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Title	Past as possibility – The potential for reflective engagement with prehistoric archaeology to facilitate ecological awareness and ecotherapy
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Publication date	2025-01-01
Original Citation	Nolan, C. (2023) 'Past as possibility – The potential for reflective engagement with prehistoric archaeology to facilitate ecological awareness and ecotherapy' [Forthcoming] in Godlewicz-Adamiec, J. and Stobiecka, M. (eds.) Heritage: between and beyond nature, culture and agency. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag.
Type of publication	Book chapter
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Download date	2026-11-06 15:38:28
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/14320



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Past as possibility: The potential for reflective engagement with prehistoric archaeology to facilitate ecological awareness and ecotherapy[12]

Abstract
The belief that prehistoric communities led simpler, healthier lives in harmony with nature is a recurring theme in the popular imagination. Sometimes described as evolutionary or ecological nostalgia, this view is often accompanied by a desire to either escape to an imagined prelapsarian past or to recreate it in the present. These ideals underpin the growing appetite in the West for the adoption of lifestyle choices based on prehistoric lifeways, such as the 'paleo' diet, barefoot running and ancestral skills. They also underlie popular perceptions of prehistoric archaeology. Despite its appeal, this type of nostalgia has received criticism from various camps in both the sciences and humanities, and has traditionally been frowned upon in the heritage sector for its sanitized and inaccurate representation of prehistoric life. This paper discusses these themes with reference to the results of qualitative research carried at prehistoric sites in Wiltshire, UK in 2016 and 2017. Presenting the experiences of residents, it demonstrates some of the intellectual and emotional ways in which certain people hold nostalgic views of prehistoric life, and the value these perceptions possess in terms of their relationship to self and the natural world. Subsequently, the paper argues that rather than seeing these impressions of prehistory as a misrepresentation of the past, they might be recognized as a desire to create a better future for both people and planet, and thus as a resource for promoting ecological awareness and human wellbeing.
Keywords: Prehistoric archaeology; evolutionary nostalgia; environmental literacy; ecotherapy, wellbeing

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1 This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council [Grant Ref: AH \L503939\1].
2 A million thanks to all the participants who contributed to this study, without whom this research would not have been possible. Many thanks also to Jim Leary and Benjamin Geary for their insightful comments on this paper.

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Introduction

In contrast to the view that life in the distant past was "nasty, brutish and short",[3] there is also the romantic belief that it was simpler, more authentic and harmonious. In his book *The Past is a Foreign Country: Revisited* David Lowenthal describes the ways in which certain individuals view the past as a form of 'escape' from the discontents of the present.[4] He maintains that, in England, this escape takes the form of 'green nostalgia' – an image of the prehistoric past that conjures up "warm, wooded, well-watered Neolithic harmony seven millennia back".[5] The roots of this sentiment stretch back as far as the city states of Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt.[6] However, the modern version of this romantic outlook took hold in Europe and North America with the anti-industrialist movement of the eighteenth-century and became engrained in the Western psyche by the nineteenth-century with the advent of Romanticism, Primitivism and the Arts and Crafts movement.[7] Common to each of these stances or modes of expression was the propensity to view the land-based lifestyles of past peoples as more authentic, wholesome and contented. This inclination to look to the past for relief or answers to present-day malaise has been revived in different forms ever since in the realms of both science and culture.

Over the past three decades, particularly in the last twenty years, this type of nostalgia has gained popularity in response to sociobiological and evolutionary psychological theories which hold that modern humans are genetically adapted to palaeolithic environments, and thus physiologically and psychological mis-

3 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil*, (London: Andrew Crook, 1651).

4 David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country – Revisited*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

5 Ibid., 114.

6 Michael Bunce, *The Countryside Ideal: Anglo-American Images of Landscape*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994); Pourabi Chaudhury and Debanjan Banerjee, "'Recovering With Nature': A Review of Ecotherapy and Implications for the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Frontiers in Public Health* 8 (2020); Eleonora Gullone, "The Biophilia Hypothesis and Life in the 21st Century: Increasing Mental Health or Increasing Pathology?," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 1 (2000): 293–321; Aric McBay, Lierre Keith, and Derrick Jensen, *Deep Green Resistance: Strategy to Save the Planet*, (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2011); Marlene Zuk, *Paleofantasy*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2013).

7 Bunce, *The Countryside Ideal*; Mark Edmonds. "Who Said Romance was Dead?," *Journal of Material Culture* 11 (2006), no.1/2: 167–88; Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country – Revisited*; Jana Krčmářová, "E.O. Wilson's concept of biophilia and the environmental movement in the USA," *Internet Journal of Historical Geography and Environmental History* 6 (2009), vol. 1–2: 4–17; McBay, Keith, and Jensen, *Deep Green Resistance*; Gustav Milne, *Uncivilised Genes: Human Evolution and the Urban Paradox*, (Carmarthen: Crown House Publishing, 2017); Sarah M. Pike, "Rewilding Hearts and Habits in the Ancestral Skills Movement," *Religions* 9 (2018), no. 300.

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matched with their present-day urban lifestyles.[8] This thinking has been taken onboard by different groups especially in relation to concerns around health, wellbeing and sustainability.[9] Consequently, it has become embedded in movements such as ecopsychology,[10] 'paleo' health,[11] the practice of ancestral skills,[12] and heritage farming,[13] manifesting in what has been variously termed as green, evolutionary, paleo and ecological nostalgia. Mark Edmonds notes that this type of nostalgia can also be found in perceptions of later prehistoric archaeology.[14] This is evident in Cornelius Holtorf's work on public responses to Neolithic sites and standing stones in Germany.[15]

Some studies infer that these nostalgic perceptions and aspirations are valid in that they stem from an in-built disposition to live a more 'evolutionary concordant' lifestyle.[16] Conversely, other work suggests they are culturally constructed or misrepresentational.[17] This paper presents public responses to the prehistoric archaeology of the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site, the Vale of Pewsey and surroundings, in Wiltshire, UK. It goes on to demonstrate how evolutionary and ecological nostalgias feature in participant perceptions of

8 Leda Cosmides and John Tooby. *Evolutionary Psychology: A Primer*, Center for Evolutionary Psychology, 1997); Gullone, "The Biophilia Hypothesis and Life in the 21st Century"; Edward O. Wilson, *Biophilia*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

9 See Noah Heringman, "Evolutionary Nostalgia in the Anthropocene," *Minnesota Review* 83 (2014): 143–52 and Zuk, *Palaeofantasy*.

10 Paul Shepard, *Coming Home to the Pleistocene*, (Washing D. C.: Island Press, 1998).

11 Heringman, "Evolutionary Nostalgia in the Anthropocene."

12 Pike, "Rewilding Hearts and Habits in the Ancestral Skills Movement."

13 Olivia Angé and David Berliner, *Ecological Nostalgias: Memory, Affect and Creativity in Times of Ecological Upheavals*. Series: Environmental Anthropology and Ethnobiology, no. 26, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2021).

14 Edmonds, "Who Said Romance was Dead?"

15 Cornelius Holtorf, *From Stonehenge to Las Vegas: Archaeology as Popular Culture*, (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2005).

16 Cosmides and Tooby, *Evolutionary Psychology*; Gullone, "The Biophilia Hypothesis and Life in the 21st Century"; Milne, *Uncivilised Genes: Human Evolution and the Urban Paradox*; Paul Shepard, "Nature and Madness", in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, eds. Theodore Roszak, Mary E. Gomes, and Allen D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995), 21–40; Wilson, *Biophilia*.

17 Bjørn Grinde and Grete Grindel Patil, "Biophilia: Does Visual Contact with Nature Impact on Health and Well-Being?," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 6 (2009): 2332–43; Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline*, (London: A Methuen Paperback, 1987); David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and Spoils of History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Michael Pitts, "The Vicar's Dewpond, The National Trust Shop and the Rise of Paganism," in *The Remains of Distant Times: Archaeology and the National Trust*, eds. David Morgan Evans, Peter Salway, and David Thackray (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1996), 116–31; Michael Shanks, "Archaeological realities: embodiment and a critical romanticism," in *The Archaeologist and their Reality: Proceedings of the 4th Nordic TAG Conference*, eds. Maija Tusa and Tuija Kirkinen (Helsinki: Department of Archaeology, 1995).

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the archaeology with regard to themes of origins, instinct, authenticity and sustainability. Considering the value that participants derive from these insights alongside the case against such perceptions, the paper suggests that if used responsibly and constructively, nostalgia has the potential to be a powerful, reflective tool for education, as well as for personal and environmental change.

Evolutionary and Ecological Nostalgia

The human tendency to yearn for past land-based lifeways has existed since time immemorial. However, it was in the twentieth century that this experience received validation through the work of sociobiologist Edward O. Wilson. Wilson theorizes that this yearning has a biological basis, a phenomenon he terms 'biophilia'.[18] He maintains that humans have a phylogenetically based, emotional affiliation with nature (i. e. biota and the abiotic environment), and that failure to nurture this innate biological tendency can have a negative impact on psychological and physical health. Fundamental to this concept is the acceptance that this biophilic disposition developed from dependency on the natural prehistoric environments in which humans evolved over millennia.

The evolutionary psychological theory of Environmental Evolutionary Adaptedness (EEA) serves to complement Wilson's biophilia hypothesis.[19] This theory asserts that modern humans are genetically, physiologically and psychologically optimally adapted to Pleistocene environments and hunter-gatherer lifeways, and thus unable to thrive within contemporary industrial contexts. As Leda Cosmides and John Tooby explain it:

> Our species lived as hunter-gatherers 1000 times longer than as anything else. The world that seems so familiar to you and me, a world with roads, schools, grocery stores, factories, farms, and nation-states, has lasted for only an eyeblink of time when compared to our entire evolutionary history […] Natural selection is a slow process, and there just haven't been enough generations for it to design circuits that are well adapted to our post-industrial life.[20]

Proponents of these evolutionary approaches argue that humans are ill-adapted to urban lifestyles which lack regular, direct contact with nature.[21] They subse-

18 Wilson, *Biophilia.*

19 David M. Buss, *Evolutionary psychology: The new science of the mind*, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999); Cosmides and Tooby, *Evolutionary Psychology*; Heringman, "Evolutionary Nostalgia in the Anthropocene"; Milne, *Uncivilised Genes*; Zuk, *Palaeofantasy.*

20 Cosmides and Tooby, *Evolutionary Psychology*, 11.

21 Guiseppe Barbiero and Rita Berto, "Biophilia as Evolutionary Adaptation: An Onto- and Phylogenetic Framework for Biophilic Design," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (2021); Buss, *Evolutionary psychology*; Gullone, "The Biophilia Hypothesis and Life in the 21st Century";

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quently hold that nature connection, and accordingly nature conservation, is essential for human wellbeing.

Comparable ideas[22] have emerged from the field of ecopsychology – which can be defined as "a collection of viewpoints and stances aiming to elucidate the relationship between human health and wellbeing, and natural processes[23] (i. e., 'nature')". For instance, Paul Shepard locates the fundamental disruption of the ecological balance in human-nature relationships at the point when humans began to move from a hunter-gatherer to agrarian economy domestication.[24] Equating domestication and, subsequently, industrialisation with disconnection from nature and destruction of the environment, some ecopsychologists[25] believe that these developments have resulted in mass psychological trauma amongst contemporary populations in industrial societies.

To remedy the ecopsychological rupture, Shepard proposes a 'return' to the Pleistocene, by recovering and integrating elements of hunter-gather lifeways, including diet, endurance running, foraging and immediate access to wilderness, into modern life.[26] Some of the practices set out in this 'Pleistocene paradigm' amount essentially to examples of what is now known as applied ecopsychology or ecotherapy, the therapeutic benefit that is derived from engagement with the earth or natural environment.[27]

Stephen. R. Kellert, and Edward O. Wilson, *The Biophilia Hypothesis*, (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1993); Wilson, *Biophilia*; Milne, *Uncivilised Genes*; Roger S. Ulrich, "Biophilia, biophobia, and natural landscapes," in *The Biophilia Hypothesis*, eds. Stephen R. Kellert and Edward O. Wilson (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1993), 73–137; Yannick Joye and Andreas De Block, "'Nature and I are Two': A Critical Examination of the Biophilia Hypothesis," *Environmental Values* 20 (2011), no. 2: 189–215.

22 Chellis Glendinning, "Technology, Trauma and the Wild," in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, eds. Theodore Roszak, Mary E. Gomes, and Allen D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995), 41–54; Ralph Metzner, "The Psychopathology of the Human-Nature Relationship," in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth Healing the Mind*, eds. Theodore Roszak, Mary E. Gomes, and Allen D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2017), 55–67; Theodore Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth*, (Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 2001); *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, eds. Theodore Roszak, Mary E. Gomes, and Allen D. Kanner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995); Shepard, "Nature and Madness"; Shepard, *Coming Home to the Pleistocene.*

23 Jorge Conesa-Sevilla, *Ecopsychology Revisited: For Whom Do The "Nature" Bells Toll?*, (Arcata: Humboldt State University Press, 2019), xii.

24 Shepard, "Nature and Madness"; Shepard, *Coming Home to the Pleistocene.*

25 Glendinning, "Technology, Trauma and the Wild"; Metzner, "The Psychopathology of the Human-Nature Relationship"; Roszak, Gomes, and Kanner, *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*; Shepard, *Return to the Pleistocene*; Chaudhury and Banerjee, "Recovering With Nature"; Conesa-Sevilla, *Ecopsychology Revisited.*

26 Shepard, *Return to the Pleistocene.*

27 Linda Buzzell and Craig Chalquist, *Ecotherapy: healing with nature in mind*, (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 2009); Chaudhury and Banerjee, "Recovering With Nature"; Martin Jordan and

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Ironically, Shepard's call for a return to the Pleistocene has succeeded at least superficially on a commercial level in what Noah Heringman describes as the 'rampant evolutionary nostalgia' marketed by the 'Paleo' health industry.[28] This trend is manifested in the promotion of healthier lifestyle choices such as the 'caveman' or Paleo diet, barefoot running and footwear, and exercise regimes thought to be based on the subsistence practices of palaeolithic hunter-gatherer populations.[29] In the same vein, Mark Sisson , proposes in his *Primal Blueprint* how such lifestyle changes can "reprogramme your genes for effortless weight loss, vibrant health and boundless energy".[30]

Evolutionary nostalgia is also present amongst contemporary 'ancestral skills' or bushcraft groups in North America and Europe.[31] Ancestral skills are understood here as crafts or techniques based on preindustrial practices such as flint-knapping, metal-working, building shelters, bow-hunting, foraging and making fire by friction.[32] Sarah Pike notes that, "A kind of palaeonostalgia permeates the ancestral skills movement: the desire for a simpler life that we have left behind, but that can be retrieved from the past using the tools of the past".[33] This comes in response to disillusionment with modern industrialized systems, such as intensified agriculture and mass production, and the generalized sense of disconnection from nature that they create. Undertaking ancestral skills enables practitioners to connect with what they perceive as a more authentic way of being that taps into a kind of genetically hardwired primordial or ancestral memory.[34]

Pike further explains that for many practitioners ancestral skills are also a response to environmental degradation and a desire to live more sustainably. This view of the past as a model for sustainability, inherent in many of the examples of evolutionary nostalgia discussed above, has also been termed ecological or eco-nostalgia.[35] In their edited volume *Ecological Nostalgias*, Olivia Angé and David Berliner demonstrate how this perspective is manifested in

Joe Hinds, *Ecotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016).

28 Heringman, "Evolutionary Nostalgia in the Anthropocene."

29 Ibid.; Milne, *Uncivilised Genes*; Pike, "Rewilding Hearts and Habits in the Ancestral Skills Movement"; Gavin Weedon and Paige Marie Patchin, "The Paleolithic imagination: Nature, science, and race in Anthropocene fitness cultures," *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* 5/2 (2022): 719–39; Zuk, *Palaeofantasy.*

30 Mark Sisson, *The Primal Blueprint: Reprogramme your genes for effortless weight loss, vibrant health and boundless energy*, (London: Vermillion, 2012).

31 Lisa Fenton, *'Bushcraft' and 'Indigenous Knowledge': transformations of a concept in the modern world*, PhD diss., (University of Kent, 2016); Pike, "Rewilding Hearts and Habits in the Ancestral Skills Movement."

32 Pike, "Rewilding Hearts and Habits in the Ancestral Skills Movement."

33 Ibid., 309.

34 Ibid.

35 Angé, and Berliner, *Ecological Nostalgias.*

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approaches to agriculture in the form of, for example, seed conservation, 'forgotten vegetables' revival, rewilding initiatives, urban hives, permaculture and collective gardens.[36]

Placing archaeology more firmly at the centre of discussions on EEA and biophilia, Gustav Milne draws on evidence from archaeological and paleoanthropological as well as medical research to support some of the arguments outlined above, particularly in relation to the evolutionary determinants of health.[37] He suggests that "urban life can be improved if society re-embraces at least some of the cardinal concepts of its half-forgotten life".[38] Accordingly, not unlike Shepard's approach, Milne proposes the creation of an evolutionary concordant lifestyle under what he terms the "Eden protocol". This focuses on cultural and behavioural changes, such as increased mobility, exercise and time spent in greenspace. However, it also addresses town planning, calling for a more evolutionary concordant approach to urban design that includes, amongst other features, better air quality, clean water supply and increased urban greenspace.

Both Holtorf's[39] and Lowenthal's[40] works on nostalgia and heritage suggest that engagement with preindustrial archaeology also evokes some of the evolutionary or ecological sensibilities described here. This idea is developed further in the case-study that follows.

The Study

An in-depth account of the study area, participant sample, fieldwork methods and data analysis has been reported elsewhere.[41] Thus, these aspects of the study will only be discussed here in brief.

The study specifically sought to understand how residents and visitors experience and perceive prehistoric archaeology. Consequently, the study was conducted in the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS, the Vale of Pewsey, and their environs; a group of heritage landscapes that are rich with ancient sites, monuments and findspots ranging in date from the Palaeolithic (*c.* 900,000–10,000

36 Ibid.
37 Milne, *Uncivilised Genes.*
38 Ibid., 207.
39 Holtorf, *From Stonehenge to Las Vegas.*
40 Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country – Revisited.*
41 Claire Nolan, "Sites of Existential Relatedness: Findings from Phenomenological Research at Stonehenge, Avebury and the Vale of Pewsey, Wiltshire, UK," *Public Archaeology* 18 (2019a), no. 1: 28–51; Claire Nolan, "Prehistoric Landscapes as a Source of Ontological Security for the Present Day," *Heritage & Society* 12 (2019b), no. 1: 1–25; Claire Nolan, *Therapeutic Landscapes of Prehistory: Exploring the Role of Archaeology in the Promotion of Present-Day Wellbeing*, PhD diss., (University of Reading, 2020).

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BC) through the Mesolithic (*c.*10,000–4000BC), Neolithic (*c.* 4000–2500) and Bronze Age (*c.* 2500–800 BC) to the Iron Age (*c.* 800 BC–AD 50). Examples of site-types and artefacts found in the area include: Palaeolithic handaxes, a Mesolithic occupation site, Neolithic burial chambers (fig. 1), standing stones and henge monuments, Bronze Age burial mounds and Iron Age hilltop enclosures.



Figure 1: Adam's Grave Long Barrow, Vale of Pewsey, Copyright Claire Nolan

Following ethics approval from the University of Reading Ethics Committee, the project fieldwork was conducted throughout 2016 and 2017. Resident and visitor lived experiences of the study area were documented via 33 semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews (seated, walking and driving), 14 written reflective participant accounts, and three separate mindful walks in the Avebury landscape with accompanying audio-recorded group interviews. Including individual interviewees and groups, the study involved a total of sixty-six participants. The participant sample ranged from 19 to 87 years of age, with just under half aged 60 and over, and a quarter falling in the range of 18–29. 38 participants identified as women and 28 as men. Seven participants identified as white American, Taiwanese, Turkish, white South African, white European, Gypsy, and British Indian, respectively. The rest of the participants described themselves as white British.

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The study adopted a reflective lifeworld[42] approach to data-collection and thematic analysis through the application of phenomenological methods within a critical realist epistemology.[43] Correspondingly, the interview questions and guidelines for the reflective walks and accounts were focused on how participants interact with the prehistoric archaeology in the study area, and the thoughts, feelings, sensations and meanings that it evokes for them.

Findings

A thematic analysis of the data found that the participants respond to the archaeological remains in a variety of ways, with many deriving what might be described as existential wellbeing from them.[44] However, analogous to the different forms of nostalgia described above, a number of residents also discussed how engaging with the archaeology positively connects them to human origins, instinct and nature, as well as a past way of life which they imagine to have been more authentic and sustainable. These themes are detailed below.

Origins and Instinct

Several of the project participants talked about how engaging with the archaeological remains gives them a sense of connection to human origins, nature and instinct, which they variously experience as grounding, enlivening and fulfilling.

Speaking of the Stonehenge landscape, one woman explained that engaging with the monuments [Fig. 2] there gives her a feeling of being close to people and lifeways of the distant past, which she experiences as grounding:

> Participant (P): It's a feeling, isn't it? It's a feeling. Um, of being, well – close to nature, and close to things that happened thousands of years ago. I mean, we don't think that actually life existed thousands of years ago, do we [laughs] … [inaudible] …?
> Interviewer (I): Yeah.
> P: But that's a feeling that, yeah, there was life thousands of years ago.
> I: Right. So, what is that feeling, then?

42 Karin Dahlberg, Helena Dahlberg, and Maria Nystrom, *Reflective Lifeworld Research*, (Sweden: Studentlitteratur, 2011).

43 Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using thematic analysis in psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2006): 77–101; Wendy Sims-Schouten, Sarah Riley, and Carla Willig, "Critical realism in discourse analysis: a presentation of a systematic method of analysis using women's talk of motherhood, childcare and female employment as an example," *Theory & Psychology* 17 (2007), no. 1: 127–50.

44 Nolan, "Sites of Existential Relatedness"; Nolan, "Prehistoric Landscapes as a Source of Ontological Security for the Present Day"; Nolan, *Therapeutic Landscapes of Prehistory.*

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P: Um [pauses], just [pauses to think], I'm not very good at putting this into words unless I'm typing [laughs]!
I: Yeah, I know what you mean [laughs].
P: A feeling of, um, belonging, um, grounding –
(Interview 25, resident, 60s)

A participant from the Vale of Pewsey similarly alluded to a connection to human origins, viewing the prehistoric archaeological narrative of the area as a foundation of human identity that must be preserved:

…I believe there's a whole world of history prior to the history that we know, and wouldn't it be a shame to lose it? Because, surely, that was the foundation of where that history evolved from, which we've evolved from, and so on. So, it's a big missing link, as such. (Interview 13, resident, 60s)

He likewise associates the archaeology with a more natural way of life that connects him to human instinct:

P: It's, or maybe both, really. Because [pauses to think], me living in this, they will say, right, you take a family man that lives in the street, you bung him in a caravan, you stick him in a field for a week, and you light a bonfire, and he's just totally different, whatsoever [says smiling], he's just, and loves it! He'll sit there all night watching the flames bounce, and the bonfire – there's something real primeval about it, instinctively.
I: Yeah.
P: That's what I feel about the area.
(Interview 13, resident, 60s)

Some participants discussed the theme of instinct in terms of DNA, highlighting how they feel that the narratives underpinning the construction and use of the monuments is embedded in human genetic memory. As one participant put it, "…there's more archaeology in Wiltshire than you can shake a stick at. We've got lots of archaeology here. And it's there in our DNA – maybe there in our culture?' (Interview 22, resident, 60s). This idea is further developed in the following interview dialogue, where the participant suggests that the archaeology, as a product of a more instinctual existence, triggers genetic memory and a connection to human instinct:

P: But I think the one thing that we all have that are still, in a changing world that has changed so much, and I find it – expression these days is, I really am an old-fashioned boy lost in a modern world – but even so, even the children I work with, and they range from 8-year-old to teenagers, we all have a common characteristic – basic human instinct. Common with us all, and I think it always has been like that, and it always, that's it, it's in our make-up. And I think it doesn't matter what period of time you go through.
I: It's still there?
P: Yeah – that fundamental foundation of those elements in a person has always been there. So, genetically, somewhere in me [pause], that is there, and maybe it's that, that when you actually come into contact with it [the archaeology], that triggers that – you

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know it, we all know it.
(Interview 13, resident, 60s)

These participant experiences indicate that interaction with prehistoric archaeology can stimulate for some people a phylogenetic awareness and, with it, a sense of evolutionary nostalgia which they find valuable. This response is very similar to the perceptions of ancestral skills practitioners and suggests that engaging with the physical remains or trappings of the deep past can facilitate feelings of foundation, fulfilment and wholeness.

Authenticity

In addition to the sense of connection to prehistoric human origins that some participants derive from the archaeology in the study area, many view the prehistoric remains as products of a more authentic way of life. For some, this manifests in the view that prehistoric life was simpler and more contented. For others, authenticity in this context signifies a greater connection to the land or a more elemental and purposeful existence.

For one farmer from the Vale of Pewsey, the archaeology in his area is a reminder of a less mechanized world:

> […] that physical reminder that people have lived here for many thousands of years. In the same way the strip lynchets, in the same way as the Iron Age forts up on the hills, that sort of thing really. And the same way, I don't know how old they are, but you go up on the hills in places, you've got trackways which have been there I presume for centuries, if not millenia. So it's a physical reminder of, I suppose previous times, before everything was machines and tarmac and everybody's charging around, and they probably had the same pressures on them in those days, but they were just different, I guess. (Interview 2, resident, 50s)

This sense also comes through in the following interview dialogue, where a participant explains how connecting with the archaeological narrative, as she imagines it, of the Mesolithic occupation site of Blick Mead, excavated to the east of Stonehenge, brings relief from the stresses of modern life:

> P: I can imagine myself sat in the bottom of a tree-throw with a little campfire going, and you know, having animal hides over top of it.
> I: Oh, like you're almost there?
> P: I can kind of imagine myself doing that, and yet I can't stand camping, so, you know [trails off].
> I: And when you imagine yourself in that kind of set-up, how are you feeling?
> P: Chilled [laughs].
> I: Really?
> P: It's simple – there's no technology, there's no demands, there's no, it's a simple way of

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> life isn't it. And there are people who go back to that all the time, they go back to being in a farm in the middle of nowhere. (Interview 32, resident, 40s)

Not all respondents imagine prehistoric life to have been simple, as evidenced by the quote below. Nevertheless, for this participant the archaeology does represent a way of life that he values – one that is more directly connected to the environment:

> I don't know whether it's just a few centuries or millenia down the line, you know, our wicked ways, our wasteful ways, whatever they are, you know will be uncovered […] I don't know – were they wasteful, did they chop down all the trees to make palisades that deforested places, maybe? So, I think it's maybe not so much an ecological, it's more, I guess it's more a life directly connected to your environment, the earth, the elements, a more, yeah, sort of elemental life. You know, I'm sure some of them if they'd been offered central heating or glass for a window so they could look out, you know they would have leapt at it. (Interview 11, resident, 50s)

Recording his reflections on the archaeology, this participant suggests that the life of prehistoric inhabitants was a more authentic one: "Perhaps it was their lack of power to control the environment in the way we do today that I find appealing? This being open to the elements in a very real sense suggests a rawer, more "real" existence than we have today…' (Reflective account C, resident, 50s). A lady from the Stonehenge area shared similar feelings about the people who constructed Stonehenge and its surrounding monuments:

> […] I feel, I think that they had a greater connection with the land and Mother Earth, so perhaps that's why I like it. Because they had the connection. Perhaps I'm wanting that connection, and that is a connection that I feel that I've got, and I want to deepen that. Perhaps that's what it is. (Interview 26, resident, 50s)

For other participants, their understanding of authenticity in this connection also includes the belief that the subsistence lifestyles of prehistoric communities involved a greater sense of purpose:

> P: Yeah, just generally. And I suppose it all goes back, you know, it's all back and it's all much simpler, and you didn't have, you know, your addiction to television. Everything you did had, everything that they would have done, would've had a purpose, wouldn't it? So, they went out hunting an animal and it had a purpose to it. If they went and talked to somebody, there was probably a purpose. If they made a necklace there was a purpose behind it, you know. So, there was purpose behind everything.
> I: Yeah, yeah.
> P: And the same with Stonehenge, I suppose, there was a purpose behind it rather than [trails off]. Everything, you know, life was simpler, I suppose – you just feel that life would've been. But then it probably wasn't, it was probably hard as hell. (Interview participant, 40s)

This viewpoint arises once again in the following participant quote:

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> […] that might be slightly sort of romantic, but I imagine whether they were hunter-gatherers or they had arable crops, the work, the day-to-day life was more clearly directed towards immediate ends. I mean you obviously, with the building of Stonehenge and the making of amazing jewellery that required a certain surplus of labour, but um, far more directly connected than a, you know – whats the purpose of a derivatives trader in the city? I mean, you know, how does that really help in the big scheme of things? (Interview 11, resident, 50s)

The theme of authenticity highlighted in these comments forms another strand to the sense of nostalgia that can be evoked through connection with prehistoric archaeology. For these individuals, engagement with the archaeology triggers the imagination in a way that arguably enables them to connect vicariously with a more basic, land-based lifestyle. As such, it appears to allow them momentary respite from the stress, disconnectedness, and meaninglessness of the modern world.

Environmental Awareness and Sustainability

Ecological nostalgia also pervaded many of the participant responses to the archaeology. Juxtaposing past human-environment relationships with those of the present day, some respondents feel that prehistoric communities lived more sustainably, or at least did not possess the means to cause large-scale and irreparable destruction of the environment. As a result, some participants noted that interaction with the archaeology in the study area has made them more aware of their environment.

Describing her relationship to the Neolithic henge monument of Marden, in the Vale of Pewsey, one woman revealed that the site is special to her because she feels it is a reminder of a time when people lived in harmony with nature and the seasons:

> But this is me, and this place is special to me, and, so, it's always people who are country dwellers, pagans, whatever you want to call people – they worked with nature and their natural environment much more than we do these days, and they were so much more in tune to it. And they harnessed the natural energy of the seasons, so they worked with them, which farmers haven't lost, obviously, but a lot of people who live in cities have lost touch with their environment. They've got concrete under their feet, you know, there isn't grass under, you know, many people who live in town, you know wouldn't necessarily touch the earth during their day, unless they go out in the garden, or have a garden. (Interview 4, resident, 60s)

A participant from the Stonehenge area made a similar statement: "I would like to think that […] our ancestors had a healthy relationship with life and all its

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Figure 2: The Heel Stone, Stonehenge, Copyright Joanna Godlewicz-Adamiec

seasons closely attuned with the environment they lived in. But perhaps I am being romantic in this ideal?' (Reflective Account I, female resident, 50s).

The previous comment demonstrates that participants do not possess an entirely uncritical perception of prehistoric life. This awareness is further illustrated in the following interview dialogue with a farmer from the Vale of Pewsey:

> P: I'm sure for the individuals, and I'm sure for individuals now in society, everybody's much better off, but the natural environment doesn't really get a look in. In times gone past, the natural environment wasn't under so much pressure and so it was much more robust.
> I: And do you think people worked more in harmony, I mean that's a bit – ?
> P: Well, they had to, because they didn't have the, I presume, because they didn't have the machinery and the chemicals and everything else which we seem to be, and also the

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> ability to import all sorts of terrible things from all over the world into the environment here. So I suppose it's thinking back to times when things were simpler and things were sort of more dependent on nature and dependent on the seasons than they are now. (Interview 2, resident, 50s)

Maintaining a realist perspective, this respondent goes on to acknowledge that, proportionately, the appetites or behaviour of past people may not have been any more sustainable than those of the present-day:

> I suppose there is a certain amount of rose-tinted spectacles, not that I knew what it was like at all, but it's just, and I suppose as you get older, and you see society moving on, and it goes off in different directions, you just, you feel an awful lot of values have dropped by the wayside […] I suppose it's easy to be critical of the way things are going, because you don't feel they're going, I don't think they're going in a particularly pleasant way sometimes. It's just more materialism, even though I'm sure that the people who lived in the [Marden] henge would've happily devoured as much, as many material possessions or whatever else is, we want to, seem to want to devour. But again, then it didn't have an impact on the environment as it does now. Or it didn't have a, it had, I imagine it had an impact on the local environment, but it didn't have an impact on the bigger scale that we seem to be, seem to be on a one-way ticket at the moment.

Here, the participant points that out that this proportionality is also true in reverse, in that prehistoric communities led a more environmentally sustainable existence simply because they did not exert the same pressure on the natural world as society does today.

The previous quote demonstrates that for some people, engagement with the archaeology provides perspective on human-environment interaction across time in a way that increases their ecological awareness. One dimension of this appreciation is the belief that in contrast to the present-day, prehistoric communities built and made things to last: "One is living in a monument [Avebury henge] that is five-thousand-years-old and yet is still standing, while in our present age, things are defunct after only 8–10 years, be it cars, computers, white goods etc. This is not sustainable for our planet" (Reflective Account E, resident, 60s). Consequently, monuments like Avebury henge (Fig. 3) serve to remind some people that humanity has the potential to live more sustainably:

> […] we're in such a throwaway society. You know, they're 5000 years old – that'll [points to the audio recorder] be out of date in about 3 years, and that's what I very much feel is Avebury, that in itself it's almost a lesson – "look, you know, hang on – we're just using too much, we're disposing of too much", but that's just me because I think things should last longer. (Interview 15, resident, 60s)

For the same reasons, a lady from the Avebury area asserts that engaging with the archaeology in the Avebury landscape "made us all more aware of the land" (Interview 20, resident, 60s), and that as a result she has become involved in

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environmental activism. She too sees the archaeology as a reminder to live more sustainably:

> It's a reminder, it's somebody poking you – "think about what you're doing, think about this". If you think over the last 20 years, how much more aware of our earth we have become as a people, not as a nation, but as a people. There's more recycling, there's more sustainability. We are switching back on. They did that, automatically that was within their DNA – they took care of what they had because it was all they had. We became complacent because we learned how to do such clever things and we forgot about the basics. This is a reminder – back to basics, back to respect.

More critically, referring to the archaeology of the Stonehenge landscape, one participant sees it as a warning to adopt a more sustainable trajectory:

> Understanding the relation with Durrington Walls, the Cursus, the Avenue, the barrows, Woodhenge, etc., gives one a sense of a complex and cosmopolitan society. A society that clearly were capable of far more than previously had been given credit for… So, to me the Stonehenge landscape is a monument to remind us not to view our current modern age as the high point of the human race, and indirectly, therefore, that we must take care with our environment as we too will be history before long and our follies will be there for future generations to view. The more we learn, the more we should be humble. (Reflective Account C, resident, 50s)

The participant feedback detailed above suggests that whether romantic or realist in nature, engaging reflectively with the prehistoric archaeology in their area helps them to think differently about human-environment relationships, and in some cases, how they personally interact with and care for their environment.

Discussion

The feedback presented here clearly continues the tradition of evolutionary and ecological nostalgia discussed earlier. In this context, it is the archaeological remains of Mesolithic hunter-gatherer groups or Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age farming communities that appear to trigger a desire to reconnect with primal instincts, prehistoric lifeways and to live in harmony with nature. From the perspective of theories such as the biophilia hypothesis, this could be considered a boon. However, some scholars are critical of this outlook.[45]

45 Grinde and Patil, "Biophilia"; Joye and De Block, "Nature and I are Two"; Hewison, *The Heritage Industry*; Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and Spoils of History*; Pitts, "The Vicar's Dewpond"; Shanks, "Archaeological realities"; Bethany L. Turner and Amanda L. Thompson, "Beyond the Paleolithic prescription: incorporating diversity and flexibility in the study of human diet evolution", *Nutrition Reviews*, vol. 71 (2013), no. 8 (1): 501–10; Zuk, *Palaeofantasy*.

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Figure 3: Avebury Henge, copyright Claire Nolan

Evolutionary biologist, Marlene Zuk regards this view of the past pejoratively, as a 'paleofantasy'.[46] Drawing on genetic evidence, she argues that humans have never been perfectly adapted to their environment, and that modern humans are no less genetically mismatched to their environment than their palaeolithic forbears were. Zuk also challenges the view that prehistoric communities had a better quality of life, emphasizing that their life expectancy was much lower due to the fact that many did not survive childhood diseases. Some bioarchaeological studies do suggest that certain prehistoric hunter-gather populations may have had healthier lifestyles.[47] However, others reveal that the quality and complexity of life likely fluctuated across different prehistoric epochs depending on a range of social, cultural and environmental factors.[48] In this much, as Bethany Turner

46 Zuk, *Palaeofantasy.*

47 Clarke Spencer Larsen *et al.*, "Bioarchaeology of Neolithic Çatalhöyük reveals fundamental transitions in health, mobility, and lifestyle in early farmers," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116 (2019), no. 26: 12615–23; Alison A. Macintosh, Ron Pinhasi, and J. T. Stock, "Early Life Conditions and Physiological Stress following the Transition to Farming in Central/Southeast Europe: Skeletal Growth Impairment and 6000 Years of Gradual Recovery," *PLOS ONE* 11 (2016), no. 2; see also Milne, *Uncivilised Genes.*

48 Hans Peter Blankholm *et al.*, "Dangerous Food. Climate change induced elevated heavy metal levels in Younger Stone Age seafood in northern Norway," *Quaternary Journal*, no. 549 (2020): 74–83; Jennifer C. French and April Nowell, "Growing up Gravettian: Bioarchaeo-

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and Amanda Thompson infer, to presume that past people's lifestyle habits were structured by their instincts and environment overlooks the influence of human agency.[49]

In terms of nature connection, certain scholars propose that present-day emotional affiliation with nature is perhaps more attributable to cultural and personal factors rather than an innate biophilia that stretches back to the origins of humankind.[50] Indeed, challenging the romantic belief that past peoples existed in harmony with nature, archaeological and paleoenvironmental evidence demonstrates that although this was true of some prehistoric communities,[51] the subsistence practices of specific groups, going back as far as 45,000 years ago, had deleterious effects on the environment.[52]

These rebuttals serve to support the idea traditionally held in the heritage sector that nostalgia is generally a misrepresentation of the past.[53] Yet, the participant feedback outlined above, clearly demonstrates that some people derive a sense of wellbeing from the nostalgic images they associate with the archaeology in their area. Indeed, this nostalgia acts almost as a form of ecotherapy in the way that it makes possible a feeling of deep connection with human origins and the natural world. It also appears to enable some project participants to reflect on past and current human-environment relations in a manner that encourages ecological awareness. In this light, the nostalgia that participants express for simpler and more sustainable times might be better understood, as others have argued, as a projection onto the past of their desires for the present and future.[54]

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logical perspectives on adolescence in the European Mid-Upper Paleolithic," *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, vol. 67 (2022); Zuzana Hukelova, *Comparative osteoarchaeological perspectives on health and lifestyle of Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age populations from Slovakia, Moravia and Bohemia*, PhD diss., (University of Edinburgh, 2017); Andrea Lessa, "Spondylolysis and lifestyle among prehistoric coastal groups from Brazil," *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 21 (2011), no. 6: 660–68; Turner and Thompson, "Beyond the Paleolithic prescription."

49 Turner and Thompson, "Beyond the Paleolithic prescription."

50 Grinde and Patil, "Biophilia"; Joye and De Block, "Nature and I are Two."

51 Nicole Boivin and Alison Crowther, "Mobilizing the past to shape a better Anthropocene," *Nature Ecology and Evolution* 5 (2021), 273–84.

52 Boivin and Crowther, "Mobilizing the past to shape a better Anthropocene"; Lucas Stephens *et al.*, "Archaeological assessment reveals Earth's early transformation through land use," *Science* 365 (2019), no. 6456: 897–902; Max Planc, "Environmental Sins from Prehistoric Times," *Max Plank Research* 3 (2017): 34–41.

53 Brian Edwards, "Avebury and other not-so-ancient places: the making of the English heritage landscape," in *Seeing History: Public History in Britain Now*, eds. Hilda Kean, Paul Martin, and Sally J. Morgan (London: Francis Boutle Publishers, 2000), 65–79; Hewison, *The Heritage Industry*; Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and Spoils of History*; Pitts, "The Vicar's Dewpond"; Shanks, "Archaeological realities."

54 Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and its Critics*, (New York: WW Norton and Company, 1991); Venla Oikkonen, "Evolutionary Nostalgia and the Temporality

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This offers a more constructive view of nostalgia as a source of possibility and route map for a better way of life.

As positive as it might seem, this interpretation of nostalgia may still be seen by heritage practitioners as an impediment to their duty to present an accurate, unsanitized picture of prehistory. However, this need not be the case, as it offers an opportunity for them to initiate a conversation about what life was *actually* like during different prehistoric periods based on the archaeological and palaeoecological record. Moreover, as some participants noted, reflecting on the archaeology in this way also throws the scale of present-day human impact on earth systems into sharp relief. As discussed, this elevated perspective prompted one participant to take climate action. This participant response supports Hannah Fluck and Michael Dawson's assertion that in order to effect fundamental change in climate awareness, people need to be engaged in "human stories of environmental science […] that understand people and the complexity of their relationships with each other and to their environment".[55]

The potential of cultural heritage to aid the development and promotion of environmental literacy in a meaningful way is gaining increasing recognition, especially in educational and heritage tourism contexts.[56] Conceivably, if presented using the types of mindful practices employed in ecotourism settings,[57] the archaeological narratives of specific heritage sites could be mobilized to encourage visitors to reflect on and alter their own environmental behaviours. If applied sensitively, this type of narrative approach would serve to complement

of Belonging," in *Population Genetics and Belonging: A Cultural Analysis of Genetic Ancestry*, ed. Venla Oikkonen (Cham: Springer, 2018), 131–71; Mark J. Rowland, "An attack of nostalgia … and other ways of seeing the past," in *An Archaeological Life: Papers in Honour of Jay Hall*, eds. Sean Ulm and Ian Lilley (Brisbane: The University of Queensland, 2006), 59–72; Stuart Tannock, "Nostalgia Critique," *Cultural Studies* 9 (1995), no. 3: 453–64.

55 Hannah Fluck and Michael Dawson, "Climate Change and the Historic Environment," *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice* 12 (2021), no. 3–4: 264.

56 Tsabit A. Ahmad, "Identifying environmental issues on the prehistoric societies in history learning", *Institute of Physics Conf. Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 747 (2021); Fluck and Dawson, "Climate Change and the Historic Environment"; Donna Graves, Elizabeth Villano, and Clare Cooper, "Expanding the Narratives: How Stories of Our Past Can Help Inspire Our Response to the Climate Crisis," *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice* 12 (2021), vol 3–4: 292–312; *Climate and society in Ireland: from prehistory to the present*, eds. James Kelly and Tomás Ó'Carragáin, Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, no. 120, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2021); Kosmas Touloumis, "Environmental Education and Archaeology", in *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*, ed. Claire Smith (Cham: Springer, 2018).

57 Jan Packer and Roy Ballantyne, "Encouraging reflective visitor experiences in ecotourism," in *International Handbook on Ecotourism*, eds. Roy Ballantyne and Jan Packer (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013), 169–77.

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existing efforts by environmental archaeologists to establish mechanisms for climate resilience.[58]

The potential of a more reflective approach to archaeological narratives need not be limited to behaviour change for the good of the environment. It is also relevant to human wellbeing. While the level of health, wellbeing and ecological impact of prehistoric communities is relative, it is certain that they did live a life more directly connected to the natural environment. Whether due to a genetically based disposition or not, nature connection has consistently been proven to improve physical and psychological wellbeing.[59] Consequently, engaging with the nostalgia for a simpler, land-based life that some people experience in response to prehistoric archaeology, could prove an effective way of encouraging individuals to reflect on how they currently connect with their environment, what that means for them and how they can deepen that relationship for their own benefit. In this way, engagement with archaeology offers a meaningful way to connect with nature; possibly providing an alternative entry point to ecotherapy. This kind of engagement could also be enhanced by immersive experiences with experimental archaeology reconstructions, something which has already been shown to support wellbeing.[60]

Viewed in this light and if used ethically, evolutionary nostalgia arguably constitutes a device for constructive reflection with the potential to effect positive behaviour change.

58 Boivin and Crowther, "Mobilizing the past to shape a better Anthropocene"; Hannah Fluck and Kate Guest, "Climate Change and Archaeology. An Introduction," *Internet Archaeology* 60 (2021); Benjamin Gearey *et al.*, "On the brink of Armageddon? Climate change, the archaeological record and human activity across the Bronze Age–Iron Age transition in Ireland," in *Climate and society in Ireland: from prehistory to the present*, eds. James Kelly, and Tomás Ó'Carragáin, Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, no. 120, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2020), 105–28.

59 Gregory N. Bratman *et al.*, "Nature and mental health: An ecosystem service perspective," *Science Advances* 5, no. 7 (2019); Jim Robbins, "Ecopsychology: How Immersion in Nature Benefits Your Health," *Yale Environment* 360 (2020); Sonja Sudimac, Vera Sale, and Simone Kühn, "How nature nurtures: Amygdala activity decreases as the result of a one-hour walk in nature," *Molecular Psychiatry* 27 (11) (2022).

60 Briony Clifton, "People making places making people," in *Historic Landscapes and Mental Wellbeing*, eds. Timothy Darvill, Kerry Barass, Laura Drysdale, Vanessa Heaslip, Yvette Staelens (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2019), 144–152; Daniel O'Donoghue, "High value, short intervention historic landscape projects: Practical considerations for voluntary mental-health providers," in *Historic Landscapes and Mental Wellbeing*, eds. Timothy Darvill, Kerry Barass, Laura Drysdale, Vanessa Heaslip, Yvette Staelens (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2019, 97–122.

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Conclusion

The qualitative study from which this paper draws was carried out with a limited group of people in a very specific setting. Thus, the participant perceptions presented cannot be assumed to be universal. In this respect, further research with diverse audiences and groups who do not traditionally visit heritage sites is necessary to support these findings. Nevertheless, as Jorge Conesa-Sevilla puts it, "As far as science can inform us, never has humanity been universally threatened by its own actions this perversely, nor been so "efficient" at altering so many Earth systems at once without the hope of rectifying the consequences of its own actions…'.[61] At the same time, the world is also dealing with a global mental health crisis.[62] Accordingly, if there even the slightest possibility that archaeological narratives can be harnessed to support climate action and wellbeing in the manner described above, surely it is incumbent upon heritage researchers and professionals to do so without hesitation? Furthermore, it has recently been recognized that cultural heritage has been marginalized from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals despite the fact that it has much to contribute.[63] It is therefore imperative that heritage professionals evidence this value.

On first thought, entertaining nostalgia in the context of public archaeology as a way to support sustainable development may seem a backward and undesirable step. However, as Miriam Bower perceptively observes:

> The clever management and marketing of heritage can be used as a tool to draw the 'consumer' into a position from which a deeper message can be delivered […] Perhaps we should be using the knowledge gained from the past to form a better future, perhaps we should use this knowledge to show how damaging wars can be, how the lack of care for the environment can lead to disaster on a world scale. Archaeology can and has been used in many ways. Through marketing nostalgia perhaps we can turn its negative use into something more positive.[64]

This study demonstrates that if approached responsibly, nostalgia – in this case evolutionary and ecological nostalgia – is a useful concept with which to think about human-environment relationships. It is a reminder to heritage practitioners and educators of the power of heritage assets to stimulate reflection on the legitimacy of present lifeways. As such, though limited, this study highlights

61 Conesa-Sevilla, *Ecopsychology Revisited*, xx.

62 Britanny N. Rudd and Rinad S. Beidas, "Digital Mental Health: The Answer to the Global Mental Health Crisis?, " *JMIR Mental Health* 7 (2020), no. 6.

63 Sophia Labadi, *Rethinking Heritage for Sustainable Development*, (London: UCL Press, 2022).

64 Miriam Bower, "Marketing Nostalgia: An exploration of heritage management and its relation to the human consciousness," in *Managing Archaeology*, eds. John Carman, Malcolm Cooper, Anthony Firth, and David Wheatley (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 33–39, here 39.

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an important opportunity for the heritage sector, schools and universities to use nostalgia when it arises, as a reflective tool for personal and environmental change. Most importantly, whether or not nostalgia is present for visitors and students, the types of thought forms and questions it engenders suggest that there is value in initiating reflective conversations in heritage contexts on past, present and future human-environment relationships. Arguably, such practices afford a unique perspective that can help to promote environmental awareness, climate action and human wellbeing.

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