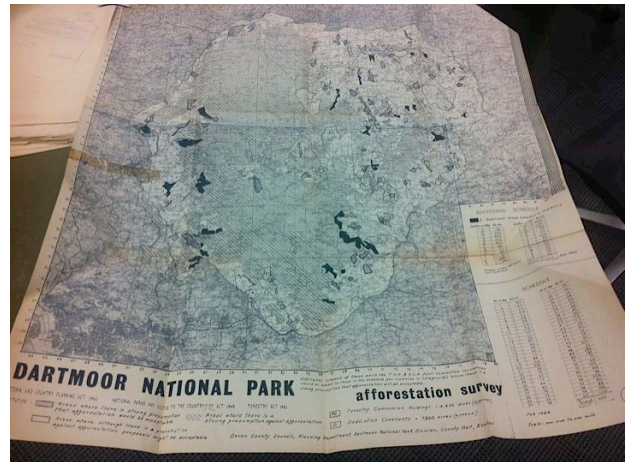


Matthew Kelly

Quartz and Feldspar: A History of Modern Dartmoor

Dartmoor National Park contains the largest unenclosed rural landscape in the south of England. My book project, *Quartz and Feldspar*, is an attempt to write an intertextual history of the discursive frameworks that shaped how this landscape has been encountered over the past two hundred years. Though strongly informed by the cultural turn's problematizing of the romantic tradition of (English) landscape writing and historiography, axiomatic to my approach is a determination to keep in view the material Dartmoor—the barely perishable Dartmoor of granite—that lies beyond the “Dartmoor” of text and representation. As a consequence, my work is much concerned with specificities of place and the overlapping responses places provoked, be they poetic, antiquarian, racial, archaeological, mythic, folkloric, religious, preservationist, commercial, and so on.



Quartz and Feldspar will be divided into four sections. The first two focus on the nineteenth century, and are concerned with how Dartmoor was subject to “improvement,” became a site of incarceration, and attracted the interest of antiquarians and archaeologists. By the early years of the nineteenth century, Dartmoor came to be considered a resource in quite novel ways and, as a consequence, became a problem of public policy and planning. This will be the subject of the third section of the book, which I plan to draft during the period of my fellowship. Under particular consideration is how government ministers, facing the statutory requirement to protect Dartmoor as an “amenity,” contended with the demands of the military, the local water authorities, forestry interests, the social and economic needs of local communities, and the BBC. Could a landscape designated a National Park also be an artillery range; could its valleys be dammed and flooded; could its distinctive hills be shrouded in conifer plantations; could a television mast, visible for miles around, be erected at its center? Indeed, could an airport be located within its boundaries? Whitehall correspondence reveals that answers to these questions were provided on a case-by-case basis. If this gave some credence to the claims made by amenity societies that the protective aspect of the National Parks legislation was too weak, it was far from clear what the alternative approach might be. By treating these questions historically, I hope to achieve three things: First, to offer an historical account of how the present physical state of the National Park came to be; second, to delineate the ways attempts to protect this and other landscapes generated problems of local, regional and national governance, recognizing how the management of the National Parks played an important role in the development of the postwar British state; and, third, to identify the roots of present thinking, including “sustainability,” the panacea of our times.