is not merely a simple issue of linguistic features but is also very much linked to social, economic and political questions. During the nineteenth century a significant number of the Catalan elite in Spain chose to speak Castilian (Spanish) in order to distinguish themselves from the Catalan-speaking peasants and emerging middle classes. However, a hundred or so years later, with the success of Catalan industrialists and entrepreneurs, the Catalan language was viewed with prestige.

Catalan thus became the language of high status, a source of cultural capital (Pujolar, 2007, p. 123). At the same time "the new romantic focus on language provided a source of legitimacy for a 'Catalan nation' and the mere existence of the Catalan group as an entity separate from Spanish speaking Spain" (Pujolar, 2007, p. 122). On the French side of the border, in effect the reverse happened: Catalan was spoken alongside the increasing dominance of the French language and it was only in 2008 that the Catalan language was officially acknowledged as a regional tongue worthy of cultural recognition (Hawkey and Mooney, 2021, p. 857). For some of those descended from generations of Catalan speakers on the French side of the border, their language is an important means of identifying with Catalans in Spain:

> *"It is the language which binds us. How can we not think of them* [Spanish Catalans] *as the same if we speak the same language? It is what binds us together. A border is only that, it doesn't exist with a language" (Participant R.33).*

Language creates its own borders. It creates its own boundaries of belonging by cutting across those boundaries ascribed by other groups in society. Strong feelings amongst some participants expressed the view that cultural and linguistic diversity should not be limited by nation states or political borders, or overlooked because of the size of the region. For example:

> *"We do not have a Catalan kingdom but that does not mean that our culture and our language is not important. In fact it is all the more important for it gives people an insight into our little corner of the world" (Participant R.30).*

The Catalan language can be described as a bridge, connecting France and Spain. The following testimony also brings out the role of language in shaping the landscape. Picking up on Ingold's argument that boundaries are creative places, the Catalan language is portrayed as a living, active part of the landscape which exploits the potential of border country as a place of creative opportunities, rather than a barrier (Ingold, 2011, p. 192). Even though Catalan is the unifying language of Catalonia, French and Spanish are also spoken, reflecting the convergence of identities in a border landscape.

> *"Catalan is an important gateway to France and Spain, it acts as a mediator between the two. But also history connects it further away too. You can go to Sardinia and speak Catalan" (Participant R.18).*

Participants also highlighted their feeling of connectivity through their appreciation of the trading strength of medieval Catalonia and its legacy in the modern world. The past is still present in these other landscapes and the language provides the link:

> *"Catalan is spoken in other parts you know. Sardinia, The Balaerics. We are not just a tiny corner of the world. And Sardinia belongs to Italy but there is a part of us Catalans there"* (Participant R.33).

Massey's concept of local being a product of global influences is substantiated by this reference to *"a part of us Catalans there"* in Sardinia (Massey, 1995, p. 183). A sense of internationalism and influence is portrayed, *"we are not just a tiny corner of the world"* which defies the relatively small area of Catalonia.

Language is also a cultural feature which is difficult to access if one is not a native speaker and symbolises the divide between those who truly feel part of the region, and those who do not. All the incomers expressed the view that the Catalan tongue was the main barrier to their complete integration into the area and for those who were learning it, they claimed that even knowledge of the grammar and the vocabulary still excluded them from the finer shades of meaning:

> *"Language always has a regard, a glance which I can't get from the words themselves. You need to have it in your blood"* (Participant R.8).

The agency of language is apparent here, *"a regard...a glance"* which give lie to the idea that language is purely a means of communication. Words can give people a window onto a particular world or culture, but, as the above testimonies illustrate, the shades of meaning and their implicit connections with the values of those who speak that language group, only allow partial assimilation for others. The following section picks up on the notion that language provides a sense of belonging and describes how incomers feel that they can never be wholly part of the Canigou landscape because of the language barrier.

6.4.2 Catalan or French?

The importance of language in the landscape as a marker of identity, defies the idea of cultural flow (see section 6.3.1). A language reflects the experiences and history of a people as well as establishing membership. These sentiments are expressed by Fillmore: "The language of a people evolves out of their experience: it reflects, not only their origins, but their history, their perspectives, their relationships to other peoples, and their

uniqueness as well" (Fillmore, 1996, p. 435). His comment supports the boundedness of language and argues that it is unique to people who share the same past. Language is a window into the history of a people and their underlying beliefs, values and ideas.

Language proved to be a boundary to complete immersion in the surroundings to some of my participants. Incomers described how their inability to communicate in Catalan left them feeling on the outside:

> *"I do feel like a stranger sometimes; the Catalans keep their language to themselves. They use it as a code. I can't belong" (Participant I.9).*

Even though he feels that this is not deliberate, it does reinforce the belief, evidenced by other statements, that he can never wholly belong:

> *"So as much as we join in with village activities - we sing in the choir, and some of the songs are in Catalan - I can only feel a part of the village to a certain degree" (Participant I.31).*

> *"I can read Catalan but as soon as it is spoken I can't follow very well so I am never wholly integrated here" (Participant I.35).*

Some incomers who had retired into the mountain villages were from other areas of the region and spoke Catalan; they considered themselves Catalan before French and this was one of their reasons for moving up to the mountain:

> *"I am Catalan above French and we moved up here because we love walking in the mountains and here you can access many paths, but also it is the Canigou which is the heart of what it means to be Catalan. So you can feel at home here even though you have not lived a large part of your life here" (Participant I.20).*

His testimony is witness to the argument that identity, heritage and culture are always embedded in a place. He has come to live in this place because it is the source of his feelings about his 'being in the world' (Tilley, 1994, p. 12). Through his emotional connections to the mountain and the physical awareness of the place which hiking gives him, he is able to imbricate himself in the landscape. This place justifies his sense of self. Language similarly enables him to connect with the world around him and he emphasised the importance of speaking Catalan as a means of belonging:

> *"And we all speak Catalan so that it is a means of knowing that you are amongst family" (Participant I.20).*

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He equates the wider population to his kin, feeling that the common language binds Catalan speakers together. In this can be discerned his reading of a boundary between them and us: 'us' being the Catalan speaking population and 'them' being the rest of the local population.

From the perspective of the Catalan-speaking residents, the language was an important feature of their identity:

> *"My heart belongs here, my language is the language of this mountain and this is what makes me a Catalan first of all" (Participant R.3).*

Language, so this participant feels, is firmly rooted in the physical and geographical landscape. The agency of the mountain is evident both as the material embodiment of the Catalan language, and as the provider of the language to the Catalan people. The Canigou and the Catalan language are co-actors in enabling people to realise their Catalan identity.

Recognition of exposure to other languages and cultures was recognised as 'progress' by the participants but this did not necessarily entail completely positive feelings:

> *"When I was young, I only heard Catalan. Today young people are exposed to many languages - like English. I'm not saying that is a bad thing, it shows how connected we are now, but as long as it doesn't put us in the shadows" (Participant R.25).*

> *"I know that we have to be open to progress and that means moving with the rest of the world but it shouldn't mean that we lose our identity and become the same as everyone else. We have these traditions here and they make us who we are and we mustn't lose them" (Participant R.16).*

> *"It is important that we don't get left behind so we must be open to what others are doing in other parts of the world. We can't hold our young people back; they need to know how the rest of the world works so they can be part of it. But that shouldn't mean that we all become the same, part of the same world, if you understand me, we have to be different at the same time. That's what makes us interesting" (Participant R.1).*

There is an underlying fear that globalisation could eradicate cultural differences; the participants R.16 and R.1 are saying that in fact strength of contribution lies in richness of experience and diversity. For these reasons, the supremacy of the Catalan language in the villages was paramount:

> *"So it is important that we honour our language [Catalan]; it is and should always remain the language of this area. This is one of our contributions to the world" (Participant R.30).*

The strength of feeling for the Catalan language was very much in evidence in these testimonies. It clearly served to create a distinct sense of belonging to the region and to the family of Catalan speakers.

6.4.3 The Catalan language in the landscape

Having outlined the different pathways of both the French and Catalan languages in bringing people together, this section analyses the role of Catalan as an expression of regional identity. With official recognition granted to Catalan as a regional language by the French government in 2008, language can be seen as a key indicator of regional or ethnic discontent, of a people trying to re-establish themselves either within or outside a national framework. The Catalan language is a case in point, as demonstrated by the recent renaming of the region to *Occitanie* (2016), ignoring the Catalan linguistic element (see Chapter Three, section 3.2.2). The political and administrative agenda of the national government has provoked the question of identity through language and illustrated the unease between local and national identities. French identity and can sit alongside local identity as long as the latter is not threated. Once local identity becomes a 'second citizen' and can be overridden by the national agenda, local feelings are mobilised in defence of regional identity. Sylvia Andolfo, the owner of a pastry shop in Perpignan, stressed the importance being able to identify with a place name. Referring to the region's name change of 2016, she said:

> A name gives identity, so this reform has made us a lot more aware of who we really are, especially since we're being told that our culture will be buried under a name that has never been ours (Andolfo, 2016).

This was witnessed as a response to the regional name changes imposed by the French government in 2016 and can be evidenced by the sign in the following photograph, Figure 6.7, which clearly demarcates the territory as '*Pais CATALÀ*' (Catalan country) in the Catalan language. The local councils responded to the national initiative by erecting these signs at the entrance to all the villages and towns in the region. The visual effect of these signs is to influence people's perceptions of the villages by marking out the territory as

distinctly Catalan, not French. The Catalan flag, seen all over the region of Catalonia on both sides of the border reinforces this message on the sign. By stating that this is Catalan country, the signs place this identity as an uncontroversial fact in the landscape. In 2021 there were further demonstrations in Perpignan against another perceived attack on Catalan identity as the wording on the city's coat-of-arms was changed by the mayor, Aliot, from '*Perpignan, ville Catalan*', to '*Perpignan, la Rayonnante*' (*L'Indépendant,* 9th April 2021). Meaning Perpignan, the Radiant, the political neutrality of the term angered the local population who felt that it was a deliberate attempt to undermine their identity. The Catalan language is as much a part of the Canigou region as the mining features through its physical presence. Catalan language signs are spatial indicators of the identity of the surroundings and embed the language as an integral part of the landscape.

Figure 6.7 The village sign clearly demarcates the territory as Catalan country (source: S. Jenkins Carter).

The visual linguistic forms displayed in the landscape reinforce the message of kinship between the language, landscape and Catalan identity. Catalan language signs are a symbolic construction of the identity of the Canigou landscape, illustrating Gorter's point that "public space is not neutral but a negotiated and contested area" (Gorter, 2013, p. 197). Not only do these signs indicate the identity of the landscape but they also serve to reinforce the message about the identity of the Catalan people. The sign, "Here lives a Catalan" (see Chapter Three, Figure 3.4) layers the identity of the inhabitant, the home, the place and the locale as Catalan.

All the new regional names in France incorporated terms which placed the identity of the region in the landscape and of the thirteen created, most accepted their new designated names. Feelings still run high in the villages of the Canigou. One of the long-term residents explained:

> "I was there at the demonstrations. I will never refer to my homeland as Occitanie. The name means nothing to me. I don't speak the language, I speak Catalan. I am Catalan and I always will be until the day I die" (Participant R.3).

The feeling of outrage at the imposition of the name change was particularly keen amongst those descended from the refugees:

> "I am Catalan, Catalan of the South or North, what does it matter; we are all Catalans. I can never say I am from Occitanie, it is a mockery of my identity" (Particiant R.8).

The border with Spain which separates the Catalans is irrelevant in the above testimony. The participant can connect his identity with those who live on the other side of a national border, but not to a neighbouring region within France. His Catalan identity renders the state border invisible; the boundary lies between Catalans and the rest of France and Spain.

Interestingly, one of the proposed names for the region referenced its geographical features: *Pyrénées-Méditéranée* was culturally neutral but highlights the sea and the mountains. At the same time, it would have given the region a spotlight in a global world: "In an environment of globalization, we should have taken full advantage of our two amazing natural assets, for which everybody envies us and nobody disputes" (Minder, 2016). Minder's argument could be interpreted as a marketing tool but at the same time it illustrates the affinity that people feel for their 'natural' assets and the need to ground

identity in one's landscape. It also provides an interesting insight into the perceived impact of living in a world where 'local' may be overshadowed by a global agenda. Minder draws attention to the fact, in his opinion, that these geographical assets are the envy of the rest of the world. As such, he highlights how local identity has as much a place in the world as wider, regional and national identities by implying that these features belie the region's importance as a relatively small area in a global context.

This section has illustrated how language embeds the Catalan identity in the landscape through visual signs in Catalan which state that this is Catalan country. These visual representations of *Catalanité,* supported by testimonies from participants, redraw the boundaries imposed by the nation state to highlight their regional identity.

6.5 Local and global

The following section considers Massey's argument that local identity is impacted by global influences. The relationship between local and global is explored through the participants' attitudes to wine growing, an economic main stay of the region, and to travel testimonies which carry messages about the nature of this relationship to the locality. The final part of this section relates participants concerns about protecting their mining heritage in the face of globalising influences.

A picture of culture as a process in which meanings are received, explored and shared has emerged from this research. At the same time as accommodating a range of values and beliefs within a group culture, the cultural meanings are very much tied to the locality. However, this emphasis on locality is not totally exclusive as participants' remarks also recognise that they can import their own meanings and feelings into a different culture. As discussed in the previous sections, many of the incomers interviewed in the research area stated that through participation in the Catalan cultural traditions, they were able to connect their own memories and experiences in the new cultural forum.

Given that this research argues that culture lies in individual *and* group meanings and attitudes which evolve, as Williams clarifies, through contact and discovery, the traditions of place are therefore constitutive of local and global values from various sources. Although on initial appearance, the research area portrays distinctly Catalan cultural

features, the locale is and always has been a hybrid of influences, although these influences accrue over time and as such are not visible processes. They "write themselves into the land" (Williams, 2014a, p. 2) and become an accepted part of the cultural landscape. The recent importation of the *Castell* tradition is an exception, having been recently introduced into the region, although those participants involved in its introduction argued that it serves to consolidate their identity with those Catalans south of the border. But this does illustrate Massey's argument that the uniqueness of places "is always already a product in part of 'global' forces", and by global she refers to places just outside the locale as well as further afield (Massey, 1995, p. 183). The problem, Massey identifies, also lies with the word 'tradition' which, as she states, implies a feeling of nostalgia, "something which can only be maintained or lost" and which one feels is rooted in the past (Massey, 1995, p. 184). Tradition implies that places, their identities and cultures are introverted and inert and are bounded and inward-looking. This is the reason why the emphasis of participants' statements locates identity and culture very much in place and anchors it to the past.

The emphasis on place can be further demonstrated by examining participants' comments about wine growing. French wines are labelled according to the area or vineyard where the grapes were grown, locating them specifically in the local earth. Viticulture is an important economic resource for the region and even though wine is not produced on the slopes of the mountain, there are many vineyards in the region.

Most of my participants related the quality of the local wines to the soil in which the vines are grown, for example:

> "We produce excellent wines here, because of the high quality of the soils. They may not be as well-known as say those of Bordeaux but they are just as good, if not better. And I am not saying that just because they are my wines, from my home. Well maybe I would say it anyway!" (Participant R.44).

The following testimonies bring a wider phenomenon into a local context:

> "I know which I like but in the end it doesn't matter where it is from. Our wines are excellent and I can compare other wines with ours. Of course, you know my preferences but it [wine] connects us all" (Participant R.19).

> "These are excellent wines. I did not really know much about them until I moved here but there are some fine ones, world class really, even though they do not get the

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publicity that some of the great say New Zealand wines do. But I can connect with them. Wine is a culture which connects us worldwide" (Participant I.29).

Concerns over the vulnerability of the vine to rapid spread of disease from outside sources reflected the collision between local and global. Participant R.27 reflected on how diseases brought from outside sources made not only vines but the land itself vulnerable:

> *"Our vines demonstrate how healthy our land is and it is healthy here, that is why we are strong people. If the land is sick, the vines are sick and we get sick. But if disease comes to the vines from outside, then our land becomes poor quality also" (Participant R.27).*

> *"If we stay in our own world, then we are not opening ourselves up to disease from other parts. We have all we need here but we cannot create a bubble around us. Insects that carry disease do not respect our borders and they never have. So I don't know" (Participant R.27).*

These statements use the vine as an analogy for the locality and illustrate the indecision concerning the relationship between local and global from a social and cultural perspective. Both incomers and residents alike reflected this apparent dichotomy, despite the former group having moved into the region. All expressed the desire to see local traditions override global trends and implicit in these testimonies lies the desire to be part of something lasting, rather than a fleeting moment, illustrating Massey's argument about the stability of tradition:

> *"We mustn't lose our traditions. They are the most important part of us. They tell the story of why we are here in this place and at this time" (Participant I.55).*

> *"How can you reconcile our local heritage with that in other parts of the world? You can't, not for me. They root us in the earth. A worldwide heritage is not a heritage, it is rather a trend. It can't last because it is new and something else will come along to take its place. That's the way the world works now" (Participant R.16).*

Global trends are perceived as short-lived and by implication, local heritage is much more sustainable. The processual, changing nature of culture, described by Williams (2014a), is seen as a threat to the traditions which anchor the past to the locality.

However, at the same time, some participants were in favour of this sort of progress which linked their region to the rest of the world reflecting a desire to be a part of global conversations, certainly for the future:

"Otherwise how can we carry on? We can't live in a time warp. It is not for us but for our children. They have to live in a different world now to the one in which we grew up" (Participant I.36).

There were cautionary words however from Participant I.36 who voiced concerns that a more global identity would lead to the concept of sameness. These thoughts were echoed by Participant I.34.

"We are all the same deep down, our hopes and wishes. And we all have dreams. But we don't have the same dreams. If we did it we would lose all this diversity and I think that is what makes us human" (Participant I.36).

"But if we all like the same things, talk about the same things, what is the difference? In the end we will find ourselves trying harder to stand out. And what will that lead to?" (Participant I.34).

However, Goodhart's (2017) point about a more global outlook refers to appreciation of other ethnicities and cultures and acceptance of closer ties between countries. He does not equate a global outlook with the erosion of local identities, which was the concern of most of the participants.

Reconciling local with global was therefore a problematic issue for all the research participants with the majority not wanting to lose the cultural identity of the region but at the same time wishing to be able to contribute to the global dialogue. It was in this context that the Catalan identity and traditions provided a bridge. Having the security of this background, many felt, gave them enough sense of their own individuality, or regional identity, to be able to also feel a part of the national and global cultural frameworks without losing their sense of difference:

"How can we be prepared for the future if we don't know where we have come from. We need to know where we are going and what lies ahead. We can be proud of this [mining] heritage. It gives us confidence, it is like a badge we wear with pride when we go and meet the rest of the world. It gives us recognition for who we are" (Participant R.25).

"All this talk of globalisation I think actually makes us more aware of our roots. We need something to hang on to" (Participant I.55).

"I am happy to meet people from other cultures, it makes me realise how important my own heritage is" (Participant I.56).

Picking up on Massey's argument (1995), global and local are on a continuum of exchange. Looking outward makes people turn inward to a deeper appreciation of their locality. It is a two-way dialogue. As borderland, the French-Catalan landscape is a is place where cultural exchange takes place, exemplified by the *Castell*. Cultural exchange is also evident in the following testimony which exemplifies Massey's point about the "global construction of the local" (Massey, 1995, p. 183). The statement reveals a heightened awareness of the specific identity of the village as a result of experiencing its place in the wider world. The iron mining background enabled regional identity to link into a global forum:

> *"Of course the village hasn't really changed but it feels as if it has. We are very involved with the mining heritage here, of course we are and now having experienced London, the iron is so important because it describes this place and I can see now how important everything is in the big picture" (Participant I.56).*

Visiting London thus gave the participant a new perspective on how the local heritage of Canigou's iron industry was part of a global narrative. As a consequence of the visit the importance of the Canigou iron is even more deeply embedded in the landscape. A sense that the global 'big picture' consists of a network of local 'small pictures' recurred in other participants' travel narratives, particularly Participant I.7's reference to his culture being part of a worldwide culture:

> *"We are lucky because we can travel and see these other places and experience different cultures. It is interesting to experience because it puts our heritage in perspective. Our culture is just a part of culture worldwide and even though ours is special to us, and makes us who we are, we can still enjoy other cultures" (Participant I.7).*

> *"You know that when you travel I know people say that it broadens your mind, it is not a cliché, it is actually true. You open your eyes to something bigger and then you take it home and bury it deep in your own culture too" (Participant I.6).*

Participants' cultural meanings were widened as a result of experiencing other cultures, supporting the idea of cultural flow, whilst Participant I.6 specifically acknowledged that his own cultural outlook consisted of local and wider influences.

The following participants illustrate two different angles on local culture and heritage. The first statement highlights the idea of cultural flow through exposure to cultures other than one's own. The second statement implies a bounded sense of culture by portraying a

satisfaction with all that life offers in the immediate locality. Interestingly, even though the Catalan towns of Prades and Perpignan are within a 50 kilometre radius of the home village, the testimony gives the impression that they are unfamiliar territory, thus heightening the specificity of what is deemed local.

> *"We like to visit other countries because we can come home and appreciate what we have here. Too often we take our heritage for granted but you need to see what other cultures consider as important and then go back and look at your own" (Participant I.15).*

> *"No, I don't need to go anywhere else. Yes we go to Prades for shopping and trips to Perpignan but this is my country and my friends and family are all here so I don't feel the need. This is my homeland and I am quite content" (Participant R.1).*

Having analysed the specificities of some of the cultural traditions of the Canigou region, I wish to finish the section by relating the themes of local/global and cultural flow to the iron mining heritage. As argued in Chapter Five, involvement in the heritage projects gives people a sense of embeddedness in the landscape. As well as bringing a deeper understanding of the mining activity and its' importance in the Canigou landscape, participants also spoke about relating their own independent thoughts and memories to the mining heritage. The mining initiatives provided the space for old and new meanings to come together. Participant R.1 spoke about his involvement as a means of being with his late mining father and it also gave him the space to consider his own future and place in the world:

> *"My father will always be here. It is like I am taking up his shovel and carrying on his work as he watches me. But it is important time for me too. The world is changing and we can't live in isolation any longer. Our little but important [mining] heritage connects us to all the other mining celebrations in other parts of the world. Maybe we can even make an exchange" (Participant R.1).*

Participant R.2 articulates her thoughts that in the future, people may acknowledge the importance of the mining past but will take their own meanings from this heritage, appropriate for their time:

> *"We don't know what will be of value in the future. Our young people may want to walk away from the iron mining history but they can see what was important for us and that might help them to find what is important for themselves" (Participant R2).*

These heritage projects illustrate both the connect between local and global, and the compatibility of local identity and cultural flow. Through the expression of openness to connect with the global mining fraternity (Participant R.1), and the sense that meanings change, implicit in the testimony of Participant R.2, the impact of exposure to different cultures is expressed as a positive force on local identity. As the following participant states, an appreciation and understanding of one's heritage is not limiting, but promotes an expansive outlook:

> *"We have worked hard to keep the [mining] heritage alive because that is what made us and so it is something that we must pass on to the younger people so that they will always know that wherever they go in the world, they come from this land of iron. Who knows what the world will look like in generations to come. Frontiers may be different but your heritage is always with you and this makes you tolerant of other points of view" (Participant R.16).*

The testimonies in this section have illustrated how the experience of other cultures enabled people to situate the narrative of their locality in a global perspective. At the same time, this deepened their insights into their own culture and heritage. An element of fluidity between cultures could be seen as those participants who had travelled to the UK spoke about experiencing shared values and hopes, even though these were expressed in different ways.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated Williams' claims that culture is a part of the ordinary daily lives of people; it is not hierarchical, or limited to the remit of a few with similar social backgrounds. It has argued that culture is a way of living because it exists in the day-to-day experiences and meanings which individuals take from the world around them. In this respect, Tilley's description of 'being in the world', is an appropriate representation of the participants' relationship with their environment. The testimonies highlight the ways in which individuals seek to engage with the world around them, to find shared meanings and to contribute to the social scene. The cultural forum, I have argued, is a feature of the present, rather than a hark back to the past. The import of the *Castells* into *Catalonia du Nord* from Spanish Catalonia represents the cultural values of the region today.

Two seemingly contradictory themes concerning the nature of culture emerged from this research. Firstly, culture links people, the past and their environment. Connecting with the past through traditions, heritage and history validates a community's identity and provides an element of stability. People who have shared experiences are able to develop similar value and belief systems which underpin their group coherence. Identifying culture with a place in the landscape roots both individual and collective identity in the landscape.

The second theme to emerge is what this study terms 'cultural flow' which acknowledges Marty's (2019) idea of 'portable cultural outlook'. Culture, as a set of values, beliefs and dispositions can accommodate both local and global aspects of belonging and it is through shared experiences that people can move through the seeming boundaries of a culture. Even though culture binds a group of people together, it is not an exclusive group. As my data has shown, individuals can move into different cultural groups with varying levels of commitment. This depends on the depth of meanings and emotions which they are able and willing to invest into the new cultural community. The testimony of the incomers in section 6.3.2 illustrates how involvement in the landscape offers a perspective on local culture which in turn gives them the opportunity to experience common values and beliefs. The interesting feature to emerge is that the individual brings this 'portable cultural outlook' to reinforce the identity of the particular locality. Their primary interest is the local culture and their main purpose is to become involved in the local customs and ways of life. It is the 'outlook' which is portable. Individuals can bring their own meanings into a variety of cultures at the same time as wishing to become a part of the local culture. In this way the seeming cultural boundaries are reconciled with the idea of cultural flow.

French Catalonia's status as a 'border country' makes it exemplary of cultural flow. The Catalans of the Canigou live on the boundaries of national and cultural identities and whilst traditions mark this place in the landscape, the cultural values flow across the national divide. For the *Catalans du Nord*, local identity is defined by being 'in between' rather than absolute and fixed; in a sense, it is part French, part Spanish – and yet wholly itself. Whilst incomers do not claim Catalan identity, they are able to feel a part of the

culture through their immersion in events and projects. It is their way of being in the world, of embedding themselves in the past, the people and the environment.

Undoubtedly, the strength of feeling concerning Catalan traditions and their continued survival distinguished all the research conversations and the Catalan language in particular was the focus of this cultural heritage. Described as a survivor language, it reflects the feelings of the resident population for their Catalan heritage. This did not sit at odds for the majority of those taking part in the research with their sense of French national identity and showcases the way in which identities can encompass areas outside their own locality.

The iron mining heritage projects epitomise a cultural environment in which individuals make sense of their world through their involvement in the initiatives. For incomers, the materiality of the mining remains enabled them to empathise with the past mining activity, understand the importance and relevance of iron in the landscape and feel part of the community. As illustrated in section 6.3.2, Participant I.22 feels that he is able to identify with the past through working with the mining machinery so that it functions again. He regards the relationship as mutual: in bringing it back into working order, he has understood the importance of iron in the story of the Canigou. He has become embedded in the landscape through the co-processual relationship between nature and culture:

> *"Now I feel that part of me belongs here because of this work [maintenance of mining machinery in the museum at Escaro]. I can say that I belong, that I am part of this place. This [machinery] has worked with me, together we have got it going again. It told me its stories as I told it mine as we worked. So now I understand the importance of the Canigou in life here. I have learnt to love the mountain, and everything it offers"* *(Participant I.22).*

The projects both mark the identity of the Canigou and also accommodate individual meanings and dispositions. In a similar vein to the argument about border country being creative spaces (Ingold, 2011, p. 192), the iron mining projects sit astride old meanings and new ones.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Conclusion

"We don't know what will be of value in the future. Our young people may want to walk away from the iron mining history but they can see what was important for us and that might help them to find what is important for themselves" (Participant R.2).

7.1 Introduction

This project has sought to understand how the people of this mountain region define themselves with respect to the landscape and the mining past, and occupies a distinctive position through its analysis of an underexamined case study: the iron-mining villages of the Canigou mountain region. Of particular interest is the location's border position, on the boundaries of France and Spain and yet its noticeable Catalan identity. Changes in population aggregates since the mine closures have resulted in a high proportion of incomers to the villages, whilst the number of families with direct connections to the industrial past are in a minority. In light of these social and demographic changes, my research has examined how the villagers embed their identity in this landscape and is distinguished by its exploration of the relationship between identity, memory and culture in a mountain environment which has emotive and symbolic meanings for Catalans.

The five villages which were the focus for my research are distinctive for their long tradition of iron-mining and are all host to various initiatives to keep the profile of this past in living memory. Hence the heritage projects provided a lens with which I was able to examine the relationship between the past and present identities of the people and this landscape. The importance of the Canigou as a symbol of Catalonia warranted examination into the ways in which the mountain conferred a sense of belonging.

As stated in the Introduction, the aims of my research were:

- to examine the relationship between the communities and the Canigou landscape and how this informs identity and a 'sense of place';

- to analyse the manner in which a local sense of belonging is embedded in the physical landscape.

The data produced compelling evidence that the Canigou is instrumental in defining the identity of the villagers. It is the focal point for Catalans to come together on both sides of the border and inspires values of resilience and strength in the local population. Through appropriation of memories and engagement with this mountain landscape, the villagers are able to realise a 'sense of place' and understand the mutual relationship between themselves and their local environment. The material remains of the past industry featured as an integral part of the landscape; my study showed that when heritage projects are determined, initiated and run by the locals themselves, they provide a vehicle for villagers to define the identity of their communities in the present time. In this respect, it has furthered previous research such as that carried out by Dicks, (2000) and Kyriakidis (2020) which argued for the involvement of local narratives in heritage projects.

> *"This mountain is my home and iron is my heritage. Without this I would be a different person. So it is important to know who you are in order to know where you are going in life, how you can contribute and what your role is in all of this" (Participant R.25).*

While the cultural traditions of the region consolidate the identity of place, they are characterised by the variety of meanings which people bring into the forum. Incomers' testimonies demonstrated cultural flow through their feelings of connectiveness with the values such as those implicit in these Catalan traditions. Watching the assembling of the human tower, the Catalan *Castell,* one incomer was able to connect with the feelings of enthusiasm of those involved. Although he talks about the Catalan show of unity, the cultural meanings flow beyond the perceived cultural boundaries to enable him to relate to the values and beliefs of the performance:

> *"It is not just a show but a symbol of unity. It is marvellous to watch and respect these traditions. They are part of the population and remind them of what they share. I am not Catalan but I can feel their enthusiasm" (Participant I.14).*

The following summaries refer to the nexus of responses to the original aims of this research and highlight the pertinent salient features.

7.2 Key findings of this research

The key findings of this research are summarised as follows and will be considered in greater detail in the remaining sections of this concluding chapter:

- How a 'sense of place' is engendered by engagement with the landscape and its features;

- Recognition by the locals of the mutual relationship between themselves and their surrounding environment, demonstrating the agency implicit in the theoretical framework of New Materialisms;

- The part played by the landscape and specific features in recalling memories and creating new ones and the accruing layers of identity in this;

- The material remains of the mining past are a dynamic part of the village communities, evolving to reflect changes in society and landscape;

- Place is a marker of identity. For incomers, absorption in activities in the landscape leads to a sense of belonging. Childhood recollections revealed immersion in the landscape, where sense of self and one's surroundings merge. I refer to this as Playscape;

- The emotional significance of the Canigou mountain landscape as a repository of memories. For incomers, feelings of belonging are engendered by embedding themselves in the mountain environment through appropriation of memories and creation of new ones;

- Culture is a way of 'being in the world' (Tilley, 1994, p. 12) through sharing and understanding the meanings that shape societies. Manifested by its 'presentness', it is a living embodiment of one's connectivity to the surrounding environment. Whilst cultural traditions serve to reinforce the identity of the locality, people from outside the area can access this way of living by appreciation of shared values. I refer to this as cultural flow;

- Catalan rather than French identity is of paramount importance, especially when regional and national policies threaten the Catalan identity of the population. Living on the boundary, this border country offers a creative space for people to mark out their identity in relation to France and Spain.

These findings provide answers to the aims of this research. A sense of place emerged as a key feature of this study, with locals protecting and respecting the identity of this mountain. Memories were important in enabling residents and incomers alike to embed themselves in the landscape. Places, particularly the material remains of the mining era, held memories of past family members and happenings, for both residents and incomers, reflecting a layering of identity, both of the landscape and for individuals.

The cultural traditions such as the *Sardana* dance were seen as important identity markers of the Catalans. These cultural practices were seen as indicators of how the *Catalans du Nord* (North Catalans) define their specific identity in the present day. Whilst these traditions reinforced the Catalan identity of the locality, they did not throw up boundaries excluding others as the testimonies of incomers illustrated. Incomers expressed how they were able to relate to the meanings inherent in these customs. Referring to this as cultural flow, this finding substantiates Marty's (2019) point about a portable cultural outlook and illustrates how people can move between cultures and take appropriate meanings from the new environment.

7.3 To examine the relationship between the communities and the Canigou landscape and how this informs identity and a 'sense of place'

Whether the locals were Catalan or not, the Canigou was regarded as an important feature in their lives and inspired a sense of awe and respect. It delivered a 'sense of place' for everyone through its physical presence in the landscape, its past mining narrative, and its present-day role in the lives of the communities. In brief, the photograph, Figure 4.6, gives an indication of the way in which it dominates the landscape and almost encircles and protects the village of La Bastide with its horseshoe configuration. In Chapter Four I referred to testimonies which described it in terms of a

nurturing and caring presence and this theme of kinship with the Canigou is an area for future research. One incomer described the emotional effect of the mountain on him (see Chapter Four, section 4.3.4):

"It is such a beautiful mountain and the views from the top are magnificent. I felt a profound silence up there on the summit" (Participant I.10).

There was a sense of pride in the high-quality iron ore which the mountain produced and the mining past figured in all the conversations. The desire to protect the mining identity of the villages was evident 'on the ground' and the photograph of the material features of this past industry at the entrance to the village of La Bastide (Figure 5.1) is representative of similar initiatives placed in prominent positions in all the research villages. Today, the mountain is enjoyed for its leisure activities, primarily hiking and many participants spoke of their love of being on the mountainside:

"We are not from here; my family are from Normandy. But I love this landscape, its beauty and its peace. It makes me feel at home, even though I am not from here" (Participant I.29).

In Chapter Four I delved into the theoretical framework of New Materialisms through the work of academics such as Coole and Frost, Rovelli, Bennet, Attala and Steel. Their position reconfigures our concept of material as inert and distinct from people and other animate life forms; we are all composed of matter and are part of a "vast web of interacting entities" (Rovelli, 2022, p. 68), in a constant state of becoming. Given the number of responses which revealed how people embed themselves in their surroundings, this was an appropriate tool with which to analyse the special relationship which my participants had with this landscape. The key finding from the data related to participants' perception of the agency of the material world, including landscape. As I have stated in the preceding paragraph, the Canigou was regarded as a living presence in their lives, *"watching and protecting us"* (Participant R.25*,* Chapter Four, section 4.3.3) and *"This mountain is the source of my life"* (Participant R.16, Chapter Four, section 4.3.4). Similarly, the example of the Catalan Hammer in Chapter Five, section 5.4 highlighted the relationship of dependency between people and material objects, *"we are tied together"* (Participant R.51, Chapter Five, section 5.4); the hammer was

acknowledged as instrumental in enabling people to transform the ore into a malleable bloom. At the same time, the hammer was also referred to in personifying terms, as a *"magnificent beast"* (Participant R.51, Chapter Five, section 5.4).

Although there were no references to the matter of 'matter' being the life force of everything and everyone, there were allusions to the fact that the participants felt entangled in the materiality of the landscape and its features. For example,

> *"Now I feel that part of me belongs here because of this work [maintenance of mining machinery in the museum at Escaro]. I can say that I belong, that I am part of this place. This [machinery] has worked with me, together we have got it going again. It told me its stories as I told it mine as we worked. So now I understand the importance of the Canigou in life here.* (Participant I. 22) (Chapter Six, 6.3.2).

There were also inferences to the flow of energy between people, the landscape, and the material features, and between material features themselves on the mountainside. I contextualised this with Participant R. 25's perception of the mountain now being too tough for her now in her old age. I also used the example of the derelict mining building in Chapter Five, section 5.4 to illustrate how the young saplings look vigorous and healthy, draining the energy from the stonework as the building crumbles over time whilst the continued presence of the mining features on the mountainside was regarded by many as an extension of the natural landscape:

> *"These furnaces have always been here in my lifetime. I don't see them as different to nature, for me they are all the same. If they were taken down it would be the same feeling as if part of the mountain was cut away overnight"* (Participant R.16).

My research has also contributed to the conversations concerning ways of being, through immersion in the landscape. Residents referred to their place in the landscape; the landscape was a part of them and the mining features provided them with references to their long years on the Canigou. Childhood recollections related how the landscape and sense of self merged during play. The landscape was both the background and the foreground to the activity. I refer to this as 'playscape' which involves unconscious absorption and acceptance of the surrounding environment and picks up on Ingold's ideas of our perceptive compass which enables us to locate ourselves in our surroundings, and

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on his term 'Taskscape', space defined by an array of human activity (Ingold, 2011, p. 195).

The desire to belong, to be a part of this landscape indicated a strong sense of the emotive content of place which was particularly interesting from the perspective of the many incomers to the region. For incomers, the information evidenced how they felt they became embedded in this landscape even though they claimed that it was not their landscape. Crucially, active engagement with this mountain landscape, whether in the form of leisure activities such as walking, or by means of involvement in the heritage projects, or, through working with the soil, were significant in promoting feelings of being a part of the place and gave people a sense of purpose and fulfilment within the locality. Incomer I.10 expresses the variety of ways in which he felt able to identify with a place through physically embedding himself in the landscape:

> *"It is by digging in the land that you get to know a place. If you get your hands dirty then you get to know the soil and understand it, whether or not it is by growing vegetables, or by clearing some part of the building [former mine building]"* *(Participant I.10).*

As well as the materiality of the surroundings, my study also revealed a phenomenological understanding of the mountain. Many spoke about their feelings of awe, with particular respect to the Canigou and expressed themselves in terms of an emotional response to the feelings which the landscape inspires: *"I felt a profound silence"* (Participant I.10), *"a sense of peace"* (Participant R.25). In stressing the relationship between people and the materiality of their surroundings, I argue that this is concomicant with a phenomenological perspective of experiencing, of being in the landscape which, induces a sense of place.

The materiality of the mining heritage features prompted meanings and memories which enabled people to connect with their environment. This was particularly pertinent for incomers who spoke of stories from their past which they felt were related to, and recalled by the industrial past as they discovered it on the Canigou. In some instances the landscape from their past merged with that of the present even though these were geographically distanced:

"We often walk along the track [of the former narrow gauge railway] and have our picnic lunch at Rapoulem [the bottom station for the aerial ropeway]. My grandfather was a miner [from South Wales] and here I feel close to him. Well in a strange sort of way, it's as though his past is also here even though he worked over a thousand miles away. But they are the same people, these miners" (Participant I.7).

Through transferring their stories and memories onto a new landscape, this not only allowed them to find their place in this landscape, but also gave incomers a part in the present narrative. I addressed the concepts of individual and collective memory in Chapter four, section 4.2.2. and highlighted Coupland's work on the connection between living memory and historical or collective memory. Her research addressed how memory is both collective and individual; and can be seen as "an exchange between 'individual' and 'collective' positions" (Coupland, 2012, p. 40). I attended some of the heritage events in the research villages and was therefore able to witness the perpetuation of the collective memory of the past mining activity through formal memorialisations, such as the unveiling of the sculpture in Escaro and the guided walk, the *Nuit des Mineurs*, and the way in which these events were also the place where individual memories were both created and recreated. These occasions were intended to keep the mining identity of the village in the public space, but the nexus of memories and interpretations which arose indicates how the collective memory is changing to reflect the changing identity of the landscape. To repeat the statement from Chapter Five, section 5.6 which reflects the absorption of stories from elsewhere into the collective memory:

"My father was a miner in Normandy. He had tough times, just like here. My town was made from coal. It is a part of my genes and I am proud of it, even though he wanted to forget. It was over and life had to change and move on. Yes, we remember and we are grateful but my village is different now. Coal brought us jobs and sustained us but now we have other means" (Participant I.29).

With only a handful of families who have a direct connection with the mining past, living memory of the industry will soon die out and inevitably, the nature of collective memory will evolve to reflect the collective memory of the material features in their 'presentness', as they appear in the landscape today:

"At first it was all about the few miners still left alive and they helped us. Then gradually many more villagers joined us and have brought in their own expertise and

some are from mining families elsewhere so we have those stories too" (Participant I.10).

Whilst residents were clear that the iron mining heritage was an integral part of their identity, incomers to the villages spoke about their wish to be involved in the heritage projects to deepen their sense of belonging to the mountain landscape and to keep the mining story alive:

"because we didn't want to see all this social and industrial history which was in people's homes, to disappear into oblivion. We wanted to get things out of attics, dust them off and put them into a collection which told the complete story. This way we could keep the story of these parts alive, obviously with the permission of those concerned" (Participant I.10).

"It is not my heritage, but I understand it. We moved here to be part of the community so we adopt it [the heritage] but it is not in our blood. This industry gives me another view of life which we knew nothing about before we came here. It is remarkable, how it has existed for so long. No wonder they call it the mountain of iron. These people were made of iron" (Participant I.49).

Whilst the relevance of local involvement in the heritage process has already been acknowledged as a critical feature in the memorialisation of everyday lives (Dicks, 2000; Kyriakidis, 2020), my research has gone further in demonstrating the importance of initiatives instigated and supported by local people themselves in order for the heritage to carry their own meanings about their sense of identity, to tell their own story and critically to *own* the telling. Engagement with these material remains is in fact a conversation with the present, a living part of the landscape which reflects the changing face of heritage with the concomitant layers of meaning. I refer back to Lowenthal, Chapter Five, section 5.5, "A heritage disjoined from ongoing life cannot enlist popular support. To adore the past is not enough; good caretaking involves continual creation" (Lowenthal, 2000, p. 22). However, I wish to reiterate that most of those interviewed were in the retirement age group and had time to devote to leisure activities which included involvement in the heritage projects. Future research is needed to identify how a younger cohort relate to the landscape, how they interpret the mining features, or even if they are at all interested:

"We don't know what will be of value in the future. Our young people may want to walk away from the iron mining history but they can see what was important for us and that might help them to find what is important for themselves" (Participant R2).

'Ongoing life' emerged as layers. The more elderly residents mourned what I term 'lost landscapes', the landscapes of their formative years. These are now barely visible as the landscape layers accrue over time. I photographed the former terraces, Figure 4.7, now overgrown to illustrate this. These layers are evident in all areas of my research, not just landscape but also heritage layers, identity layers, memory layers. The photograph (Figure 3.14) in Chapter Three, section 3.3.5, similarly evidences the heritage layers in the landscape: these were formerly mining paths connecting the adits (mine entrances); today they are hiking routes on the mountainside. Individual memories brought varied layers to the collective memory of the mining past as incomers and residents alike brought new meanings to the heritage features. My study therefore highlights how identity layers accrue, both of the landscape, its features and in individuals, as a dynamic process impacted by the agency of each upon the other. For my participants, this was a particular feature of the discussions I had with the incomers who, having spoken about how they brought a part of their past with them, all reflected on how their sense of self developed through engagement with their new surroundings. This substantiates Ingold's (2018) stance on the 'presentness' of identity, how a person is aware of their identity at that moment in time, whether that is during participation in community events or by simply being in the landscape. I refer again to the testimony of I.7 in Chapter Four, section 4.3.3 which highlights the layers of his identity as he recalls his mining ancestry, and the layered identity of the landscape:

"My grandfather was a miner [from South Wales] and here I feel close to him. Well in a strange sort of way, it's as though his past is also here even though he worked over a thousand miles away. But they are the same people, these miners" (Participant I.7)

Although my research indicated the changing face of landscape identity through the dynamic relationship of the locals with the heritage features, the villagers were clear that their investment in the projects lay in protecting the mining identity of the mountain. In Chapter Five, section 5.4, I discussed the significance of the strategic positioning of some

of the mining artefacts, a physical and visual statement in the landscape of the mining identity of the Canigou. Many of my study participants also stated that the mining past was a part of the story of the mountain and that the material remains belonged as much to the mountain as to the villages. There would therefore appear to be an apparent dichotomy between preserving the local identity of the Canigou, and its imperceptible changing identity brought about by incomers adding to the story which leads me on to my concluding comments concerning the second aim of this study, discussed in the following section.

7.4 To analyse the manner in which a local sense of belonging is embedded in the physical landscape

The second aim of this research was to situate the issues of identity, culture and heritage at a local level and at the same time to consider these feelings of belonging in a landscape which sits on the boundaries of two cultures. The background to this emerged from Goodhart's analysis of the tensions arising between protecting local identity and welcoming an outward looking perspective (Goodhart, 2017). My research highlighted the importance of the relationship between identity, cultural traditions and place which seemingly threw up boundaries of belonging in the landscape. However, the study highlighted the 'presentness' of the cultural practices, which reflected the inclusion of incomers. Hence this research has brought into sharper relief the argument that local and global identities exist side by side on a continuum of interactions between cultural experiences and place and provides a model for inclusiveness in a world where populations and groups are increasingly displaced by economic poverty, climate change and conflicts. This could lead into wider discussions about integrating cultural practices and further research would identify how people navigate these environments using the concepts of energy flow and 'mattering' of New Materialisms.

Chapter Six, section 6.1. outlined how the concept of culture arose as the participants spoke about the traditions of the region in terms of their heritage. However, they all referred to Catalan rather than French traditions, and continuing these was an important factor for the local population. Not only did this mean connecting the past to the present but it also signalled their determination to celebrate their distinct regional personality.

Neither wholly French, nor wholly Spanish, the *Catalans du Nord* are proud of their position at the crossroads of geography and history. Chapter Three related the movement of peoples in and out of the region over the centuries and this is mirrored in today's expressions of identity which welcome the contribution of incomers to consolidate the *Catalanité* of the region. The term was used to define the region as well as their own sense of identity:

> *"This notion of Catalanité is very real. It really does reflect the identity of the Canigou and the people who live here. I want to understand it because it defines us all in a way because we have chosen to live here" (Participant I.29).*

Participants referred to the term *Catalanité* to describe the feelings and expressions of being Catalan within the French nation. The relationship between local and global is part of the discursive landscape in French Catalonia, where identity in the landscape knows no border with Spanish Catalonia. The Canigou mountain is a symbol for Catalans on either side of the border and a space for identities to be negotiated. The Catalan celebrations on the mountain, held annually in June on the *Fête de Saint Jean,* presents the occasion for both French and Spanish Catalans to celebrate their commonality. Support for the exiled leader of Spanish Catalonia when he was welcomed to Perpignan in 2020, evidenced the strength of Catalan local identity. However, research testimonies indicated that the problems over the border belonged solely to the Spanish Catalans. Furthermore, as shown in Chapter Six, despite individual cases for purely Catalan identity, mainly emanating from those descendants of the refugees of 1939, most of the participants described their identity in national and regional terms and were able to accept that being French and being Catalan could sit side by side as long as their Catalan identity is respected. Chapter Six (section 6.4.3) and Chapter Three (section 3.2.2) described the reaction to the region's name change and the response of local government to reinforce the feelings of regional identity by erecting village signs indicating that these are Catalan villages.

Being Catalan *and* French allows people of the Canigou area to enjoy their unique position on the border with Spain, to share something with those living in Spanish Catalonia, and, at the same time, to be able to be part of the national identity of France and its role in the world. As one of my participants explained:

"To live in this part of the world is to be rich. We live at the meeting point of various nationalities, and we can watch from the mountains and across the sea and enjoy the fruits of this experience. We are connected" (Participant R.3).

Emphasis on Canigou's status as a meeting point or border zone helps reconcile potential tensions between the concept of fluid boundaries and the need to have a sense of allegiance to a particular locality. Accordingly, this thesis argued that the local identity of the Canigou is defined by cultural values which overlap and flow across perceived boundaries.

Whilst this study recognizes the importance of the role of traditions in marking the identity of a particular place, it also acknowledges that anyone is able to imbricate their personal identity in the culture through their individual experiences. This, I argue, makes culture a living organism in the present. It is a way of being in the world and is expressed through the way we live our lives, rather than a re-enactment of past practices. Culture flows through the channels of sharing and passing on ideas and belief systems and lies on a continuum of exchange and absorption. To reconcile the opposing positions of the boundedness of culture and an outward-looking, inclusive culture, this research picked up on Massey's work on the links between local and global to present the case that just as places evolve through their connectivity with other places, identity and cultures are also hybrids (Massey, 1995). Place is a continuous meeting point of relationships which dilute, metamorphose and contribute to its dynamic meanings in the landscape. The results of this study contribute to these ideas by illustrating that heritage and cultural practices are host to an eclectic mix of identities. The unveiling ceremony of the iron sculpture, Chapter Five, section 5.8, is a case in point. Incomer to the village, Participant I.20 described how he and his wife sensed the importance of the event and as a result, felt themselves to be imbricated in the mining story:

"Even though I am not from these parts, to be able to participate in the unveiling [of the sculpture] was a significant moment for me and my wife. We both felt that we had been witness to the history and that made us feel just a little bit part of it" (Participant I.20).

These findings also substantiated Marty's point (see section 6.1) that a local cultural outlook is not necessarily self-limiting, and research results identified the concept of

'cultural flow' as having relevance in the twenty-first century. People layer previous experiences and values onto new environments and across various situations, which belie the idea of culture as a fixed entity.

As illustrated by the above testimony of Participant I.20, this study revealed how incomers were able to embed their sense of themselves in the landscape through their participation in the traditions and ceremonies which celebrated Catalan identity and culture. In so doing they were able to push back the boundaries of their own cultural perceptions and embody a different perspective of life, however slight. In this sense, I argue that it is possible to live on cultural boundaries as people engage with differing cultural forums in varying degrees. The incomer who participated in the hunting of the boar exemplified this. He was able to take his own meanings from the cultural experiences, illustrating Williams' argument that culture is personal and specific to every individual (Williams, 2014c, p. 99-100). Seeing the landscape from a different perspective, the incomer embedded a part of himself in the locale through the hunt and its attendant rituals. His experience of the hunt acknowledges Williams' point that culture is for everyone, culture is ordinary (Williams, 2014a). Testimonies to the richness of cultural traditions from other groups and different landscape were seen as enablers of change in their ability to embrace differences as the following statement illustrates:

> *"You have to listen to other people's stories because that makes us tolerant. It is not a society if we all tell the same stories; we would fall over at the smallest push" (Participant R.51).*

An area for further investigation arises from the concept of cultural flow and the possibility of having a portable culture as outlined by Marty in Chapter Six. In a world of multi-ethnic communities and diaspora, does a portable culture exist and if so, what does it look like and what are the conditions needed to enable it to become a feature of social life? Further questions arise from this consideration. Can identity therefore exist as a fluid concept on these borders? How does language work if people have fluid identities? How does the idea of the distinctiveness of a group maintain cohesion if boundaries are actually points of flow?

7.5 To summarise

This research has illustrated the importance of a 'sense of place' in enabling people to feel that they belong in a landscape. It makes the case for shifting relationships between people and landscapes and provides a model for studying how communities and individuals connect with and adapt to changing post-industrial environments. My study considers how aging populations relate the landscape of their youth with that of today and explores the role of memory in enabling incomers to connect with their new surroundings. In this, I highlight how a sense of place is contingent upon the layered identities of landscape and people and illustrate how cultural and social phenomena are fluid individual and community assets that have significant material or physical components. This has particular relevance in a world of constant diaspora where borders are considered as barriers and embracing the dominant social culture is considered a prerequisite for integration. Rather, my research has illustrated how border country is an area where identities are realigned to accommodate a range of cultural and material influences.

As a symbol of Catalans everywhere, the Canigou mountain carries special meanings and plays an important part Catalan identity by bringing together Catalans from both sides of the border. Whilst wishing to protect the mining identity of the mountain, the participants in my study demonstrated awareness that this is changing as incomers appropriate new meanings and memories onto the features of the Canigou. Nevertheless, the incomers are instrumental in initiating the heritage projects which sustain the mining past and through their involvement, they gain a deep sense of the importance of the past which enable them to become embedded in the landscape story. There is a feeling of continuity in terms of the relationship with the landscape, identified in previous research by Izard, Izard and Mut and Verna, but the emphasis is different. The economic significance of the Canigou in the lives of the villagers in the past has evolved to reflect the importance of its physical and symbolic features in effecting a 'sense of place'.

Finally, I wish to conclude with the following photograph which sums up how the villagers wish to define their place in society today. Fashioned from iron, the multi-layered landscape, identities and heritage are present in this visual representation, Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1 Iron sculpture at the entrance to the village of La Bastide, a statement in iron of the changing landscape (source: P. Claughton).

The sculpture is located at the entrance to the village of La Bastide and illustrates the variety of ways in which people interact with their mountain environment. The mining activity is presented at the centre of the sculpture, highlighting the importance of the industrial past in the lives of the locals today and the importance attached to the identity of the locality itself. The sculpture also communicates the agency and energy flow between humans and non-humans; the figures interact with the mountain environment through climbing, hiking and mining. The harsh work of the miner, illustrated by the shovel and the manual effort of pulling the laden wagon, contrasts with the portrayal of leisure pursuits which depict the mountain environment as a place for enjoyment. Recalling Participant I.49's statement in Chapter Five, 5.5, life is easier now:

> *"Life is softer here now. It must be. Miners' work is harsh, it doesn't feel harsh today, living in the village" (Participant I.49).*

The accumulating layers of landscape identity are featured on the higher slopes of the mountains where figures of people skiing, hiking and climbing, indicate the changing identity of the region:

"The mountain has changed because life has changed" (Participant I.49).

As a statement of the Catalan identity of the region, the triangular peak of the Canigou is unmistakably represented in the iron shape of the mountain summits whilst the top-most figure is drinking from the *pourrou,* the traditional Catalan drinking vessel, a symbol of friendship.

Belonging, sense of place and an understanding of the role of the past in the landscape of the present were the themes which consistently presented themselves from research testimonies. Memories and meanings provided the catalyst for people to realise their embodiment in the spirit of their surroundings. I conclude with the words of one elderly resident whose thoughts sum up the voices of this research:

"We are one world. I exist because of our beautiful mountain. We all exist, and by all I mean the Canigou as well… Our identity and our destiny are entangled" (Participant R.2).

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Appendices

Appendix One

The following table provides basic information about my research participants which I deem necessary for reference, without disclosing their identity. Hence I include gender, age group and village of residence.

	DATE	MALE/FEMALE	AGE GROUP	PLACE
R.1	April 2017	Male	50-60	Escaro
R.2	April 2017	Female	80 plus	Escaro
R.3	April 2017	Male	50-60	Baillestavy
R.4	April 2017	Male	50-60	La Bastide
I.5	April 2017	Female	50-60	La Bastide
I.6	April 2017	Male	50-60	La Bastide
I.7	April 2017	Male	50-60	La Bastide
R.8	April 2017	Male	40-50	La Bastide
I.9	April 2017	Male	35-45	La Bastide
I.10	April 2017	Male	60 plus	Escaro
I.11	April 2017	Male	60 plus	Escaro
I.12	September 2016	Male	35-45	Arles-sur-Tech
R.13	September 2016	Female	20-30	Corsavy
I.14	September 2016	Male	20-30	Corsavy
I.15	September 2016	Female	60	Taurinya
R.16	September 2016	Male	80 plus	Escaro

R.17	September 2017	Male	45-55	Taurinya
R.18	September 2017	Male	60 plus	Escaro
R.19	September 2017	Male	60 plus	Escaro
I.20	September 2017	Male	60 plus	Escaro
R.21	September 2017	Male	60plus	Escaro
I.22	September 2017	Male	60 plus	Escaro
R.23	September 2017	Male	80 plus	Escaro
R.24	September 2017	Female	80 plus	Escaro
R.25	September 2017	Female	80 plus	Escaro
R.26	September 2017	Male	60 plus	Escaro
R.27	September 2017	Female	60 plus	Escaro
I.28	September 2017	Male	30-40	Arles-sur-Tech
I.29	September 2017	Female	60 plus	Escaro
R.30	September 2017	Male	40-50	Baillestavy
I.31	September 2017	Female	60 plus	Escaro
I.32	September 2017	Male	50-60	Taurinya
R.33	September 2017	Female	60 plus	Baillestavy
I.34	May 2019	Male	50-60	La Bastide
I.35	May 2019	Male	30-40	La Bastide
I.36	May 2019	Male	50-60	La Bastide
R.37	May 2019	Female	50-60	Taurinya
I.38	May 2019	Female	50-60	Taurinya

R.39	May 2019	Male	30-40	Taurinya
I.40	May 2019	Female	30-40	Taurinya
R.41	May 2019	Male	60 plus	Taurinya
R.42	May 2019	Male	60 plus	Corsavy
I.43	May 2019	Female	60plus	Corsavy
R.44	May 2019	Male	60 plus	Corsavy
R.45	May 2019	Male	60 plus	Corsavy
R.46	May 2019	Female	60 plus	Taurinya
I.47	May 2019	Male	50-60	Taurinya
I.48	May 2019	Female	50-60	Taurinya
I.49	May 2019	Female	60 plus	Taurinya
R.50	September 2017	Female	30-40	Escaro
R.51	September 2019	Male	60 plus	Baillestavy
R.52	September 2019	Male	60 plus	Baillestavy
R.53	September 2019	Female	60 plus	Baillestavy
R.54	September 2019	Male	60 plus	Baillestavy
I.55	September 2019	Male	60 plus	Baillestavy
I.56	September 2019	Female	60 plus	Baillestavy
I.57	September 2019	Male	60 plus	Baillestavy

Appendix Two

Financial report for the museum of Escaro, 2020 (source Participant R.27).

BILAN FINANCIER 2020
RECETTES
Adhésions et Dons……………………… (1010+576,00)…………………..1586,00 € Recettes Musée ………………………… (1449,00+522 ,60)………………1971,60 € APLEC…………………………………………………… ……………..……... 0,00   € Subvention du conseil départemental………………………………………1000,00 €
TOTAL   DES RECETTES   4557,60 €
DEPENSES
Salaires et charges………………………………………………………1950,69 € Assurance……………………………………………………………….378,66 € Eau…(facture non reçue)……………………………………………… 0 ,00 € Téléphone ………………………………………………………………383,29 € Communication…………………………………………………………501,72 € Fournitures……………………………………………………………..182,55 € Produits dérivés………………………………………………………..148,01 € APLEC……………………………………………………………………0 ,00   € Divers ……………………………………………………………..…...57,00 € Frais bancaires ………………………………………………………..14,00 €
TOTAL DES DEPENSES   **3615,92 €**

BILAN DE FONCTIONNEMENT	**941,68 €**

Solde du compte Crédit Agricole au 31/12/2019……………………………..10913,81 €

Solde du Livret A au 31/12/2019 …………………………………… ………..……...5128,79 €

Appendix Three

Funding sources for stabilisation of the mine, La Pinouse (source: Participant R.3).

Funding Source	Amount (Euros)
FEDER (EU):	335811
Etat:	277665
Région	92414
Département	205769
Fondation patrimoine	140000
Syndicat du Canigó	62915
Total TTC	1014576