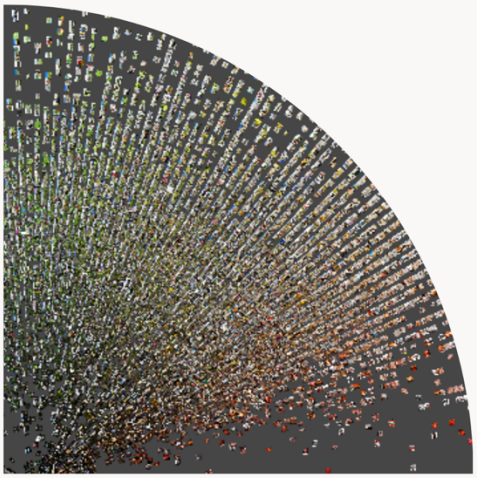
Light, land, and the lens: Digital landscapes, fell farming, and the politics of vision in the Lake District.







Supplement photobook of figures

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School of Geography & the Environment
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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Light, land, and the lens:

Digital landscapes, fell farming, and the politics of vision in the Lake District.

In the spirit of embracing diverse ways of seeing, images associated with this thesis are available in a wide variety of formats.

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Abstract

This thesis explores how the Lake District National Park is encountered as a digital landscape in the social media platform, Instagram. It aims to develop innovative digital methods, embracing both qualitative and quantitative approaches, to examine how longstanding romantic representations of the Lake District are continued through contemporary digital mediums. The thesis draws together conceptual underpinnings from studies of visuality and digital ecologies to interrogate how rural geographies of the #lakedistrict can be understood and reimagined. The thesis then focuses on the fell farming communities of Herdwick sheep farmers to explore what happens when we make interventions into dominant manifestations of the online #lakedistrict using participatory digital visual methods.

By developing methods such as digital textures and the concept of aperturing, this work examines how less visible #lakedistricts can be brought into light. The thesis deploys experimental analytical approaches such as digital textures to develop a cumulative 'hyperscene typology' of the #lakedistrict, moving from formal representations and influential conceptions of the #lakedistrict in the first half, to visioning farmers' #lakedistricts as lived space and lived shade. The thesis offers new considerations about how alternative digital landscapes can challenge and enrich dominant hyperseen manifestations of the #lakedistrict.

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Figure X. 1: A motivational potato, Source Dr Jonny Turnbull

To the wonderful @fellsfarmers, you'll probably never know how much you have all changed my life, and probably never read this, but I cannot express how profound an impact on me you have had. The passion for your fells and flocks, it is infectious and has taken hold of me completely. I will continue to dedicate my time, personally and professionally, to pursuing ways for your voices to be heard and your views to be seen.

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To my dear human family- Mam, Dad, and Buf, I promise, I'm done with education now. I'm afraid I'll be reading books forever, but no more degrees. Thank you all for your love, your interest in what I'm doing (or when I'll be finished!) I know it's taken flipping ages, but I am proud of what I have achieved- and don't worry you don't have to read it ☺ Eighty-odd thousand words though, not bad for someone who was only going to get an A level in Fish and Chips ey! I love you all dearly.

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For my dearest Grannie, and for every Herdwick in Cumbria

xxx

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Prologue

I am a farmer's daughter. Growing up, farming was the backdrop of my life, an inheritance I admired but never imagined as my own. When I embarked on this research journey over seven (!) years ago, it was to be an academic endeavour, not a return to my roots. Yet, through the days, weeks, and now years that I have spent with fell farmers, I found that farming began to weave itself back into the very fabric of my everyday existence. The digital technologies I explored academically as an exciting and innovative tool for this research soon became a lens through which I came to frequently consider the ways it mediates my existence in the landscapes I moved through, always both physically and virtually. This journey has been one of both knowledge and personal transformation, one that has reshaped my relationship with land, place, and the communities that care for them.

I first wrote to the Prime Minister when I was 11 years old, in the spring of 2001, as Foot and Mouth disease ravaged the countryside. I remember the trauma and the fear, but looking back what I remember most is the striking, haunting view of burning pyres of livestock in fields through the valley I lived in. The smoke which pillowed around carcasses of dead, healthy cattle and spun swirling into grey skies. Those bodies are etched in my memory forever. Imagery stays with us. The feelings we associate with what we see are personal, raw, and, as this view was for me, life changing. My own naïve fear at the time was for my pet mule ewe, Speckle, and what might happen to her if a farm close enough to us was infected. But ripples of the fear, uncertainty, and a distinct feeling of being unheard and unseen by the public and by politicians are all outlooks that became embedded in the farming community are still felt today.

Bringing the views of rural communities to the fore was the central focus and goal of this thesis from inception and has perhaps been the only element to remain steadfast as this research process has evolved and, finally, flourished. I hope the following pages show a story of passion, perseverance, and playfulness in bringing to you, reader, the digital landscapes of a #lakedistrict and a community I have come to love dearly.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Beginnings

On the 12th of June 2017, in an office on the outskirts of Kendal, a communications assistant at the Lake District National Park Authority shared a post on Instagram. The image (Figure 1.1) shows a small Herdwick sheep, a commodified and stylised souvenir in the form of a cuddly 'Little Herdy'™ toy, which viewers could buy to support the Lake District's bid to become a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Cultural Landscape. With less than a month to go before the decision would be announced, this image is a manifestation of the many dynamics between visuality, rurality, digitality and visibility that this thesis seeks to address. Indeed, it was my encounter with this social media post way back in 2017 which inspired the work that this project has become.



For, in encountering this Instagram post, my brain couldn't help but consider the curiousness of seeing so many jarring representations held together in an image which, at a cursory, fleeting glance through the Instagram feed seems an attractive, unproblematic composition. Let's start with the Herdy itself: the Herdwick sheep is unknowingly central to many alternate visions of the Lake District National Park in the United Kingdom. Visual social media have situated these sheep as unwitting representatives of their home, locally and across the globe. The breed is a charismatic (Lorimer, 2007, 2014) cultural emblem to local rural communities who value most their long-held traditions of

pastoral upland sheep farming (Monbiot, 2017). Their 'friendly face' (Lake District National Park Authority, 2015) is a commodified and stylised souvenir in the form of cuddly 'Herdy'™ toys, clothing and giftware; a 'cuddly soft power' (Buckingham, David and Jepson, 2013) emissary for the tourists of the Lake District's international visitor base, as it is presented here. Though they are also the villain in conservationists' accounts which render Cumbria's landscape 'a sheepwrecked wasteland' (Monbiot, 2017).

Frequent visitors to the Lake District, or walking enthusiasts from across England, may also recognise the small stack of books shown in the image. More than something for the Herdy to lean against, the tell-tale-coloured band at the bottom of the spines tells any avid walker that the books are Pictorial Guides of the Lakeland Fells, by celebrated author and rambler Alfred Wainwright. To 'complete the wainwrights' is a mark of honour among enthusiasts, and this nod to their hero, whilst subtle, would be instantly recognisable to Wainwright's fans. The Herdwick, an emblem of Lakeland's farming heritage, yet crucially a souvenir version, is thus composed side-by-side with the books which shape and engender the movements and ways of seeing, the very footsteps and viewpoints sought, of millions of Lake District tourists annually.

And finally, to the location, Brockhole Visitor Centre on the banks of Lake Windermere. The background of the composition includes all of those elements, in blurred pastel tones, for which the Lake District is most renowned, the calm cool lake and the muted shapes of dramatic mountain landscapes behind. The landscape on which the Herdwicks graze, the farmers shepherd, and the tourists walk, vitally different modes of encountering the same terrain. The contestations which exist between each form of engagement and understanding of place are filtered out when they are brought together, unevenly 'United by Herdy'[1] for the Instagram viewer, and the site of *this* Lake District encounter, is digital.

Digital media continues exponentially to hold an ever more intertwined and intervening role in our daily lives. Arturo Escobar first welcomed us to 'Cyberia' and identified the rising prominence of social studies into cybercultures back in 1994. The increasingly intimate relationships between 'bodies and machines' were already raising questions for Escobar

[1] 'United by Herdy' was the Lake District National Park Partnership's logo and slogan for the World Heritage Bid campaign. (See Lake District National Park Authority, 2015)

about how the body is reconfigured through these entanglements (1994). The first iPhone, widely regarded as the first smartphone, would not be released for another 13 years. Since then, innovations in technology and cyberculture have continued to evolve so dramatically that 'the digital' holds the capacity to mediate previously unimagined aspects of our worlds.

When Apple went on to trademark the phrase 'there's an app for that', they recognised and made explicit the seemingly ubiquitous capacity of our handheld mobile devices to aide in our everyday activities. Instagram was still one year away from being released. Just over a decade later, this visual social media platform has taken on a fundamental role in the contemporary mechanisms through which people and places are visualised. Instagram already has over 1 billion global users, with over 31 million in the UK alone, making the UK the country with the 9th largest Instagram audience size in the world (Tankovska, 2021b, 2021a). These users spend an average of 30 minutes per day on the platform (Newberry, 2021). As the National Geographic has hinted, when it comes to picturing how we see the world in the contemporary era[2] (Miller, 2017), Instagram is the app for that.

The short story of the Herdwick regarding the origins of this project uncovers the myriad questions I began to ask myself about how we (not just academics, but organisations, governments, and publics) come to understand rural places, the different roles of humans and nonhumans in the production of landscapes, and in what ways social media is contributing to these understandings and mechanisms for seeing and being in the world. The World Heritage inscription is just one contemporary moment within an ongoing saga of contestations and compromises between the many factions who lay claim to this iconic landscape (Pollard, 1987; Kinsman, 1995; Tolia-Kelly, 2007; Halfacree and Williams, 2021). The Lake District's World Heritage bid, like many modern movements of popular culture, played out across multiple digital terrains alongside the revered Lakeland fells which are synonymous for many with both natural beauty and national identity in the United Kingdom. On social media, images of the Lake District, predominantly in the form of picturesque mountainscapes, played an important

[2] Photographers cited in Miller's article stated that: 'I see this desire to escape to these landscapes, to do something real, because more than ever everyone is buried in their phones. But where do they get the inspiration to travel? Instagram.' Corey Arnold (@arni_coraldo); 'I guess following photographers on Instagram gives a more genuine expression than looking for inspiration in a tourism brochure' Johan Lolos (@lebackpacker); 'Now you're less than 10 clicks away from seeing an image on Instagram to purchasing a ticket to go there' Chris Burkard (@chrisburkard)

role in this contentious campaign for many of the key organisations with a stake in the nomination's outcome.

As a farmer's daughter, my intellectual fascination has always been with the way that farming stories are lived, told, shared and experienced in rural landscapes, and particularly in England's protected areas. I first considered the Lake District as a case study because it was *not* where I am from: in the North York Moors I was concerned that I would either know, or be related to many eligible participants, or, at the least, they would know my dad somehow, and that was certain to colour their perceptions of me and my study! Yet the more I learned about the Lake District, the clearer it became that this was a timely, rich, and unique case study to explore these dynamics of visuality, rurality, and the digital.

Much literature exists on the exclusion of rural perspectives from long-existing communities in protected areas across the world. The feeling of invisibility for rural communities in the Lake District has been highlighted in popular media by the memoirs, and regular Twitter and Instagram updates, of Lakeland shepherd James Rebanks, who also campaigned for the Lake District's World Heritage bid (Rebanks Consulting Ltd & Trends Research Ltd, 2009; Fraser and Fraser, 2013). Rebanks' bestselling account details the jarring relationship between upland hill farmers, who view themselves as the protectors of the fell landscape, and the more recent inhabitants of the area who are drawn, he asserts, to the Lake District by the Wordsworthian picturesque representations that most farmers do not share:

'*When we call it our landscape, we mean it as a physical and intellectual reality… Landscapes like ours were created by, and survive through, the efforts of nobodies… The real history of our landscape should be the history of the nobodies*.'

(Rebanks, 2015, pp. 4–5).

The Lake District is a mountainous region in Cumbria, Northwest England (Figure 1.2), of over 900 square miles. Author Daniel Defoe, in 1724, declared that the region was 'the wildest, most barren and frightful of any that I have passed over in England' (cited in Urry, 2013, p. 193). However, the subsequent attention and celebration of prominent figures such as William Wordsworth has for centuries cemented the Lake District as something of an icon in English culture, inscribed as an UNESCO World Heritage Cultural Landscape in 2017. On Instagram,

the number of #lakedistrict images stands at over 4 million[3], a number which has more than doubled over the lifetime of this research project. But to what extent do these posts tell a full story of the Lake District, as it is experienced by its many users and inhabitants? Or does social media continue the romantic visions of the Lake District which first brought the area to fame 300 years ago? The democratic potential of social media as a means to inform, coordinate and mobilise political action is not evenly distributed, locally or globally (Lewis, Pea and Rosen, 2010; Loader and Mercea, 2011; Boulianne, 2015; Gan, Lee and Li, 2017; Zhang and Lin, 2018). There are discernible absences from online publics, and existing critiques of uncritical application of digital technology in the rural can exacerbate the disempowerment and marginalisation of local communities through their exposure to external socio-economic forces (Young, 2019). Digital geographies thus have legitimate concerns about the extent to which these spaces can ever be truly decolonised (McLean, 2020) where technologies continue to perpetuate and rework particular ways of seeing and being in the world. These ongoing disparities within the intimately intertwined and blurred spheres of online and offline visualities of people and places highlight the enduring necessity of critical studies into the visual landscapes of digital media.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How does Instagram construct and perform English natures in digital landscapes of the Lake District?
2. Who is influential in curating digital landscapes of the Lake District on Instagram?
3. What would the #lakedistrict look like if the groups less visible within the digital landscape were empowered to use Instagram to represent their everyday lives?
4. How well does the fell farmers' Instagram #lakedistrict reflect their lived experience of the digital landscape?

In addressing these questions, my thesis will provide several contributions to cultural geography. This thesis will deliver a contemporary approach to rural geography through the utilisation of innovative methods hitherto only somewhat explored in urban and digital geographies. The thesis will therefore highlight that the rural is an apt intellectual area for studying digital geographies. Further, the thesis provides conceptual and methodological

[3] 4.1 million posts on 11th September 2023.

contributions particularly through the use of participatory approaches which draw together accessible yet experimental methods for field research which create agency for research participants and generate rich data for analysis.

In contributing to these key areas of geographical study, this thesis develops a digital ecology of the Lake District as the '#lakedistrict'. It explores and aims to conceptualise relationships between rural communities and the #lakedistrict as a simultaneously online and offline environment. In this way, the Lake District National Park (Figure 1.2) is understood a simultaneously physical-virtual process-place of always becoming imaginations, encounters and embodied experiences, produced and consumed as images, characters, and algorithms. This digital ecology focuses upon Instagram as one of many complex and interrelated digital environs, and the fell farmers who are just one of many interconnected groups who could have been the subject of study.



Figure 1. 2: Topography and Location of the Lake District National Park © Ordnance Survey

1.3 Thesis structure

This study is presented in two parts. The first half of the thesis will focus on what already exists in the online Instagram #lakedistrict; it explores at varied scales the ways that digital landscapes are at once consumed and produced by both the everyday and exceptional stakeholders. The second half of the thesis asks about what *could* exist in the online #lakedistrict: the project experiments with making positive interventions into the Instagram #lakedistrict by attempting to assist in making visible some farming perspectives of the landscape which are unseen online.

This thesis is thus structured as a cumulative story of seeing, sensing, and knowing the #lakedistrict which can be broadly split in half. It starts with a review that draws together diverse academic literatures to develop a multifaceted conceptual framework (Chapter 2). This informs a range of innovative and interactive methods that are detailed in Chapter 3. Chapters 4 and 5 examine and find new ways to make sense of what *already exists* in the #lakedistrict.

Chapter 4, *Digital Textures*, introduces us more fully to the Lake District National Park, a landscape revered in the UK as an everyman's 'staycation' destination for adventure seekers and nature lovers. It is a place celebrated as an inspiration for Romanticism and the modern conservation movement, and it is enjoyed by almost 20 million visitors a year. These imaginations of nature are constructed and reproduced through many cultural media. Instagram media of the #lakedistrict have been utilised by the general public, local institutions and tourism businesses as a means to share images of the region in ways which, I argue, continue dominant discourses of nature in destination #lakedistrict. Chapter 4 examines how Instagram constructs and helps to perform particular ruralities of English nature in the Lake District. These issues are explored through a large-scale digital analysis of a year-long dataset of #lakedistrict images on Instagram. These images are analysed utilising innovative methods from cultural analytics (Manovich, 2009, 2012, 2017, 2020) to offer new insights into the ways in which social media perpetuate dominant imaginations of nature in the #lakedistrict. The chapter investigates if there is a set of archetypal imaginations of the Lake District on social media. It proposes a new methodological approach of Digital Textures as a means to analyse both the discursive and affective qualities of images we encounter on Instagram.

Having explored in Chapter 4 the ways that the existing corpus of #lakedistrict Instagram images can be consumed as hyperseen images, Chapter 5, *Candid | Poetic*, moves to identifying some of the more powerful ways that the #lakedistrict is produced. The aim of this chapter is to explore how two popular local Instagram profiles have cultivated differing visual accounts of the online #lakedistrict. It focuses on two accounts, @herdyshepherd1, a popular author in nature writing from Cumbria, and @thelakelanders, an amateur photography collective, to examine the ways in which they have established their authentic personas as #lakedistrict influencers, and the curation of their particular authentic #lakedistrict aesthetics. The first part of the chapter compares and contrasts the processes of curating an Instagram #lakedistrict, and details how @herdyshepherd1's influence is constructed from a duality of 'native' personas, while @thelakelanders utilise a 'networked' approach to develop their online influence. The second part of the chapter looks more closely at the curated aesthetics of the Lake District produced by these accounts. The #lakedistrict through the Instagram grid of @herdyshepherd1 is understood as a 'candid pastoral' which utilises unposed, unprofessional images which enhance the humble farmer persona and more everyday rural lifestyle aesthetic evident in his literary works. @thelakelanders' authentic aesthetic is a complex combination of professional approaches and designed style which together are curated as a 'poetic landscape'. Following these analyses, the accounts are mapped back onto the cumulative ruralities of the #lakedistrict typology being developed throughout the thesis (see below). The chapter closes with a discussion of aesthetics in flux.

We will see throughout the first half of the thesis that influential ruralities of nature in the #lakedistrict emerge, are reconstructed, and reproduced through the processes and practices that are embedded within digital culture. The Lake District National Park is revered in the UK as a site of both natural beauty and national identity: it is the birthplace of the National Trust, and the inspiration for many of our most beloved poets, artists, and cultural signifiers. Yet where the #lakedistrict is celebrated for its landscape, the role of everyday rural communities in creating and maintaining that landscape is filtered out online. It as this juncture that the thesis moves from analysis of what already exists, to developing and exploring positive interventions into the #lakedistrict.

Chapter 6, *Overshadowed and Inbetween*, explores the gaps in the current portrayal of the #lakedistrict on Instagram, focusing on who and what is missing from this digital representation. It examines the impact of empowering invisible rural groups, particularly fell farmers of Herdwick sheep, to depict their own #lakedistrict on social media. Through a collaborative project, which involved me building an Instagram account (@fellfarmers), rural families from across the National Park shared images of their everyday lives on Instagram, aiming to present an alternative reality of the #lakedistrict. This chapter assesses the potential of Instagram to amplify #alternativerurals, offering a new narrative that contrasts with the dominant representations of the region. Using the metaphor of the shadow, the chapter interrogates issues of visibility, influence, and the aesthetics of place. The method of digital textures is revisited to analyse these images, alongside public and curated Instagram accounts, revealing how @fellsfarmers' contributions are either overshadowed or positioned in the margins of the existing #lakedistrict imagery through methods of cultural analytics. Ultimately, *Overshadowed and Inbetween* provides a novel analysis of digital landscapes and showcases innovative digital methods for examining uneven representations of place on social media.

Chapter 7, *Hands, Blood, Gather,* is the final substantive Chapter of this thesis, and delves into the personal stories, images, and embodied experiences of the Herdwick @fellsfarmers whose images have been collected and whose perspectives this project has sought to uncover. Chapter 7 demonstrates how three 'silenced' and unseen practices fundamental to the everyday experience of farming families in the #lakedistricrt are brought out of the shadows by @fellsfarmers to demonstrate elements of the hyperscene which remain invisible on Instagram.

In the concluding chapter of this thesis, *Hefts, Hope and Home*, I return to the cumulative methodological and empirical findings of the study to offer insight into the importance of paying attention to the established impact, present politics, and future potential of digital technologies for considering and conceptualising encounters with landscapes. Digital technologies such as Instagram have evolved, and continue to evolve, in ways which play a pivotal role in the persistence of powerful, long existing and widespread imaginations of landscape. Instagram further perpetuates the influence of those who are most savvy in their

engagement with digital technologies, in ways that entrench particular accounts of these landscapes as authentic. There are some groups whose contrasting visions of these landscapes remain outshone by influential and established accounts, yet by paying attention to their experience we can uncover vital gems and versions of landscape which digital technologies cannot fully encompass or, indeed, adequately translate. I outline the profound personal and professional impact of this work on my own life and research, and offer recommendations for further study and exciting plans for the continuation of this work: some data which has been gathered in preparation for this dissertation was ultimately beyond the scope of what could be included, particularly in reference to the need for consideration of multispecies perspectives. Sheepcam will return.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review is presented in four sections. The first three sections are each dedicated to a broad area of geographical study: the visual, the digital and the rural. A key contribution of this thesis is to bring together these literatures in previously unseen ways through the dual case studies of the Lake District National Park and the social media platform Instagram. The fourth substantive section of this literature review introduces the three key elements of the thesis' digital ecologies conceptual framework (after Turnbull *et al.*, 2023), spatiality, hyperscenes, and aperturing, which together provide the conceptual underpinnings and driving rationale behind the methods and motives for the main chapters of the project.

In section one, *geographical visions*, I explore seminal work on vision and visuality before turning to key conceptual elements of the visual encounter, focusing on the experiential roles of light (Ingold, 2005), colour (Buether, 2014) and shadow (Edensor and Hughes, 2021) which are all concepts that figure deeply in the analytical contributions of this thesis.

In section two, *hyper visions*, I outline some of the key literature from media studies and the burgeoning field of digital geographies, and highlight how this work, which has already been effectively utilised in urban studies, also has much theoretical purchase for work in rural geography. In particular, I introduce the notion of the hyper, and existing seminal studies of social media before focusing on work which examines the role of the screen in digital encounters. Finally, I introduce the concepts of the hyperlocal (Hochman, Manovich and Yazdani, 2014) and the hyperseen (Rose and Willis, 2018) which are fundamental to the academic contributions of this study.

In section three, *rural visions*, I summarise some of the rich body of literature exploring understandings of the countryside in the English context, including notions of the gaze, rural idyll, and romanticism. I go on to outline several key critical analytical approaches to rural studies, before focusing in on the everyday rural (Shirley, 2015), which I utilise most particularly in the second half of my thesis to help understand farmers' perceptions of the landscape they reside in.

In the final section, I detail the key elements of the digital ecology conceptual framework upon which this thesis is established. I show how rural and media-based applications of Lefebvre's triadic model of spatialisation will be used to structure the relationships between rural place, representation and lived experience that are explored in the thesis, and extend key theoretical elements from the literature review, such as the hyperlocal and hyperseen, to develop a new conceptualisation of how digital landscapes are encountered and can be intervened in through social media, bringing othered and alternative visions into light.

2.2 Geographical Visions

What does it mean to see? Vision is defined by Merriam Webster as 'the act or *power* of seeing' (emphasis added). Humans see when light enters the eye through the cornea, and hits the retina, sending electronic signals back to our brains, which then make sense of the colours and shapes we encounter. Yet vision always happens in an individual social context, leading to different forms of 'visuality'. And yet, as Hal Foster argues 'although vision suggests sight as a physical operation, and visuality sight as a social fact, the two are not opposed as nature to culture: vision is social and historical too, and visuality involves the body and the psyche.' (1988, p. ix) The sharp distinction between nature and culture notwithstanding, Foster succinctly offers here a nuance of vision and visuality which underscores the complexities which theoretical understandings of the visual encompass. Through vision and visuality, Foster argues we must always consider both the physical *and* the discursive, wherein we 'thicken', 'socialise', and 'historicise' modern vision of the world in order to adequately 'specify its dominant practices and its critical resistances' (1988, p.ix).

2.2.1 Visuality and the Visual Encounter: Image

Gillian Rose's work on visual culture and visual methodologies has been fundamental to social science's understanding and utilisation of the visual (2003, 2010, 2016; 2022), and geography's commitment to 'take images seriously' (Rose, 2016). Rose notes that 'the visualities deployed by the production of geographical knowledges are never neutral' (2003, p. 213), returning an emphasis to that notion of the visual as the *power* of seeing, which calls our attention to how geographers select and present images, to whom they are presented, and where these

images are displayed: the curation of image encountering by geographers must also be paid attention to (Rose, 2003). Further, and together with Divya Tolia-Kelly, in *Visuality/Materiality* Rose emphasises that visuality is constantly co-constituted with materiality, where the embodied processes of understanding visuality go hand in hand with the representative work our brains do in contextualising and making sense of what we see (Rose and Tolia-Kelly, 2012).

A visuality/materiality approach to research and practice also necessarily involves the acknowledgement of a 'situated eye', with 'an attunement to the collective, multiple and embodied textures, sensibilities and productive meanings of the visual through the material, and vice versa' (Rose and Tolia-Kelly, 2012, p. 4). In other words, 'the way we see things is affected by what we know or believe' (Berger, 1972). Further, Rose and Tolia-Kelly's approach aligns with Donna Haraway's insistence on the 'embodied nature of all vision', acknowledging the *power* in particular ways of seeing. Significantly, for Haraway, how particular political and economic regimes have enabled the male, colonial and capitalist knowing subject to see 'everything from nowhere' (Haraway, 1988, p. 581). These fundamentally situated and power-laden dimensions of visuality are central to the conceptual and methodological underpinnings of this study.

Mary Louise Pratt has referred to the social spaces in which societies 'meet, clash, and grapple with each other often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power' as 'contact zones' (Pratt, 2014, p. 34). The encounter between differing visions of places can be both visible and heterogenous when there is power behind multiple ways of seeing, where communities can and do articulate alternate visions of a place, a community, an idea. However, where this asymmetry in power relations is more extreme, there are often occasions where a much narrower vision, or oligopoly of visions, is made visible, or when alternate visions are made invisible by this relational distortion of visual cultures.

Visuality, then, refers to the process by which our brains interpret and make sense of visual stimuli within a social context. It's the way we perceive, understand, and assign meaning to what we see, influenced by cultural, social, and personal factors. This thesis will introduce and expand the concept of 'aperturing', the act of expanding the range of interpretations or visualities that are visible or accessible. It involves creating opportunities to see and

understand more aspects of a visual experience, broadening our perceptual and interpretive frameworks.

The visual encounter on which I primarily focus within this thesis is the encounter with the image. An image, according to John Berger, is 'a sight which has been recreated or reproduced' (1972, p.9). This initially straightforward definition emphasises the detachment of an image from the *situated* nature of the initial 'seeing': as, again according to Berger, 'every time we look at a photograph, we are aware, however slightly, of the photographer selecting that sight from an infinity of possible sights' (1972, p.10). And yet, there is an additional power in photographic imagery which is understood as empirical: there is a clash between critical understandings of seeing, sights and image making as particular and situated with common understandings of photographs as evidence with the ability to 'compel belief'; (Mnookin, 2013, p. 3). As Susan Sontag has observed, 'something we hear about, but doubt, seems proven when we're shown a photograph of it' (1978, p. 5). Ways of seeing are thus, embroiled in power relations regarding the perspective of who sees, what they see, and the mediums through which visual material are presented: *seeing is believing*?

2.2.2 Immersion: Affect, Light, Colour, Shadow

So, there is a power in who sees and what we see. There is also a power in *how* we see. Having outlined the situated nature of vision, and how the political positionality of different seers can impact the power of particular visions, it is also important to consider the bodily experience of vision. The affective capacity of images can be understood as more-than representational 'blocks of sensation with an affective intensity: they make sense not just because we take time to figure out what they signify, but also because their pre-signifying affective materiality is felt in bodies' (Latham and Mccormack, 2009; Lorimer, 2010). The term affect incorporates a variety of perspectives from social science which emphasise bodies' lively capacities to generate and be susceptible to sensory experiences and processes. Bodies are broadly conceived here: 'affect is distributed between, and can happen outside, bodies which are not exclusively human, and might incorporate technologies, things, non-human living matter, discourses' noises or groups of beings (Lorimer, 2008). The affective dimensions of life are distinctly 'more-than' human, and the 'intensities of feeling' (Thrift, 2004) generated by affect are understood

as pre-personal and autonomous capacities of our corporeal being (Massumi, 2002; Thrift, 2004, 2008; Gregory *et al*., 2009, p. 8). This affectiveness is evoked by the image itself, and situates images as one format of media which can act as 'vital components of affective 'resonance machines' that powerfully configure popular political landscapes' (Lorimer, 2010).

Tim Ingold follows Merleau-Ponty's argument that to encounter light is 'fundamentally an experience of being in the world that is ontologically prior to the sight of things' (2005, p. 97)- we do not 'see' light, but we comprehend everything through our immersion in light. Further, vision is not a unilateral bodily process of encountering things through light either mentally *or* physically, it is always experienced as unfolding in both. For Ingold:

> 'In reality, nothing is turned over from body to mind. This is because vision is not a one-way process leading from worldly object to mental image, by way of the eyes and the brain, but rather unfolds in circuits of action and perception, without beginning or end, that are set up through the placement of the perceiver from the outset as a being *in* the world. Thus, the phenomenon known as 'light' is neither on the outside nor on the inside, neither objective nor subjective, neither physical nor mental. It is rather immanent in the life and consciousness of the perceiver as it unfolds within the field of relations established by way of his or her presence within a certain environment.' (Ingold, 2005, p. 99 original emphasis).

Ingold emphasises that even as a bodily experience, ways of seeing are not static nor mechanical but an ever-unfolding process and part of being in the world, even when returning to the same location or image, our visual encounters change with unending elements, from internal, personal aspects such as knowledge and mood, to external factors such as weather, season and time.

The weather is a fundamental element of the visual experience (Ingold, 2005). Ingold builds upon James Gibson's ecological approach to visual perception, utilising his typology of medium, substances and surfaces to describe the terrestrial environment (2015). For Gibson, the weather is not material substance, nor is it a surface of a substance, such as the ground upon which we are situated or the landscape we behold, the weather is a medium (air) *through* which we see the surfaces of other objects by means of light. However, combining Gibson's typology with Merleau-Ponty's notion of experiential immersion, Ingold goes beyond Gibson's

approach to weather-as-medium towards a notion of perceiving weather which also includes the experience of *being in* rather than seeing through. To reiterate, them, our visual encounters are always situated and experiential unfolding processes where, even when we see the same object/surface/image, the weather/atmosphere is the medium *in* which (not *through* which) we see.

In focusing on Ingold's work on weather, my aim is to draw attention not only to the ways we see as an experience *in* light, but to also consider those less powerful perspectives, images and modes of seeing: the experiences where light is reduced, visual encounters, if you will, in the shadows. Tim Edensor and Rachel Hughes have recently emphasised the lack of geographical engagement with the notion of the shadow (2021). Shadows are, among other things, an important indicator of the passing of time, at scales from the second to the season, and for the weather. Indeed, through the medium of weather, we feel shadow as shade as well as seeing shadow's obscuring qualities across terrestrial surfaces. In this way, Edensor and Hughes highlight that shadows reveal how landscapes are 'always in process, always in movement, always in making, vitally immanent and emergent' in ways parallel to how Ingold has described the role of light in the immersive visual experience, yet through the notion of shadows we are also attuned to the importance of light intensities, of how changing levels of light further enhance this process and our experience of place (2021, p. 1310). Shadows can thus have complex impacts on experiences of being in the world.

The shadow emphasises that light itself has emerging processes, situatedness and immersive qualities which are an important consideration to develop critical understandings of ways of seeing. On the one hand, Edensor highlights that in combination with the visual experience there are significant discursive connotations associated with shadows as gloomy, dark places, ages, or moods (2017). To 'cast a shadow' is to spoil something. Shadowy places can be understood as inhuman or unsafe. Conversely, Stephen Kite has also noted the ways that shadows can be understood as enabling 'spaces for refuge, devotion, awe, political and theatrical display, mystery, power, coolness' and more (2017, p. 5). The dramatic shapes caused by shadows were also seen by painters such as Ruskin to elicit notions of the sublime (Edensor and Hughes, 2021, p. 1311). Ruskin's hero Turner has said, in his discussions of light and shadow, that *colour* is also a fundamental dimension of light and experience. In the following,

Turner is emphasising the distinction between the ways colours are made through paint and the way colours interact and affect in our visual experience of bodily immersion:

> 'White in prismatic order is the union or compound light, while the . . . mixture of our material colours becomes the opposite; that is, the destruction of all, or in other words — darkness. Light is therefore colour, and shadow the privation of it by the removal of those rays of colour, or subductions of power; and there are to be found throughout nature . . . the ruling principles of diurnal [daily] variations, the grey dawn, the yellow morning sun rise and red departing ray, in ever changing com bination; these are the pure combinations of Aerial colours. .' (Turner in Gowing, 1966, p. 24)

Turner insisted on a relative purity in his paints, resisting a combination of more than two colours for the resultant mix 'impairs the power' of colours, resulting in 'monotony, discord, [and] mud' (Turner in Gowing, 1966, p. 24). Thus, Turner's use of dramatic colours reflects less an attempt at visual accuracy, to depict the same tone, and more an accurate feeling, using colours to elicit the mood and atmosphere of a vision. This notion relates to what Ball has, citing James, referred to as the 'feeling tones': affections which are evoked most effectively through colour (see also Wexner, 1954; Ball, 1965, p. 447). This way in which colour enables and accentuates our experience of being in the world is, according to Lash and Lury (citing Walter Benjamin) 'an experience of intensity' (2007, p. 14).

Further, Buether argues that colour is simultaneously phenomenon and medium, in ways which mirror Ingold's conceptualisation of weather:

> 'As a phenomenon, colour shapes how people experience the environment visually, while as a medium, it conveys meaning, emotional moods and functional information. As luminous colour it appears atmospheric and diffuse to the viewer, while as non-luminous colour, shape and form materialise from it. The antithesis of coloured light is darkness, which shows its influence on the aesthetics and function of the phenomenal world in the spatial play of shadows. The complex sensations of colour result from the interaction of light with the entire organism. Colour and light form two sides of the same phenomenon, since colour illuminates and light colours.' (Buether, 2014, p. 7)

In short, as being in the world outlined by Ingold always encompasses the experiential alongside the knowing, *seeing is, always, also feeling*.

2.3 Hyper visions: the visuality of online and offline places

Having discussed ways of seeing, and academic contributions to 'how we see' which range from Turner's remarks in the 1800s through to the current day, a key contemporary facet of how we see, and a central component of this thesis, relates to vision in a digital era. Since early studies of digital spaces and places, the computer has emerged as an affective component of our lives, simultaneously lively and inanimate, external and yet an extension of self (Turkle, 2005). To encounter digital technology is to engage with immersive (Bluteau, 2019), social (Miller *et al.*, 2016), and seductive (Turkle, 1995) interfaces. Ash et al's 'Digital Turn, Digital Geographies?' emphasises that geographies are produced through, produced by, and of the digital, both across the discipline and beyond: rather than 'digital geographies' necessarily being categorised as a single subdiscipline, digitalisation has pervaded both theory and practice across the field (Ash, Kitchin and Leszczynski, 2018).

2.3.1 Digital geographies and digital encounters

Despite digital geographies' undoubtable relevance across the field, it is important to note that much scholarship focuses on urban environments. This thesis will seek to demonstrate how digital concepts developed in urban studies also have significant utility for rural geographical knowledge. Digital shadows[4] are first conceptualised by Graham (2013) as the 'virtual layers of the city' which augment, as digital dimensions of the urban, our experiences of spaces and places through data which is increasingly accessible through common mobile devices. Agnieszka Leszczynski asserts that the dense production of this geocoded information is a 'distinctly urban phenomenon' (2019, p. 16). Sarah Barns describes platforms as 'urban technologies' and argues that engagement with these technologies is 'an integral part of being an urban citizen' (2020, p. 17). Further, Barns states that an ongoing move

[4] 'Digital Shadows' and 'Data Shadows' are terms used interchangeably by Leszczynski, but following the work on Data Shadows by Graham (2013)

towards 'platform-*ed* urbanism', away from the notions of sharing in real time and towards the capitalised, extractive platform usage accentuates the notion that 'the increasing ubiquity of platform ecosystems is reshaping urban conditions, institutions and actors' (2020, p. 19). I would argue that these dynamics are also at play in reshaping rural livelihoods, landscapes and communities, as this thesis will seek to explore. In utilising these 'urban' concepts in rural, sparsely populated and loosely infrastructured locales, this thesis will show how technological innovations also have impact and influence in the livelihoods of rural communities and encounters of many actors in non-urban contexts.

Instagram images as they are encountered on the smartphone are also affective by virtue of the manner of the encounter. Mike Crang indicates that new digital media have potential to decentre the human actor as we engage with new flows of information - yet the conceptual advancement of new digital techniques is yet 'unproven' and unimpressive: 'the poetics and affective power of the visualisation have often been more powerful than the supposed 'result'' (2015, p. 354). The digital image is contextually experienced in the affective place of the screen. The screen's interior lighting provides a 'digital luminescence' which exacerbates the affective qualities of digitally encountered images (Rose and Willis, 2018, p. 3). The affective experience of this 'illuminated atmosphere' (Edensor, 2012) from the smartphone screen is pre-personal yet simultaneously extremely intimate. This affect is also situated within the physical: the glow of the screen and the images' affective capacity is relative to physical elements, from the brightness adjustment of the screen itself to the physical environment in which the user is stood. For instance, the affective power of the luminous screen is greater in contrasting physical settings such as a cloudy day or at night, than it is at moments of great earthly brightness where the screen is not only less bright in comparison but also difficult to consume in the sun's (or a lamp's) reflection. What we are 'feeling through the screen' (Sumartojo and Graves, 2019) is therefore also spatially and temporally mediated.

Common to many ethnographic studies of digital spaces as a cultural site or object of study (Rose, 2015) is consideration for the role of the screen. The mode of visual encounter in studies of the digital is often literally 'behind the screen' (Kozinets, 2002), and thus the screen is less a site of visual encounter itself, and often understood more as a frame or 'display' of digital spaces (Sobchack, 2018, p. 157), a representation imbued with a fundamental 'flatness' (Yang,

2021). Such understandings of digital encounters are akin to the partial and framed 'window' view of landscapes enabled by a filtered assemblage of railway systems through which landscapes, relationships and other phenomena are experienced (Jørgensen, 2014). Jørgensen cites Schivelbusch to detail how modern, fleeting and panoramic 'armchair' views of environments have been enabled by technologies' 'annihilation of space and time', fundamentally altering the intimate and embodied experience of place (2014, p. 96).

Nonetheless, screens' contemporary ubiquitousness within our lives has emphasised their capacity to affect, activate and transform our experiences and even our lived-bodies (Sobchack, 2018, p. 158). More recent research, however, has highlighted how the mobile smartphone screen has further enabled ongoing, everyday 'slippages' (Pink *et al.*, 2016, p. 238) into digital platforms, where users habitually scroll and simultaneously encounter online and offline worlds, returning to an appreciation of tactile, personal relationships between the mobile phone screen, the digital and the bodily in an ever-becoming 'life-mix' (Turkle, 2011, p. 160).

The screen can also be understood as a more agential, intimate and tangible site of encounter for virtual worlds. Proulx (2020) argues that screens-as-interfaces are best understood as *milieu* which, in ecology relates to 'the part of the world with which a living organism is in contact' (Saachi in Proulx, 2020, p. 2), where any object on the screen, or indeed screenshot, is temporally encountered within its own environment or ecology, and is simultaneously always the connector between humans and the digital. Furthermore, as our contemporary ways of living become ever more entangled with digital, for Carbone our future encounters with screens is best conceptualised through the notion of *prostheses* (2019). As a prosthesis, the screen serves as a digital artefact which has the capacity to 're-establish… to amplify and even to alter the human possibilities of perceiving, feeling knowing and acting' (Carbone, 2019, pp. 97–98).

James Ash advances a nonrepresentational 'spatiality of the screen' to explain how screened images are spatially constructed both as *existential*, in 'producing a structure or logic of 'worldhood'' (2009, p. 2111 after Heidegger, 1926) and ecological in the way an image 'constructs a world for the viewer, and [its] affects resonate to form a territory for the body' (Ash, 2009, p.2116). These worlds on screens are conceptualised by Tom Boellstorff as digital

'places', as online environs where users not only 'show and tell' information, they also 'be and do' within digital worlds (Boellstorff, 2020, p. 116). We spend time on social media, websites, and file systems, but *in* digital places. Boellstorf's work on Second Life (2008, 2020; Boellstorff *et al.*, 2019) where groups can come together, and indeed create new socialities, spatialities or even environments (as screened images), present important manifestations of technology-society-space relations that digital geographies can interrogate. These advances in understandings of the screen as an affective, sensory and agential site of encounter are utilised in the conceptual framing of this thesis, where images on social media platforms are primarily encountered through the mobile phone: to develop Ingold's framing, the Instagrammed landscape surface is seen here *through* the medium of the screen.

The notions of the hyper and the digital have been utilised in multiple forms throughout cultural studies and environmental social sciences. The origins of the prefix 'hyper' within social sciences' and humanities' interactions with information technology are first seen in Theodor Nelson's usage of 'hypertext' and subsequently 'hypermedia', to describe 'a body of written or pictorial material interconnected in such a complex way that it could not conveniently be presented or represented on paper' (Nelson, 1965, p. 96). For Nelson, the digital, linking and categorising affordances of the computer, here the evolutionary list file, can be utilised to 'help integrate, for human understanding, bodies of material so diversely connected that they could not be untangled by the unaided mind' (1965, p. 97). Hypermedia systems can also expand and multiply as users contribute more material to the structure (Presner, Shepard and Kawano, 2014, p. 14).

The term hyperreality was conceptualised by Baudrillard (1983) to describe an assumed reality which is so distorted or removed through representations that it becomes hyperreal (1994). In social media, Baudrillard's notion of simulacra has been utilised to theorise how repetition of stories as 'fake news' come to have power despite its lack of connection to the real (Morris, 2021). Borges-Rey has illustrated how Instagram images can correspond to the 'third order' or hyperreality where the version of the world they depict, though assumed real, is so staged, retouched and mediated that the reality is completely obscured by a representation which simulates it (2015).

Another key concept of the digital encounter which is central to this thesis is Nadav Hochman's notion of the hyperlocal. The concept of the hyperlocal is an attempt to appreciate the site-specific qualities of places which are produced by vast amounts of digital information in the contemporary era. The term is nuanced by Hochman, who critiques previous computer science studies of the hyperlocal, (in this sense understood as digital information which is 'automatically augmented with location information and timestamp') for their tendency to homogenise physical spaces by focusing on clustering methods for similarity between places, rather than exploring 'the particularity of unique singular places as they are represented in social media' (Hochman, 2017, p. 5). Hochman argues that through his interpretation of the hyperlocal, we can identify three contemporary characteristics of social media images, which encapsulate their unique capacity to represent place: fragmentation, temporalisation and nomadicity.

Hyperlocal representations of places on social media are representations which are brought to us through 'fragmented performances and exhibitions from multiple perspectives and times' (Hochman, 2017, p. 381). These digitally-logged representations can be tracked and traced, enabling us to zoom in and out of, or back and forth from, any one of these many 'fragmented' representations, and explore how they relate to a given physical location (Hochman, Manovich and Yazdani, 2014, pp. 7–8). In contrast to the ways that previous mediums, from paintings to poetry, utilise a very specific and singular spatial encounter with place to produce a representation of local, the fragmented hyperlocal produces myriad situated interactions and interpretations of the local in time and place.

These fragments of the hyperlocal are also illustrative of a temporally mediated experience, demonstrating place as it is produced sequentially over time, a 'schedule' rather a 'map' of a given locality. This was particularly the case in earlier versions of social media platforms such as Instagram, when time stamps formed a crucial dimension of chronologically ordered feeds, and so social media encounters were once primarily mediated through the temporal.

Finally, the hyperlocal presents us with social media images that are nomadic. Social media images of the local, though often geotagged to a given place, have the capacity to be produced (as well as consumed) in locations completely detached from their original setting. The hyperlocal thus 'transcends the original boundaries of that place' both physically and

through the unstructured narrative pathways produced by users' controls, tags and comments of images (Hochman, Manovich and Yazdani, 2014, p. 8). However, it is also important to note that social media platforms can provide users with the capacity to consume images through a type of 'native' organisational mode (as opposed to a detached nomadic mode) wherein they may choose to view images through features such as location (geotag) popularity (most engagement- seen as 'top') or temporally registered (most 'recent').[5]

The hyperlocal effectively illustrates how a physical place can be digital produced 'through the lens of the multitude of visual and textual hyperlocal activities, [where] a physical site is no longer viewed as a fixed spatial entity (noun/object) but rather as a set of immaterial or informational 'verbs' or 'processes' that move through it' (Hochman, 2017, p. 10). In this thesis, therefore, the Lake District National Park can be understood not only a physical place but also a virtual assemblage of always-moving images, characters and algorithms. In the conceptual framework, I will show how the hyperlocal is extended as a fundamental element of this thesis to conceptualise the notion of what I will call the 'hyperscene', a homophone of hyperseen.

If the hyperlocal provides for us an effective conceptual tool through which to understand the ways social media platforms can uniquely digitally produce the 'particularities of a place', then the hyperseen illustrates the way in which these places are also uniquely digitally consumed. Hyperseeing is a term coined by Rose to apprehend the distinctly affective qualities of intense engagements with images on social media. Hyperseeing is 'a restless form of looking, glancing and casual, on the lookout less for meaning than for feeling', it is 'a glancing search through (what then becomes) the constantly emergent, transient, conjunctural digital image field, in which images of many kinds appear and disappear as screens light up, feeds refresh, searches complete and screens are swiped' (Rose & Willis, 2018, p. 5). Rose categorises the attention to affect in hyperseeing as an innovative fourth approach to the study of what makes technologies social, building upon three existing chronological approaches to the study of social media technology outlined by Noortje Marres (2017) which can be simply characterised as being social 'on', 'by' or 'with' technology.

[5] Since 2016, Instagram's home feeds for users have been constructed through multifactorial algorithms rather than chronologically.

The first of these approaches is a techno-centred understanding of social media, wherein it is the respective platform's technological capacity to enable social interactions between users which makes it 'social'. This approach is the 'common-sense' view of Web 2.0., disseminated by the tech industry, which has been critiqued by social scientists as 'making sociality technical' rather than 'making the web social', thereby 'making [the internet] available for intervention, manipulation and control' (Marres, 2017, p. 50). The second approach to social media is data-centric. In this view, it is 'the ongoing capture and analysis of vast amounts of data' that makes technology social, by enabling modes of monitoring sociality in novel 'bottom up' approaches which take lead from the data itself in formulating categorisations, rather than a 'top down' approach shaped by pre-exiting theoretical assumptions (Marres, 2017, p. 51), The third approach is that the digital technology is practice-centred. It has been argued that the data and digital materials made available by our online interactions are a 'naturally occurring' part of social life itself: our comments, photos, and their respective 'by-product' metadata are actual social life in play. However, the ways in which platforms mediate these interactions has called the 'naturalness' of this sociality into question. Therefore, we must highlight the importance of considering socio-cultural, political contexts in which technologies are used and understood, as the practices of being social with technology are 'inevitably located, situated or embedded' in particular circumstances and environments (Marres, 2017, pp.53-55).

Rose's hyperseen approach makes a marked departure from these existing approaches to the study of social media technology. Each of these approaches attempts in some way to understand the way that social phenomena are produced by, in or, with technology, Rose instead addresses the question of how phenomena are consumed with technology. Alongside producing complex and connected representations of society through metadata and coded networks, the connective flow of images which flash across our screens has a sensory dimension which accompanies our consumption of digital materials. Hyperseeing has some synergies with hyper reading. Hyper reading is a form of reading which includes skimming and scanning texts in an information-intensive environment which, according to Hayles, correlates strongly with hyper attention where one will 'alternate flexibly between different information streams and prefers a high level of stimulation' versus close reading of a single information source with deep attention and focuses on a single cultural object (Hayles, 2012, p. 12). Alongside producing complex and connected representations of society through metadata

and coded networks, the connective flow of images which flash across our screens has a sensory dimension which accompanies our consumption of digital materials. The hyperseen concept emphasises that our social media engagement is more than a proxy of sociality, it is also an affective encounter of 'innumerable microprocesses of visualization that form via relays, captures, and releases and that resonate to compositionally produce emerging sociotechnical ensembles' (Munster in Rose and Willis, 2018, p. 5).

Zulli distinguishes between the 'glance' and the 'gaze', where the objectifying and unidirectional gaze is a lingering practice with 'duration, time spent, an unhurried look', the glance in contrast is a more participatory visual encounter where the 'looker/look at dynamic is often interchangeable' (2018, p. 139). Further, Zulli argues that in the context of social media, the glance as a predominant mode of seeing not only becomes present but (especially in the case of Instagram) is *actively enabled* through the user interface which 'orients the user' towards fleeting glancing behaviour and engagement with posts by encouraging constant scrolling where only one image is visible on the screen's surface at a time (Zulli, 2018, p. 142).

2.3.2 Social media: Instagram as Case Study.

Related to the fast and fleeting dimensions of the glance, there are two central features of Instagram's initial attraction as a form of visual social media, summarised by the name itself: Instagram is a combination of 'instant' and 'telegram,' which, according to Systrom, one of the co-founders, appealed further because 'it also sounded camera-y,' (Markowitz 2012). The instantaneousness that the user is afforded through use of the app thus makes it desirable for showing friends and followers a glimpse of the 'everyday' that users portray through selecting images which show what they are doing in real time. The seemingly direct and immediate sharing of images enables through platforms such as Instagram carries a sense of authenticity to the viewer of the sharer's perspective- the notion that what is shared in real time must be a true account relies on the speed with which it is delivered, and the 'pictorial logic' of a spontaneous, emotive and grassroots viewpoint (Hochman and Manovich, 2013, (not) On photography).

Instagram's continued evolution towards an infrastructure adept for monetisation, for instance through in-platform shopping capacities and the paid influencer industry, are effective

examples of Barns' notion of platformed capitalism (2020). This concept emphasises the move from social media as a space of personal sharing towards an extractive market platform ecosystem. Such developments in social interactions can arguably be seen to reflect how a need for physical proximity to develop our social relationships has been reduced with the advent of digital media, and especially social media platforms. Elisa Serafinelli has argued that, via online social media platforms such as Instagram, 'mediated relationships' have come to replace 'imagined communities' (after Anderson, 2006), where not only are many of our communities a constructed notion rather than a physical reality, the affordances of social media platforms and the digital hardware we use to encounter them enable the formation of *new* communities and relationships (Serafinelli, 2017, p. 96, 2018, pp. 82–28).

Instagram images are also affective in their platform context. This virtual space holds material properties as a digital artefact which provides the site for technology-in-practice (Leonardi, 2010). Where the platform-site is read as material and emerging 'from a range of spatial processes whose power is not dependent upon their crossing a threshold of contemplative cognition' (McCormack, 2003, p. 488), it is also a space of affects which are manifest in the hyperseen images. Just as the world around us is emerging and materially mediating our engagements and movements, the platform's infrastructures and capacities are also facilitating our actions and encounters. It is therefore argued that the platform should be understood as a laterally experienced context of affective sensations, alongside the users' physical location.

Also significant to Instagram's 'ecology' as a social media platform is its continued strategy of 'privileging the mobile' (Leaver, Highfield and Abidin, 2020, p. 84). Unlike some social media platforms which have similar capacities in handheld and desktop formats, most of Instagram's image interface and editing features (for example, 'Boomerang') are made specifically for the intimate locale of the mobile smartphone. This emphasis on mobile formats arguably intensifies the intimacy of image sharing and encountering, where it occurs through the personal space and interface of a device which is commonly understood as a private accessory, especially for amateur viewers.

Instagram images' affective capacities are therefore drawn not just from the image itself, but also from its place on the smartphone screen and the space of the Platform. It is not the

purpose of this thesis to enter ongoing and sometimes overlapping debates between disciplines and sub-disciplines regarding what terminology most suitably articulates the concept of affect (McCormack, 2003; Thrift, 2004; Lorimer, 2008; Wetherell, 2013), and it is sufficient for our means to describe affective qualities using terms such as feeling, sensation and emotion more or less interchangeably. There are several key features which determine the affective capacities of the Instagram image and enable us to understand the Instagram image as a material assemblage of affect; the images' particular capacity to evoke affect, the further affective presences of the image afforded by the smartphone screen, and the affective processes of the image within the context of the platform's own ecology.

The affective capacity of images can be understood as more-than representational 'blocks of sensation with an affective intensity: they make sense not just because we take time to figure out what they signify, but also because their pre-signifying affective materiality is felt in bodies' (Latham and Mccormack, 2009; Lorimer, 2010). This affective-ness is evoked by the image itself, and situates images as one format of media which can act as 'vital components of affective 'resonance machines' that powerfully configure popular political landscapes' (Lorimer, 2010, p. 241).

Instagram images are digitally located and mediated objects which are virtually and materially becoming as physically, socially and culturally situated assemblages of affect. This research will seek to establish both the affective qualities of these images in their smartphone contexts and in their manifestations of physical locales as digital landscapes. A significant facet of social media infrastructure also crucial to the ways images, posts, places and people are digitally encountered and organised is the hashtag. A hashtag is a word, or phrase without spaces, which is preceded by the symbol '#' to relate the post in which it is shared to a particular event, message, or subject (Feng *et al.*, 2015). Hashtags have become increasingly popular since their first use in 2007: they are now regularly included by millions of social media users across the world, and across multiple platforms, forming an effective manifestation of hypermedia (Nelson, 1965) by literally becoming a form of 'searchable talk' (Zappavigna, 2012, 2015) with which users can engage and contribute to by simply including the hashtag as a 'descriptive annotation' to their own captions. In forming a contribution to an ever-growing and becoming

'folksonomy', hashtags are unique among metadata forms for 'operating in the service of interpersonal social relations' (Zappavigna, 2015, p. 277).

Individuals' use of visual and geo-tagged metadata on platforms to 'document, archive and display their experience and/or mobility within space and place in order to represent or perform aspects of their identity to others' has been conceptualised in Media Studies as the 'spatial-self' (Schwartz and Halegoua, 2015, p. 1644). However, research into visual social media and its impact upon the construction of meaningful landscapes has remained very scarce in cultural geography, which Rose suggests may be in part attributed to the extreme velocity and flux in which digital technologies can develop (2015, p. 336).

Instagram has been conceptualised by Haidy Geismar as contemporary 'archives of the everyday' wherein people move in, around and contribute to the simultaneously 'predetermined and emergent infrastructure' of social media platforms as 'assemblages of taste' but where they also, crucially, 'work collectively to construct new forms of value' (2017, p. 341) for and of peoples, places, and more-than-human worlds. And yet, Instagram is more than an instant, unruly archive (Geismar, 2017) of environments where values are constructed, these constructions have 'real', terrestrial (Bluteau, 2019) impacts; they also inspire and enable movements to, from and within the places pictured. Moreover, these impacts and influences are uneven: the rise of the Instagram Influencer as a vocation highlights the power, capital and fervour that shape digital ecologies in favour of particular voices and visualities.

On Instagram, as on much social media, the ability to 'influence' other users has become pervasive as a means of income and vocation for young people and contemporary brands hoping to reach a wide audience. Victoria O'Meara notes how these 'immaterial labour' careers aligned with cultural industries have emerged out of job insecurity in the post-industrial economy and the vastly strengthened role of the internet in 21st century capitalism (2019, p. 2). Zulli finds that, unlike Facebook, Instagram does not necessarily foster close relationships between users, and that Influencers' status as 'micro-celebrities' may mean they are famous only to a 'niche group of people' (2018, p. 145). To be an 'Instagram Influencer' is now a marketing profession, defined as: 'users who have an established credibility and audience; who can persuade others by virtue of their trustworthiness and authenticity' (Pixlee, 2020 emphasis added). There are two broad factors at play in this definition of a user's

influential capacity: a persuasive character (by virtue of the users' credibility, trustworthiness and authenticity) and the viewership to consume it.

Unlike a business promoting itself internally, an important element of the 'influencer' paradigm is their unique role as digital content creators external to the subject or object (usually a brand) that they promote. The change from a chronological order to a multifactored algorithm for determining the viewing order of a feed and for post visibility has intensified the need for influencers to create content which is also 'algorithmically recognisable' (Gillespie, 2017). O'Meara (2019) has demonstrated how some users attempt to 'game' the algorithm by participation in another layered structure of engagement: mutual or reciprocal online actions of liking or commenting on other users' posts within a community called an 'engagement pod' has become a social strategy between users to increase the algorithmic chances of higher viewership beyond the community for all members.

At the other end of the range, some users' online influence may be low to the point of obscurity. There may be various reasons for this. For instance, some users choose to keep their profiles set to 'private' and must authorise another user account to 'follow' them. This is often the case with accounts which users wish to keep between their family and friends. In this way, a user with a very small audience cannot influence a larger audience than the one they choose to have. Other reasons for low levels of influence may relate to low levels of posting, or simply because their content is commonplace and does not inspire users to engage. Romero et al introduced the concept of passivity to indicate where users may see but not meaningfully engage with the content of social media posts (2011).

The notion of the 'networked audience' is outlined by Marwick and Boyd as an abstract concept for social media technologies' *imagined* audiences, which consists of both real and potential viewers for our online postings, but also consists of multilayered connections: 'viewers are connected not only to the user, but to each other, creating an active, communicative network; connections between individuals differ in strength and meaning' (2010, p. 16). The networked audience can be simultaneously public and personal, with viewers we know and those we don't, whose interactions we may value differently. Further, there are clear channels of reciprocity in interaction with a networked audience which are not present in 'one to many' modes of communication: 'Audience members take turns creating and

producing content, and in this 'many-to-many' model the network constantly centres on who is talking, responding, or replying.' (Marwick and Boyd, 2010, p. 16).

The ability of users to 'influence' others is also related to their perceived authenticity. Authenticity is a notoriously difficult concept to define and evaluate: it is inherently political and thus contestable, where 'for every claim to authenticity, there emerges a parallel argument debunking it as a myth or mask for illegitimate power' (Umbach and Humphrey, 2017, p. 1). Recent literature in digital studies has critically examined the concept's usage (or misuse) around the concept of influence on social media regarding political image-building (Enli, 2015), celebrity endorsement (Pöyry *et al.*, 2019), visibility and algorithms (Cotter, 2019) and imagined audiences (Marwick and Boyd, 2010). Authenticity has also been an important dimension of place-based geographical research regarding the use of social media for tourism place 'brands' (Handayani and E Korstanje, 2017), to counter historical and male-dominated visions of place-based sport (Olive, 2015a), as a methodological tool to examine tourist experiences of place (Wang and Alasuutari, 2017) and to explore authentic dimensions to virtual environments and experiences (Sutherland, 2020). Jamal and Hill (2004) outline three dimensions of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism: objective (real), constructive (socio-political) and personal (phenomenological).

For many of these studies, notions of visual representations play a fundamental role. As Rebecca Olive highlights in her study of Byron Bay surfing and Instagram, 'taking and appearing in images of surfing is an important aspect of cultural heritage, and published images tend to validate some ways of surfing other others' (2015a, p. 100). This understanding of the relationship between ways of being in places, influencing understandings of place and the role of Instagram images in these dynamics is fundamental to this thesis.

In addition to the general scale of influence related to audience size and engagement, there are 'barriers of influence' which exist in the realm of social media user affect. The first of these is a social barrier that distinguishes between a user with consistent high engagement and a 'micro-celebrity' (O'Meara, 2019, p. 3). The key difference at this end of the scale is the distinction of a user who can be considered to some degree as famous and the subject of widespread attention from other media sources. The second barrier, close to the bottom of the scale, is a structural barrier of digital access. Users who may wish to have influence in and

of online places may be obstructed by the lack of consistent internet access. As this thesis will demonstrate, people in the most remote and mountainous areas of the Lake District often have irregular or ineffectual broadband, and these areas can also be dead spots for coverage from mobile networks.

In exploring who and what is made visible in Instagram, a key concept which I utilise in this thesis is authenticity. Authenticity is a notoriously difficult concept to define and evaluate: it is inherently political and thus contestable, where 'for every claim to authenticity, there emerges a parallel argument debunking it as a myth or mask for illegitimate power' (Umbach and Humphrey, 2017, p. 1). Recent literature in digital studies has critically examined the concept's usage (or misuse) around the concept of influence on social media regarding political image-building (Enli, 2015), celebrity endorsement (Pöyry *et al.*, 2019), visibility and algorithms (Cotter, 2019) and imagined audiences (Marwick and Boyd, 2010). Authenticity has also been an important dimension of place-based geographical research regarding the use of social media for tourism place 'brands' (Handayani and E Korstanje, 2017), to counter historical and male-dominated visions of place-based sport (Olive, 2015a), as a methodological tool to examine tourist experiences of place (Wang and Alasuutari, 2017) and to explore authentic dimensions to virtual environments and experiences (Sutherland, 2020). Jamal and Hill (2004) outline three dimensions of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism: objective (real), constructive (socio-political) and personal (phenomenological).

In recent years, the labour of authenticity in social media and the vitally visual dimensions have come to receive increased scholarly attention: Maares et al (2021) examine how elements of visual authenticity are established and enhanced against criteria such as absences of editing, of posing and of overt composition, alongside a consistency in the user's photographic technique. However, it is vitally important to note that these criteria are referred to in relation to microbloggers or 'influencers' in isolation. A key element of this study will relate to authenticity in a broader sense of encounter in the digital landscape- we are examining not only the authenticity of the users' persona and page but the authenticity of the digital *landscape* that they produce, their own #lakedistrict. In this thesis, we will see then, that some of the criteria for an authentic individual, such as amateur photography techniques (the 'absence' of sophisticated editing) may be in contrast with perceived visual authenticity of

digital landscapes: high-quality 'real' looking imagery lends to a sense of compelling authenticity, seen as more 'objective' (Jamal and Hill, 2004, p. 356) or existential (Buchmann, Moore and Fisher, 2010). So, in this thesis, rather than distinguishing between more or less authentic accounts of the #lakedistrict, I will concentrate on trying to characterise what contrasting authentic #lakedistricts we encounter on Instagram through consideration of both influence and aesthetic, which is detailed further in the rural section of this review.

2.3.4 Social media and the environment.

In the broader context of the climate and biodiversity crises, digital media and ever-increasingly the social media platforms of 'Web 2.0' in particular are wholeheartedly embraced as a means of communicating experience, activism, and conservation innovation (Büscher and Igoe, 2013; Elliot, 2016; Hawkins and Silver, 2017; Lunstrum, 2017). Web 2.0 is distinguished from 'Web 1.0'- the original world wide web and its static pages- as an interactive medium through which 'users can co-create and co-produce the online activities services and information they consume' (Büscher, 2013, p. 1). National Geographic published an online article about the significant impact of visual social media upon tourism in natural landscapes, but with a word of caution: 'Social media-savvy travellers are increasingly drawing their destination inspiration from Instagram—but at what cost?' (Miller, 2017).

There are also important considerations for how we investigate, intervene in, and interact with digital media and the human and nonhuman subjects we study. Turnbull et al note how 'digital encounters can displace decision-making away from local communities and their situated knowledges, which in turn reinforces colonial knowledge production practices that plague the history of global conservation' and emphasise that, despite the vast quantities of data which can be elicited, 'digital encounters, like all encounters, always offer partial perspectives' (2023, p. 13). This sentiment is also evident in Webster *et al.*'s notion of digital landscapes. They articulate how through ''(re)localising landscapes, 'framings of community and enterprise can be critiques through a local agency that challenges and redefines politically and economically dominant narratives found within the digital landscape' (2020, p. 1101).

On Instagram, the number of #lakedistrict images stands at over 4 million, a number which has nearly tripled over the lifetime of this research project. However, upland farmers are not

typical of the users that usually have a significant presence on a platform like Instagram. The median age of farmers in the UK is 60 years old, and the largest share of farmers were over 65 years old (36%) (DEFRA *et al.*, 2018, p. 19). In contrast, the largest share of Instagram users in the UK are between 25 and 34 years old: over 65s make up the smallest share of Instagram users, at just 2.8% (NapoleonCat, 2021). This is just one broad statistical comparison of the demographic chasm between UK farmers and Instagram users, but it is effective for illustrating that typical farmers are not typical Instagrammers.

And yet, as Riley and Robertson (2021) state, there has been increasing use of social media platforms by the farming community in recent years a means to share their experiences and promote farming to the public. They also note the organisational dimensions to this farming sharing, where popular hashtags and social media events are often initiated by farming media and/or by corporations (such as #farm24 set up by the Farmers Guardian and Morrison's supermarkets) (Riley and Robertson, 2021, p. 100) or through moderated discussions such as #AgriChat (Mills *et al.*, 2019, p. 196). They examine the ways that farming is shared and narrated online as 'working out loud', following Sergi and Bonneau (2016). Their analysis focuses on Twitter through posts shared by farmers (Riley and Robertson, 2021, p. 102).

Indeed, various rural publications have also highlighted the farming presence on social media. Farmers Weekly, a regular informational digest for farmers, presents a pragmatic and issue-based overview of successful farming profiles across social media platforms, providing advice from successful users for other farmers by emphasising the way that social media can 'improve farming's image' but also highlighting the abuse and hostility faced by farmers in online spaces (Henderson, 2021). In contrast, lifestyle magazine Country Living has highlighted some popular farmers a more general public might want to engage with, such as 'The Moo-tuber' (Country Living, 2020). The Country Living article includes a more performative than instructive overview of social media farmers who can provide light-hearted infotainment on farming life to the public. The article showcases a broader range of farming perspectives, including a hobby farmer ('The Foodstagrammer': @telltalefood) and a contract shepherdess ('The Influencer': @RedShepherdess) as well as three accounts from more conventional dairy, arable, and mixed beef and sheep farmers (@tompemberton_farmlife, @WyeFarm and @Airyolland respectively), who are all present on Instagram. During my fieldwork, farmers who are more

comprehensively engaged with social media showed a distinct preference for Instagram, describing it as a 'comfort blanket' with friendly and supportive counterparts who offer positive feedback, contrasting with their engagement on Twitter, described as a 'hard and nasty place'.

Both of these articles focus on high-profile representations of farming from those few accounts with high levels of influence, similar to the accounts explored in Chapter Five. Indeed, @RedShepherdess has sometimes featured on the account of @herdyshepherd1, and vice versa, when she has worked for him gathering and at lambing time. Despite this increasing coverage of farming practices in online spaces, rural affairs in the United Kingdom are still considered to be, and addressed as, a 'niche interest' across conventional popular media too (Shirley, 2020, p. 277). Moreover, what remains omitted across both existing research and popular media coverage is the connection between farmers, their work, their animals and the intrinsically place based dimensions of their practices and identities.

2.4 Rural visions: cultural geographies of the countryside

In this section, I outline various ways that the countryside has been conceptualised, varying from the most dominant and powerful representations, such as the rural idyll and romanticism, before discussing important lessons for this thesis which can be learned from critiques of these dominant representations. The rural visions section finishes with a consideration of the Lake District itself, and summarises how and why the Lake District has been used so often in rural studies as a case for exploring the cultural geographies of the countryside.

2.4.1 Concepts of the countryside i: trending theories

The rural idyll refers to a bucolic conceptualisation of nature as 'countryside', in which pastoral peoples live in harmony and work within the land, linking closely to the Western imagination of 'arcadian nature' (Van Den Born *et al.*, 2001, p. 66). The Rural Idyll is arguably an exclusively Western-based imagination of nature, where the notions of a pretty and picturesque 'chocolate box' countryside (Short, 2006; Readman, 2018a), which is inherently man-made, relate most specifically to English, and some European, North American and Australasian

pastoral spaces, with traditional agricultural practices, manicured fields and quaint villages. Though Paul Cloke and others have demonstrated the limitations of the persistent unilateral presentation of the rural as 'idyllic', both in theory and in practice (Bunce, 1994, 2005; Cloke, 2003, 2013; Short, 2006), the idyll remains an enduring and powerful representation of rurality, which arguably remains its prevailing symbol in contemporary media.

Prior to the continued growth in tourism that the Lake District has continued to enjoy (or suffer) since the late 18th Century. Following the trend for Grand Tours around mountainous regions of the continent (Edmonds, 2006, p. 168), affluent gentlemen found that the English Lakes possessed many of the sublime qualities of the landscapes they had admired overseas. The Lake District's reputation among the gentile classes began to rise following the popularity of such publications as Burke's *Enquiry into the Beautiful and the Sublime*, and Thomas West's *A Guide to the Lakes* in 1778 (Edmonds, 2006).



Figure 2. 1: Claife Viewing Station (Author's own image)

Material infrastructures to enable ways of seeing which adhered to the picturesque movement's landscape aesthetic (Whyte, 2002, p. 4) were realised in the Lake District through Viewing Stations. Constructed from the 1770s, Viewing Stations such as Claife, on the southwest of Windermere, were small stone buildings erected at places from which elite enthusiasts felt that the landscape should be perceived. The buildings had large windows, shaped and positioned to frame a particular view of a given vista. Moreover, as shown in Figure 2. 1, the windows would have been adorned with stained glass panels through which the observer could envisage the view in different weather and seasons (Walton and Wood, 2013, p. 12). The Lake District landscape became a literal manifestation of the picturesque as 'fit to be made into a picture' (Lines, 2018) through these physical 18th century framings of the tourist's gaze upon particular elements of the landscape. The National Trust says of the coloured glass at Claife: 'the modern equivalent is using a filter on your camera or smart phone. *Imagine the Instagram opportunities*' (2019, emphasis added).

Throughout the 19th Century, the Lake District became increasingly rendered as *romantic*: it contained all of the necessary 'ingredients' for the type of classical paradise landscape that early protagonists of the picturesque movement had sought out on the continent (Edmonds, 2006, p. 168). English Romanticism transformed perceptions of the Lake District from an adverse 'wild and barren' terrain to a celebrated natural landscape, wherein one could experience very personal, moral and emotional moments of reflection and simple 'rustic' joy through 'living in complete harmony with nature' (Squire, Shelach, 1988, pp. 238–239). Some of the most well-known and influential visual works of the Lake District during the time of the romantic movement are by artist JMW Turner. His painting style developed to encompass traditions of both the sublime and the picturesque, and he became a leading figure in the Romantic movement alongside other artists and, of course, famed poets such as William Wordsworth.

The ability of light and colour to play a role in the emotion and impact of scene in the work of the romantics is long recognised, and famously celebrated by another renowned artist deeply inspired by the Lake District, John Ruskin. The romantic tradition which has been replete in understandings of the countryside also has significant lessons for us in relation to light and

colour, as previously discussed. Ruskin further emphasises Turner's careful choice in even the particular hues of a given colour, to evoke strong emotions from his viewers- choosing a deep, dark and bloody red for the skies above the Slave Ship in the aftermath of a deadly storm, emphasises the ferocity and tragedy of the deathly scene. In contrast, he goes on to remark on Turner's celebration of simpler ways of living in the rural idyll:

> *'Another feeling, traceable in several of his former works, is an acute sense of the contrast between the careless interests and idle pleasures of daily life, and the state of those whose time for labour, or knowledge, or delight, is passed forever. There is evidence of this feeling in the introduction of the boys at play in the churchyard of Kirkby Lonsdale, and the boy climbing for his kite among the thickets above the little mountain churchyard of Brignal-bank; it is in the same tone of thought that he has placed here the two figures fishing, leaning against these shattered flanks of rock,— the sepulchral stones of the great mountain Field of Death.'* (Ruskin, 2006, p. 34)

Woods has argued that animals are often a key element of popular understandings of the rural, and that 'the relationship between animals and the rural is informed by the diverse social constructs of nature and rurality.' (1998, p. 1221). These relationships also involve a classification of animals related to their role in rural places, as either working animals, livestock, or wild animals, all of which are ascribed different levels of domestication and differing aesthetic values, as well as their economic value within modes of food production. Through the aesthetic values of different animals are certainly subjective, Broglio notes how cattle in particular were embraced as a part of the picturesque painting tradition, suitable as a specimen for inclusion in landscape painting due to its 'sharp edges, boxy shape, rugged coat and even the proper colouring, number and grouping' of cattle (Broglio, 2005, p. 48).

The notion of the family farm is also important in popular culture, despite the difficulty in defining such a term: questions of familial composition and management, scale, land ownership are among those factors which make it so challenging to delineate as a concept (Woods, 2014). Despite the popular appeal of the imagined family farm, in ways similar to the rural idyll, the reality of these businesses' ability to survive is tenuous and government policy has tended to favour larger more productive farms, unlike the extensive operations of fell farmers upon which this thesis will concentrate (Winter and Lobley, 2016).

I use the term Rural Play to draw together literatures which have examined how the rural is often a setting for outdoor activity and adventure tourism. Hall (1992) defined adventure tourism as 'a broad spectrum of outdoor touristic activities, often commercialised and involving an interaction with the natural environment away from the participant's home range and *containing elements of risk;* in which the outcome is influenced by the participant, setting, and management of the touristic experience.' (Hall in Kane and Tucker, 2004, p. 143, emphasis added). The happenings involved in rural play are thus distinct from the rural idyll where experiences move from the relaxed 'armchair' comfort and leisure towards interactions which are full of excitement, adventure, and challenge. The notion of play and adventure tourism 'embraces certain core elements' such as uncertain outcomes, danger and risk, anticipated rewards, novelty, stimulation and excitement, and exploration and discovery (Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016). Gammon has highlighted how the place of sport tourism is integral to its conceptual and experiential existence, sport tourism as opposed to 'tourism sport' (2015). Jepson has explored how rural tourism activities in the Lake District, from 'completing the Wainwrights' (hiking), to biking to water sports, are often a crucial anticipated and preconceived dimension of visits rather than a secondary attraction and can play a role in the spiritual experience of place (Jepson, 2013). In their analysis of tourism, recreation, and land use in Britain, Williams and Shaw argue that 'future play' in the UK will continue to include a corporeal sporting element, though technology and online entertainment offer opportunities for 'virtual tourism' (2009, p. 333). Costa and Chalip have noted how the integration with the 'colourful adventure' of contemporary sport tourism can sometimes be seen as at odds with the narratives of long-existing cultural heritage (2005, p. 273).

Rural wilderness encompasses many of the 'natural' visual tropes of the countryside which we identify with the dramatic and sublime landscapes of the romantic movement. Esther Peeren has emphasised that despite being conventionally discerned in opposition to the 'wild', rural places are nonetheless often represented as spaces of wildness, in contrast to historical conventions of urban intensification, as a romanticised 'idealised natural location' (Peeren, 2018, p. 1). Mountainous, less populated regions are also potential sites of incognita tourism, which lends its name from the notion of '*terra incognita*', which referred to lands which were previously unknown in periods of European exploration and so are to be 'discovered' (Williams and Lew, 2015, p. 221). Williams and Lew have further argued about the importance of

experiencing the 'unknown and unexpected' in this way, and that in doing so a visitor may become exposed to 'personal transformation' (2015, p. 221), evoking notions of the sublime which Peeren also referenced in her explanation of rural wildness. The sublime refers to the romantic sensation of overwhelm, particularly in reference to a dramatic landscape or experience which terrifies or intimidates (Donaldson, Gregory and Taylor, 2017). Donaldson *et al* have comprehensively traced historical literature which demonstrates such representations of sublime feeling in dramatic, mountainous areas of the Lake District, for instance 'in association with forms whose astonishing magnitude defies discrete comprehension' (2017, p.53).

These concepts of rural idyll, rural play and rural wilderness will be utilised in the thesis to explore dominant modes of encountering the #lakedistrict. Related, a recurring motif which is seen both in romantic visions of landscape and, as we will see, on digital media, is the notion of the promontory witness. The promontory witness refers to the aesthetics of a 'world traveller' figure imbued with privileged access to the planet's most scenic destinations, and whose ability to capture and encounter such places may even displace local communities (Smith, 2018). For Smith, the promontory witness is epitomised in visual form by Caspar David Friedrich's 1818 painting *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (2018, p.181), and the motif has become a consistent mechanism for representing adventurous modes of tourism travel across the world.

2.4.2 Concepts of the countryside ii: critiques

The conventional apparatus for producing understandings of the English countryside was conceptualised as the 'armchair countryside' (Bunce, 1994): an imagined rural produced through established media such as the 'country lifestyles' of rural magazines and television shows, and children's literature within our own homes, rather than understood through a corporeal experience of being in a rural space with rural people. Mirroring innovations in digital scholarship, Sutherland has proposed this consumption of the rural now occurs as the 'desk-chair countryside' (Sutherland, 2020) yet with dominant representations still envisioned by a middle-class (Halfacree, 1993), white (Crang and Tolia-Kelly, 2010), post-productivist (Halfacree, 1997) and human-centric (Jones, 2006, 2013) public. Despite more critical academic

accounts of the rural idyll as a partial and power-laden construction (Cloke and Little, 1997; Shucksmith, 2018), these imaginations remain pervasive.

The notion of an 'escape to the countryside' is a powerful rhetorical discourse in Western imaginations of nature (Woods, 2005, p. 291). As with seeing and with the digital, shadows have been utilised in academic literature to describe rural places. The notion of Shadow Landscapes is first outlined by Bryant et al as a way to understand rural 'in-between places', which are 'neither densely populated nor pure wilderness' (2011, p. 460). They outline four elements - marginality, scale, socio-nature and cultures of depopulation - as some conceptual tools which can help to describe the 'essential otherness' which characterises these rural places. Bryant and colleagues' analysis, perhaps understandable given that the paper was published over a decade ago, crucially misses the importance of the digital as a conceptual element that is significant to the production and consumption of 'shadow landscapes' such as the Lake District, which the first two chapters of this thesis will seek to illustrate through the example of Instagram images.

The sense of invisibility and dispossession felt by rural communities across physical (Mackenzie, 2013, p. 19) and virtual (Lundgren and Johansson, 2017) spaces further emphasises a need for the development of participatory methods through which the excluded may become more visible on digital media, as a means to articulate their perceptions of both the physical realities and digital mediations of their lived experience. This is not to assume that such dispossessions are an exclusively rural phenomenon: Murdoch and Pratt use the notion of the 'post rural' to argue for 'an end to the use of universal or global concepts such as 'rural' (or the 'urban') and for a concern with the way places are 'made'. This will entail a focus on 'power' as certain actors impose 'their' rurality on others.' (Murdoch and Pratt, 1993).

Nonetheless, conceptualisations of a less idealised rural continue to enlighten us about critiques of the idyll, and also affirmative conceptualisations of less dominant experiences of the countryside. Ingrid Pollard's seminal artistic photo-series 'Pastoral Interlude' offer an exemplary illustration of powerful artistic and visual critiques of dominant manifestations of the rural idyll in Britain (1987). After first encountering Polllard's work during the first year of my undergraduate degree, her methods and message have gone on to acutely influence my research. Pollard's use of photography and her captions (seen in Figure 2.2) also demonstrate



Figure 2. 2: Ingrid Pollard's Pastoral Interludes:

Image Source: https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O107865/pastoral-interludeits-as-if-the-photograph-pollard-ingrid/

an effective and powerful message about who is seen in rural landscapes, how they are seen, and how their being in the landscape is acknowledged or, conversely, made absent by more powerful agents in narratives of place, by using both visual and textual material to demonstrate absences within nationalistic discourses of landscape.

Similarly, the anti-pastoral or anti-idyll is a critique of the 'twee-pastoralisms' (Bell, 1997, p. 95), 'falsifications' and overly romanticised visions of the countryside, and instead offers to try and 'correct such deceptions' and nostalgic idealising (Gifford, 2013, p. 23). The anti-pastoral is a useful concept here for highlighting that there are elements of the Lake District landscape which are not only neutrally absent of the 'romantic', but they can also be perceived as the opposite of pastoral idylls, reflecting dimensions of suffering, death and horror. Importantly, in this thesis I will argue that the anti-pastoral is a relational lens- some of the images we will see may be read as 'anti-pastoral' by some viewers, but not by others. In the same way that Bell has argued that the anti-idyll moves us from the 'armchair countryside' to the frightening, hiding 'behind the sofa countryside' (Bell, 1997, p.95), this thesis will offer a situated and contextual 'in the shed countryside' which is, to some, everyday, and perhaps to others, an inherent contradiction of the idyllic countryside that they encounter.

The concept of the dark pastoral, as outlined by Heather Sullivan (2017), is a literary trope which acts as a lens for reconsidering portrayals of human-environment relationships. The dark pastoral, for Sullivan, is a 'tool' (rather than a critique) which we might use to closely examine these depictions, and which also can be used as a 'trope of exposure' for emphasising the ways in which industrial capitalism is 'inherently connected to modern agriculture, but not shown in lovely photos of green farms' (Sullivan, 2017, p. 26). The dark pastoral thus draws

together the rich history of the pastoral theme, which has (in the English context) usually celebrated an idyllic countryside and was imbued with a sense of nostalgia and escapism (Gifford, 2013, p. 18), with the unavoidable role of global industrialisation in our relationship with the environment: 'The dark pastoral emerges from a hybridity of 'dark' (ironic, posthuman, postmodern, polluted) and 'green' (the sentimental and 'artificial natural' of the pastoral that is also biophilic) (Sullivan, 2020, pp. 20–21).

In the English context, Michael Woods has argued that 'the ubiquity of visual consumption as a way of engaging with the countryside is such that it can be difficult to comprehend the idea of consuming the rural landscape without sight' (2011, p. 110). The rural gaze examines how the nostalgia of the tourist gaze upon the rural should 'be contextualised as a part of a wider discourse on ruralism' (Abram, 2003, p. 35). Rural studies have long sought to highlight that the related representation and understanding of the rural community as a single homogenous group, hides the perspectives and livelihoods of many marginalised groups (Philo, 1992, 1997; Short, 1992; Garland and Chakraborti, 2006; Chakraborti, 2010). These 'excluded' rural others emphasise important questions about how the 'rurally included' are defined (Neal and Walters, 2006), and highlight the situation where there are many actors with a variety of different claims to speak for rural places and rural beings. These power relations and group dynamics within the Rural have also been explored in detail, with particular reference to children (Philo, 1992); women (Little, 1997); ethnic minorities (Chakraborti, 2010; Agyeman and Spooner, 1997) alternative religious groups (Philo, 1997) and even social groups who do not fit the remit of the nuclear family (see Travellers and Nomads in (Sibley, 1997)).

Divya Tolia-Kelly has emphasised how dominant aesthetic traditions of the countryside such as the picturesque have occluded 'the dynamism of landscape and emotional values of the cultural landscape' focusing on the view rather than the viewer and their personal, subjective, emotional responses to landscapes (2007, p. 333). Tolia-Kelly highlights how the power of the picturesque, its focus on the physical landscape, favours groups of a particular (privileged and land-owning) social status in a way which denies more progressive forms of land use, and the emphasis on nostalgia and the sublime as affective dimensions discourage and even exclude the acknowledgement and representation of multi-cultural engagements and encounters with place (2007, p. 334).

Since the late 1990s, when much of this existing research into English rural dynamics was comprehensively explored, the advent of the internet has profoundly changed the ways in which the rural can be constructed and reproduced. The notion of the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990, 1992, 1995b, 1995a; Urry and Larsen, 2011) has sought to emphasise and elucidate how the 'fundamentally visual nature of the tourist experience' generates significance and meaning because tourists are situated in a 'distinctive visual environment' (Urry, 1992, p. 172). The tourist gaze is one of many rural *gazes*, which organise 'the way things are seen, but [also] what is deemed appropriate to be seen and motivate people to change the appearance of the land to conform with their ideals' (Abram, 2003, p.40). Each gaze is underpinned by different sets of knowledges about nature and society, humans and nonhumans, within a particular rural vision. Urry later extended the tourist gaze concept to account for the growing importance of photography, digitisation and embodied performance (Urry & Larsen, 2011), ideas which have been further advanced in light of social media to what has been called a 'selfie gaze': 'how the presence of a social media audience influences the tourist's perception of travel' (Magasic, 2016, p. 172; see also Dinhopl & Gretzel, 2016).

2.4.3 Concepts of the Countryside iii: Understandings of the everyday

The notion of the rural everyday, or 'everyday country' is proposed by Rosemary Shirley as a means to explore the rural, and her justification is worth quoting fully. She states that the lens of everyday life allows us to examine the rural as

> 'a populated place, rather than its more usual conceptualisation as a place to be visited or looked at. Furthermore, thinking about this region in terms of everyday life allows [the rural] to be thought about in terms of the habits, *practices*, rhythms and routines from which it is constructed, a position which destabilises the notion of such places as primarily 'natural' in their appearance and use. Finally, the theoretical grounding of everyday life studies has tied the emergence of a perceivable notion of the everyday firmly to processes of modernity. Relocating the topography of the everyday from its habitually urban focus out into the English Countryside, enables an examination of [the rural] as an *active space of modernity*. To focus on everyday life is to adopt an approach to investigating culture that attends to the ways in which the daily is woven from

repeated practices and performances. It is also to attend to the ways in which these actions are shaped by societal controls and acts of resistance. It reverses the field of enquiry from the exceptional event (although exceptional events are also part of the everyday) to *the boring, the routine, and the taken for granted.*' (2015, pp. 8–9, emphasis added).

The term livelihood, conventionally the means through which a person 'makes a living', takes on additional qualities when related to communities intimately entwined with environments. Ingold has argued against the orthodox separations we saw in anthropological literature between the ways in which people interact with the natural environment to make this living and 'how their lifeworld is imaginatively constructed', because such separations normalise and remove opportunities to explore the assumed distinction between nature and culture (Ingold, 2000, p. 9). In this thesis I will seek to show how previously unseen images are an effective visual illustration of the inextricable entangling of the environment-as-livelihood and an intrinsically valued farming *way of life* for fell farming communities (Gasson, 1973; Price and Evans, 2005, 2009). For Price and Evans:

> '*A farming way of life is founded upon distinct sets of customs, perceptions and values, which together define the agricultural experience for individuals, family and non-kin related groups of people. Aspects such as being close to nature, a feeling of independence in decision-making and forming part of a community of like-minded individuals respected by others can be identified as examples of the advantageous qualities embraced by a farming way of life*' (2005, p. 3).

'Farmscapes' are conceptualised by Susan Haedicke as a rejection of the binary representations of farmland as either understood as spaces of food production or as touristic rural idylls, and instead sees these places as:

> 'a hybrid of agricultural land that produces food and bucolic agrarian scenery that is 'visually' consumed and to shift the focus away from the land so prominent in the word farmland… …the word farmscape acknowledge[s] the recent 'performative turn' in landscape studies that privileges the *lived experience of a landscape* over a detached gaze and, by implication, suggests that farmscapes live in the words, experiences and encounters of farmers, non-farmers and nonhumans; in the rhythms and repetitions of

> seasonal farming practices associated with a particular place; and in the traces and echoes left in the land by living creatures and natural forces alike' (2021, p. 2 emphasis added).

The notion of vernacular landscape was explored by John Brinckerhoff Jackson, as a means to understand how many different types of landscape are shaped, produced and maintained through local *everyday* human practice (Jackson in Farminer, 2017, p. 119). This material impact of everyday vernacular practice is illustrated in the context of dwellings, where Jackson explains that the 'vernacular dwelling is designed by a craftsman, not an architect, that is built with local techniques, local materials, and with the local environment in mind: its climate, its traditions, its economy, predominantly agricultural' (Jackson, 1984, p. 85). Alongside emphasising the importance of locality in the qualities and construction of vernacular dwellings (of which a farmhouse in the Lake District could certainly be considered an apt example) Jackson here also alludes to the importance of class in the production of vernacular landscapes. It is the working-class vocation of the local craftsmen which has the fundamental role in landscape shaping, as opposed to the middle-class profession of the 'architect'- skills learned and taught in context with situated knowledge rather than more abstract training techniques applied or imposed onto landscapes. In this way, the term vernacular landscape helps us to build on the 'everyday rural' explored in section three, which focused upon how practices of work and tradition were situated and embedded *in* the landscape to evoke a sense of attachment, towards a notion of how these practices also *shape the landscape itself*.

In the Lake District, this 'vernacular' means of landscape making (Hoskins, 2013) is evident even in the distinctive farmsteads of the region. Farmsteads are created using very local materials, with slatestone and limestone forming the walls and the iconic slate roofing (Brunskill, 1985), all as geographically concentrated as the Herdwick Breed (Bowles, Carson and Isaac, 2014) which roams the fells (see Figure 2.3).

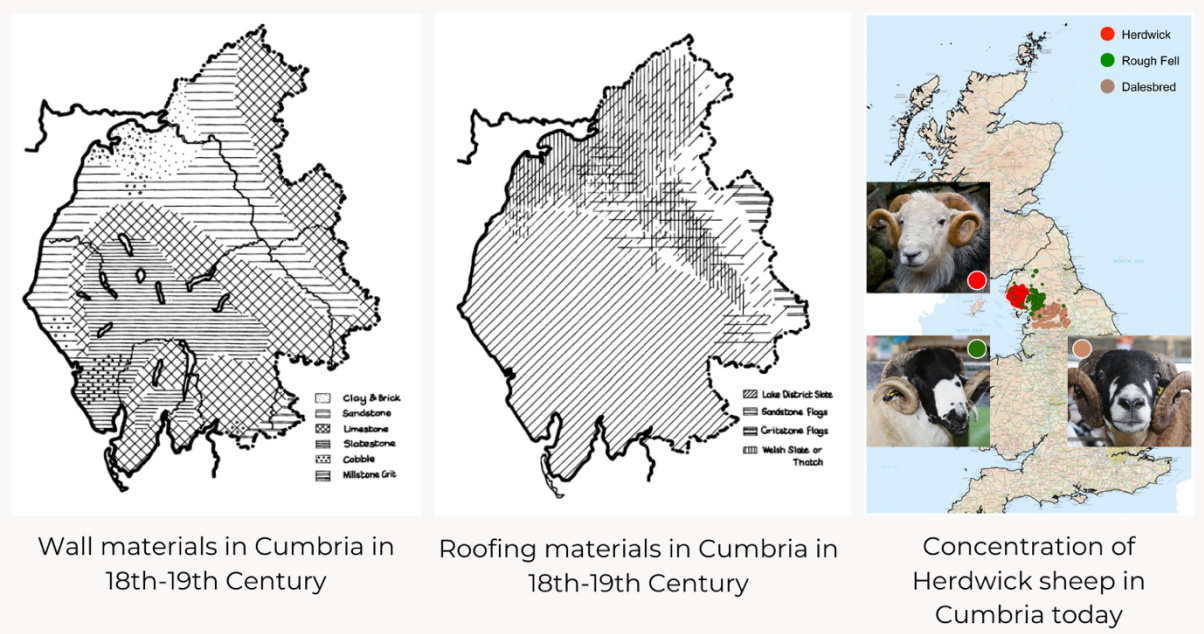


Figure 2. 3: Features of the Lake District vernacular landscape. Left and Middle from Brunskill, 1985. Right from Bowles et al, 2014.

In this thesis, I will explore how Jackson's vernacular concept can be extended beyond a method of landscape-shaping to its own distinct *aesthetic* of the #lakedistrict as it is made and encountered by local farmers.

2.4.4 Seeing the Countryside

In places, the everyday countryside and its critters have found their way into romantic understandings of rural places like the Lake District. Domesticated animal species including cattle and sheep are perceived by the general public as intermediaries between nature and culture (Broglio, 2005). Even seminal picturesque thinkers and influencers such as William Gilpin recognised and incorporated the aesthetic value of animals, and specifically livestock, in the picturesque, arguing: 'he who studies landscape, will find himself very deficient, if he hath not paid great attention to the choice and combination, both of animal and human figures' (1786, p. 261). Indeed, Gilpin dedicated some time in his works 'Observations relative chiefly to picturesque beauty' to the ways in which livestock should be included in picturesque imagery, offering opinions on the character, form and combinations (groupings) of horses, cattle and sheep. Gilpin tells us that sheep are beautiful and 'well adapted to receive the graces of painting'. Despite their lack of variation in colour in contrast to cows and horses,

Gilpin highlights the textures of the sheep fleece as beautiful, stating: 'there is a softness in its fleece, a richness, a delicacy of touch, and a sweet tenderness of shadow, which make it a very pleasing object' (1786, p. 256-257). However, whilst for horses and cattle he argues that there can be 'many degrees of beauty and deformity' to distinguish between individual animals, for sheep, Gilpin argues, the picturesque viewer 'is less apt to investigate parts: rather it rests on the whole appearance [of a flock], and more so, as sheep, being particularly gregarious, are generally considered as objects in a group'. This thesis will demonstrate that, in contrast to this picturesque notion that sheep's aesthetic value lies wholly with the form of the flock, there are significant intimate and individual aesthetics and experiential qualities to sheep which are of great importance to farmers in their everyday #lakedistrict.

A contemporary interest in the aesthetic qualities of landscapes and environments has been a rich area of academic interest and debate since the 1960s (Carlson, 2001, 2014). In Brady and Prior's overview (2020), they identify a significant distinction in contemporary approaches to environmental aesthetics as the distinction between cognitive and non-cognitive notions of aesthetic appreciation. 'Scientific cognitive' approaches follow Carlson's (2000) logic that, where in appreciation of art, the assessor should have sufficient experience and knowledge of art history and critique to properly contextualise and comprehend a piece of art, so too must a viewer of environmental aesthetics be knowledgeable in the natural sciences to properly, fully and 'objectively' be able to appreciate the environment's aesthetic qualities. In contrast, non-cognitive models such as Berleant's 'aesthetics of engagement' emphasise the more affective qualities of environmental aesthetic appreciation and focuses on the subjective, sensory dimensions of such visual encounters:

> 'Environmental appreciation is not just looking approvingly at lovely scenery; it is driving down a winding country road, tramping along a hiking trail, paddling the course of a stream, and, in all such activities, being acutely attentive to the sounds, the smells, the feel of wind and sun, the nuances of colour shape and pattern. It is found, too, in the deep awareness, so rare in the contemporary world, of living in a house and place to which we intimately belong both in living experience and in memory. And it arises in the kinaesthetic sense of the masses and spaces that incorporate us. Incorporate is a good word here, for it means literally to bring our bodies in, and this

> engagement in a whole is what aesthetic experience of environment involves.'(Berleant, 1997, p. 13)

Berleant this emphasises a more situated and sensory approach to seeing the countryside. In contrast to environmental theories, landscape aesthetics continue to employ the 'picturesque' as a categorisation, wherein 'aesthetic pleasure comes from the wild- ness of such things as overgrown walls, gnarled roots and rustic paths. The smaller human scale is also reinforced by the inclusion of small-scale agriculture' (Brook, 2013, p. 42).

Landscape aesthetics also incorporates an appreciation for the vernacular: Brady considers dry stone walling as a mode of aesthetic engagement with the land is illustrative a 'dialectical' relationship between stones and waller, human and nature, landscape and farmer: she argues that these relationships are more harmonious, and the aesthetic value greater, in 'traditional' agricultural landscapes such as the Lake District than in more conventional agricultural landscapes (2006). Thus, for Brady, the aesthetic value from agricultural landscapes such as the Lake District is critically embedded in the traditional practices which 'involve more intimate experience of the land and its creatures, characterised by an aesthetics of embodiment, where the individual is immersed in this environment' (Brady, 2006, p. 2). Seeing in, being in, appreciating and making the landscape are thus irrevocably intertwined.

A final key contribution to the situated and practice-based notion of seeing which this thesis will utilise is the notion of skilled vision. In reference to her farming participants' ability to distinguish individual cattle, Cristina Grasseni remarks that 'to be able to 'see' became shorthand for being well-integrated into the environment of one's practice, and especially to have *certain socially accepted skills*- including that of knowing how to learn by paying attention to the right people and the right features in one's environment', which also emphasised the intimate and interconnected connections 'between skill, identity and place' (2009, p. 85 emphasis added). In contrast to the wholly aesthetic considerations of romantic (Broglio, 2005) and picturesque (Gilpin, 1786) visual appreciation of livestock, Grasseni highlights here that vision and seeing can also be a 'vernacular' craft: context and breed specific, in ways arguably parallel to the use of particular local materials and techniques for building, farmers identify the best qualities in their livestock to suit the very fell, farm and flock in which they reside, and in turn also become landscape makers.

2.5 Conceptual Framework: a digital ecology of the #lakedistrict

In this section, I synthesise several of the academic contributions discussed in the literature review, from visual, digital and rural geographies, to outline the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis. Firstly, by drawing together several utilisations of Henri Lefebvre's conceptual triad of spatiality, I develop a conceptual approach for understanding the #lakedistrict as a digital landscape. Secondly, I utilise the notion of the hyperseen, and develop the concept of the 'hyperscene' to conceptualise how the digital landscape #lakedistrict is simultaneously produced and consumed. Thirdly, I advance the notion of aperturing as an epistemological approach to understanding participatory action-based methods for bringing previously unseen #lakedistricts into the light.

2.5.1 Spatiality for digital landscapes

The conceptual framework applies key contributions from cultural geographies, media studies and participatory cultures of social media to build upon and renew Lefebvre's triad of spatiality for digital landscapes. In doing so, I also draw upon two other uses of the triad of social space for rural contexts (Halfacree, 2009) and for mediatisation (Jansson, 2013). Each of these three frameworks is summarised in the table below (Figure 2.4):

Lefebvre's (1991) Triad of spatiality (in Merrifield, 1993)	**Halfacree's threefold model of rural space (2006)**	**Jansson's sociospatial regimes of mediatisation (2013)**
Representations of Space 'Conceived' space	Formal representations of the rural: the way the rural is framed within the (capitalist) production process; specifically, how the rural is commodified	Media's role in the circulation and mediation of various representations: how we are influenced into certain practices 'according to conceived media spaces.'
Spatial Practices 'Perceived' space	Rural Localities:	Material dimensions of media:

	inscribed through relatively distinctive spatial practices.	media have become 'constructed as necessary'.
Spaces of Representation 'Lived' space	Everyday lives of the rural: inevitably incoherent and fractured. These incorporate individual and social elements ('culture').	Mediatised saturation of the lifeworld: normalising our use of social media- how it in turn has changed our social norms.

Figure 2. 4: Utilisation of Lefebvre's triad of spatiality

Lefebvre's spatial triad is presented in The Production of Space (Lefebvre, 1991), as a means to unify theories of the relationship between physical space, mental space and social space, in a theory which would also 'expose space, decode space and read space' (Merrifield, 1993, p. 523). The three dimensions of Lefebvre's spatial theory are representations of space, representational space and spatial practices. Representation of space is the dominant dimension, a conceived and abstract space comprised of understandings discursively constructed by professionals and technocrats, utilising arcane, exclusionary signs and language in ways tied to the order of capitalist production (Lefebvre, 1991; Merrifield, 1993; Jansson, 2013; Sletto, 2015). Spatial practices are enacted in 'perceived' space, wherein 'people's perceptions condition their daily reality' and consequent uses of and interactions with space. Representational space refers to the 'lived' space of everyday life, a space as it is passively experienced by its users and inhabitants, and one which the 'conceived' space seeks to dominate or obscure (Merrifield, 1993).

Keith Halfacree (2009) utilises Lefebvre's triad to develop a threefold model of rural space as 'imaginative, material *and* practiced', incorporating and enhancing existing contestations of the rural as distinguished by either its locality or representations (Woods, 2011). Halfacree utilises Lefebvre's triad of spatiality to explain that each of these elements cannot be understood without comprehension of the other two (Halfacree, 2009). This approach emphasises Lefebvre's argument that 'a dialectical relationship exists within the triad of the perceived, the conceived, and the lived' (Lefebvre (1991) in Fuchs, 2019, p. 136). The synthesis between these dimensions is thus a vital element of study. André Jansson concurs by stating that 'if we want to understand the nature of social space and its transformations, we must try not to isolate these realms from one another'. They go on to explain the effectiveness of

Lefebvre's method for understanding mediatisation of social life, for it enables a 'holistic view that captures the composite effect that occurs through the interaction between perceived, conceived and lived spaces.' Further, Jansson demonstrates how the presence of social media in our everyday lives provides an effective example of this relationship, where different platforms impact how we act, how we engage with others, how we move through and understand spaces (Jansson, 2013, p. 283).

So, in Lefebvre's triad of spatiality we have an effective conceptual tool for examining how rural and digital space are socially produced. Yet it is vital in how this thesis understands situated, local environs, both in online and offline locales, that the notion of place is also encapsulated within the conceptual framework. Merrifield has argued that Lefebvre's triad also enables a fruitful mechanism through which the relationship between space *and* place can be conceptualised by utilising a *dialectical* mode of argumentation. Merrifield returns to Marx's work on the fetishism of commodities to illustrate that, as commodities are *processes* which appear at the moment of exchange in the form of *things* from which we can no longer fully comprehend the social processes which went into their production, so too is space fetishised 'as space in itself', a 'passive receptacle' where the social relationships which are inherent to it are obscured.

For Andrew Merrifield, the production of space is the process and the thing, the flow and the place, but by paying attention to the conceived-perceived-lived *moments* of place, though perhaps unstable and fleeting, the 'structured coherence' of a place in a given time can be characterised 'without divorcing that place and those people from wider sets of changing relations' (Cloke and Goodwin, 1993, p. 166). Therefore, in understanding the dialectical relationships that exist between each spatial dimension of Lefebvre's triad, we also need to consider the situated context in which a given 'place' was produced; how, where and when it was produced, but vitally also how this particular moment is also consumed: what existing assumptions, understandings, relationships, and experiences have led to this particular encounter with a given place, this particular #lakedistrict?

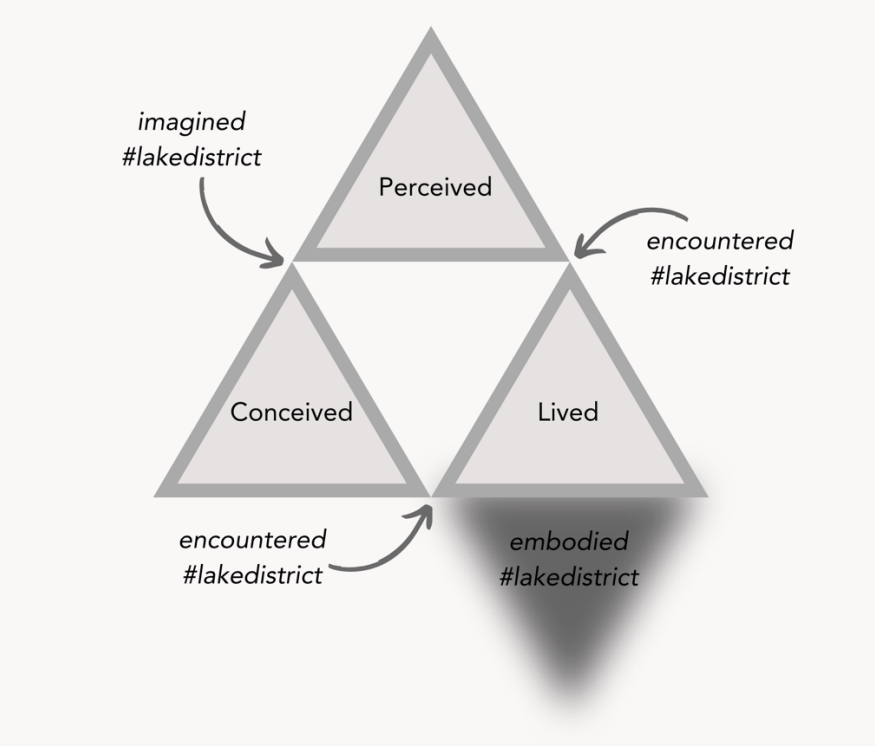


Figure 2. 5: A triadic conceptualisation of the digital landscape

To make sense of these moments in the #lakedistrict as they are produced, I will demonstrate that the consideration for how places are consumed is also of vital significance. To that end, I advance two concepts for understanding another dialectical relationship: that of the hyperseen and hyperscene. The hyperseen, as previously outlined in chapter 2, refers to the practice of intense, restless and experiential looking when we encounter digital images, as when one would encounter digital landscapes on social media platforms. This is the visual mode of consuming, apprehending, and sensing the #lakedistrict which I argue users experience when encountering the #lakedistrict on Instagram. To explore the conceived, perceived, and lived elements of digital landscapes on social media, we must consider, I argue, the respective *imagined, encountered and embodied* dimensions of the #lakedistrict.

Further, I contend that this visual mode of consumption also marks a new contemporary phase in notions of rurality, where we move on from Michael Bunce's armchair countryside (1994), learned through books and television, and even on from Lee Ann Sutherland's desk chair countryside (2020) - experienced sat at the computer, - towards a *handheld countryside*; digital landscapes encountered at the intimate scale, yet also intensely connected, mode of the mobile phone screen. Through the notion of the hyperseen, we are able to distinguish between previous pre-digital encounters of the Lake District as power-laden rural gazes, and

move to consider the work done by fleeting, affective 'glances' (Zulli, 2018) in producing the digital landscape, as seen in this thesis through the case of the Instagram #lakedistrict.

Figure 2.5 also importantly highlights for us the points of contact between dimensions of the digital landscape: these interconnections, or 'entanglements' (Taffel, 2019), are addressed in turn throughout this thesis' substantive chapters. In chapter four, I principally explore the relationships between representations of a 'conceived' #lakedistrict as it is hyperseen through Instagram. Chapter 4, therefore, utilises key rural conceptualisations of space by examining the extent to which dominant formal representations of the Lake District are continued in the 'locality' of the Instagram #lakedistrict. In chapter 4, therefore, we also begin to map out the discernible *absences* of everyday farm life in the #lakedistrict.

In chapter 5, an additional layer of nuance is added by considering more closely the power relations and mediatisation of the #lakedistrict through an exploration of two contrasting Instagram #lakedistrict accounts. Chapter 5 considers the way influential accounts on Instagram conceive of particular aesthetic and authentic #lakedistricts, and how these formations may mediate other users' understandings of and engagement with the #lakedistrict. Further, chapter 5 considers how these accounts may constrict or continue particular perceptions of the #lakedistrict, and encourage or normalise conceived, perceived and even lived conventions (on and offline) for their followers' own engagement with the #lakedistrict.

In chapter 6, participatory methods enable an intervention into formal representations of the #lakedistrict. Farmers' #lakedistricts are shared in chapter 6 and examined in close detail in chapter 7, to shed light on less seen perceptions of the lived #lakedistrict. In these chapters I confront assumptions about particular representations and constructions of the #lakedistrict to bring a partial yet everyday *lived* manifestation of the #lakedistrict to an Instagram viewership, and explore what embodied elements remain shadowed and unseen.

Together, this multidisciplinary conceptualisation of encountering digital landscapes through Lefebvre's triadic notion of space, and the concepts of the hyperseen and hyperscene which are presented next, aim to enable a new approach through which we might 'locate' a digital ecology of the #lakedistrict. In this sense, I extend Turnbull et al's (2023) work on encounters in digitally mediated contact zones (Haraway, 2007; Pratt, 2014) to the landscape; the

hyperscene locale of encounters and the hyperscenes which are themselves encountered through digitised mediums.

2.5.2 The hyperseen and hyperscene

I advance the term 'hyperscene' to conceptualise the digital landscape which is produced and consumed as a hyperseen social media image. A homophone of hyperseen, the hyperscene emphasises the partialities, particularities and performative dimensions of digital landscapes as they are encountered on social media: this thesis will aim to demonstrate that representations of place on social media, as through other forms of visual culture, are power-laden and situated. The hyperscene thus draws together Hochman's (2017) notion of the hyperlocal, digital artefacts of place as they are encountered on social media, and characterised by their fragmentation, temporalisation, and nomadicity, with literature discussed on visuality and situated encounters. The hyperscene simultaneously acknowledges the algorithmic affordances of social media posts and produce representations of place, it emphasises that the 'local' #lakedistrict cannot be fully comprehended through social media: the #lakedistrict is reduced to many versions of 1080 pixels^2, and a scene constructed through the users' aesthetic choices in form, colour, light and composition. Just as Turner made careful choices in his colour and composition to elicit emotion and atmosphere, Instagram users make careful choices to (among other things) elicit likes and comments.

Together, the approaches of the hyperscene and hyperseen will be utilised in this thesis to introduce the theoretical argument that social media constructs and performs the #lakedistrict through a mediated process in which digital #lakedistricts are produced and consumed. This process is made possible where hyperscenes of the #lakedistrict become consumed as hyperseen. This process is outlined in two diagrams, which trace a single journey of a single image across the digital, to demonstrate (a) the point of 'convergence' of the hyperscene and the hyperseen, from the site of the social media platform where a digital image of place is simultaneously both produced and consumed and (b) the dialectical nature of this relationship between hyperscene and hyperseen.

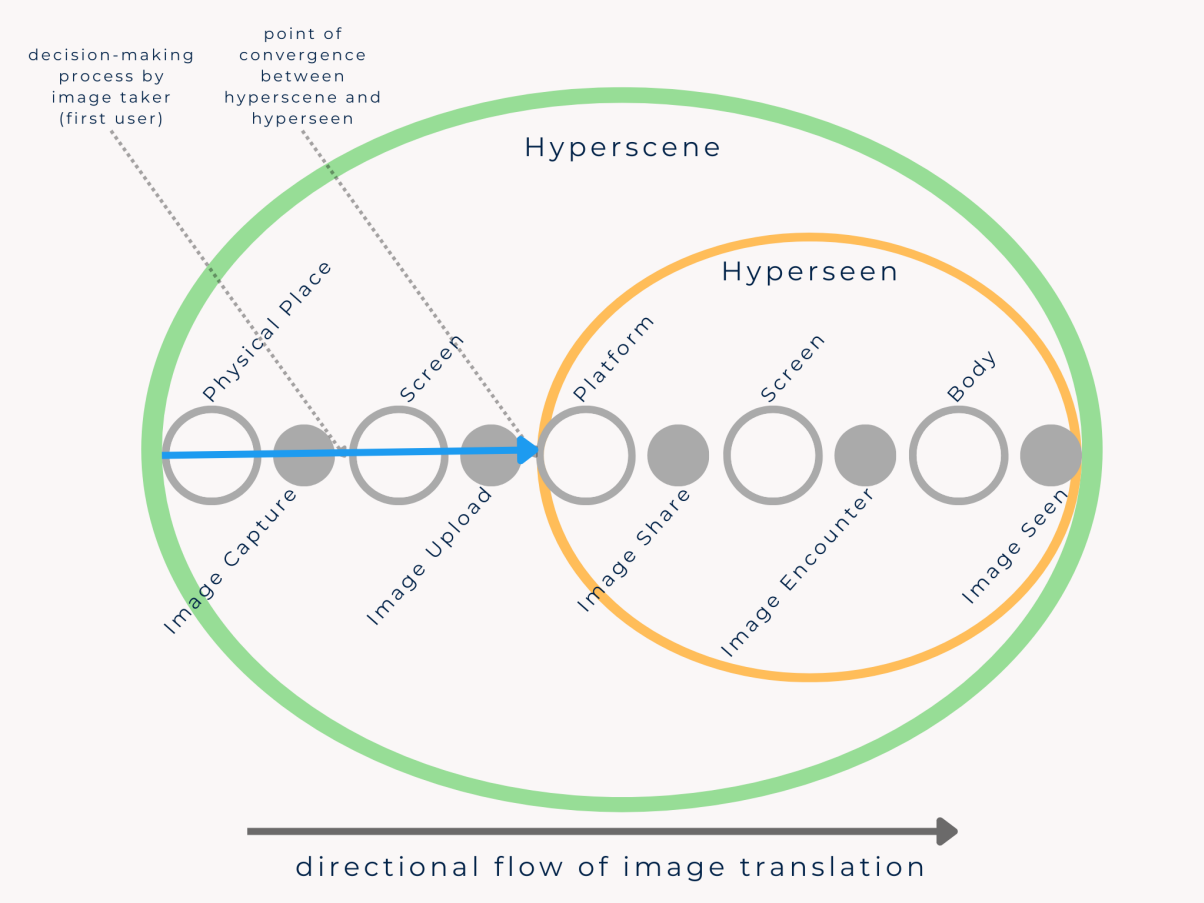


Figure 2. 6: Conceptualising the relationship between production and consumption of digital landscapes: where the hyperscene becomes hyperseen (part one).

Figure 2.6 traces a theoretical linear conceptualisation of the relationship between hyperscene and hyperseen, in an attempt to illustrate and locate the spaces of mediation between place, image and person when an image is shared on Instagram. This section aims to illustrate for the reader that the social media platform is an important site of convergence where the hyperscene becomes consumed as a hyperseen image by Instagram users. How does the image produced by the first user come to represent the hyperscene #lakedistrict on Instagram, and how is the hyperscene #lakedistrict then consumed as a hyperseen image by other users?

We see a cumulative build of factors affecting the decision-making process as the hyperscene image is produced by the first user (blue arrow). At the physical environment (far left), the user beholds the lake district in person. In this location, the images which become our digital manifestations of place are first captured. The capture itself is a process which may be influenced by a variety of factors; the affective qualities of the environment, the weather on a given day, the time of day, or even the presence of other bodies within a viewpoint. Also, of

vital significance as we develop this approach will be consideration of particular narratives and precedents which may have influenced an image-taker at any time. What assumptions do users carry about the particular features which an image of the given place should possess? Are they influenced by a certain view they have seen online before? This concern also ties to anticipations about the image's future: does the user want it to be popular and have high engagement? Or is the main purpose for their own personal documentation?

In the Screen (1), often the mobile handset, or a desktop PC for professional editors, these questions are raised again as the first user more consciously deliberates which images to post, and in what ways they will be subject to change. Additional factors here may relate to the aesthetic preferences of the user- do they prefer the warm and bright Instagram filters such as 'Rise' or 'Valencia', or the bolder saturation of 'Clarendon' and 'X Pro II'? The capabilities of the user to edit images is also a factor here; do they use the platform software or more professional tools such as Photoshop? At the point of Image Upload, users also ascribe their chosen narrative to images; comments describing the scene or its relevance, and hashtags to tie the image into ongoing discourses.

The digital image reaches the Platform, where the image produced by the user's many choices both in the physical and digital place are composed and transformed with a click into a single post. On the Platform, the produced and consumed are simultaneous. At this point the hyperscene representation of place becomes hyperseen by other users. The countless digital pieces of computer, colour and code which have been sewn together through the first user's choices are now identical to our hyperscene producer and our hyperseeing image consumer: both users view the same image when they see it on their Instagram news feed.

The hyperseen user comes across the posted image at a glance in their continuous scrolling through their personal feed, in their own Screen (2), on their own smart phone, tablet or (less likely) desktop computer. Their first consumption of the image is sensed- the immediate 'flow and glow' of the image (Rose and Willis, 2018) enhanced by its brightness and colour onscreen have a stimulating quality. This accelerated sensing-as-looking encourages an appreciation of distinctively digital 'cumulative affect', where in the constantly updating and perpetually scrolling platform interface, users may only happen upon an image for a fraction of a second, and yet the post may still inspire a reaction, 'not because of something inherent within [the]

single image alone, but rather because it shares qualities with a body of images already familiar with the viewer' (Dewan and Hackett, 2009, p. 338).

At the site of the body, the affective qualities of the image have a sensory impact for the hyperseen user. The emotive responses felt by the user, once felt, are in a moment then accompanied by particular narratives and situated perspectives that this user has experienced. The 'Seen' image here is affective and yet also replete with existing narratives; the embodied 'gazes' (Urry, 1990, 1992; Urry and Larsen, 2011) through which the hyperseeing user makes sense of the hyperscene image are dialectical points of contradiction, a means of making sense conditioned by ones' prior understanding of place and intertwined with the immediate affective encounter. Moreover, beyond the sensual affectiveness elicited from the encounter with the hyperscene image, I argue that the hyperscene itself is bodily, drawing from the work of Proulx and Carbone to emphasise that the screen-as-interface functions in a contact zone of interactions, where the entanglements between human, environ, device and screen acknowledge the affordances of digital hard- and soft-wares in an ecological milieu (Carbone, 2019; Taffel, 2019; Proulx, 2020; Turnbull *et al.*, 2023).

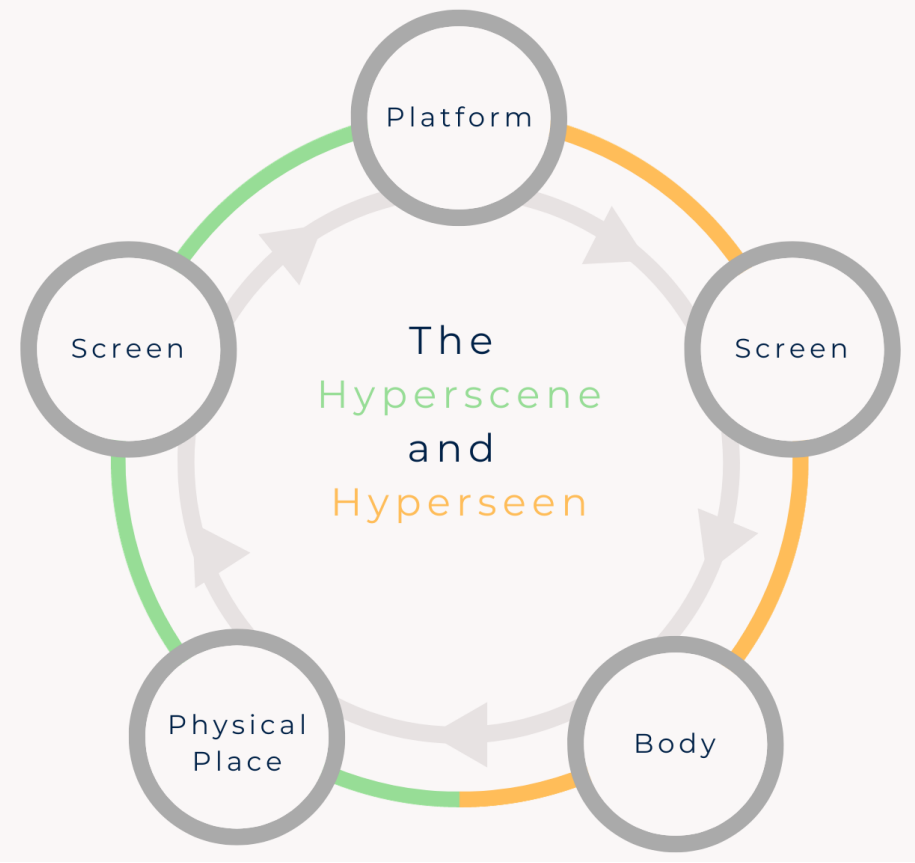


Figure 2. 7: The recursive Hyperscene and Hyperseen

Once the image is seen and understood within context of place and narrative, the user makes conscious decisions about their engagement with both the image and with the place. The image that is hyperseen by this user may prompt them to engage with the hyperscene, to 'like' and to comment upon the image, or to search for and even return to the physical place itself, utilising its digital affordances such as attached geodata. In this way, the relationship between the hyperscene and hyperseen goes beyond a point of convergence to a where the hyperseen image of the hyperscene has potential embodied effects for the physical place itself (see Figure 2.7).

2.5.3 Aperturing

The literature review has attempted to demonstrate the recognition in academic studies that our understanding of imagery and representation is deeply rooted in both cognitive processes and socio-cultural contexts. As we navigate the myriad ways of perceiving and interpreting visual data, it becomes crucial to explore methods that can enhance and broaden our visual comprehension. This exploration is not only about identifying new viewpoints but also about actively engaging in the process of uncovering and illuminating diverse perspectives. By examining and expanding upon existing concepts, we can develop more dynamic and inclusive frameworks for visual interpretation.

The final conceptual contribution developed in this thesis is the notion of aperturing. The entire second half of this thesis is devoted to exploring what happens and what it might look like to make positive interventions into the online #lakedistrict. I conceptualise this epistemological approach as aperturing, after Fendler (2017), who described 'apertures of documentation' as different methods for seeing, particularly images, in educational history research. Through aperturing, I aim to expand this definition for thinking through ways of seeing as a *verb*, for not only alternative static 'apertures', openings, viewpoints or lenses, but to make clear *the active intent of this work* in making more visible, letting in more light, uncovering more shade on farmers' everyday #lakedistricts.

Aperturing serves to enhance visuality by introducing new perspectives and interpretations. By expanding the range of what we can see and understand, aperturing enriches the process of visuality (Foster, 1988; Rose, 2016), allowing for a more comprehensive and nuanced

understanding of what we see. Visuality is not static; it evolves as our contexts, knowledge, and experiences change. Aperturing actively contributes to this evolution by challenging and expanding our existing visual paradigms, prompting continuous reinterpretation and deeper understanding. Aperturing promotes inclusivity by making more interpretations of place accessible. This can help to democratise visuality, ensuring that diverse perspectives and meanings are considered and valued in the process of interpreting visual information. While visuality provides the foundation for how we make sense of what we see, aperturing acts as a catalyst that stimulates and broadens this sense-making process. They are interdependent; effective aperturing relies on an initial understanding of visuality, and enhanced visuality is a result of successful aperturing.

Chapter 3

Methodology: Doing digital ecologies of the #lakedistrict

In this methodological chapter, I explain my approach for selecting the tools I developed and applied to analyse, explore, and co-create digital ecologies of the #lakedistrict. The methods I develop in this project are one of the key contributions of my thesis to geographical research, and they explicitly aim to blur, disrupt, and often reject the boundaries of qualitative/quantitative, online/offline, image/text, and action/analysis in digital studies. I begin by outlining the methodological underpinnings; the commitments, broad approaches, and considerations which have provided the foundations for this project. I then detail the key methods which are utilised through each chapter, explaining where and why existing geographical methods of the digital and ethnographic have been enhanced and adapted to offer innovative ways of understanding local communities and digital ecologies. The final section of this chapter considers reflexivity, and the complex ethics involved in this study.

The broad timeline for the completion of this thesis is shown in Figure 3. 1: Timeline of research. In September 2017, my main studies began with a three-week pilot study in the Lake District National Park. During this period, I attended shepherds' meets and shows, and travelled around the Lake District to visit farms and discuss my research with potentially interested farmers. This initial phase helped establish connections and gauge interest in the study. From May 2018 to the end of September 2018, I conducted the main fieldwork in the Lake District. This involved spending time with farmers, conducting ethnographic fieldwork, building rapport and trust, and explaining and testing the research process for image generation and collection using iPads. This phase was crucial for setting the foundation for the subsequent data collection.

In the summer of 2018, the data scrape of Instagram was also conducted to collect one year's worth of images tagged with #LakeDistrict for Chapter 4. This provided a comprehensive dataset for analysing the visual representation of the #lakedistrict on social media.

From September 2018 to September 2019, I generated data for Chapters 6 and 7 by collecting images from the @fellsfarmers Instagram account. Concurrently, I conducted image analysis via digital ethnography and data scraping of the @herdyshepherd and @thelakelanders

Instagram grids for Chapter 5. This period was dedicated to gathering and analysing visual data from various sources to understand different perspectives and representations.

The analysis of the Chapter 4 data took place from autumn 2018 to spring 2019. This involved a detailed examination of the Instagram images to identify dominant themes and trends.

In May and June 2019, I conducted the Sheepcam fieldwork, which provided additional insights and data for the planned final chapter, but which was ultimately removed from the thesis. Following this fieldwork, I continued with the analysis of the Chapter 5 data and began writing up the findings from 2019 to 2021. This period included a medical suspension of studies, which temporarily halted progress. Upon returning to my studies in 2021, I completed Confirmation of Status and proceeded with the write-up of the remaining empirical chapters (Chapters 6 and 7). I also revisited and refined the literature review and then wrote up the other sections of the thesis as shown in the timeline.

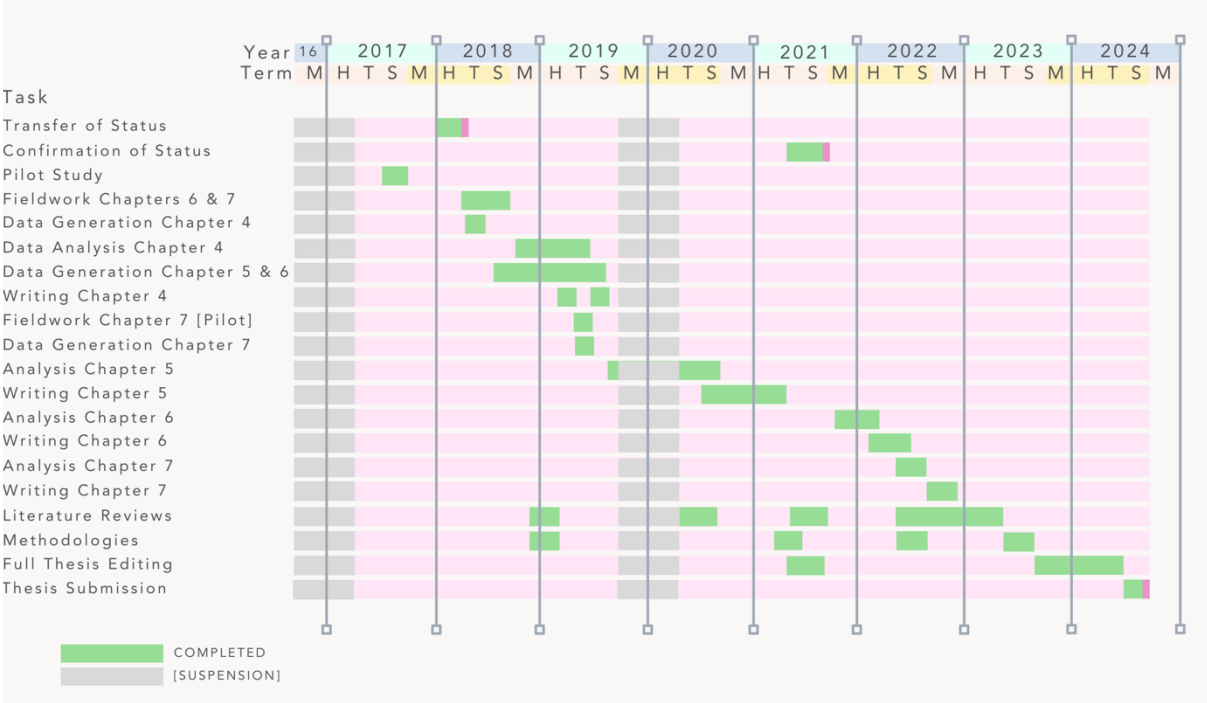


Figure 3. 1: Timeline of research

3.1 Multipurpose methods for meaningful research

The four empirical chapters of this thesis can be viewed most simply as two halves of a story. In the first 'half', chapters 4 and 5, the story focuses on an exploration of what is already there, what existing digital ecologies of the #lakedistrict look like. In the second 'half', shown through chapters 6 and 7, the story expands to explore what happens when new interventions are

made into the #lakedistrict, and what new digital ecologies are uncovered or emerge from the shadows. These two broad explorations of the existing and the experimental world require differing yet complementary methods of data generation and analysis. Yet, an issue remained of how to draw these two halves together and to make a whole, coherent thesis. What is the common thread which sews together these visual digital ecologies? The answer was methodological. Three key approaches which are fundamental to threading this thesis together are cultural analytics, participation, and allyship.

Cultural analytics

Cultural analytics is a term first coined by Lev Manovich and colleagues to describe 'a new paradigm for the study, teaching and public presentation of cultural artifacts, dynamics, and flows' in the context of contemporary cultural data such as visual social media (Manovich, 2009, p. 4, see also 2020, p. 30). Manovich's claim that we moved in the late 00s from a stage of 'new media' to a stage of 'more media' has been echoed in geographical thought such as Rose's conceptualisation of digital objects as 'mutable, multimedial, and mass' (2015, p. 336). In consideration of these qualities, Manovich predicted that humanists, as scientists have, would turn to the widespread use of 'large-scale computational analysis and interactive visualization of cultural patterns' and asks, 'what new cultural disciplines may emerge out of the use of visualisation and data analysis?' (Manovich, 2009). For Manovich, other terms emerging to describe the increasing computational analysis in the humanities (such as digital humanities) were insufficient, due to much of the discipline's continued exclusive focus on digitisation of mostly historical and textual data rather than analysis of 'contemporary digital culture', of new and multimedial data (Manovich, 2020, p. 7), such as visual social media. Through his Software Studies Initiative, this thesis employs some of Manovich's flagship cultural analytics computational techniques for processing (ImageMeasure) and then visualising (ImagePlot) patterns in large datasets of cultural objects, in this case Instagram images of the #lakedistrict, in ways which can be both interrogated and intervened in, utilising innovative qualitative techniques developed in this thesis. Manovich's cultural analytics approaches enable a fundamental change to the ways we can analyse visual data, which he describes as how to: 'describe images with images' (2012, p. 263).

Participation

One of the most central methodological commitments for this thesis was to *participatory visual approaches* which would be accessible and interesting to farmers. Participatory research is 'done *by* or *with* insiders of a community, rather than *to* or *on* them. Traditional models of participatory research usually follow the steps of engaging communities/ participants, identifying issues and goals, gathering data and interpreting data, and disseminate findings.' (Dierckx *et al.*, 2021, p. 473). Participatory visual methods to elicit alternative perceptions of English rural landscapes, including the Lake District, have been used to great effect. Ingrid Pollard has utilised photography as a mechanism to challenge racial stereotypes in visual representations and imaginaries of the Lake District as an English Landscape (Kinsman, 1995). Yarwood has examined how images are utilised in varying ways and for different agendas to portray rural places, from idyllic and charismatic promotional imagery of tourist villages, to emotional and harrowing visual coverage on the impact of foot and mouth disease (Yarwood, 2005). Tolia-Kelly has used participatory image-making to illustrate the contested landscape, dominant representations of which exclude particular cultures from the narrative of 'Englishness' (Tolia-Kelly, 2007): she has also highlighted a 'neo-visual turn' in cultural geography wherein the study of visual culture in geography has driven increased emphasis on participatory approaches (Tolia-Kelly, 2012, p. 135). Contemporary research practitioner groups, such as the recently established PLACE collective, continue to utilise visual arts and digital media, among other experimental mediums, as a means to elaborate, prompt dialogue and engage with rural issues in and around the Lake District (Fraser and Fraser, 2021).

In many ways, contemporary digital culture such as visual social media can allow for more participatory ways of contributing to culture, following Jenkins et al's definition of participatory culture as 'one in which not every member must contribute, but all must believe that they are free to contribute when ready and that what they contribute is appropriately valued' (2009, p. 6). Elisa Giaccardi elaborates by outlining that a participatory culture is 'characterised by relatively low barriers to public artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations with others, and frameworks for formal and informal mentorship to novices' (2012, p. 3). Coyne elaborates and, in reference specifically to sites of

heritage and contemporary means of participatory encounters such as digital photography, argues that:

> 'contemporary heritage practices wrestle with concepts of the institution, authority, expertise and the archive, all of which are challenged by the proliferation of technologies and practices that facilitate openness, the putative the ratization of knowledge and expertise, and the proliferation and increasing exposure of archives and materials able to be archived.' (2012, p. 162)

This challenge to the status quo, to 'authority' and 'expertise' about the #lakedistrict as a digital landscape, is a central aim of this thesis which my methods need to enable. And yet, the proliferation of these media and their 'mass' qualities present another risk that the methods must navigate- how to prevent our interventions becoming lost in the crowd, drops in a digital ocean, or minute threads in a vast tapestry of textures. It is for these reasons that alongside a commitment to the digital, and the participatory, this thesis also utilises close, sustained, qualitative methods of analysis and research presentation. The textures, ethnographies, image analyses, and vignettes which are woven throughout this thesis aim to draw out specific examples which provide richness, liveliness, and depth to the arguments, theories and indeed methods developed within. The thesis thus walks a winding path, continually utilising and collecting the qualitative and the quantitative, the online and the offline, addressing and embracing our understanding, engagement and *entanglement* with digitised landscapes. It develops methods for digital ecologies which aim to explore and characterise the ways in which digital media may inaugurate new relationships with nature, landscape, places, environments (following Turnbull *et al.*, 2023).

Allyship

A third key methodological consideration and commitment in this research relates to allyship. In participatory action research, 'Researchers accept that their own position changes from someone who controls the research process to someone who becomes one actor amongst many others that work towards the common goal of raising awareness and building a relevant knowledge base that, particularly in a PAR (Participatory Action Research) scenario, evokes change' (Dierckx *et al.*, 2021, p. 474). I did not consider this project as PAR, because 'change'

for these farmers is a long-term goal of meaningful and sustained engagement and agency in broader stories about Lake District land management, which was always beyond the scope of this study. Instead of action, I offered allyship.

As a farmer's daughter, and one who has been keenly invested in the plight of rural farming communities throughout my life, raising awareness about the value of farming in protected landscapes is an aim I share with my participants. And yet the landscape and particular cultures of their farming practices, as this thesis shows, are completely unique and in many ways unlike practices I have previously known. Our goals are aligned, but not identical. The allyship I sought to establish with the farming participants of this research was based on both building a longstanding and meaningful relationship with participants through the ability to offer genuine shared passions and experiences, with an eager curiosity and openness to learn about and work from their own needs and knowledges.

Dierckx et al have highlighted that the key factors which hinder successful allyship in participatory research as time, space and research management protocols. Time is understood as a barrier where 'efficient' research 'does not always allow for the flexibility of prolonged research exploration to understand experiences and phenomena.' (2021, p. 486). Space is an issue where the academic space and local community are 'as separate worlds wherein only the researcher was able to move back and forth', when what is needed is a space which is more 'independent, in which ideas can flow freely, almost informally, and can be reconsidered as thinking and storylines evolve.' (2021, p.487). Research management means that there is 'little space for actors to negotiate, critique, experiment with or deviate from the protocols underpinning the research team's activities in both worlds' (2021, p. 486). So, Dieckx et al propose a 'third sphere' or 'in-between space' of 'cultural hybridity and flux' (2021, p.487) where there is affordance for creating 'new potentialities that aid the visual, spatial and sensory storytelling that is continuously evolving in [our] mind' (Beer, 2017, p. 112).

In this project, the third sphere is in many ways enabled and mediated by the digital: I gave the farmers iPads to enable longer term data collection (which continued for over a year as farmers continued to send images), more accessible image spaces which could be engaged with, amended and added to by farmers, and a more flexible research practice which, in the following section I will show, allowed farmers to become experimental in their methods of

data generation, and enabled dimensions of community-based participatory research (Castleden, Garvin and First Nation, 2008). Further, my allyship with these farmers has continued beyond the lifetime and scope of this research: enabled by the genuine care, continued engagement and flexible approaches used with these farmers, I continue to conduct research *with* them about their farming experiences and truly enabled a reciprocal bond between researcher and local community. This allyship is imperfect, but I would not change it for the world.

In what follows, I outline the rationale behind my choice of case studies and explain in detail the methods developed for each of my empirical chapters.

3.2 Case Studies

The #lakedistrict

In this section, I have outlined several of the key conceptual tools which are utilised in cultural geography for understanding dominant representations of the rural, critiques of such dominant representations for the invisibilities they enable, and understandings of how banal, everyday notions of the rural are made present. Much of the literature I have already discussed has made effective use of the Lake District as a case study for their work (Halfacree & Williams, 2021; Jepson & Sharpley, 2015; Pollard, 1987; Readman, 2018b; Sharpley & Jepson, 2011; Tolia-Kelly, 2007), often citing its importance as a culturally significant region in England (Donaldson, Gregory and Taylor, 2017) as rationale for deploying innovative concepts. Many authors indicate the significance of romantic thinkers and artists such as Ruskin and Turner, who were so impacted by their time in the Lake District, in influencing contemporary understandings regarding many aspects of the countryside (Giberti, 1991): the landscape's national significance here is in some ways thus explained by its physical characteristics and consequent aesthetic appeal, where the dramatic terrain of mountains and lakes is so different from the rest of England and reminiscent of grand overseas regions, and was therefore so attractive to artists in the 1700s onwards (Readman, 2018b). These physical characteristics became so irrevocably entwined with the literary, aesthetic, sentimental and cultural associations with the landscape that it has remained a revered national landscape to this day, formalised through

designations such as National Park status in 1951, and UNESCO World Heritage Status as a cultural landscape in 2017.

The Lake District's inscription as a cultural landscape World Heritage Site celebrates, among other things, the unique role of Lakeland sheep farming as a unique and fundamental means of land management in the English uplands. These traditional practices are a continuing vital element in creating and sustaining the landscape of the Lake District we see today. The rural communities of fell farmers are therefore a key component of the identity, inspiration and conservation tenets on which the World Heritage Nomination, and its success, were based. At their forty-first session in Krakow, Poland, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (2017) summarised:

> 'The English Lake District is a self-contained mountainous area in Northwest England of some 2,292 square kilometres. Its narrow, glaciated valleys radiating from the central massif with their steep hillsides and slender lakes exhibit an extraordinary beauty and harmony. *This is the result of the Lake District's continuing distinctive agro-pastoral traditions based on local breeds of sheep including the Herdwick, on common fell-grazing and relatively independent farmers.* These traditions have evolved under the influence of the physical constraints of its mountain setting. The stone-walled fields and rugged farm buildings in their spectacular natural backdrop, form a harmonious beauty that has attracted visitors from the 18th century onwards.'

When determining the Lakes' nomination, the World Heritage Committee recognised that all three of the criterion on which the nomination was based are intrinsically related to Lakeland farming traditions. Criterion II (to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world), the committee states that):

> 'The harmonious beauty of the English Lake District is rooted in the vital interaction between an agro-pastoral land use system and the spectacular natural landscape of mountains, valleys and lakes of glacial origins.'

Criterion V (to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change):

> 'Land use in the English Lake District derives from a long history of agro-pastoralism. This landscape is an unrivalled example of a northern European upland agro-pastoral system based on the rearing of cattle and native breeds of sheep, shaped and adapted for over 1,000 years to its spectacular mountain environment. This land use continues today in the face of social, economic and environmental pressures.'

With regards to Criterion VI (to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance):

> 'A number of ideas of universal significance are directly and tangibly associated with the English Lake District. These are the recognition of harmonious landscape beauty through the Picturesque Movement; a new relationship between people and landscape built around an emotional response to it, derived initially from Romantic engagement; the idea that landscape has a value and that everyone has a right to appreciate and enjoy it; and the need to protect and manage landscape, which led to the development of the National Trust movement, which spread across many countries with a similar rights system. All these ideas that have derived from the interaction between people and landscape are manifest in the English Lake District today.'

The Committee summarised the Lake District as a genuine and authentic site of cultural and natural importance:

> 'As an evolving cultural landscape, the English Lake District conveys its Outstanding Universal Value not only through individual attributes but also in the pattern of their distribution amongst the 13 constituent valleys and their combination to produce an over-arching pattern and system of land use. The key attributes relate to a unique natural landscape which has been shaped by a distinctive and persistent system of agro-pastoral agriculture and local industries, with the later overlay of distinguished villas, gardens and formal landscapes influenced by the Picturesque Movement; the resulting harmonious beauty of the landscape; the stimulus of the Lake District for artistic creativity and globally influential ideas about landscape; the early origins and ongoing influence of the tourism industry and outdoor movement; and the physical legacy of the conservation movement that developed to protect the Lake District.

These comments echo the earlier recommendations of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) who stated that:

> '*The most defining feature of the region, which has deeply shaped the cultural landscape, is a long-standing and continuing agro-pastoral tradition.* The nomination dossier documents the early settlement of the area and the traces of the medieval agro-pastoral system that has continued until today. The farm pattern explains how the different features of the land were used and how the farming and grazing system developed over the centuries.'

And yet, a focus upon the romantic gaze in tourism, popular media and throughout the Lake District's pursuit of World Heritage status arguably glazes over the impact of fell farming which created the landscape that is celebrated:

> 'If you don't take on the hill farming thing and you just see it [from] a kind of post-1750 sort of romantic [perspective], then layers of culture from thereon, *the actual making of the place and landscape that was interpreted by writers and artists*, will actually just decline and will become, in a sense, dilapidated, you know, and *people won't know what they lost*.' (McCormick in Harrison and The OpenLearn Team, 2009 emphasis added).

McCormick emphasises here and elsewhere (2015, 2018) that a lack of acknowledgement and public understanding of the role in fell farming in creating and maintaining this landscape risks resulting in both a loss of that landscape's most celebrated qualities and the long-existing cultures of place which have been so central to its existence.

Influential #lakedistrict Instagrammers

To identify the two accounts which are examined in Chapter 5, I conducted online observations of Lake District-related social media accounts over several months (time aligned mostly with my time in the Lake District itself from May to September 2018), with a particular focus on Instagram, to see which accounts became apparent as influential in terms of their user engagement and authorial voice. This decision is further aided by quantitative evidence related to Lake District social media accounts: both @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders

among ten of the most popular accounts relating specifically to the Lake District. These accounts exemplify perspectives from what I argue are situated at divergent ends of the aesthetic ruralities in the #lakedistrict typology developed throughout the thesis. They embody contrasting aesthetics on a spectrum of ruralities, yet both have secured a continued and persuasive presence as 'influencers' within the Lake District on visual social media, and both have utilised their social media authority to materialise new ways of being in the landscape, as we will see in Chapter 5.

@herdyshepherd1 is the Instagram account belonging to James Rebanks, a Lake District farmer and author of bestselling memoir The Shepherd's Life: A Tale of the Lake District (2015). In May 2020, his Twitter account had over 120,000 followers and his Instagram profile had over 20,000 followers (Table 5.1). Since the release of his most recent memoir English Pastoral (2020), this number has risen dramatically once more: his Twitter has over 145,000 followers and his Instagram now has more than doubled in the past year, now with over 47,000 followers.[6] To comprehend how Rebanks has become an authentic presence as an influencer of the Instagram Lake District, it is important to look back at the history of his public work relating to Lake District placemaking. I aim to demonstrate here that Rebanks' Instagram influence comes indirectly from his influencer status developed through other means- most notably from his concurrent yet more substantive engagement with Twitter (earning him the moniker 'Twitter's Favourite Shepherd' (Moss, 2015)), which acted as a springboard for Rebanks' literary career. The Lakelanders are a group of photographers who post regular original photographs and share other users' images to their profile. Though the @thelakelanders profile was only set up in January 2017, they have amassed over 52,000 followers during the study period. As a group, @thelakelanders is not static- group members have changed from the founding members over time, and different members have their own styles and preferences for aesthetics and imagery, as we will see in Chapter 5. Both @herdyshepherd and the photographers behind @thelakelandsers were invited to be interviewed or collaborate on this study if they wished. Unfortunately, but understandably, both declined this invitation due to busy schedules, and so the analysis conducted in Chapter 6 is based on the Instagram datasets of both accounts and, in the case of @herdyshepherd,

[6] As of May 19th, 2021.

additional source material such as the authors own works, or interviews he has previously undertaken with pertinent reflections.

Being unable to directly discuss the account users' motivations and strategies for the creation and curation of their Instagram accounts could be seen to limit the research, where the examination of the accounts could be argued to rely on overly narrow empirical analysis, as, for instance, Turner has previously argued in relation to an overreliance on analysis of media text to in celebrity studies (2010). This argument is based on the concern that such analysis is restrictive in its approach and that textual analysis can sometimes be too descriptive, leading to a 'cyclical relationship between academia and the media' (2010, p.15). However, the wide range of methods employed in this thesis and for this analysis provide sufficient multidisciplinarity and critical engagement to negate these concerns from creating an insurmountable issue. Moreover, beyond the access issue incurred here, other challenges raised in celebrity studies such as 'getting beyond the sound bite' (Driessens, 2015, p. 200) are arguably mitigated by a close and critical reading of their own direct words and images as presented in Chapter 5.

A third case study account from the Lake District National Park Authority, @lakedistrictnpa, was also originally included in this thesis, because it represented what I wanted to argue was a 'middle ground' between the aesthetics and influence of @herdyshepherd and @thelakelanders. Aesthetically, rather than focusing on 'idyllic' or 'wild' configurations of the rural, which in Chapter 6 I show as the aesthetic conventions of @herdyshepherd and @thelandlanders respectively, @lakedistrictnpa was illustrative of a broader suite of countrysides, strategically working across the spectrum, as is perhaps to be anticipated of a public body account reflecting a more institutional perspective. I therefore categorised their types of imagery as 'diplomatic' and characterised their account as a form of 'uniform heritage', which reflected a tactful and more professional approach to curating an online #lakedistrict than is seen by the two private accounts which form Chapter 6. However, in writing up the chapter I found that the use of three accounts left the analysis too diluted and therefore opted to remove one case from the analysis in order to ensure a sufficiently deep and rigorous argument.

3.3 The hyperscene and the hyperseen: Digital Textures

The methodological approach for Chapter 5 takes inspiration from literatures on both affect and discourse in imagery to develop an analytical framework called digital textures. Digital textures are the holistic qualities through which we make sense of both the affective sensations and the narrative connections that we experience in relation to the hyperscene, through the hyperseen encounter with a social media image. This approach attempts to encapsulate the distinctively digital yet complex 'everyday human muddle' (Wetherell, 2013, p. 358) of how an image is sensed on social media both cognitively and bodily by the viewer. Whilst taking seriously the embodied nature of encountering things, I also aim to reflect on the intricate histories and narratives which are entwined in our beholding of the image almost instantaneously. The messy material and discursive sensitivities of this outlook follow from Haraway's notion of 'fingery eyes' through which we can, with 'haptic-optic touch', be at once in the presence of the many different historical, political and material processes which brought a given image onto our screen and into our palm (Haraway, 2007, p. 6).

Texture is briefly discussed by Margaret Wetherell in her endeavour to implore scholars of affect and (or) discourse to treat these two concepts equally, in recognition that they are 'entangled in the sense that embodied action (on a scale of intensity) tends to be bound up with [discourse] at some point in a flow of activity' (2013, pp. 358–360). She calls into question the efficacy of distinguishing affect as always 'beyond, below and past discourse' and draws on non-representational theory to argue that deliberately 'dividing affect from discourse creates a straitjacket for empirical work' in studies of affect (2013, p. 357).

Wetherell borrows the term from Sedgwick, who understands texture as a perceptive touch which is always replete with additional connotations beyond the physical experience of the texture itself:

> 'Texture is always, immediately, and de facto to be immersed in a field of active narrative hypothesizing, testing, and re-understanding of how physical properties act and are acted upon over time. To perceive texture is never only to ask or know What is it like? nor even just How does it impinge on me? Textural perception always explores two other questions as well: How did it get that way? and What could I do with it?... …I haven't perceived a texture until I've instantaneously hypothesized

> whether the object I'm perceiving was sedimented, extruded, laminated, granulated, polished, distressed, felted, or fluffed up. Similarly, to perceive texture is to know or hypothesize whether a thing will be easy or hard, safe or dangerous to grasp, to stack, to fold, to shred, to climb on, to stretch, to slide, to soak' (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 16).

Before we may even reach to touch the bodily qualities of a texture, we have already knowingly 'reached' out in some form, even if this reach is a cognitive stretch through memory to know how we may have experienced it before, and with this reaching we are already laden with existing presuppositions and understandings about how it might feel to make contact. In the instant moment we sense texture we are also making sense of texture. Importantly, this explanation of texture also offers an exceptional vocabulary for a study of images to help describe affective sensations. As an analytical toolkit, 'textures' provide a broad lexicon of articulations which can be immediately known and understood. The audience can then learn to be affected and utilise their own 'haptic-optic' touch to know what it means when something is described, for example, as soft and fluffy, as opposed to hard and sharp, and the terminology enables the audience to very effectively comprehend how the image has been perceived. Jansson further emphasises the sensory dimension of textures:

> 'A texture is like a fabric with a particular pattern and a particular feel—and thus something more than a text or a sign system. Textures support our sense of continuity and belonging, not only at the representational level, but also in a deeply embodied sense as we learn how to move and act in various settings.' (Jansson, 2013, p. 286)

Sedgwick goes on to argue that texture renders the polarised understandings between affect and discourse of who and what can have power as irrelevant:

> 'Even more immediately than other perceptual systems, it seems, the sense of touch makes nonsense out of any dualistic understanding of agency and passivity; to touch is always already to reach out, to fondle, to heft, to tap, or to enfold, and always also to understand other people or natural forces as having effectually done.' (2003, p. 16).

This passage further highlights the inextricable linkages between affect, as something done 'to' us as acquiescent bodies, and reminds us of the purposeful actions which have brought us to the moment of being affected. In choosing to pick up a smartphone, open Instagram

and scroll through images, we allow ourselves to be affected by #lakedistrict. This acknowledgment is not to diminish the significance of affect, rather it encourages us to observe the 'assemblages and articulations of practices' that a combined 'multimodal' approach can offer (Wetherell, 2013, p. 360).

Through digital textures, I attempt to make sense of or think through the Instagram Image with *an analytical approach which grasps both the representational narratives and the bodily affective qualities of #lakedistrict images*. Digital textures are a methodological tool for locating discourses of English nature in Instagram images of #lakedistrict and articulating the affective intensities generated by encountering images typical of these discourses. Put another way, digital textures help us to identify how the hyperscene #lakedistrict is experienced as hyperseen. We can examine digital textures at a variety of scales, and in both abstract, 'ex-situ' (visualisation) and original 'in-situ' (social media post) contexts. The analysis of in-situ and ex-situ digital textures is reflective of the synergistic interaction between larger scale digital or algorithmic analysis and hermeneutic close readings as outlined by Hayles (2012, p. 31).

To examine 'ex-situ' textures which are not immediately present, we must do some weaving of our own. This method thus follows Jansson's argument that 'textures do not appear at random; they materialize through certain spatial and temporal regularities and rhythms' (2013, p. 286). To weave these digital textures, we must turn to digital methods which will enable us to think with this vast array of digital objects (Rogers, 2013). Cultural Analytics visualisations are generated with ImageJ image processing software with the ImageMeasure and ImagePlot macros developed by the Software Studies Initiative (Manovich, 2012; Software Studies Initiative, 2013). ImageJ is opensource software available online, initially created by the US National Institute of Health (NIH) for imaging and analysing medical data, which enables users to examine and visualise image data. The ImageMeasure and ImagePlot are two macros from a series developed by the Software Studies Initiative for the purpose of cultural analytics (Software Studies Initiative, 2015). These tools enable us to digitally analyse and visualise thousands of images according to parameters set by the user. Through the use of these visualisation techniques, and in contrast to traditional methods of manual content analysis, images are assessed and arranged according to their digitally-affective affordances, their

luminous light and colour 'hyperseen, connective glow and flow' intensities (Rose and Willis, 2018).

To generate the 'ex-situ' visualisations of the #lakedistrict first utilised in Chapter 4, I began by downloading a 1 year scrape (1st July 2017 to 12 July 2018) of publicly available Instagram images which included the hashtag #lakedistrict. This full dataset of images with their associated metadata, including caption, date stamp, number of likes, and number of comments, were scraped for this thesis. This initial collection process resulted in 453,421 images. Due to the very high volume of images, the data was obtained through a professional online analytics organisation, Postchup (previously Tweetchup), which was one of many commercial organisations offering this service in 2018 (Costopoulou, Ntaliani and Ntalianis, 2019). The dataset when fully scraped was over 36GB of data. In order to download these images, due to the maximum number of files which can be contained within a single secure, encrypted Microsoft folder, 47 folders were created each containing around 9,000 images.

Following image retrieval, the next important step was to clean the dataset, ensuring that the images analysed in the thesis were relevant to the English Lake District. Accordingly, images relating to other 'Lake Districts' around the world were removed (see Appendix A.1 for a list of words used in reference to other geographical Lake Districts). This process created a dataset of 350,482 files. Additionally, all data in video format (mp4) were removed from the dataset, as they were incompatible with the ImageJ software and plugins for analysis and visualising. In total following cleaning, there were 319,559 relevant and compatible images.

The next stage was to organise the images into relevant samples for visualisation. This was achieved by analysing the captions of all relevant images for their use of hashtags and conducting content analysis on these hashtags. To explore dominant textures of the #lakedistrict, the most frequently used discursive hashtags accompanying the images were identified based on a quantitative count of hashtags in the captions of the 350,482 files related to the English Lake District. The images were first temporarily downloaded to a single folder and then organised and copied into folders to create samples. The list of the most frequent 100 hashtags is provided in Appendix A.2. Removing the two Geographical hashtags (#lakedistrict and #Cumbria), the following five most numerically popular hashtags (#nature, #mountains, #landscape, #hiking, #lakes) were used to create sample datasets. Additionally, a

stratified sample of every 10th image in chronological order was included. The code for scraping these samples into their own folders, ready for analysis, is shown in Appendix A.3.

Having organised the samples needed to generate the visualisations, the visualisations were created using ImageJ software with the ImageMeasure and ImagePlot macros. Macros are instructions which interact with software to transform data inputs, by replacing parts of the original software instructions with new commands they create a new mechanism for compiling or analysing data (Butterfield, Ngondi and Kerr, 2016).

First, ImageMeasure was used to quantify the median hue and median brightness of every image in the respective dataset. In the resulting datasets, these numbers were attributed to the name of each image file. Next, ImagePlot was used to 'map' each image on a visualisation, utilising the quantified hue and brightness of the image as coordinates for every image's location on a data axis. For every single image in the dataset, the ImageMeasure outputs of median hue and brightness are used as coordinates to then map a thumbnail version of the image onto the ImagePlot visualisation. The completed visualisations plot the Instagram images in the shape of a colour wheel, arranging images by their mean hue (colour) as the perimeter, and by their mean brightness (amount of light) as the radius from the centre. The visualisations are produced on a scale of 20,000 x 20,000 pixels, providing the researcher with the capability to 'zoom in' from the abstract, aggregate visualisation to images at original thumbnail size, and examine them in close detail in situ for content and composition. This process provides us with the capacity to conduct rich 'multi-scale readings' (Hochman and Manovich, 2013) of the #lakedistrict not only 'in-situ' at the locale of the Instagram platform itself, but ex-situ as newly categorised patterns emerge in new digitally-enabled contexts. Moreover, we can identify particular zones of commonality, described by Rose and Willis as 'affective territories' (Rose and Willis, 2018), within the visualisations where groupings of images contain similar 'flow and glow' properties are layered together.

In order to comprehensively examine the affective and discursive quality of these territories, archetypal images were identified as representative of these spaces of density and sparsity within the visualisations through a thorough iterative process of 'learning to be affected' (Latour, 2004). This was a process of many hours, days, and weeks spent zooming in and out of the visualisations, reflecting on which images *felt* as well as *looked* illustrative or made

significant examples of the 'territories' in which they were mapped on the visualisations. I recorded 'fieldnotes' of my observations, reflections and feelings when encountering the images within the visualisations, utilising a more holistic and interpretive approach to visual analysis. This method follows Saldaña's argument that

> "the researcher's careful scrutiny of and reflection on images, documented through field notes and analytic memos, generate language-based data that accompany the visual data. Ironically, we must use words to articulate our "take" on pictures and imagery. So any descriptors and interpretations we use for documenting the images of social life should employ rich, dynamic words." (2016, p. 57)

Prompts for these analytical reflections included: how similar (or dissimilar) is the image from others within the area of the visualisation? How is the image composed? How does the image composition impact my reaction to the image? Does it remind me of other #lakedistrict images? What are the key content elements of the image? What emotions does the image evoke? To what extent are the colours of the image consistent with the 'median' colour, or are there surprising, unsettling colours?

Following many weeks of sitting with many, many thousands of #lakedistrict images across the visualisations and recording my observations, I arranged the images which most effectively evoked the textures I had identified as collections presented in Image Plates. The analysis outlined in Chapter 4 details the common factors each Image Plate's arrangement which assist in structuring the analysis, where applicable. For instance, in Image Plate 1, where column C shows particular modes of framing a scene, or column F shows all images with dogs.

By drawing together the cultural analytics approaches of Manovich and Hochman, with the characterisation of territories also seen by Rose and Willis, as digital textures, Chapter 5 provides an archetypal digital ecologies approach which draws together innovative quantitative and qualitative methods to explore multiple dimensions of contemporary #lakedistrict imagery.

3.3 Instagramism as visual methodology

In Chapter 6, the analytical focus moves from the 'population' of #lakedistrict images on Instagram to images from two key influential accounts. To rigorously examine the way these two particular users have developed their own 'aesthetic' and 'authentic' versions of the #lakedistrict, it is necessary to examine their images together. Instagramism is a term utilised by Lev Manovich in his book 'Instagram and Contemporary Image' as a means to articulate the 'combination of a media form and particular content' (2017, p. 73) which some Instagram accounts exhibit. Manovich emphasises that the impact of these images is situated 'not [only] within histories of photography, design and visual culture […] but rather within the histories of social, economic and cultural ideologies and corresponding ways to conduct one's life. Something with *-ism*' (p. 73, original emphasis). The term is thus purposefully intended by Manovich to be analogous with modern art movements 'such as futurism, cubism, [and] surrealism', and refers to a specific style within some Instagram accounts which are imbued with a unique and stylised 'aesthetic', 'attitude', 'atmosphere' and 'feeling' (2017, pp. 75–6), an overall affect quite beyond sum of the account's images' parts.

When defining and differentiating Instagramism from other aesthetic genres and movements, Manovich outlines three common types of photographs which are evident on Instagram: casual, professional and designed (2017, p.42). Casual photos are best understood as a form of documentation: they are predominantly about the content of the photo. They follow many conventions of vernacular photography, rather than examples of 'good photography' and qualities such as colour, focus, tone, and composition are not as considered or controlled as they are in the other common photo types (2017, p.52). Their appearance as 'unpremeditated, unintentional [and] spontaneous' lends to types of 'snapshot aesthetics' (p.55) that are prevalent in candid Instagram photos. Professional images are not 'professional' in the sense that the photographers are formally trained or making a living from their camerawork, but in the sense that they follow the 'systemic rules' of 'good photography' which existed before Instagram and were codified into how-to books in the latter half of the 20th Century, such as symmetry, perspective, proper exposure, line orientations and balanced colours without any particular hue dominating the image (as we might see in the characteristic use of Instagram filters!) (Manovich, 2017, p.58-60).

Designed photos also maintain many of the basic tenets of modern photography, yet additionally contain many features of modern graphic design (2017, p.67) such as the preference for close-up images versus open landscapes, asymmetry over symmetry, or the favouring of a particular colour palette, emphasised in empty spaces within the image. Manovich explicitly brings this definition down, in part, to a focus within designed images on the 'designed environment, as opposed to nature' (2017, p.69). The analysis begins with a study of the types of photographs shared by the accounts. It is important to note that, in examining types of photos within these two profiles, there are some important inconsistencies in photo 'types' which also help us to explore the account's aesthetic and authenticity.

For Manovich, 'Instagramism' can only apply to the types of non-commercial lifestyle images which have emerged from a 'global design class' of content producers- a class defined by its 'visual voice' and use of Adobe Creative suite rather than its economic relation to the means of production (2017, p.95). He defines the Instagramism style in direct comparison with the influential lifestyle magazine 'Kinfolk' and indicates that these contemporary Instagrammers often practice what he calls 'poetic design' in explicit reference to the poetic realism movement in French cinema, in which films 'combine social cinema themes and settings with accentuated visual style', and 'present a stylised, dark and shadowy *mise-en-scene* that imbues them with an atmosphere of pessimism and doomed romance' (Kuhn and Westwell, 2020). However, within #lakedistrict, and specifically the two account examples explored within Chapter 6, I expand beyond the conventional 'global design class' of Kinfolk-style influencers Manovich studies to examine the ways that a #lakedistrict Instagramism is emerging; one which is influenced by, and is influencing other users to replicate, enduring notions of romanticism, whilst also establishing new #lakedistrict aesthetic traditions unique to social media.

Manovich also emphasises that images are not viewed in isolation, and that, when viewed in an Instagram gallery, images appear together. The mood established by the *composition* of things in images, or of a collective of images in a grid, can change the focus and meaning of the images from how they are viewed separately. This composition, I refer to as curation. 'Today, every user of networked technologies is involved in some form of curating' (Tyżlik-Carver, 2017, p. 3). In this post-curatorial turn, curating has become a democratised and 'daily

practice of displaying, linking, posting, re-blogging, commenting, categorising that takes place non-stop on many social media platforms and is performed by its users' (2017, p. 3) where to take a picture and post that to your Instagram page often involved a mode of post-human curating, a 'speculative engagement with software' not only in considering the way your image is presented, but how will be made visible, or indeed hyperseen, by algorithms within the myriad galleries, news feeds and screens upon which it will feature the moment it is posted online.

To curate in these online spaces is therefore a 'strategic alliance' or 'co-curation' between humans and algorithms, where the human curator utilises their intellectual abilities for 'contextualising, interpreting, reflecting, sensing out, imagining, criticising and inserting humour' in contrast to the automated tasks of the software (Dekker and Tedone, 2019, p. 7). Within a single account's Instagram grid, each image, viewed individually in the first analysis, is also viewed in terms of its *relationship* to surrounding images. This 'curated' impact of the images when encountered together thus returns full circle to Manovich's Instagramism, where he argues:

> *'we have to remember that in an Instagram gallery interface, any image always appears next to others. Look at the selection of six images shared [by user shown in Figure 3.1]. It shows that the meaning of a particular photo in Instagram changes depending what photos are around it in the user's gallery'*(2017, p.77).

Manovich demonstrates this through a simple collection of six images from a single user (Figure 3.2) as they are posted on Instagram, demonstrating that three images of a coffee cup, mobile phone and fruit basket viewed individually would be 'about things', but when viewed altogether on the user's Instagram grid alongside three pictures of a meadow, the pictures of the coffee, phone and fruit become more 'about *the mood established* by the three other photos of the flowers in the field' (2017, p.77).



Figure 3. 2: Lev Manovich's Example of 'Instagramism'

In developing an analytic Instagramism, I acknowledge that neither of the accounts which are examined in Chapter 6 meets the criteria set out for how Manovich's Instagramism/Kinfolk or poetic design images look. Instead, I utilise the characteristics which Manovich provides in defining Instagramism to develop an analytical framework through which to explore what particular #lakedistricts are generated by powerful actors on Instagram through the 'combination of a media form and particular content' (2017, p. 73). This analytical framework of Instagramism as methodology explores and evaluates the way @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders construct scenes within their Instagram grid which convey a particular atmosphere, aesthetic, and holistic sense of *their* #lakedistrict. Instagramism is thus utilised as a series of prompts, the elements of a mise-en-scène which enable me to articulate and analyse their imagery as always situated within its wider context on the grid and on the screen. Having ascertained and characterised the accounts, I compare and evaluate the aesthetics and authenticities of their Instagram images by 'mapping' the stylised curation of an authentic, digital #lakedistrict aesthetics developed by these two unique profiles. This 'mapping' is conducted along two critical axes: influence (y) and aesthetic (x) (see Figure 3. 3).

The vertical axis of influence draws upon the work of O'Meara (2019) to characterise and locate the levels, values, and power of visibility which are ascertained by the case study accounts, evaluating the influential capacity of their #lakedistricts. At the top of the diagram, an 'influencer' is reflective of a very high level of online visibility and subsequent influence in online spaces, as corresponding features of their high levels of followers and engagement. In contrast, 'obscurity' is reflective of an account with little or no influence on other social media users, having potentially very few or no followers and subsequent communications with other users.

The horizontal axis of aesthetic in Chapter 6 draws upon and further develops the aesthetic, textured dimensions of rurality examined in Chapter 5. The horizontal axes polarises two broad rural imaginaries on a spectrum on which the Instagram #lakedistrict is produced as an authentic place by these accounts: the 'rural idyll' and the 'rural wilderness'. The horizontal dimensions of these figures illustrated two other well-known rural dichotomies: the ordinary/sublime and the personal/objective. The 'ordinary' depicts everyday countryside exploits and practices, while the 'sublime' represents spectacular and dramatic landscape elements. Personal authenticity referred to an individual's subjective experience of a landscape, shaped by personal memories and unique viewpoints, whereas objective authenticity was associated with more formalised or detached representations of the landscape.

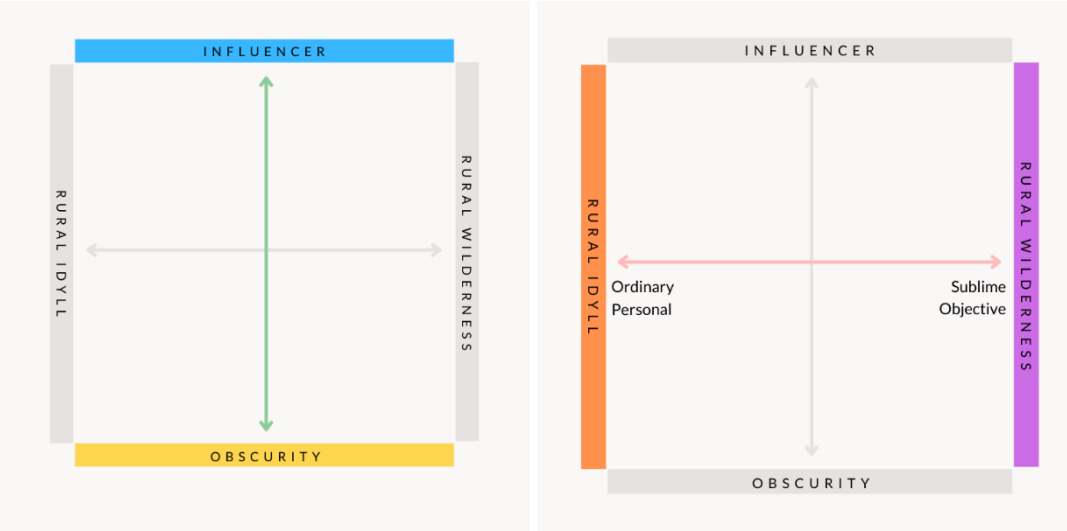


Figure 3. 3: Two axes of Authenticity in an Instagram #lakedistrict

Drawing together the work of Manovich with the rich literature explored in Chapter 5 on influence, aesthetics and authenticity, Chapter 6 utilises this mapping framework to ask questions of the two case study profiles, @thelakelanders and @herdyshepherd1, about their own stylised curation of an authentic, digital #lakedistrict aesthetic. These questions are:

1. What are the 'types' of images predominant in the grid and how does this impact our perception of the user and the #lakedistrict within the grid?

This initial basis of the analysis draws on Manovich's three common types of photograph evident on Instagram: Casual, Professional and Designed (Manovich, 2017) to characterise the images shared in the case studies. Where, for Manovich, the style of Instagramism is marked only by designed photographs, I use this categorisation to examine the extent to which the type of photograph can enable Instagram users to generate authenticity and mood within their own grid.

2. How are encounters with the #lakedistrict landscape *performed* as authentic within the grid?

In this section, I examine the way these accounts make visible their own authentic *relationship* to place, the authentic *practices* of place, and their relationships with other authentic 'locals'. There is a growing body of work examining the ways that authenticity is established, aesthetically portrayed, and performed through the making visible of relationships between both users and places, and users with other people (and nonhuman animals) on Instagram. In this section, I amend and apply Olive's (2015b) analytical framework to examine the way these accounts make visible their own authentic *relationship* to place, the authentic *practices* of place, and their relationships with other authentic 'locals'.

3. How is the authenticity of the account's #lakedistrict aesthetic *curated* within the user's grid?

'Today, every user of networked technologies is involved in some form of curating' (Tyżlik-Carver, 2017). In this post-curatorial turn, curating has become a democratised and 'daily practice of displaying, linking, posting, re-blogging, commenting, categorising that takes place non-stop on many social media platforms and is performed by its users' (Tyżlik-Carver, 2017), where to take a picture and post that to your Instagram page often involved a mode of

post-human curating, a 'speculative engagement with software' not only in considering the way your image is presented, but how will be made visible, or indeed hyperseen, by algorithms within the myriad galleries, news feeds and screens upon which it will feature the moment it is posted online. Through this analysis, I will focus upon the character of the accounts' own grid curation.

Within a single account's Instagram grid, each image is also viewed in terms of its *relationship* to surrounding images. This 'curated' impact of the images when encountered together thus returns full circle to Manovich's Instagramism, where he argues that '*the meaning of a particular photo in Instagram changes depending [upon] what photos are around it in the user's gallery*' (Manovich, 2017). He demonstrates this through the simple collection of six images from a single user (shown in Figure 3.2) that are posted on Instagram, demonstrating that three images of a coffee cup, mobile phone and fruit basket viewed individually would be 'about things', but when viewed altogether with the meadow pictures become 'about *the mood established* by the three other photos of the flowers in the field' (2016, p.77). In this section, then, I examine the way that authenticity is established through the collective visual impact of a users' Instagram grid.

In returning to Geismar's conceptualisations of Instagram as archive, chapter 5 will explore how users' grids are *more than* the sum of their parts as component images, and 'more than just representations of their makers and users; they recursively reflect the epistemologies, classifications, and political economy of this archival infrastructure which itself plays a constituent role in Instagram's dominant aesthetic conventions.' (2017, p. 332). We will focus upon the slower and more cognitive 'human' curatorial space of the accounts' own grid space, and examine the ways that authenticity is established through the dynamic, collective visual impact of a users' Instagram grid.

4. How do the aesthetics reflect features of the hyperscene ruralities of English Nature in the #lakedistrict first examined in Chapter 5?

3.4 iPads, image, and unseen #lakedistricts

Following the more desk-based methods of collection and analysis present in the first 'half' of the thesis, for Chapter 7 the research methods take a marked turn towards an aperturing of alternative, unseen visions of the #lakedistrict, those of the upland hill farming families whose flocks of Herdwick sheep have become a cultural emblem of the region. McCormick (McCormick in Harrison and The OpenLearn Team, 2009; 2015, 2018) has highlighted that without wider acknowledgement and public understanding of fell farming's vital role in shaping and sustaining the Lake District, we risk losing not only the landscape's most celebrated qualities but also the deep-rooted cultures of place that have defined it for generations. This concern is particularly significant given that the Lake District's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its *cultural landscape* explicitly recognises Lakeland's agropastoral traditions as practices of outstanding value to our shared world culture and to the stewardship of landscapes of global importance.

Having detailed how existing #lakedistricts on Instagram are consumed and produced by publics and powerful voices, Chapter 7 explores how the #lakedistrict of the everyday fell farmer is still 'hidden' (Hammett, 2012, p. 169) from popular discourse, and examines how methods of aperturing might help to bring these unseen perspectives into the light.

Despite the number of #lakedistrict images almost trebling over the course of this study, and an increased use of social media by farmers, upland farmers are still not typical Instagram users. For farming more broadly, a median industry age of 60, with a significant portion over 65, (DEFRA *et al.*, 2018, p. 19) , lies in sharp contrast with the largest Instagram user group, aged 25-34 (NapoleonCat, 2021). Despite this demographic gap, there has been an increasing use of social media by the farming community to share experiences and promote farming. Riley and Robertson (2021) apply the concept of 'working out loud', following Sergi and Bonneau (2016), to demonstrate how farming is shared on Twitter. This trend includes organised initiatives like #Farm24 and social media events or forums initiated by farming media and corporations such as #AgriChat (Mills *et al.*, 2019, p. 196).

Various rural publications have also highlighted the presence of farmers on social media. Farmers Weekly has previously provided practical advice for farmers on using social media to

improve the industry's image, while also addressing the abuse faced by farmers online (Henderson, 2021), and Country Living magazine has promoted popular farmers who engage the general public with light-hearted content, featuring a range of farming perspectives from hobby farmers to conventional dairy and arable farmers (2020). This existing research also focuses on high-profile farming accounts, with already-existing influence, rather than making a direct intervention and increasing farmer capacity to participate in online understandings of their industry and the places they live, which this research seeks to achieve: despite the growing online coverage of farming practices, rural affairs in the UK are still seen as a 'niche interest' in mainstream media (Shirley, 2020, p. 277). Additionally, both existing research and popular media often overlook the connection *between* farmers, their work, their animals, and the place-based aspects of their practices and identities. For those who consistently engage with social media, farmer preferences for different platforms continues to vary and evolve: anecdotally, in a group interview, some farmers contrasted their perception of Instagram as a 'comfort blanket', a place of support and camaraderie among their peers, with Twitter (now 'X') which they found to be 'hard and nasty place'.

Participatory research is 'done *by* or *with* insiders of a community, rather than *to* or *on* them. Traditional models of PR usually follow the steps of engaging communities/ participants, identifying issues and goals, gathering data and interpreting data, and disseminate findings.' (Dierckx *et al.*, 2021). Photovoice (Wang and Burris, 1994, 1997; Wang, 1997) is a participatory [and] action-based method which has been employed prolifically across the social sciences since its inception. Its many benefits as a more collaborative approach include promoting the dignity of participants, and enabling research as a means to advocate for less-powerful populations, highlighting the continued need to address inequalities (Bulla and Steelman, 2016, p. 1109). The Photovoice method, originally done using disposable cameras, enables participants to visually document their perceptions and concerns. The images can be used to generate critical discussions about alternative knowledges and perceptions of issues. In recent years, Photovoice methods have utilised digital cameras and eventually, discrete forms of social media to capture participants' views. Several recent studies have utilised digital media with Photovoice, in particular to engage with younger people in their research (Yi-Frazier *et al.*, 2015; Volpe, 2019). Volpe has conceptualised the use of Photovoice within the realm of visual social media, and specifically Instagram as *Digital Diaries* (Volpe, 2019). Young Indian

women shared images from their phones with her during discussions about how they might take images which prompt them to think about their identity (Volpe, 2019, pp. 363–4).

Photovoice has also been used in studies of farming, to understand perceptions and representations of climate change on small family farms in North Carolina (Bulla and Steelman, 2016), and as an emotional geographies method for giving voice to the experiences of women farmers in Australia through a project on Facebook (Baker *et al.*, 2021). Baker *et al* demonstrate the ways that photovoice can show how emotion in agriculture is linked to landscape: 'text, images, and colours of farm life are interwoven with the geography of the self, emphasizing how emotion and place are part of identities and memories' (2021, p. 6).

Introducing @fellsfarmers



Figure 3. 4: Approximate locations of @fellsfarmers families in the Lake District

@fellsfarmers is a group of six farming families who live across the Lake District National Park (see Figure 3. 4). The criteria for inclusion in this research was farming families with hefted hill flocks of Herdwick sheep. Beyond this, an ability to cope with me following them around for days at a time and an openness and curiosity about my research were additional essential features not formalised in my research plan prior to the commencement of fieldwork! My approach for locating and selecting the farmers hinged on attending as many farming events

as possible during my pilot study, reading auction mart and agricultural show reports on sheep sales and competitions in the area (to ensure I approached farmers with Herdwicks as opposed to another breed), and knocking on the doors of farmhouses I found at the end of long tracks, journeying around the area on my first visit. Through this approach of going out to the places where farmers are, as opposed to inviting those already conversant in digital communication about landscape and agriculture, such as @herdyshepherd1, I aimed to reach farmers whose views were not yet being shared in online spaces. As such, the families in @fellsfarmers varied widely in terms of their use of digital media such as Instagram, from casual personal accounts for two of the younger participants, to not at all for all the others. Nonetheless, there are remarkably close relationships among the fell farmers I worked with. They are active participants in local shows and shepherd meets I attended, and as multigenerational farming families in a relatively small community of hill farmers, they have known each other very well for a long time. This strong sense of community and shared cultural practices, particularly in breeding Herdwick Sheep, created a cohesive group. The aim of the study was to identify how these traditional hill farmers understood and perceived the Lake District, and their close-knit relationships and shared experiences provided a unified perspective for the analysis that the second half of this thesis seeks to explore.

Having spent several weeks during the pilot study trying to familiarise myself with the valleys, common family names, and the sheep, it was upon my return to the Lake District in Spring 2018 when, to recruit the families who would generate the @fellsfarmers data for the following year, I needed to move from planning into action and develop a strong rapport with the individuals who would bring this work to life. I followed up with many of the contacts I had made in 2017, and visited a lot of families for informal interviews to explain my research more thoroughly, provide a new copy of my information sheet and to get to know them. I sought a more collaborative approach to generating data with research participants, rather than a more passive analysis of 'subjects' (Glesne, 1989, p. 47), and as such I dedicated a lot of time to informal processes of observant participation initially, rather than requesting interviews or a significant commitment to data collection at an early stage in my fieldwork. This meant that for several weeks the bulk of my fieldwork was chatting at auction marts, at sheep fairs, at kitchen tables, and in livestock sheds, and with my notebook away. Building trust was a process of showing willing to get stuck in, to contribute rather than to only observe and extract.

Additional strategies which I employed in order to assist in building research relationships included utilisation of my own farming background and shared vernacular as a means to form trust with farmers- it is perhaps impossible to definitively identify the extent and impact of a familiar northern accent, of discussing 'yows' instead of 'ewes', and 'tups' instead of 'rams', but it is important to recognise the privilege these shared dialect can have on access, and to be responsible with the trust that it engenders. The final six families that became participants in this research are therefore in many ways self-selecting: they were those most enthusiastic to participate and those with whom I was most successful in establishing a rapport which lasted the length of the study, and indeed has lasted beyond.

The Cook[7] family manage two owner-occupied hill farms in the Western lakes. One farm runs a more commercial enterprise with crossbreeds of sheep and cattle alongside the Herdwicks, while the other focuses solely on Herdwick sheep. This traditional family has 13 recorded generations at the larger farm. The iPad users are a young couple in their twenties with two small children, who are accustomed to using social media. The older generation, in their sixties, also shows interest in the research and worked with the younger couple but did not sher the images directly. It was to their smaller farm that I returned to conduct my fieldwork with Sheepcam!

The Williamson family is a couple in their forties with three young children, ranging from primary to secondary school age. They ran a tenant farm on a 15-year tenancy owned by the National Trust, with mostly fell rights, and were setting up a second, smaller but more commercial farm in the valley bottom that they owned when I conducted this fieldwork. Charlotte used the iPad throughout this research to take and share images, while her husband Matthew, who initially did not even text when this research began, later took a keen interest in social media.

The Grainger family are a couple in their early forties, Mark and Sally. Mark's father and uncle farmed there for many years on a multi-generational National Trust tenancy. This traditional hill farm focuses solely on Herdwick sheep. Uncle Fred, now in his late seventies, still helps on the farm when he can. They also rent some land on the valley edge through a private tenancy.

[7] All names are pseudonyms

Sally uses the iPad, while Mark, who was initially less inclined to take images, later established his own Instagram page and regularly updated it with pictures of his flocks.

The Jones family, Harry and Alice, are in their late forties, and operate a large owner-occupied farm in the south-central Lakes with significant fell rights and good ground in the valley bottom. They run hill sheep and some commercial cattle. The farm is ran by Harry, whilst Alice runs a camping site as a method of diversification.

The Salt family are a couple with two sons in their early twenties. One of the sons, Ben, volunteered to exclusively use the iPad and contribute to the research. The sons are taking on an increasing amount of work in partnership with their father, and each have a small flock of their own sheep alongside the family's main flock. Their grandfather also used to farm here, at one of the largest hill farms in the Lake District, with a significant hill flock of Herdwick sheep. The farm is a tenant farm owned by a water company. Since the research, however, the farm has been taken back in hand by the water company, forcing the family to move to a farm outside of the Lake District.

The Shepherd family is a couple in their sixties on a multi-generational National Trust tenancy. This relatively small farm has significant hill rights and is a very traditional hill farm with mostly hill sheep and a small group of cattle. Although there is another potential generation with rights to the tenancy, there is no following generation to take on the tenancy, so the couple is concerned about the future of their farm. Penny uses the iPad. She has no previous experience with social media and is initially very nervous but grows significantly in confidence over the course of the research, as Chapter 7 will discuss.

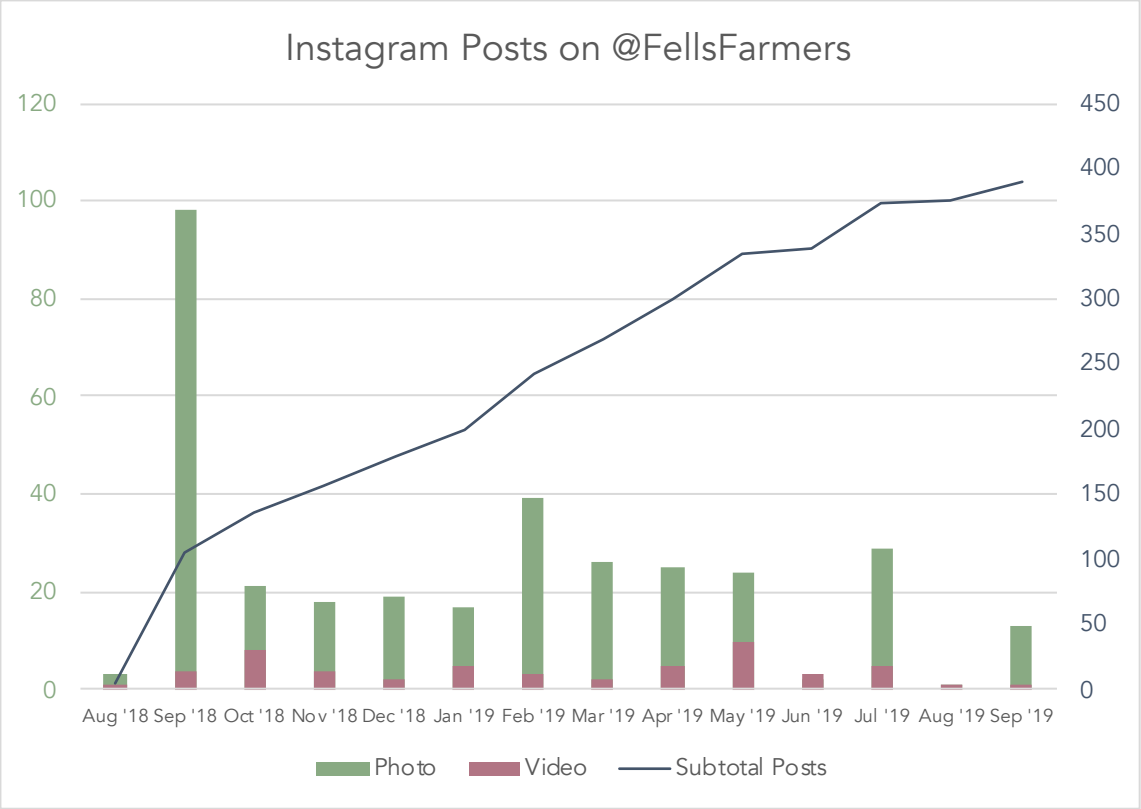


Figure 3. 5: @fellsfarmers' Instagram posts

Since the first post on 31st August 2018, @fellsfarmers has shared 266 posts to Instagram, with 335 images and 54 videos[8]. This totalled 389 units of visual data. Figure 3.5 illustrates that many of these posts occurred during the first six weeks, at the end of my period of ethnographic fieldwork in 2018. I decided to leave the iPads with the farmers as there had been a delay in accessing the devices, and consequently I continued to share the images that farmers added to the iPads for as long as they were providing content. This lasted, at varying levels, for one year. We also see in Figure 3.5 a slight increase in image sharing during the spring, at lambing time, and again when the sheep are gathered for clipping in July.

As previously discussed, participatory visual methods to elicit alternative perceptions of English rural landscapes, including the Lake District, have been used to great effect by Pollard (1987), Yarwood (2005), and Tolia-Kelly (2007). Contemporary research practitioner groups, such as the recently established PLACE collective, continue to utilise visual arts and digital

[8] Some posts share multiple images (known as 'carousels'), for instance where a series of very similar of closely related images were uploaded together.

media, among other experimental mediums, as a means to elaborate, prompt dialogue and engage with rural issues in and around the Lake District (Fraser and Fraser, 2021).

@FellsFarmers has sought to explore these matters together, through a photovoicing approach to farming, social media and the Lake District landscape. This process began in 2017 and has involved the need for much flexibility and adaptation to reconcile complex issues, from digital infrastructures to participant knowledge and confidence, resulting in an experimental and evolving methodology. Below, I outline key moments and methodological evolutions within the reflexive and reactive process of data generation in @FellsFarmers, structured around three themes: *mediation*, the *multidirectional*, and *messiness*.

Mediation

A key issue in my research design, to enable farmers to continually share images about their everyday #lakedistrict, was how to get the images. The Lake District is a large place, and I needed these farming families to be able to quickly and easily send the images to me that they wanted to share online. The research was digital, and so was the solution. The processes of image upload and synchronisation on today's smartphones and tablets appear, to the everyday user, as smooth and simple. Cloud-based storage solutions, simultaneously alleged as being both 'everywhere and nowhere' (Furlong, 2021, p. 190) have enabled seamless automated sharing between devices, particularly between devices of the same brand or operating system. Using a set of seven iPads, each with the same Apple ID, enabled farmers in disparate valleys to share their images within seconds, as soon as the device is connected to Wi-Fi. Sounds simple.

The principal issue with my photovoice research design was mediation. I always shared the images online, not the farmers. Farmers often do not share images on social media due to indifference, unfamiliarity, time constraints, confidence, and limited digital access, especially in sparsely populated areas where long-term, in-person relationships are highly valued (Townsend *et al.*, 2016). To encourage participation and reduce the burden over a relatively long term (12 months), farmers were only asked to take the photographs and offer captions, not to share them online. Image provision was inconsistent, leading to periods of few or many images. This pattern of scarcity or excess of images created a necessity for editorial decision-

making on the part of the researcher, making decisions about which images to post first following an influx, and which to use later when fewer images were uploaded. Though the qualitative researcher is always to some extent an instrument of mediation between data input and output (Migliorini and Rania, 2017, p. 136), is facilitation needs to be carefully measured against the subsequent effects on the power relations between participants, researcher, and other stakeholders, to ensure that the Photovoicing still has an empowering and awareness-raising purpose for participants (Kessi *et al.*, 2019, p. 355).

A conscious choice was made to allow participants to use the iPads as their own, and to offer relative freedom in how often and in what ways farmers would contribute images to the project. It was of vital importance that due to the project's longevity over several months, the practice of image-generation was not made onerous and remained an enjoyable and interesting activity for participants. It was important that the farmers felt that they 'would have a choice in how they wanted to capture and document the people, places, and things that were significant to them' (following McIntyre, 2003, p. 53). However, there were implications for the research from an institutional perspective, where the original devices we were meant to use were pre-configured with limited resources by a University Department. These devices were branded for a university department, with restricted applications and settings. It was a process of ongoing negotiation with the University to secure devices which the participants could treat as their own instead of iPads configured for minimal access, in such a way that the device might seem like a 'foreign' object in the participants' homes. The central aim here was to normalise the iPads as household devices, for web browsing etc, as is the accessible and participatory nature of devices used for social media: people can use the devices in an everyday manner and still communicate with a wider audience. The aim was to help them to feel comfortable and regularly pick up the devices and see how their images are being received. Future research into digital photovoicing with participants who are unfamiliar with smart devices will do well to anticipate in advance some of the institutional barriers which can arise from administrative approaches to technology.

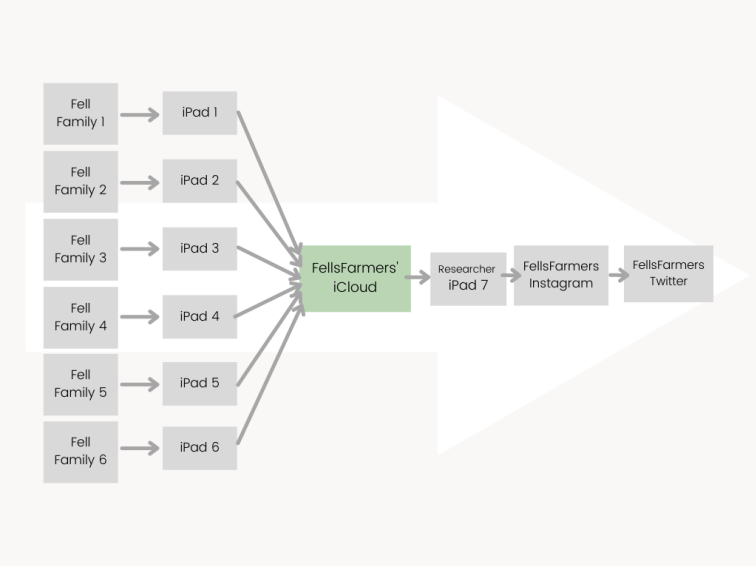


Figure 3. 6: Initial conceptions of digital photovoicing

During my initial research design, I (perhaps naively) outlined this approach for obtaining images from farmers as a relatively straightforward, linear process of sharing, where farmers would be able to input their images to the iPads, which would automatically synchronise and share the images with the researcher. Figure 3. 6 shows this linear interpretation, as it was presented in my transfer of status: each family has a device and shares photos to the cloud, which are then shared with the researcher, who shares them on the social media accounts. Images were initially aimed to be shared in three ways: a) between farmers through the shared Apple-ID function across the iPads, b) onto Instagram and c) onto Twitter.

The multidirectional

What this initial conceptualisation failed to take into account was the *multidirectional* form of cloud synchronisation. Images go out, but they come back in too. Images did not only head to the researcher, but they also circulated amongst the other farmers. The cloud was not only a destination but a source, images *circulated* between the farmers when their devices synchronised. Figure 3. 7 shows how I better understood this process in the field, with the iPads as all *within* the cloud, and the information sharing as moving to, from and between the farming families. This image sharing was highlighted for me in the ways that families began to comment on the images one another had shared: 'seeing the set up at 'Kinburn', it's like stepping back in time 200 years!' Luke observed, having seen another family's images on the

iPad. The contributions of these families and their image content is explored in more detail in Chapter 4, but in terms of research design these comments highlight that the cloud infrastructures' multidirectional capacity enabled a more intimate *scale* of image-sharing than my methodology had previously envisaged: a sharing *between* the farmers produced through a new space of making visible, an automated and synchronised semi-social network of images between participants.

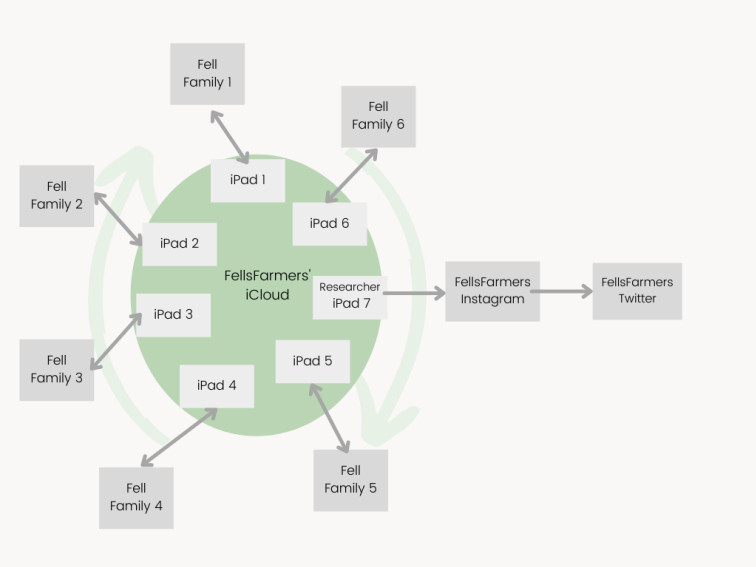


Figure 3. 7: Reconfiguring digital photovoicing

And yet still, this approach was not enough. The iPads were necessitated as a means to provide all of the families with a device capable of the automated synchronisation, and so that all farmers could equally see what the others were producing. But iPads are clumsy, they do not easily fit into farmers' pockets while they jump on a quad bike or work with sheep. They were left on kitchen tables while farmers were out in their #lakedistrict. More and more, I found the farmers asking if they could send me the images through other means, from their phones, if they had them, via messages. Thus, alternative and improvised mechanisms for contributing to @fellsfarmers were established ad-hoc, illustrated through the additional processes of contribution in Figure 3. 8.

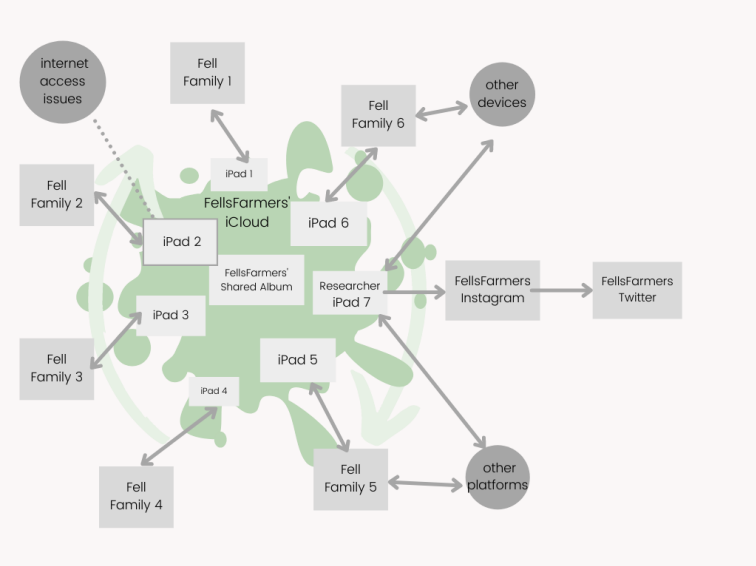


Figure 3. 8: Messy conceptions of digital photovoicing

Furthermore, issues with poor broadband severely affected farmers' ability to synchronise their devices. One farmer became so frustrated she almost gave up on the project. These issues resulted in farmers sending their devices to the homes of other family members, or taking them to work to synchronise, meaning image uploads were often delayed and fractured. There were times when farmers were thus obstructed from seeing and being in the live, synchronised iCloud, a digital barrier illustrated through the hard grey lines around iPad 2 in Figure 3. 8. Farmers' capacity to contribute to and access their place within the cloud was therefore uneven and fractured, illustrated through the disordered shape of the cloud in Figure 3. 8. Further, by showing varying sizes of the iPads within the Cloud, I aim to illustrate that there was variation in the number of images contributed by different farming families, and so their images were taking up more or less storage within the iCloud space.

Messiness

Together, these evolving issues and impromptu solutions are conceptualised as a messy and unfolding research process (Mellor, 2001), wherein the theoretically simple and automated processes of cloud sharing are brought back to earth in sociality, materiality and territoriality (Furlong, 2021, p. 191), from human digital literacy and confidence to the very mountains which stand between farmers and a broadband connection. We are reminded that clouds 'grow out of [and rely upon] older networks' of digital infrastructures (Furlong, 2021, p. 192), and that the

world and our research process are 'inevitably messier than our theories of it' (Shaw, DeLyser and Crang, 2015, p. 212).

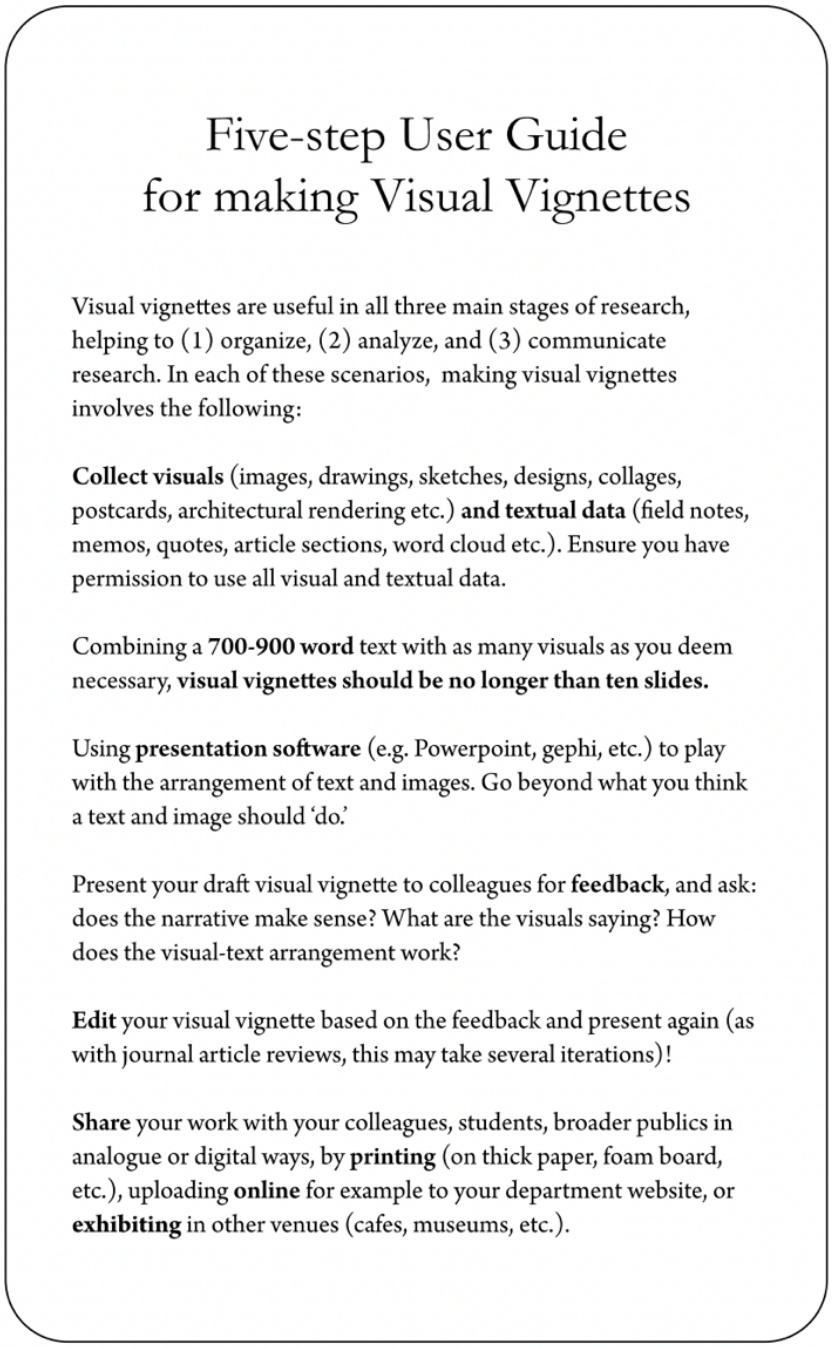
3.5 Bringing light and life to everyday #lakedistricts: visual vignettes

In the final substantive chapter of this thesis, I draw upon the method of visual vignettes to simultaneously make sense of, analyse, and present the findings of my time spent with the families of @fellsfarmers between 2017 and 2019. Through a series of miniature and interrelated visual ethnographic portraits, I draw together key insights and observations from my ethnographic work in the Lake District with the images taken and commentaries made by some of the farming families that I worked with during my data collection. Together, these elements of text and imagery are presented as a series of 'visual vignettes' (Gugganig and Douglas-jones, 2021) of alternative #lakedistricts.

Visual Vignettes are a method of organisation, analysis and representation of research developed by Mascha Gugganig and Rachel Douglas Jones (Figure 3. 9), which encourages and celebrates innovative, experimental approaches for combining text and imagery in academic work. For Gugganig and Douglas-Jones, to create visual vignettes is 'to sort through and select images of significance, to explore what makes a difference' (2021, p. 227) and to effectively combine these images with words in a way which generates meaningful analysis that is accessible to participants as, for a visual vignette, 'audience matters' (2021, p.231). This chapter is thus both about deliberately making present the stories of @fellsfarmers

and presenting them in a manner which is accessible to both participants and academics, in line with the participatory ethos which underpins the second half of this thesis.

The Chapter will explain how comprehending @fellsfarmers' images through the lenses of the aesthetic and embodiment enables us to see more of their lived reality within the #lakedistrict and highlights the fundamentally different modes of engaging with the landscape by @fellsfarmers versus the other sources this thesis has examined. I argue that these visual vignettes bring to light previously unseen perspectives and performances of fell farming in



Five-step User Guide for making Visual Vignettes

Visual vignettes are useful in all three main stages of research, helping to (1) organize, (2) analyze, and (3) communicate research. In each of these scenarios, making visual vignettes involves the following:

Collect visuals (images, drawings, sketches, designs, collages, postcards, architectural rendering etc.) **and textual data** (field notes, memos, quotes, article sections, word cloud etc.). Ensure you have permission to use all visual and textual data.

Combining a **700-900 word** text with as many visuals as you deem necessary, **visual vignettes should be no longer than ten slides.**

Using **presentation software** (e.g. Powerpoint, gephi, etc.) to play with the arrangement of text and images. Go beyond what you think a text and image should 'do.'

Present your draft visual vignette to colleagues for **feedback**, and ask: does the narrative make sense? What are the visuals saying? How does the visual-text arrangement work?

Edit your visual vignette based on the feedback and present again (as with journal article reviews, this may take several iterations)!

Share your work with your colleagues, students, broader publics in analogue or digital ways, by **printing** (on thick paper, foam board, etc.), uploading **online** for example to your department website, or **exhibiting** in other venues (cafes, museums, etc.).

Figure 3. 9: A five-step user guide for making a Visual Vignette (from Gugganig & Douglas Jones, 2021)

the #lakedistrict. I conclude by considering what this aperturing tells us about the politics of seeing the #lakedistrict through Instagram. Aperturing, or shedding light on, the everyday working practices of @fellsfarmers is the crux of not only what this project hoped to achieve on Instagram, but an apt motif for the myriad different ways of becoming seen that @fellsfarmers have realised over the six years I have been working with them.

Aperturing, as concept and as visual vignette method, characterises how imperfect attempts at utilising the purported 'democratic potential' of social media (Collins, Marichal and Neve, 2020) might be realised, and also embraces the increasing combined and complicated blurring between image and text. Since the data collection from this research was finished, Instagram's continued move towards 'stories' and 'reels' has highlighted and enabled this entangling by facilitating the addition of text, gifs, and smaller images over existing posts in 'Story' format. It can perhaps be argued that Instagram is moving towards a platform filled with visual vignettes, always blending imagery and text together, further qualifying this experimental method as a suitable format for the presentation of @fellsfarmers' stories. Aperturing can provide a fresh lens (pun intended) for understanding the imperfect democratic potential of social media platforms, focusing on how these platforms can both broaden and constrain the ways users see and engage with the world.

3.6 Reconciling Typologies for Digital Ecologies: Hyperscenes of an Instagram #lakedistrict

The development of typologies, of groupings and ideals based on common features or archetypes, has been a cornerstone of much qualitative research in the social sciences (Stapley, O'Keeffe and Midgley, 2022). The development of these categories is in some ways at odds with approaches to rejecting simplified binaries in studies such as those outlined at the start of this chapter. Taffel (2019) has argued in favour of embracing the complexities of digital entanglements, considering also the affordances of digital mediums themselves alongside the immediate content presented to users of digital media. Digital Ecologies, an analytical framework proposed by Turnbull *et al,* emphasises 'the inseparability of the material and experiential qualities' (2023, p. 4) of digital technologies for research which considers how digitisation mediates and elicits new ways of encountering more-than-human worlds. Such

research, then, into intimately contextual, temporal, and material digital encounters of landscape, such as the encounters of #lakedistricts within this thesis, are not easily rendered into neat characterisations.

Given these challenges, the typology of hyperscenes I propose seeks not to impose rigid categories but rather to provide an analytical framework that remains fluid and adaptable. In line with Digital Ecologies, this typology must account for the interdependence of content, digital affordances, and material experiences. The hyperscene #lakedistrict is shaped not only by the digital representations of place but by the algorithmic, aesthetic, and temporal dynamics that influence how these landscapes are consumed and experienced. While the hyperscene typology offers a way to organise and understand these representations, it is inherently dynamic, designed to reflect the plurality and contextual specificity of digital landscape encounters. This approach bridges the gap between the need for analytical clarity (through categorisation) and the reality of complex, entangled digital experiences.

Rather than reducing digital landscape encounters to simplified archetypes, the hyperscene typology recognises the importance of layered digital interactions. By accommodating multiple modes and points of analysis which build throughout the thesis, chapter on chapter, the typology remains open to the nuanced ways in which landscapes are both produced and consumed through digital media. This flexibility allows for an exploration of diversity within digital spaces while resisting the oversimplification of complex, entangled ecologies. Thus, the typology of hyperscenes is not an endpoint in analysis but a starting point for understanding the ways in which digital landscapes like #lakedistrict are simultaneously constructed and consumed across diverse contexts and users. We begin this exploration now.

3.7 Research Ethics

There are vital ethical considerations to bear in mind with all social research, and these considerations are heightened when we utilise digital technologies and social media (Hanlon and Jones, 2023). There are two main groups of 'participants' involved in this study: fieldwork participants and indirectly, online participants whose public images of the #lakedistrict were analysed. Fieldwork participants are local Herdwick sheep farmers primarily involved in the ethnographic element of this project. The participants were identified through snowballing techniques- I met organisers of shepherd's meets, and local shepherds at agricultural shows

who either expressed interest themselves or suggested suitable individuals to participate. Farmers were engaged as collaborative participants who allowed me to accompany them on ethnographic fieldwork and who contribute images to the @fellsfarmers collective through their iPads. All of the farmers I worked with completed consent forms which included details of processes for sharing images, withdrawing them, and outlined how I would develop 'pseudonyms' for them in the thesis. Pseudonymity was a more practical option than anonymity because it enabled me to provide a fuller story of the farmers and also the images they shared of themselves- they are identifiable to persons who know them.

The online participants are the broader public who have contributed to existing social media corpus this thesis explores by publicly sharing images with the hashtag #lakedistrict on Instagram. I utilised the Framework for Ethical Research with Social Media Data shown in Figure 3.7 (Townsend and Wallace, 2016) to determine that informed consent was not needed for the #lakedistrict images gathered from the yearlong data scrape in this thesis. Users agree to the legal terms and conditions of Instagram, which explicitly state that users "hereby grant to Instagram a non-exclusive, fully paid and royalty-free, transferable, sub-licensable, worldwide license to use the Content that you post on or through the Service". Instagram's rights to user content thus include the sharing of data with approved Application Programme Interface Users. The access of this data for this project constituted such a use.

Other ethical concerns with social media data included ensuring that the post or data was not misrepresented by the researcher. The data was not misrepresented because the images were not altered. The data consisted of images that were examined for their existing content as a whole and were not edited by the researchers. Additionally, the user's data was not to be triangulated in a way that could reveal potentially harmful information that the user did not originally intend to share. Individual user data was not triangulated in any way that could reveal unintended information about the user. Images analysed in Chapter 4 from general individual users relating to public hashtags such as #LakeDistrict were compared to one another to analyse dominant trends amongst the total image corpus, rather than individual pictures. Images analysed from local public organisations or high-profile figures, which were examined as a group from a single account, were also analysed as a collection of images in Chapter 5.

Given the public nature of the accounts, it was reasonable to assume that this data was meant to be viewed by a large audience and was unlikely to be sensitive.

Other issues with regards to existing social media data that need to be addressed relate to potential risk of harm to vulnerable participants or sensitive subject matter. Because the hashtag #lakedistrict is not politically, morally or visually contentious, there are no issues of sensitivity or risk of harm within this project. Privacy of individual users will be protected because this data is presented in aggregate form as a visualisation of many images, and the handles of personal individual users will not be published or presented in the thesis.

During the course of this research, the evolution of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 have also highlighted some key considerations for ethical use of social media data, most significantly the right to be informed, to access and know how your data is being used, and the right to be forgotten, to stop the use of your data or to have that data erased. For this reason, encrypted records were kept of the data scraped throughout this thesis and its use in each sample, so that any account user could find out if and how their data has been used for this work or request its removal.

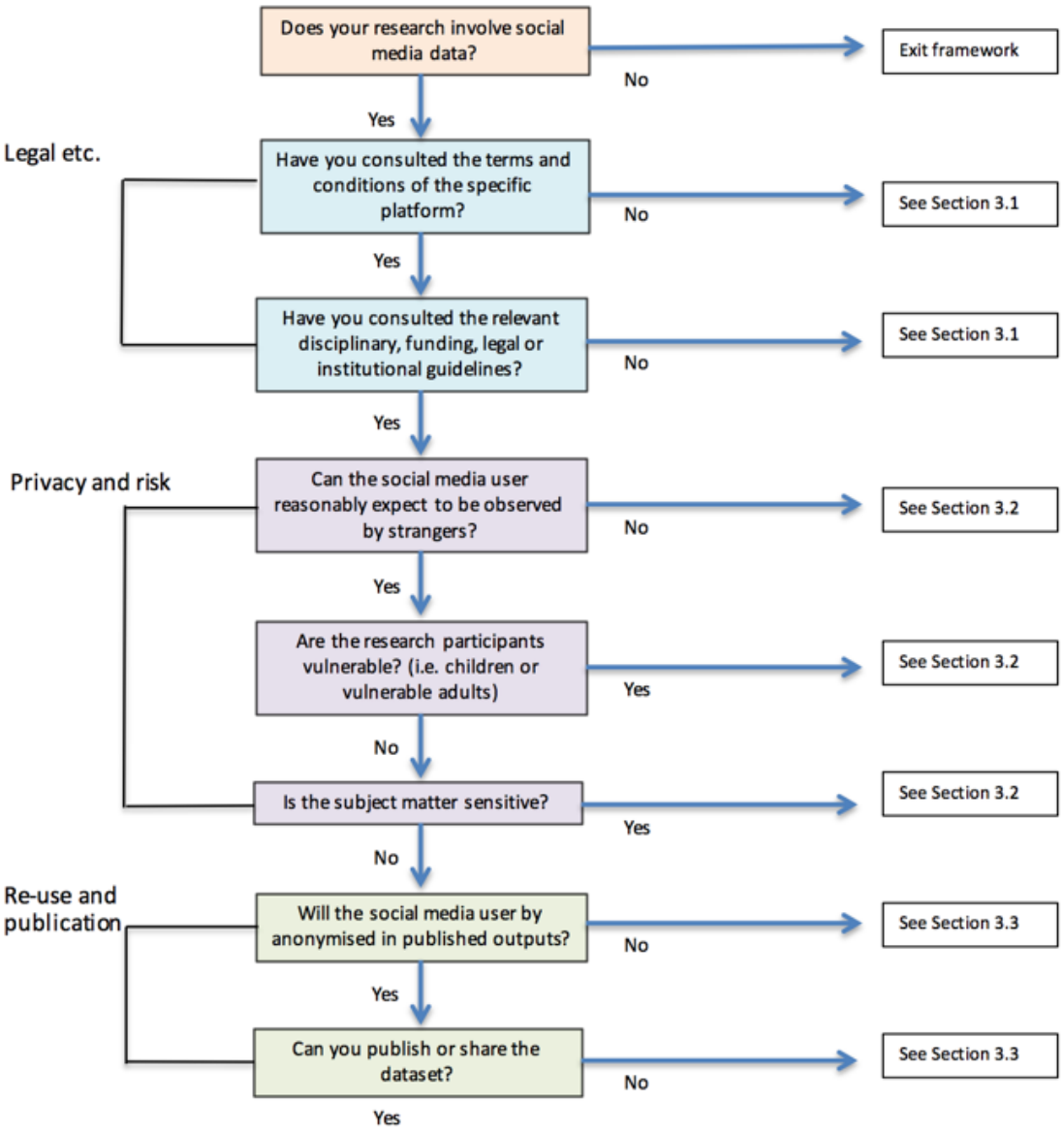


Figure 3. 10: The Framework for Ethical Research with Social Media Data (Townshend & Wallace, 2016)

Chapter 4

Digital Textures: Encountering the online #lakedistrict as hyperscene ruralities of a digital landscape

For over two hundred years, members of the English public have learned about the mountainous area known as the Lake District through the paint or the pen of some of our most celebrated figures. This chapter will explore several of the aesthetic and experiential tropes developed over the Lake District's long history as an object of visual cultural interest and explore their persistence in the age of social media. It will also document how the processes through which the Lake District is translated from place to platform also generates fundamentally new ways of encountering this beloved landscape.

This chapter argues that the visuals consumed through hyperseeing the #lakedistrict as a digital hyperscene, are encountered as 'digital textures.' This new concept that was introduced in chapter 2 aims to illustrate how images are simultaneously encountered through both discursive and affective registers by Instagram users. In 4.2, digital textures of the #lakedistrict are explored through the methods from Cultural Analytics that I introduced in the previous chapter (Manovich, 2012, 2017, 2020; Hochman and Manovich, 2013), which utilise the processing software ImageJ to plot vast quantities of #lakedistrict Instagram images into single visualisations. The visualisations are produced on a scale of 20,000 x 20,000 pixels, providing the researcher with the capability to 'zoom in' from the abstract, aggregate visualisation of thousands of images, to individual images at their original thumbnail size, and examine them in close detail for content and composition. This process provides us with the capacity to conduct rich 'multi-scale readings' (Hochman and Manovich, 2013) of the #lakedistrict, and to collect ex-situ digital textures from the visualisations in spaces where there is a density or sparsity of images.

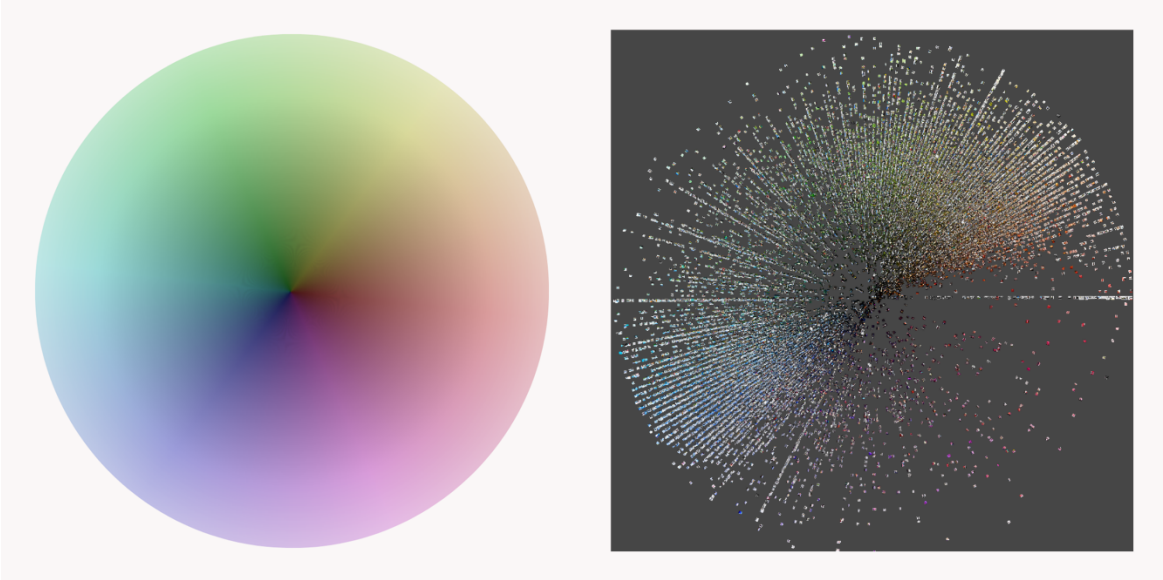


Figure 4. 1: How digital images are plotted based upon hue and brightness using techniques of Cultural Analytics

The completed visualisations plot Instagram images in the shape of a colour wheel, arranging images by their mean hue (colour) as the perimeter, and by their mean brightness (amount of light) as the radius from the centre (see Figure 4. 1). The characteristics of colour and brightness are also fundamental indicators within the Romantic's perceptions of landscape and emotion, thus providing an apt variable through which to organise the images into affective categories.

The meta-scale #lakedistrict enables us to identify particular clusters of digital textures where dominant affective and discursive components of the #lakedistrict emerge as hyperseen qualities. This section describes the processes through which particular digital textures of the #lakedistrict were identified in an iterative process of 'learning to be affected' (Latour, 2004, p. 206) by clusters in the visualisation, and exploring textural categories of sensation and discourse, as they were drawn together within the visualisation. The large-scale analysis of Part A also enables us to envisage how the #lakedistrict is hyperseen in comparison to other hyperscene places: how different patterns (Manovich, 2012) emerge as unique digital constellations of colour and light through the public contributions to Instagram of a given place.

The chapter identifies the digital textures of Attachment, Adventure and Awe each of which is situated within the pre-existing representations of the rural idyll, rural play, and rural wilderness respectively. These digital textures of #lakedistrict are identified from an analysis of four visualisations of images associated with dominant hashtags within the #lakedistrict dataset.

In 4.3, digital textures of Attachment, Adventure and Awe are demonstrated to follow precedents of dominant representations of English Nature outlined in the literature review: Rural Idyll, Rural Play, and Rural Wilderness. These precedents are demonstrated through a 'textural' analysis, exploring both discursive and affective qualities, which examines how the images convey these ruralities of English nature through three closely interrelated analytic lenses:

a) Continued conventions of romantic aesthetic categories
b) Manifestation of Nature-Tourism Discourses
c) How the presence (or absence) of human subjects is expressed

These three lenses provide a useful means through which to demonstrate the ways that the hyperseen images of Attachment, Adventure and Awe continue romantic imaginations of the hyperscene #lakedistrict. Moreover,

The categories of Attachment, Adventure and Awe directly speak to the conventions of *conceived space* as outlined in the conceptual framework. First, and most understandably, we consider the continued conventions of romantic aesthetic categories to examine the specific ways in which these romantic imaginations may still have purchase in explaining the affective and discursive qualities of present-day images. Secondly, we examine the manifestation of nature-tourism discourses as most dominant narratives of the #lakedistrict that we see on social media are tourist-centric. This is evident from a study of the hashtags which accompany the #lakedistrict images in our dataset. These hashtags provide a strong discursive indicator for the subject and intention of social media posts, wherein users are essentially purposefully contributing to an existing virtual visual dialogue.



#Cumbria	91,247
#Nature	37,170
#Mountains	35,799
#Landscape	31,571
#Hiking	29,038
#Lakes	28,523
#Photography	25,928
#England	25,489
#Lake	25,322
#Adventure	22,046

Figure 4. 2: Hashtags associated with the #lakedistrict on Instagram. Frequency of top 10 hashtags (left); Top 100 highest frequency hashtags within #lakedistrict (right)

Figure 4. 2 illustrates the relative dominance of these monikers within the dataset, alongside the place-based title, #Cumbria. The word-map shows the 100 most-frequently used hashtags alongside #lakedistrict within the full eligible dataset[9]. The size of the word indicates its' relative popularity compared to the other hashtags displayed here. The 'largest' word (#Cumbria) has a frequency of 91,247. The 'smallest' word here (#weekend) has a count of 4,501. The manifestation of nature-tourism discourses will therefore provide an effective analytical lens through which to examine the digital textures.

This analysis is conducted over a collection of 'archetypal images' identified within the digital textures from the main dataset of #lakedistrict images. These images all fall within the respective 'boundaries' of the mapped textures Attachment, Adventure and Awe identified in the systematic sample visualisation. This means that the archetypal images within each Image Plate all have roughly the same mean hue and brightness, and would fall close together on an ex-situ hyperseen visualisation.

[9] For list of 100 most popular hashtags in content analysis of dataset, see Appendix A.2

4.1 Contextualising and visualising romantic imaginaries in the digital #lakedistrict

Following the trend for Grand Tours around mountainous regions of the continent, in the 18th century affluent gentlemen found that the English Lakes possessed many of the sublime qualities of the landscapes they had admired overseas (Edmonds, 2006, p. 168). This picturesque aesthetic was realised by the construction of Viewing Stations such as Claife Figure 4. 3, which were built to frame specific views and evoke particular emotions through the use of their coloured glass windows (Walton and Wood, 2013, p. 12; Lines, 2018). Moving into the 19th Century, the Lake District's reputation as a Romantic landscape was further established through the works of influential artists still world renowned today, from William Wordsworth to JMW Turner. The Lake District was progressively understood as a romantic landscape, celebrated for not only its natural beauty, but the personal, moral and emotional experiences it was seen to offer (Squire, Shelach, 1988, pp. 238–239).



Figure 4. 3: Claife Viewing Station (Author's own image)

The Turner paintings of the Lake District (Figure 4. 4, overleaf)[10], illustrate the importance of light and colour in setting a mood and drawing attention to the particular emotions which are felt in moment of experiencing a scene, in contrast to the focus on the less personal, 'rational' view of landscapes which had previously dominated enlightenment approaches to the study of nature (Raval, 1978, pp. 254–5). These three paintings of the Lake District evoke very different affective sensations for the viewer.

The bottom painting, of Buttermere Lake in the western fells, uses a dark colour palette to render the scene, with a piercing, eye-catching rainbow in the centre. This painting is acknowledged to be a deliberate account of the 'Sublime' by Turner, 'intended to evoke the viewer's awe at the grandeur of Nature' and his annotations upon previous sketches of the piece indicate the intent to express dark and powerful mood (The Tate Gallery, 2010). In Turner's watercolour of Windermere (middle) he utilises the technique of *bodycolour* to create depth and contrast within coloured segments of the painting (Abbot Hall Art Gallery and Turner, 2009). The higher saturation of colour and shape gives the waves and clouds form (Raval, 1978, p. 254), and therefore provides an enhanced sense of movement, texture and liveliness to the piece.

In the top painting, of Kirby Lonsdale Churchyard, are many of the tropes which we have come to associate with a romanticised 'rural idyll' of the Lake District region. In contrast to the scene of Buttermere, this watercolour demonstrates the bucolic ideals of country life that also emerged as understandings of the Lakeland region (this particular spot is a few miles east of the current National Park boundary). This mountainous background framed by leafy trees, presents an apt example of the type of images which have become an imagined and idyllic 'Chocolate Box Countryside' (Short, 2006), initiated by Cadbury's, who utilised romantic rural paintings such as Constable's Haywain (Holloway and Hubbard, 2013, p. 154) as wrappers for confectionery. The warm tones of the image evoke a sense of calm and bliss in a 'sepia-tinted' landscape. This sensation is realised in the presence of several young boys in rustic clothing playing in the foreground, offering a sense of naivety and joy.

[10] Top: Kirby Lonsdale Churchyard (1818); Middle: Windermere, JMW Turner (1821); Bottom: 'Buttermere Lake', JMW Turner (1798). Source: Tate Online (no date)

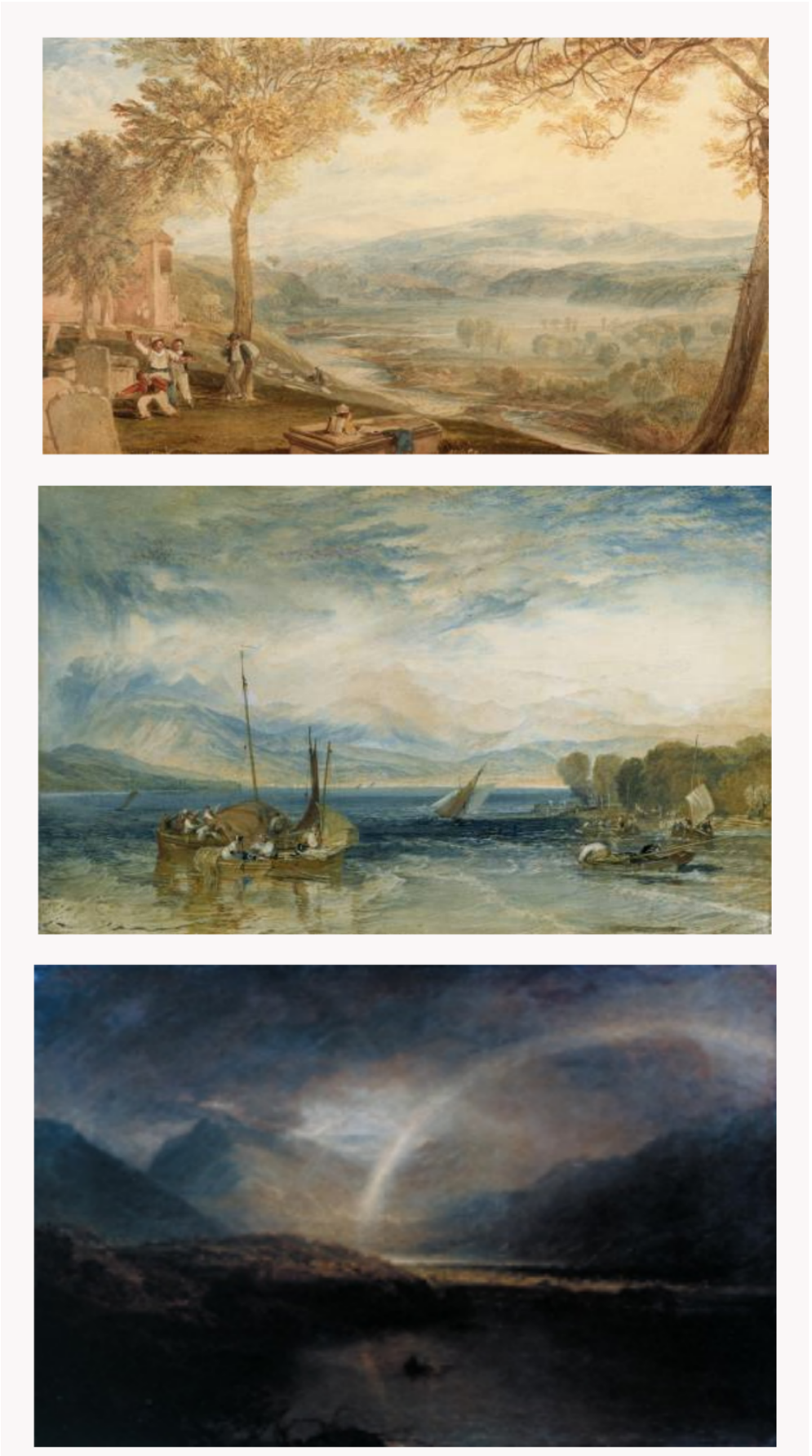


Figure 4. 4: Select JMW Turner paintings of the Lake District

As I will demonstrate below, the dominant discourses of English Nature and emotive emphasis brought about by the Romantic movement have continued in today's online portrayals of the Lake District through visual social media. Romanticised tropes such as the sublime, picturesque and beauty have continued and remain evident in popular representations on contemporary cultural resources such as social media. These trajectories are shown in the typology of ruralities indicated in Figure 4. 5. The continued presence of these aesthetic traditions will be demonstrated through the digital analyses of one year of images related to the Lake District National Park from the social media platform *Instagram*.

However, before demonstrating these visual continuities through the digital analyses, the chapter will also explain and conceptualise some important discontinuities in the *character* and *experience* of visual social media representations of the Lake District from these traditional popular sources of culture. Through a closely connected process of production and consumption, social media images construct and perform a digital manifestation of the Lake District as a hyperscene place. The hyperscene #lakedistrict is encountered through these images as a process of hyperseeing: the everyday and intimate experience of continuously viewing the Lake District through palm-held digital social media images normalises dominant discourses in intense and concentrated ways.

Hyperscene typology of the #lakedistrict

Hyperscene representations of English Nature in the #lakedistrict	Rural Idyll	Rural Play	Rural Wilderness
Rural Idylls (Bell, 2006)	Recreational	Sporting	Natural
Media Representations: *Aesthetic Traditions*	Beauty/ Picturesque	Picturesque/ Sublime	Sublime
Representations of the Rural: *Nature Based Tourism Discourses*	Rural & Heritage Tourism	Adventure-Sport Tourism	EcoTourism, Tourism Incognita

Figure 4. 5: A dynamic typology of the #lakedistrict. Trajectories and characteristics of Digital Textures as 'conceived space'

4.2 Identifying Digital Textures of the #lakedistrict

> '*While the availability of large, digitised collections of humanities data certainly creates the case for humanists to use computational tools, the rise of social media and globalisation of professional culture leave us no other choice.*'
>
> (Manovich, 2012)

The main body of this section is dedicated to outlining the ways that digital textures of the #lakedistrict demonstrate a continuation of the dominant English Nature ruralities that have been encountered by the publics that engage with the Lake District through popular media of the time over the last several centuries. The publics which encounter today's online #lakedistrict is very different and much broader than the elite groups who would engage with the landscape through viewing stations and Claude glasses two centuries ago. The demographic of social media users has also broadened relatively quickly since its inception early in this century, yet there remain important spaces without engagement in digital publics, both at a global scale and in these local areas, as subsequent chapters of this thesis will explore. For the visualisation below (Figure 4.6), a systemic sample of every 10th image in chronological order was used, totalling 31,842 #lakedistrict images.

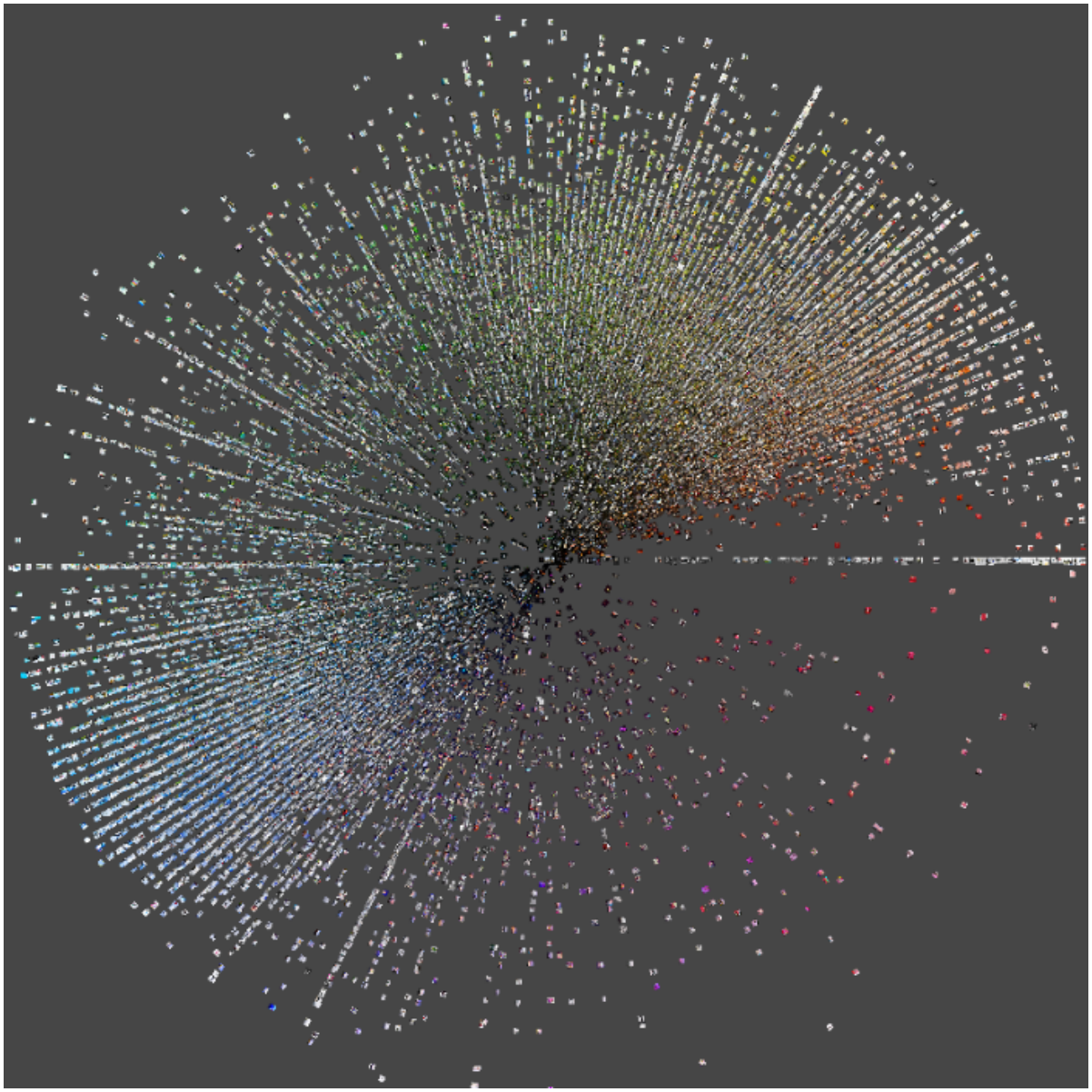


Figure 4. 6: Systematic Sample of #LakeDistrict, Every 10th image (31,842) Data Set sorted by median Hue (radius) and Brightness (Perimeter)

At first glance, the hyperseen *ex-situ* #lakedistrict in this visualisation (Figure 4. 6) does not appear to tell us a great deal about the hyperscene Lake District. There are dominant slices of bright blue and warm green, and small clustered extremes of dark radii at the centre. The purples and red portions which we might expect to form at the bottom right of the visualisation are almost entirely absent. This clustering effect indicates the popularity of images with a warm green or bold blue quality, and the relative scarcity of deep red and purple images. The visualisation therefore immediately indicates for us at the broadest scale something about the conventions that users follow in Instagramming the #lakedistrict. To illustrate, Figure 4. 7 shows a comparison with a similar visualisation by Hochman and

Manovich of images from Bangkok (2013), where it is immediately evident that in a much bolder spectrum of intense colours and broader bands of brightness are visible in the second visualisation. In some ways, this already speaks at first glance to what we might anticipate thinking or feeling about these two locations: the bold, bright, loud and diverse colours of Bangkok versus the calmer, softer palette and simpler natural colours of the Lake District. Moreover, in contrast to the broader 'spread' of images around the Bangkok visualisation, we see in the #lakedistrict that there are clear spaces of density and sparsity, which form the starting point for our digital texture analyses.

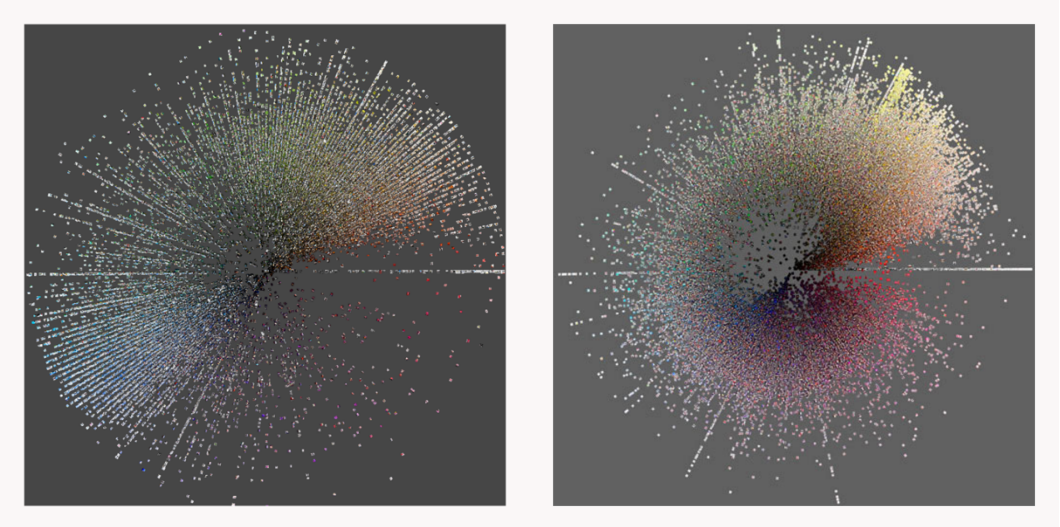


Figure 4. 7: Comparing Digital Landscapes of the Lake District and Bangkok

Left: 31,842 images of #lakedistrict organised by hue median (radius) and brightness median (Perimeter)
Right: 50,000 Images of Bangkok, organised by hue median (radius) and brightness mean (perimeter) (Hochman and Manovich, 2013)

Locating Digital Textures of the #lakedistrict

The process of arriving at the eventual digital textures of Attachment, Adventure and Awe was more messy, cyclical and iterative than either an exclusively inductive or deductive approach to study (O'Reilly, 2009). Once I had begun to generate the visualisations, and continuously analysed the images through an ongoing 'zooming in and out' and across the visualisation (Hochman and Manovich, 2013), through spaces of density and sparsity, the three digital textures emerged as amended versions of the categories outlined below, formed through a process of 'learning to be affected' by the visualisations at hand, all the while acknowledging the presence of existing discursive conventions.

Prior to generating the #lakedistrict visualisations, I anticipated that there were several discursive representations and affective conventions which may have been manifest in the visualisations, based upon both the existing literature and the close observations of #lakedistrict social media sites throughout my fieldwork. The first of these was a broad sense of 'ownership', in relation to the Lake District's celebrated status as a beloved National Park. The notion of a collective ownership of the Lake District was first and most famously suggested by Wordsworth when he declared that the area should be 'a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy' (Robinson, 2011), an attitude which is continued explicitly in the establishment of the first national parks in America by John Muir, who indeed referred to '*Our* National Parks' (1991 emphasis added) as ones belonging to the entire nation. The connection in England particularly between past, heritage and the nation has been most notably explored by Lowenthal in connection to landscape (Lowenthal, 1991). Yet, the identity which the literature suggests we might anticipate being related to national heritage imaginaries, replete with notions of the archetypal English landscape, was in fact, as I found upon examination of the images, often expressed in relation to more personal and intimate manifestations of identity, and thus attachment emerged as a key feature of the #lakedistrict.

The second expected texture was a sense of 'conquer', owing to the prevalence of outdoor pursuits and adventure in the Lake District. The sense of conquer reflects some of the narratives and visual ques for outdoor pursuits as a feeling of an often masculine adventure and colonial exploration of the unknown *terra incognita* (Meyer-Arendt Although, 2004; Williams and Lew, 2015) which are dominant in much of nature tourism. My time on fieldwork in the Lake District and observations of the online Lake District also highlighted how these views were manifest in the development of the tourism industry and user experience. The sense of achievement in summitting particular peaks is shared publicly in online forums daily by many users, and triumphs are recorded and categorised through revelations such as the number of 'Wainwrights' an individual has climbed. A significant industry in the Lake District has been built around providing tourists with this sense of exploration and triumph, offering activities from bespoke guided mountain tours and expeditions, on foot, by car or by bike, to exciting off-road all terrain 4x4 driving experiences. However, this sense of adrenaline-fuelled adventure was not consistently (though often) reliant on the terra incognita dimension. It is

more effectively described as adventure than tourism for the protagonists show a more active than exploratory role in the images. The analysis demonstrates the continued picturesque and sublime tropes which contribute to a sense of adventure in the public's images of outdoor pursuits in the landscape.

An anticipated sense of 'awe' in the images was based on the continued importance of the romantic influence in Lake District literature. Both the environmental and transcendental motivations for outdoor pursuits in the Lake District are well documented (such as Jepson and Sharpley, 2015). Due to its continued significance, I anticipated that the sense of awe would be present as a clear cluster, present in a space of 'density' within the images. However, it was interesting to find that the sense of awe developed here is located in a space of relative sparsity. As the analysis will identify, this less frequent presence of Awe goes further to accentuate its affective qualities, as it is less regularly encountered and so has an all the more concentrated affect within the hyperseen.

Figure 4. 8 illustrates where digital textures of Attachment, Adventure and Awe are respectively located within the ex-situ #lakedistrict. Through mapping the digital texture territories of the #lakedistrict, we can see some of the ways in which attachment, adventure and awe weave together as 'the fragmented performances and exhibitions from multiple perspectives and times' of the hyperscene #lakedistrict (Hochman, 2017, p. 381). Importantly, mapping the territories of digital textures allows us to identify other potential spaces of inquiry. This textural mapping is certainly partial and as yet, an incomplete portrait of the hyperscene #lakedistrict. For instance, the range of images in between the heavily clustered areas of blue and warm green is of a consistently moderate density, which is not yet 'mapped' in this thesis. This textural mapping emphasises that the textures identified here are imperfect 'views from somewhere' (Haraway, 1988, p. 598), replete with the expected narratives identified by the researcher's previous experiences and based upon the processes and literatures outlined above. In explicitly mapping these views, we leave room for other spaces to be mapped, and acknowledge that these textures may also be mapped differently.

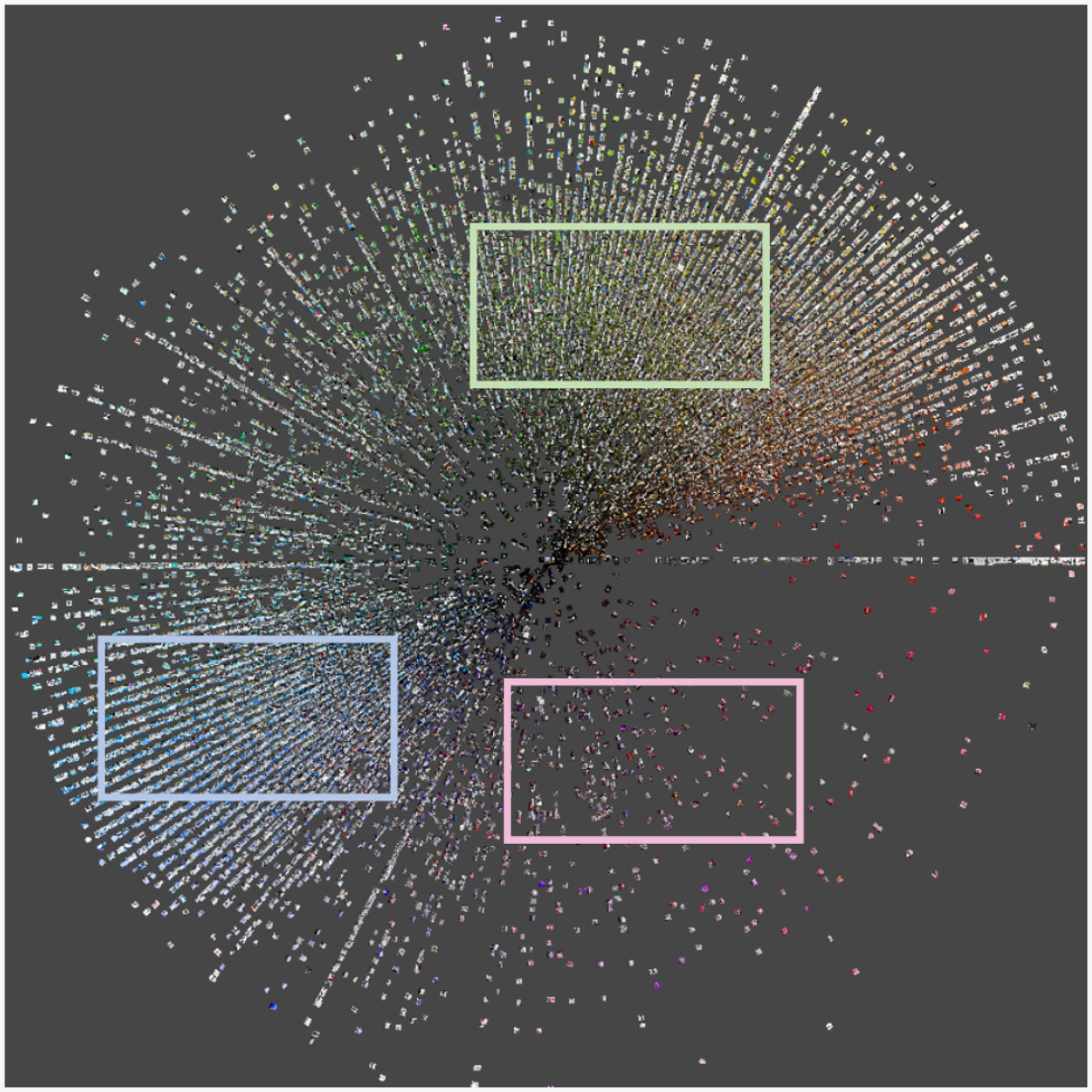


Figure 4. 8: Mapping digital textures of the #lakedistrict

Digital Texture of Attachment

Digital Texture of Adventure

Digital Texture of Awe

'Zooming into' Digital Textures of the Lake District

For the next part of this analysis we 'zoom in' (after Hochman and Manovich, 2013) to closer scales of the digital textures. This section will assess both the textures themselves as an 'ex-situ' visualisation (Figures 4.9, 4.10, & 4.13) and also examine more closely the minutia of the texture through a detailed study of the *actual* images, encountered as thumbnails in the visualisations, and detail the ways in which the images within the digital textures mediate (after Jansson, 2013), convey, and evoke formal representations of the rural (after Halfacree, 2009) as various English natures to conceptualise how the #lakedistrict is manifest as a conceived space digital landscape.

The images investigated in this study were identified within the mapped digital textures of attachment, adventure and awe in four visualisations. These visualisations were the systematic sample of Every 10th chronological #lakedistrict image discussed previously, and three secondary visualisations completed using the most popular hashtags within the #lakedistrict corpus which did not relate to location (see Figure 4. 2): #Nature, #Mountains and #Landscape. Each of these visualisations was mapped using the methods of ImageMeasure and ImagePlot described in Chapter Three utilising the samples of images which included the respective popular hashtags in their post. The use of multiple visualisations from these most popular hashtags enabled the researcher to explore more dimensions (or 'threads') of the textures by examining them from multiple dominant perspectives within the #lakedistrict corpus. As a pragmatic research exercise, the changing 'layering' of images enabled by utilising different images from within the full #lakedistrict corpus allowed more images to be made visible within the visualisations that would otherwise remain covered by the computerised mechanism of producing the textures in ImageJ software: the change in the dataset, in other words, enabled hidden layers of the texture to come to the fore. These images which were identified as representative of the texture through a thorough iterative process of 'learning to be affected' (Latour, 2004) by the textures are presented in Image Plates 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

i. Attachment

The first digital texture that this chapter will examine is the texture of Attachment. The textured 'ex-situ' territories of Attachment, shown in Figure 4. 9, are located on the visualisations within the area of warm green. The densely packed and overlapping images in these digital textures also tell us how relatively popular these colourways are within the #lakedistrict corpus. They are therefore images that we encounter frequently in scrolling through #lakedistrict, and as such their familiar colouring and regularity offer a more comforting 'everyday' quality to the viewer who encounters #lakedistrict attachment.



Figure 4. 9: Ex-Situ Digital Texture of Attachment in the #lakedistrict

Images of attachment from this texture, shown in Image Plate 1, demonstrate a continuation of the aesthetic traditions of beauty and the picturesque. The representation of beauty in the rural as an idyllic locality is aptly demonstrated by the first image of column A, depicting a sepia-tinted close shot of a meadow. The meadow is busy with daisies, buttercups and a multitude of other wildflowers and plants, forming a lush green that is tempered pale and warm by cascading sunlight from the top of the image. This aesthetic image emphasises the rural as a beautiful bucolic setting of calm and peaceful nature; there is no sense of movement, and the position of the shot makes the viewer feel as if they could be laying among the grasses themselves. A similarly beautiful landscape is the bottom image of column A, depicting a typical pastoral landscape with gentler valley slopes than many #lakedistrict images, such as

the more severe, dramatic skylines we would expect in images of the sublime. The skies in these idyllic images are also warm and pale, without the stark contrast of atmospheric clouds, or a piercing sun that we might expect to see in more dramatic images of the sublime. This stark contrast indicates the beauty and loveliness of these images as a philosophical opposite to the sublime in the romantic tradition (Burke, 2001). Again, the lush green of the valley head is further warmed and made 'sepia-tinted' by the sky, reminiscent of Turner's gentle pastoral hills and pale atmospheres.

The picturesque aesthetic is also evident in several of the images, which emphasise the framing of a view that is both impressive and beautiful. For instance, in column C we see several instances of deliberately curated images which frame particular scenes and practices which are associated with visits to the English countryside. In C1, Castlerigg stone circle (a well-known Lake District landmark) is shown framed within a human hand, distorted yet instantly recognisable in a small orb. The image is made affecting in its eye-catching shapes which invert colours and a recognisable scene. This technique reflects a continued attachment to capturing English Natures in the #lakedistrict through picturesque practices of framing. They are in many ways directly relatable older picturesque tactics: the globe for instance makes the whole scene at once visible to the user, in a way extremely similar to the Claude Glasses advocated by Thomas Gray as a means to see the entire view 'properly' from a handheld device (Whyte, 2002; Urry, 2013, p. 206; Umbach and Humphrey, 2017). The globe provides a means for the photographer to capture this picture and share with the Instagram user an image which is both 'slightly distorted but satisfyingly framed' (Uglow, 2011).

Framing techniques such as this orb provide us with interesting insights into unique practices stimulated by Instagram's #lakedistrict: the contemporary use of experimental objects to reimagine and reproduce affecting images includes the utilisation of objects which we would not now conventionally use to 'see' nor to document the familiarity of the #lakedistrict outside of the platform context. One would not look through the globe the same way we look through binoculars, glasses, or even our screens to behold a particular scene, and as the elite once looked through the Claude Glass. The aesthetic of this particular framing technique is arguably a made-for-Instagram approach to photography which is made affective and eye-catching in its distinctiveness.

The hedged archway in C4 is also effectively utilised to frame a romantic #lakedistrict view. This particular image is illustrative of a popular shot taken from Hope Park on Derwent Water in the town of Keswick. The slate houses and the mountainous horizon of the Skiddaw among the northern fells in the background exemplifies the picturesque ideals. The framing work done by the trees, carefully located to capture such a view, are surely a deliberate attempt by the local landscapers to encourage visitors to engage with the landscape through the picture they have orchestrated, just as West did with the viewing stations in the 1700s. An idealised yet genteel English nature is coordinated by the photographer, capturing recognisably #lakedistrict qualities in their very best (filtered) light. The familiarity evoked by these images is a nostalgic rurality which is conventionally felt and represented in dominant imagined identities and landscapes of 'Englishness' (Matless, 2016). The framing is reminiscent of the 'Chocolate Box' countryside introduced earlier. .

The nature-based tourisms in #lakedistrict images of attachment are manifest as rural heritage tourisms. There is arguably a close relationship between the romantic aesthetic traditions and heritage (Williams and Lew, 2015, p. 204) as well as the more explicit connections we have already seen between the romantics and the advent of tourism to 'wilder' rural landscapes of Britain such as the Lake District.

Due to ease of infrastructure and access, the Lake District remains an extremely popular destination for tourists, even for short breaks and day visits (Williams and Lew, 2015, p.40). Everyday holidaymaking is evoked through images of familiar and relatable poses in settings of the rural idyll. Indeed, the composition and quality of most of the attachment images would not look out of place in a family photograph album. Column B most evidently illustrates this style through natural poses, momentary pauses in the process of memory-making which offer an account of simply documenting the day as it unfolds: we see a man stood with his dogs walking along a single-track road, small children gathered under a monument, a young family walking in matching t-shirts, and even a teenager checking her phone!

The colours within these images are not reminiscent of the professionally edited hues of photoshopped landscape photography and this gives the texture the homely authenticity of pictures taken on the family digital camera. These images give a sense of the everyday, unedited both as an image and as an encounter in the countryside. They are comforting in

their predictability, they are conventional images which represent ordinary activities in the ordinary and yet familiar and pleasant settings of the rural idyll. The natural poses and activities of the subjects are thus directly comparable to the boys playing in Turner's painting of the Kirkby Lonsdale Churchyard, celebrated for their simplicity and everyday humble activities in the rural: a bucolic ideal.

A sense of heritage is also curated by the imagined traditional and rustic ideals of holidaying in nature which are depicted within these images. In C3, the sunny picnic on a wooden board nestled between rocks, with lakes and mountains in the background, is a deliberate composition which captures several key elements of an idyllic and quintessentially British tourist experience with #lakedistrict English nature. The sunny day with uninhibited views, yet with the homely domestic comforts of tea and biscuits evokes a pleasing ideal. These traditional and simplistic activities again relate to the romanticised celebration of the 'idle pleasures' of rural life. The comforting qualities of these images are enhanced by their embodiment of the stereotypical English family holiday, which provides a sense of reminiscence for the viewer of childhood experiences (Jepson and Sharpley, 2015, p. 1160). The affective impact of these qualities is therefore potentially dependent on having experienced similar encounters, to reignite and empathise with this particular mode of attachment.

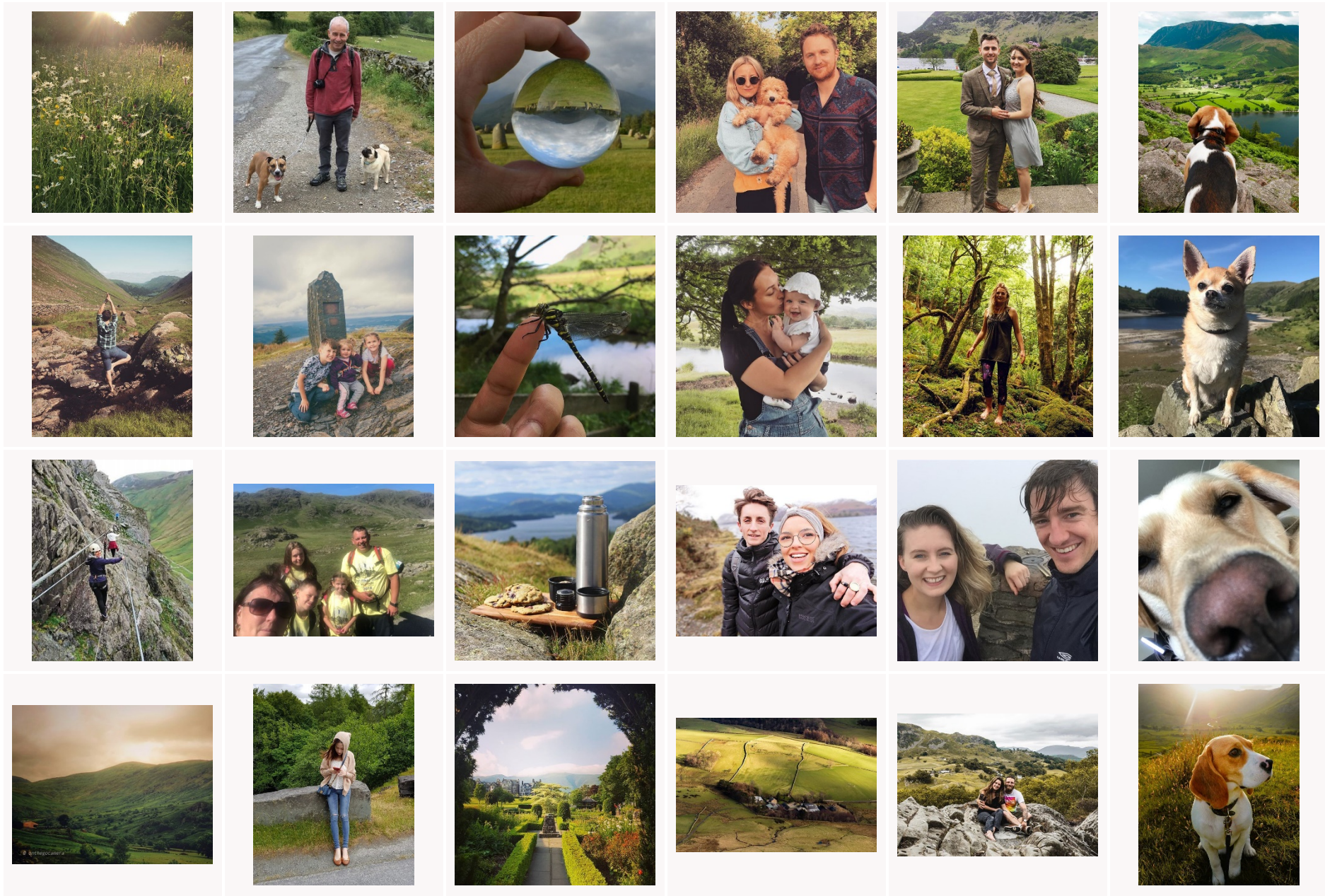


Image Plate 1: Digital Textures of Attachment in the #lakedistrict

The presence of the human also evokes a sense of attachment situated in the rural idyll. There is a distinct sense of familiarity and family emphasised through the presence of intimate moments within these images. Particularly in columns D and E, we see intimacy designed as rather posed memories in the rural idyll. There are several young couples: holding a dog, holding hands in occasion wear in large gardens, cuddling on a rock; and a young woman kisses a baby under a tree. These images evoke a very personal sense of memory-making in the rural idyll, through deliberate and yet decidedly intimate poses which offer the warm, sincere feeling of viewing a very special and cherished moment, enhanced by the warm sepia-filtered editing of several of the images. These images are less everyday than some of the others which also evoke a sense of attachment but remain very relatable with the uplifting sense of shared intimacy of special moments with specifically chosen rural settings. Thinking back to Turner's celebrated painting of the Churchyard in Kirkby Lonsdale, we can recall Ruskin's remark that the painting evoked 'an acute sense of the contrast between the careless interests and idle pleasures of daily life, and the state of those whose time for labour, or knowledge, or delight, is passed forever.' (Ruskin, 2006). The inclusion of social intimate moments continues to emphasise this sentiment through images within the rural idyll, recording the simple pleasures in everyday life by producing a #lakedistrict which is a place of memory making. The forward-facing characters accentuate this warmth, both in their skin colour in the overall composition, and with the joy that they share with the image's viewer through smiling faces.

A final mode of evoking attachment closely related to the human presence is the inclusion of dogs. In the four images in column F, dogs are encountered as the closest companion species, captured in many of the poses that dominate human images in #lakedistrict: moving from the top to the bottom of this column we see a pensive outward-looking dog (more common for human subjects in 'adventure'), the holiday pose, a 'selfie' and even a scenic 'candid' shot. The dogs are captured as active participants of memory-making, even considered family members or 'pets as kin' (Charles and Davies, 2008, 2017). These endearing images reflect much of the sepia-tinted warmth we see in other modes of attachment, through the inclusion of these images where the dog in the view is the central focus of an image, and the strong presence of the human in the rural idyll is extended even to nonhumans through their domesticated and anthropomorphised form.

ii. Adventure

Rural Play is constructed and performed by the digital texture of adventure. Adventure is territorialised, as seen in Figure 4. 10, in bright blue hues of #lakedistrict. The radiant colour of these images is alluring as it flows across the screen. The images have a bold, saturated quality in contrast to the warm closeness of attachment textures. Rural play will be demonstrated here as constructed and performed by the texture of adventure through influences from the aesthetic traditions of the picturesque and the sublime, clear discursive and affective tropes of adventure tourism, and presence of the human as active discoverers within the landscape.

Similar to the texture of attachment, the territories are generally densely packed, indicating that these images are frequently encountered on the screen as #lakedistrict. Despite being densely packed, the grey space between hues which we can see in the adventure territories indicates to us that these images are also brighter and lighter than the images of attachment (see Figure 4. 11). This is because the texture is situated on the visualisations at a location further out from the radial centre of the visualisation, as the images are plotted from centre to edge based on the amount of light within the image.

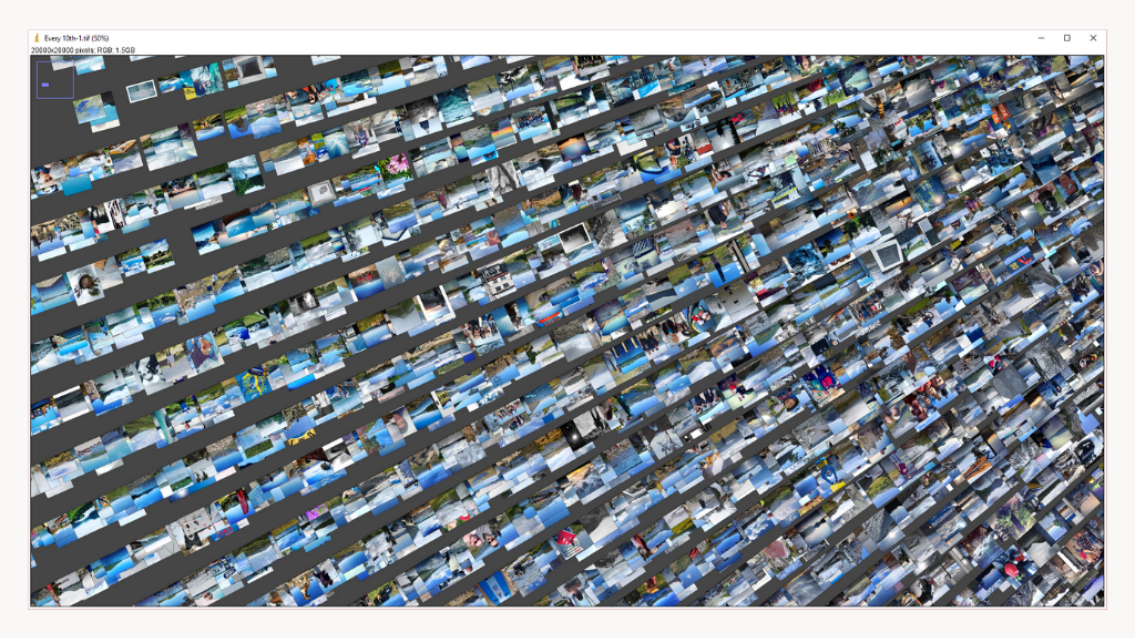
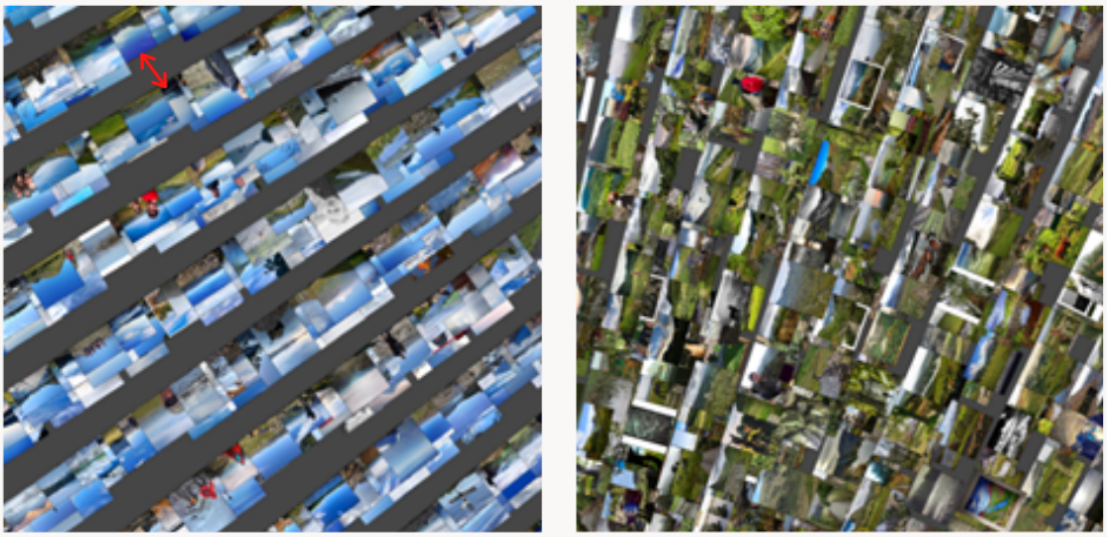


Figure 4. 10: Ex-Situ Digital Texture of Adventure in the #lakedistrict



Same scale of zoom for both visualisations.
Wider spacing between hues arranged in textures of adventure indicates that the images are brighter than textures of attachment, with darker hues spaced closer to the radial centre of the visualisations.
Red arrow to indicate spacing.

Figure 4. 11: The relationship between light and density in digital textures

As a continuation of aesthetic traditions of the Lake District, Image Plate 2 illustrates that adventure has some important similarities and divergences with textures of attachment. Firstly, in a manner very similar to attachment, the picturesque aesthetic is also continued by the use of framing techniques. As was discussed regarding the use of the globe in attachment, we see in column C of adventure that there are several imaginative framing methods utilised for the view, such as the car mirror (top) and the fisheye lens image of Helvellyn (bottom). Though they are not common among all of the images, these framing techniques represent a strong continuation of picturesque properties, most evidently the prioritisation of 'the role of [an] imagined viewer' (Herrington, 2006, p. 24). Moreover, the 'tiny planet' panorama image of walkers with clouds illustrates an attempt to use of photography editing apps to generate views which are unfamiliar (Herrington, 2006), surprising and interesting for the viewer. In this way, picturesque images in adventure importantly differ from attachment.

In contrast to the static and bucolic 'chocolate box' views framed in attachment, the picturing work done by adventure evokes a sense of exhilaration and excitement: the speed and

movement alluded to by the car mirror, recalls memories of fast and sophisticated car adverts, rushing through mountainous terrain. The tiny planet capture literally gives the illusion that the hikers are on top of the world, further emphasised by white fluffy clouds, and accentuating the sense of conquer through exploration evident in many images of adventure. The unusual fisheye framing of Helvellyn evokes a sense of exploring distant landscapes, where the dark circle of the lens is reminiscent of binoculars or a telescope. These images provide an unfamiliar sensation of viewing the unknown 'terra incognita' landscape from afar (Williams and Lew, 2015, p. 221). Therefore, we can see that the framing techniques of adventure also evoke a sense of the sublime for the viewer, accentuating new intensities of beholding a dramatic and impressive environment.

Adventure further demonstrates the notion of rural play through the elicitation of an adventure sport tourism narrative. The elements of risk, challenge and achievement for the human within the environment which are fundamental adventure tourism properties (Kane and Tucker, 2004; Williams and Lew, 2015; Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie and Pomfret, 2003 in Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016, p. 9) are evident throughout archetypal images of adventure. Most of these images display activities of adventure tourism- they are more active than recreational tourism and the leisurely strolls of the rural idyll. This difference can be seen clearly in images of walkers, where the hikers of adventure are shown to be either actively climbing or as conquerors having reached their summit. For example, in column A and in F (top) we see hikers in the act of rock climbing. The face is steep, and the climbers use their hands as well as their feet. The sense of risk and discomfort is enhanced in the lower image by the eerie mist, creating an intimidating grey atmosphere contrasting his bright blue shirt. Columns A, B, E and F all exhibit images of the sense of conquer. Some subjects face the camera in celebratory poses with triumphant arms raised (B1, B3, E2), inviting the viewer to share their sense of joy and achievement.

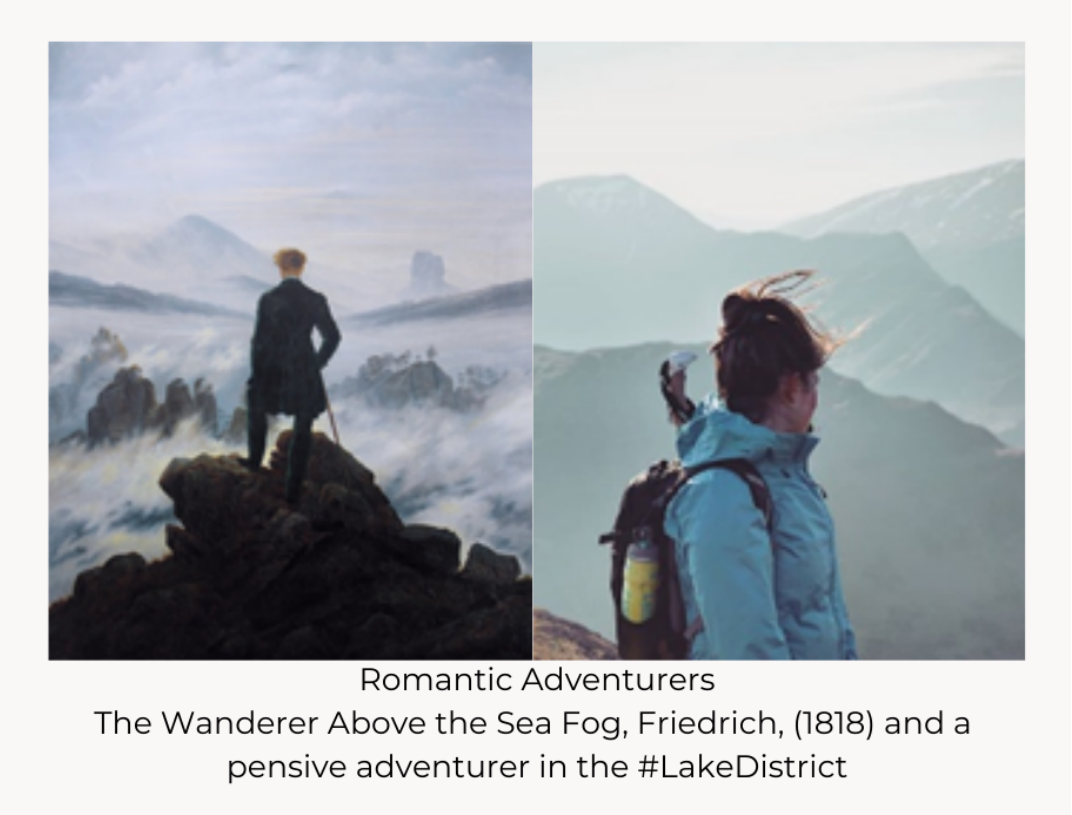


Figure 4. 12: Manifestations of the Sublime 'Promontory Witness' in Digital Textures of Adventure

In contrast to the conqueror, in adventure many others have their image taken facing away from the camera and into the landscape. These images offer the sense of pensive discovery of a motif Smith has described in Instagram travel photography as the 'promontory witness' (Smith, 2018, 2019), where the subjects have again captured the moment of reaching a mountain summit, yet instead of showing a proud grin and elated bodily movements, users face away from the camera and show themselves taking in the view. This pose embodies a more romantic and reflective sense of pride, as the hiker looks out and takes a moment to consider what they have achieved within this sublime landscape. The almost epiphanic aura from this positioning, in images such as A2, is strikingly reminiscent of Freidrich's famous romantic image of the Wanderer Above the Sea Fog. Indeed, even the greyed colour tones and windswept hair of the figure's silhouette bear close resemblance as shown in Figure 4. 12.

These images thus evoke a type of secondary transcendentalism, where the viewer can empathise with the hiker's appreciation of the landscape, though through the image which we encounter the hiker remains the focal point. With both examples, the positioning also helps to explain much of the dominance of the bold blue hues in adventure, where the sky at the

forms a larger proportion of the background for these celebratory images at the top of the hills and mountains.

This positioning is related to the presence of the human in adventure, who is represented and performed as joint subject of the image with the environment itself. The human is in situ within landscape, positioned to demonstrate the scale of their surroundings and to show their engagement with that landscape. The human subject is a consistently smaller feature of the composition than in images of attachment, where the landscape provided the setting, as in adventure the image we encounter is configuring a relationship between the body and the landscape (Jepson and Sharpley, 2015) rather than between people.

However, in contrast to the 'everydayness' of the people-centred images of attachment, the human is not naturalised as a part of the landscape in adventure. The adventure-tourism properties of risk, challenge and exploration identified above continue to demonstrate the juxtaposed relationship between man and environment. In the kayak shot from column D, an eerie sky contrasts the bold orange life jackets of the rowers. The angle of the shot, immediately behind the rowers, draws in the viewer as a team member, emphasising a sensation of perseverance in the landscape. For the biker in column E, though the landscape is only barely visible, the low position of the camera and curved horizon evoke a powerful sense of movement and energy which emphasise the scale of his surroundings. The composition of the girl's outstretched arm from the selfie stick (C2) acts as a beckoning gesture, encouraging and inviting the viewer to follow and join her in exploring the landscape.

The landscape in the majority of images contains many of the powerful qualities that we associate with the sublime, and yet the presence of the human tempers the sense of awe and drama. Through the sense of endeavour and conquer over the landscape, whether celebratory or reflective, the dominant affective quality of adventure images is a collective sensitivity for the achievement of the subject. We share in their reflection and/or euphoria, rather than being overwhelmingly affected by the landscape itself, which performs the role of context for personal achievement.

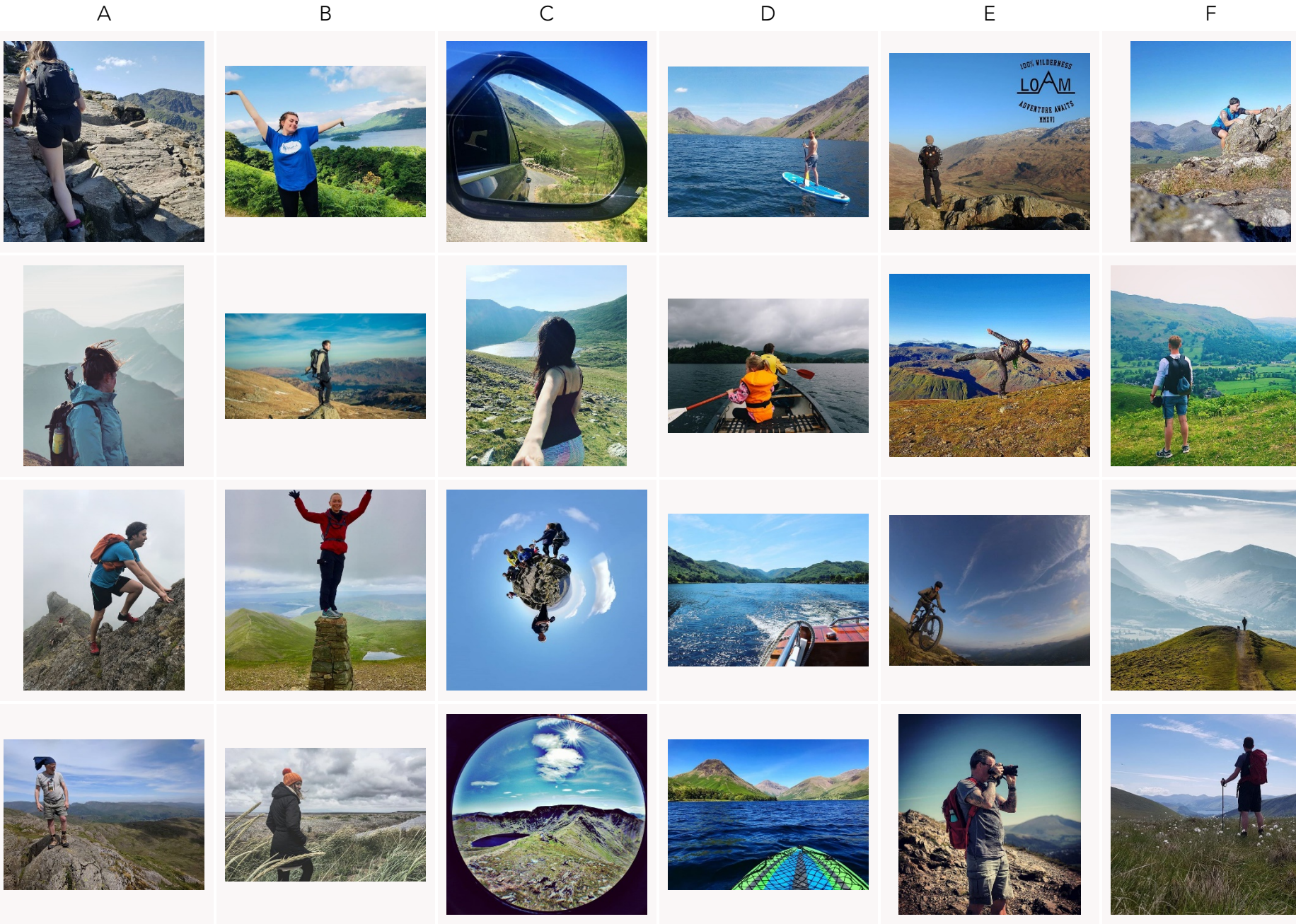


Image Plate 2: Digital Textures of Adventure in the #lakedistrict

iii. Awe

The rural wilderness is constructed most significantly for the viewer through significant evocations of the sublime. The continuation of this aesthetic tradition is the most marked commonality among images from the digital texture of Awe. These images can be seen as performing discursive qualities of ecotourism and unknown *tourism incognita* and distinctively nonhuman landscapes. In contrast to the densely packed textures of 'attachment', the sparse density of 'awe' textures tells us that these images are less frequently generated as a part of the hyperscene #lakedistrict. This frequency also enlightens us to the affective patterns (a textural interpretation of McCormack's visual 'rythmns' of the city; Latham and Mccormack, 2009) of digital textures as they are hyperseen on social media: due to its higher volume, where attachment is commonly-encountered and thus has a regular, soothing and expected pattern as we continuously encounter these images, in comparison 'awe' has a much less frequent, unpredictable and even volatile confronting presence.

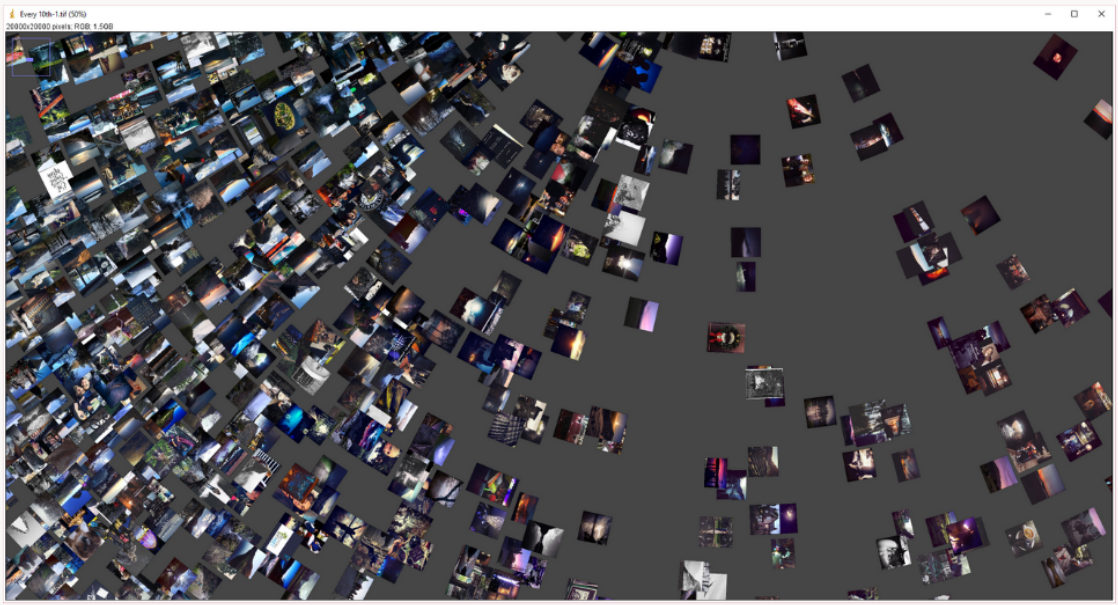


Figure 4. 13: Ex-Situ Digital Texture of Awe in the #lakedistrict

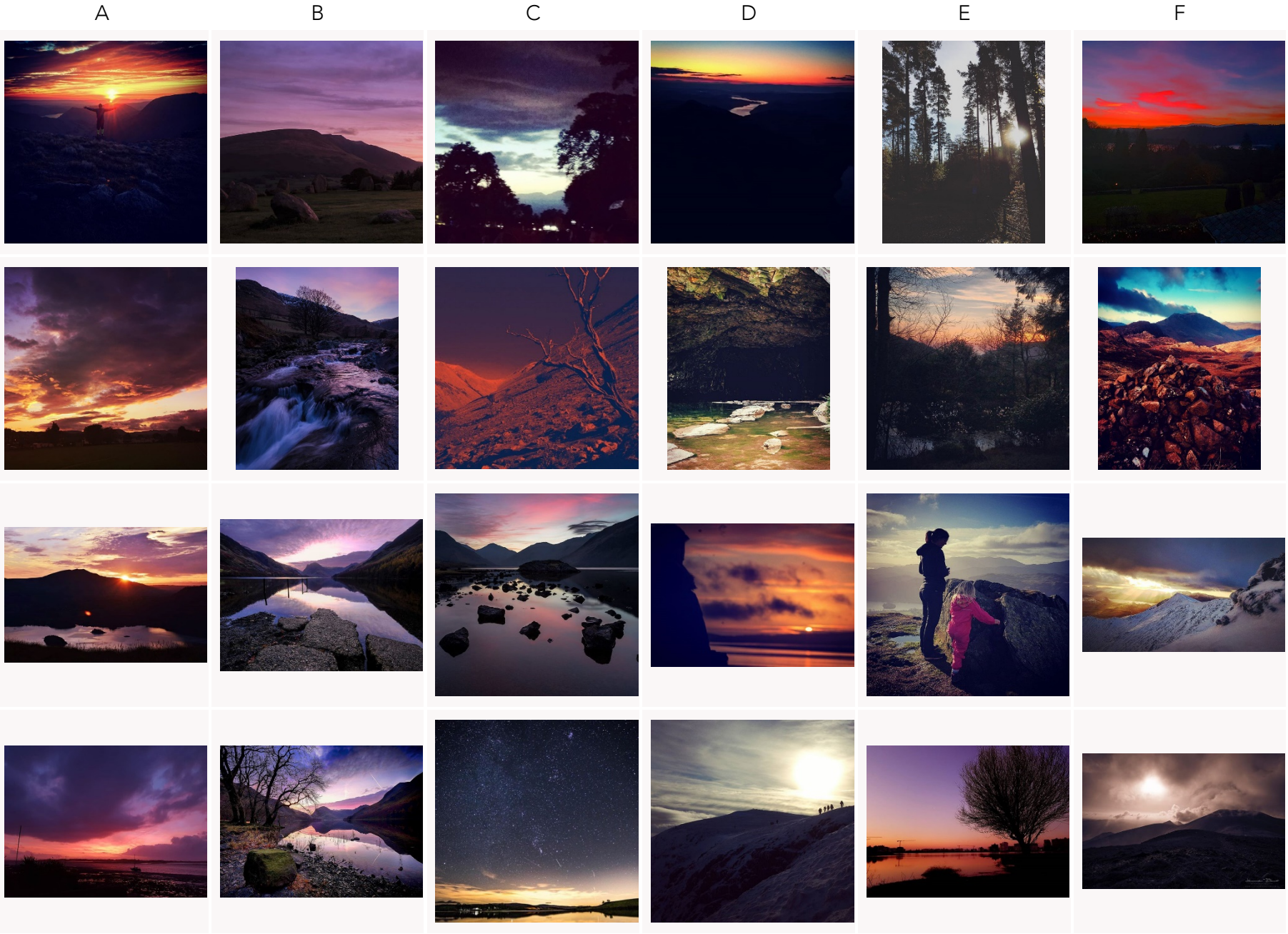


Image Plate 3: Digital Textures of Awe in the #lakedistrict

The grandiose scale and emphasis upon the nature as the predominant subject of awe is evidently representative of the aesthetic sublime tradition: the horizon is a consistent feature in images which evoke a sense of scale, shown effectively in Image Plate 3. The distinct skyline emphasises the shape of the mountain range to show distance from detail in the foreground, such as the lake pictures we see in columns B and C. However, the particular content of the images is not the most significant means through which a rural wilderness #lakedistrict is performed. Instead, their dramatic use of light and colour are the most direct manifestation of the sublime. It is the contrast of the skyline, as a dark silhouette against which a vivid, otherworldly sky is made luminous, which most intensely affects the viewer as Awe crosses the screen. Indeed, images of Awe are arguably the most conventional of the digital textures in their relationship to the 'romantic', utilising colour and light above all else to evoke and illustrate a mood of wonder and power. In returning to Turner's sublime painting of Buttermere Lake (above) the similarities between the composition and digital textures of awe are evident: a dark and impressive skyline is reliably contrasted against a sharp and vivid streak of colour across the image. This precedence is in contrast to the importance of composition for attachment and adventure which rely on picturesque framings first to convey their sentiments, which are enhanced rather than created through their particular colour palettes.

Moreover, these digital textures of awe are reminiscent of a sublime which is arguably more than an incarnation of grandeur and power, but also to some extent evokes the 'horror' that Burke argues may be incited by extremes of light and dark (Finley, 1979). In Column A, the saturation and severity in the contrast of the colour against the almost black horizons produces an assuredly transcendent, and almost apocalyptic overwhelming sensation, iconised in A1 by the barely visible single figure with his arms raised open to the heavens.

The potential sense of horror experienced in beholding images of Awe is arguably closely related to their manifestation as ecotourism discourses. In contrast to the more leisurely, recreational tourisms seen in attachment and adventure, nature-based tourisms of awe are manifest through more environmentally conscious discourses of ecotourism, and uncertain, exotic representations of *Tourism incognita* (Williams and Lew, 2015). The sublime evocation of 'horror', when considered through the concerns of ecotourism, also arguably provides the viewer with a sense of the apocalyptic; the vast scale and intense colours project an elemental

quality to the images, reminiscent of environmental peril. For instance, the expression of heat in A1, A2, D1, F1 and most evidently C2, contrasted with dark, cool earth tones, conjures a sense of a threatening geological force, suggestive of prophetic warnings regarding declining planetary health. D4 effectively incorporates the sublime aesthetic in this way, where one of the rare inclusions of humans shows a row of five walkers silhouetted against a huge and harsh glaring white sun, effectively contrasting the awe and almighty of planets with people.

Ecotourism characteristics such as the appreciation of nature, sustainably visited by small groups who aim to minimise their impact due to recognition of ecosystem fragility (Tuohino and Hynonen, 2001; Sontag and Foale, 2005) of are also alluded to through the frequency of pristine nature representations in Awe images. Alongside dramatic skylines, the use of atmospheric lakes (B3, B4, C3), caves (D2) and trees (E1, E2, E4, C1, B4) as the focal points of Awe images emphasise a practice of 'picturing pristineness' (Sontag and Foale, 2005). Images of the still lakes in (B3 &4, C3) represent an extremely different interaction with nature by tourists, 'as if we were never here', in stark contrast to the adventure images where the human engagement with the elements is recorded by the chopping, foaming and rippling waters of lakes. Another example of picturing pristineness is the 'wildness' of nature, emphasised by the depiction of messy vegetation (seen in E2). The silhouettes of many unruly overlapping branches generate the sense that these places are very infrequently visited (and thereby 'spoiled') by tourists, and have remained uncontrolled and un-conquered by humans, in contrast to the managed countryside of the rural idyll, and the conquered landscapes of adventure.

This notion of the untamed landscape is also representative of tourism incognita; alluding to spaces of either threat and avoidance (terra intimidus) or the completely unknown wilderness (terra incognita) (Lew, 1987, Williams and Lew, 2015, p. 223). The intimidating nature of the landscape is emphasised by harsh lines and unforgiving conditions of the landscape, (F3) which evokes the sensation of an uncrossed and hostile terrain that is aesthetically impressive but too daunting to climb. Even the trees in E1, in contrast to the leafy, almost cushioning trees which provided the settings for attachment, are depicted as extremely tall, domineering and almost overbearing in their exclusion of light. These images are unsettling as trees are usually considered to evoke a sense of care and connectedness with nature (Jepson and

Sharpley, 2015). As has been discussed above, the images of Awe demonstrate a powerful and 'awesome' natural landscape which is at times translated as almost so overwhelming that the viewer may feel 'a sense of separation, a lack of control, and inability to connect with the natural environment' (Kane, 2018, p. 123). What is important to note here is the surprising sensation that these unexpected colour choices evoke for the viewer, emphasising an unknown dimension to #lakedistrict.

In contrast to the images of attachment and adventure, where the human is almost exclusively present or represented, it is apparent that digital textures of awe have a distinctly nonhuman quality. Any representations of technology or infrastructure are notably absent, offering the impression that this nature remains 'unviolated' by human interference (Sontag and Foale, 2005). Moreover, and as has been discussed above, there is a nonhuman dimension to some of these images that is almost unearthly, such as the bare tree in the second row of column C. By inverting the colours and maximising the contrast of the image, to a black and red image, the editor evokes a shocking and disconcerting #lakedistrict; this tree appears to belong on a landscape which might not even be of this planet. The dark and dusty red presents the land as harsh, unnatural, and barren. Moreover, the editor's bicolour composition even evokes a sense of nonhuman, almost extra-terrestrial imaging, as if this image were taken by a robot on a far-flung planet across the solar system.

4.3 Encountering the hyperscene #lakedistrict as hyperseen digital textures.

This analysis demonstrates how connections between the physical Lake District, bodies, and the online #lakedistrict are mediated through the screen and the Instagram platform, by illustrating the recursive relationship between the hyperscene and the hyperseen. Three 'digital textures' of the #lakedistrict, attachment, adventure and awe, are manifest as continuations of existing dominant ruralities of the Lake District, as it has been represented for several hundred years. Through methods of cultural analytics, the chapter has examined the #lakedistrict as a hyperscene place at varied scales. The chapter has outlined both the romantic trajectories which from which these textures are established, and explained how these textures are now encountered, both discursively and affectively, as tourist-based, anthropocentric contemporary manifestations which are *felt and embodied* as much as they

are understood when encountered in digital spaces. These nuances are summarised in the rural typology developing throughout the thesis.

Hyperscene typology of the #lakedistrict: Conceived Space

Hyperscene representations of English Nature in the #lakedistrict	Rural Idyll	Rural Play	Rural Wilderness
Rural Idylls (Bell, 2006)	Recreational	Sporting	Natural
Media Representations: *Aesthetic Traditions*	Beauty/ Picturesque	Picturesque/ Sublime	Sublime
Representations of the Rural: *Nature Based Tourism Discourses*	Rural & Heritage Tourism	Adventure-Sport Tourism	EcoTourism, Tourism Incognita
Digital Textures of the Hyperscene #lakedistrict	Attachment	Adventure	Awe
Precense of Human in Rurality	Human Central	Human *in-Situ*	Nonhuman
Hyperseen characteristics of images identified in digital textures	Warm Glow	Bold Radiance	Vivid Luminosity
Affective Qualities of Digital Textures	Comfort	Invigoration	Exhilarating
Characterising Hyperseen Digital Textures of the Hyperscene	Warm, soft, comforting, familiar	Refreshing, pleasing, luscious	Hard, shining, sharp, unsettling

Figure 4. 14: How characteristics of digital textures are manifest in a hyperscene typology of the #lakedistrict

In the next chapter, we look more closely at the way ruralities are produced, rather than consumed, as we closely examine two landscape 'influencers' of the #lakedistrict: @herdyshepherd and @thelakelanders.

Chapter 5

Candid | Poetic: Exploring Influences and Aesthetics of Authenticity in the #lakedistrict

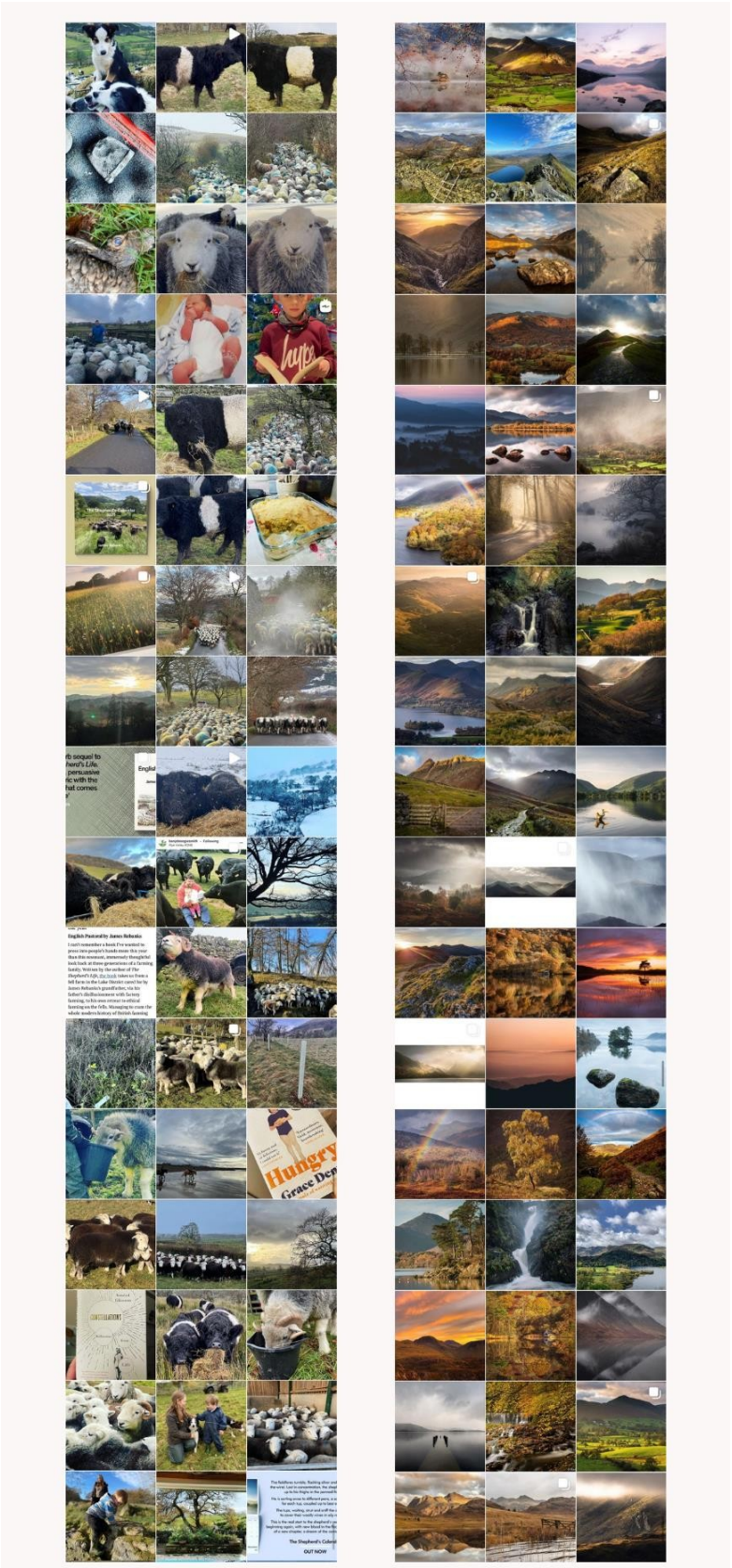
5.1 Introduction

Becoming 'influential' through digital media, especially Instagram, is a divisive but lucrative contemporary vocation and the potential impact of a positive relationship with the branding of a given product, or *place*, is ever-increasing. Intimately intertwined within the potential influence and reach of a visual social media user is their particular *aesthetic*: the common threads of colour, style, content and composition which runs throughout their grid to give the viewer a sense of who they are, what they are, and *where they are*.

This chapter explores the accounts of two remarkably popular Lake District Instagram users, @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders, which were introduced earlier.It examines how they have established and enacted visual modes of authenticity as #lakedistrict influencers inthree parts: part one compares and contrasts their *processes* of curating an influence *through* Instagram - examining what personas and platform approaches these accounts employed to establish themselves as #lakedistrict 'Influencers'. It argues that @herdyshepherd1's influence is constructed from a duality of 'native'[11] personas, where @thelakelanders utilise a 'networked' approach to develop their online influence.

Part two explores the *practices* involved in curating an influential account *of* the Instagram #lakedistrict. Through the grid of @herdyshepherd1 the #lakedistrict is understood as what I term a 'candid pastoral' which utilises unposed, unprofessional images which enhance the humble farmer persona and more everyday rural lifestyle aesthetic evident in his literary works. @thelakelanders' authentic aesthetic is a complex combination of professional approaches and designed style which together are curated to create what I term a 'poetic landscape'.

[11] @herdyshepherd is conceptualised as both as a landscape 'native' and social media 'native'



@herdyshepherd1 (left) and @thelakelanders (right) on Instagram

Figure 5. 1: Grid samples from the case study Instagram accounts explored in Chapter 5

Part three closes by exploring the dynamic ecologies *produced by* these Instagrammers, demonstrating that the authenticities of their accounts move beyond the Instagram platform, and even become manifest in physical places as well as the hyperlocal #lakedistrict. These three cumulative sections speak to the interconnected, multimodal relationship between geography and the digital outlined by Ash *et al* of geographies produced through, produced by, and of the digital (2018). The chapter closes with a summary of these interrelated geographies of the #lakedistrict and speaks to the ever-evolving nature of the processes and practices of authenticity in digital places as aesthetics in flux.

Where chapter one focused upon the 'hyperseen' qualities of population-volume quantities of the hyperlocal #lakedistrict, chapter two will expand understandings of #lakedistrict visualities/materialities (Rose and Tolia-Kelly, 2012) as they are co-constituted by the two powerful Instagrammers in question. Though their images may often be viewed as hyperseen, within the constant stream of images that users scroll through on their news feed, these accounts are also viewed by users as a digital, visual curated archive (Geismar, 2017). With this in mind, I extend the hyperscene typology first developed in chapter 4 to explore the aesthetic techniques, styles, and visual choices (Manovich, 2017) made by @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders within their Instagram grids.[12]

Visual Methodology of the Instagram Grid

To examine the aesthetic choices and authentic qualities expressed within these two profiles, I employ a methodology of *Instagramism* that was introduced in chapter 3. Where this analysis focuses on individual user accounts, I argue that an analysis of their visuality necessitates a methodological focus at the scale of their grid rather than simply examining the images in isolation.

[12] user page wherein their images are collectively stored in reverse chronological order

Instagram Account Handle	Figure/Organisation	No. Posts	No. Followers[13]
@lakedistrict	Lake District Forum Account by 'Photos of Britain'	447	183,000
@onelakedistrict	One Lake District Forum Account	838	72,900
@thelakelanders	The Lakelanders	2083	52,600
@lakedistrictcumbria	Cumbria Tourism: Visit the Lake District	1,055	51,700
@herdyshepherd1	James Rebanks	4738	28,200
@lakedistrictnpa	Lake District National Park Authority	609	25,600
@herdy_uk	Herdy UK	893	10,500
@ntlakedistrict	National Trust in the Lake District	245	8,509
@friendsoflakes	Friends of the Lake District	232	1,847
@lakedistrictfoundation	The Lake District Foundation	214	1,429

Table 5. 1: Ten of the most popular Lake District-related accounts on Instagram

I utilise methods that Manovich and others have used to ascertain the aesthetics and authenticities of Instagram images to ask questions of these two unique profiles about their own stylised curation of an authentic, digital #lakedistrict aesthetic. These questions are outlined in the methodology to interrogate how @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders have achieved their positions of influence *through* their use of Instagram (and, as we will see, other social media) within the #lakedistrict.

5.2 Processes of Becoming Influencers through an Instagram #lakedistrict.

This section outlines the context and strategies that these accounts have utilised to develop and sustain their influence as authentic producers of the online #lakedistrict.

@herdyshepherd1 as a Native #lakedistrict Influencer

I characterise the ways through which @herdyshepherd1 has utilised Instagram to become influential as contrasting and yet interrelated online manifestations of *nativeness*. @herdyshepherd1 simultaneously has inhabited and interacted with Instagram as a 'social media native' (Giles, 2017) wherein his *process* of gaining influence has developed alongside the growth of social media. @herdyshepherd1 also performs his authenticity (Giles, 2018, p. 146) online as a 'landscape native', where his online *persona* emphasises the local, place-based nature of his rural livelihood and identity. Thus, @herdyshepherd1 is enabled to perform his place-based 'landscape native' persona *through* digitised 'social media native' processes.

[13] As of 10 June 2020, rounded to nearest 100 if over 10k

Giles has defined 'social media natives' as 'authors whose careers have coincided with the rise of social media' (2017, p. 446) developing further Prensky's concept of the 'digital native' (2001) for interactive web2.0 platforms which are predicated upon user engagement and the 'social' dimensions of digital media. When conceptualising Instagram authenticity, I identified two key characteristics of the influencer as a persuasive character with an active viewership. In contrast to Giles' analysis of natives' interactions with their fans/followers on a single platform, where the quantitative evidence of @herdyshepherd's Twitter and Instagram follower figures (Table 5. 1) are evidence of his viewership, I focus this analysis on examining how his persuasive *character* is intimately intertwined with Rebanks' use of social media.



Figure 5. 2: @herdyshepherd1 on social media as a 'landscape native'

The notion of the 'landscape native' persona is derived from Patrick Laurie's memoir, *Native* (2020), which documents his return 'back to the [home]land' (Halfacree, 2007) in Galloway, Scotland, and draws effective parallels of the interdependence between the native cattle and biodiversity, with traditional pastoral identities and nature-friendly upland farming. This concept thus speaks to contemporary ways that rurality is performed (Woods, 2010) as a simultaneously old-fashioned and stereotypical 'gruffness', which is identified in the masculine discursive tone of rural writers such as Rebanks, with practices of future-gazing (Woods, 2012)

which emphasise and champion localised, nature-friendly, sustainable livestock breeds and agricultural practices.

Here, I compare and contrast @herdyshepherd1's Instagram presence with Rebanks' other publications and social media activities over his professional career to illustrate his influence and persona as a 'landscape native' is enabled *through* his digitised 'social media native' status. It is through his strategic choices and distinct forms of engagement across different digital media that @herdyshepherd1 becomes a persuasive, authentic online persona who is intimately connected to the online #lakedistrict (see Figure 5.3 for an anecdotal yet effective example!)

Firstly, @herdyshepherd1's position as a social media native can be genealogically traced through his use of social media over more than a decade. @herdyshepherd1 first joined Twitter and Instagram in early 2012, when both platforms were still growing in prevalence. His history with first embarking on social media reads, through his online biographies, as rather a happy accident:

> '*Old world met new when a shepherd in the English Lake District impulsively started a Twitter account. A routine cell phone upgrade left author James Rebanks with a pretty decent camera and a pre-loaded Twitter app--the tools to share his way of life with the world. And what began as a tentative experiment became an international phenomenon.*'
>
> (The Shepherd's Life by James Rebanks, 2015)

Furthermore, the direct and causal relationship between Rebanks' social media use and his subsequent popularity as an author are made explicit in interviews where he, surprisingly, expresses resistance to online engagement:

> '*I didn't want to start doing it [social media]! I didn't have any interest in it. For about six months, I had a few friends that were talking about it, and I didn't think it was anything to do with me at all. Then out of curiosity, when I got a new phone I just for an experiment started putting some pictures on of some sheep. But I had no expectation of it being particularly successful.*' (McKenna and Rebanks, 2015)

This impression of Rebanks' resistance and doubt in the relevance of social media to his own life is further reinforced when we also consider that Rebanks maintained anonymity on his social media for over three years. At the time of writing his breakthrough article for the Atlantic in 2013, he tweeted anonymously because:

> '*that's how I like it. My feed is not really about me: I'm just a narrator. It's about the way my people farm an amazing landscape, the sheep, the land, the sheepdogs, and the characters in our valley. It's not really in the spirit of my community to self-promote... The individual is not that important here compared to the collective way of life.*' (Herdy Shepherd, 2013)

These comments are reflective of Rebanks' persuasive character as somewhat of a reluctant tweeter and 'native' humble farmer. This simplified and 'distilled' version of Rebanks' character is effective for developing an easily understandable personal brand (Dean Hund, 2019, p. 49). There is also a vital landscape native place-based dimension to this persona, wherein Herdy Shepherd (anonymous Rebanks) has framed his Lake District and the local community with utopian facets of the rural idyll.

Moreover, such summaries of Rebanks' rise to a role as something of an 'working class hero' (Rebanks, 2015, p. 140) ambassador for rural communities in the Lake District and across England emphasise the 'authentic' facets of his public persona. Book descriptions and interviews with Rebanks reinforce the impression that his decision to join social media was 'impulsive' rather than premeditated, and an 'experiment' (McKenna and Rebanks, 2015) in sharing his life with the world, as it was for thousands of other users becoming accustomed to social media in their pockets. These online descriptions assist in underscoring the casual narrative which is evident in his social media presence: Rebanks' rise to prominence and subsequent impact are a series of fortuitous incidents rather than premeditated strategies.

However, this narrative of good fortune should be closely considered in relation to Rebanks' other roles and qualifications. Despite the persona of a brusque, humble tweeting farmer, Rebanks diverges from the demographic of his shepherding neighbours in several ways. In terms of education, Rebanks has a degree in History from the University of Oxford. He has also worked professionally for several local tourism companies, previously produced a regular column for the magazine Cumbria Life, currently writes for UnHerd online, and runs his own

consulting firm which has done work for organisations such as UNESCO on the economic impact of World Heritage status (Rebanks Consulting Ltd & Trends Research Ltd, 2009, 2011).

These credentials in professional spheres of heritage and tourism arguably provide Rebanks with a different perspective and strategic capacity from which to engage the general public, and brand both the Lake District and Place and his individual persona, than the experiences of most upland sheep farmers. This capacity is amply demonstrated in Rebanks' own report to ICOMOS regarding the role of narrative and heritage in placemaking:

> *'I believe there is an intellectual element in the development of communities that we might, in the name of simplicity, call the stories people tell about those places. Shared narratives about places can define both what they are now, but also what they can be in the future…*
>
> *…The best practice [World Heritage Sites] we identified have found themselves at the cutting edge of a world movement which seeks to focus the economic development of places on their uniqueness, their authenticity, their distinct sense of place, and the depth of their identity and culture. And to engage with the rest of the world from a position of confidence, selling distinct products and services at added value based upon their provenance.'* (Rebanks, 2011)

Rebanks' recognition of the role of compelling place narrative in the social and economic success of heritage campaigns is here made explicit in the year prior to him first embarking upon Twitter. This professional consideration appears particularly jarring with Rebanks' Herdy Shepherd persona when compared with his earlier comments (above), which express much less confidence in these same dynamics of engaging in narratives of place.

Furthermore, in Rebanks' more public-facing commentaries and literary works, he further distances himself from the places and cultures of formal education. In his latest memoir, English Pastoral, Rebanks reminisces: 'Thankfully, my father never sent me to agricultural college. He was old-school and thought *those places* turned out people that knew the cost of everything and the value of nothing' (Rebanks, 2020, p. 230 emphasis added). Interestingly, Rebanks does not use this space to reflect on the place of his own very privileged education, opportunities and networks through his time at Oxford, but has, through other media,

continued to differentiate himself from the cultures associated with his University (see 'What Oxford Taught Me About Posh People', (Rebanks, 2021)).

These conflicting comments demonstrate a sharp contrast between Rebanks' institutional, professional works and qualifications and his public, social media oriented persuasive character. In one forum, he emphasises the importance of compelling narratives of place based upon his own comprehensive research. In the other, he assumes a position of reluctance and humility which endears him to the reader. Even the negative language used in his comments regarding Twitter seem in conflict with the positive, confident tone of his academic message. These contradictory histories indicate that Rebanks utilises a considered strategic approach to his respective public personas to respective target audiences which is resonant with the notion of self-branding (Khamis, Ang and Welling, 2017).



Figure 5. 3: @herdyshepherd1 as the Friendly Farmer



Figure 5. 4: @herdyshepherd1 leaving twitter in 2018

Finally, I situate these dynamics and strategies relating to Rebanks persuasive character more specifically in relation to Instagram. Rebanks use of social media reflects these considered strategies in multiple ways. Rebanks narrative voice on social media is informal yet varied. His posts can range from brusque, simple informative tweets about everyday land management, to humorous engagement with followers he knows, or commentary on current affairs. These findings are based in many months of online observation through digital ethnography, rather than methods of more 'heavy' discourse analysis which are less suited to the 'noisy and unstructured' form of texts such as tweets (Mukherjee and Bhattacharyya, 2012) which are of course, brief (and in some ways informal) by design. During the most intensive period of my fieldwork in 2018, where I spend 6 months conducting observations of Lake District farmers (both online and offline), was a particularly significant time for @herdyshepherd1's relationship with social media.

The examples in Figures 5.3 and 5.4 show some of the tweets and Instagram posts during one week in June 2018, when Rebanks left Twitter for a year. In Figure 5.3, we see examples of tweets which reflect both Rebanks' humour and also emphasise his approach to nature friendly farming as a local landscape native. In particular, the bottom tweet effectively illustrates several key dimensions of @herdyshepherd1's persona: a) the tweet highlights Rebanks' popular use of imagery across social media, b) it emphasises @herdyshepherd1's ancestral heritage within the landscape by referencing his grandfather and 'our land', c) the reference to his grandfather 'turning in his grave' about a perceived weed contrasts the more conventional agricultural practices of the late 20th century with Rebanks approach to nature-friendly farming, and d) the grandfather's imagined, interrelated questions about Twitter and not 'working' signify @herdyshepherd1's subtle emphasis on farming as his 'real' work, implying that his social media use and related literary success are secondary and thus reinforcing the 'reluctant' social-media-user-come-humble-farmer rural persona that he performs.

Rebanks' complicated relationship with social media and 'reluctant' rural ambassador status is evident in Figure 5.4, where we see he announces his decision to leave twitter following a difficult time as part of the government's Landscapes' Review advisory Panel. Whilst the tweets themselves emphasise the brittle nature of social media, and also indicate a brusque

personality which aligns with other interviews, it is Rebanks' engagement with social media, particularly Instagram, immediately *after* this departure from Twitter which tells us more about Rebanks as a social media native. In contrast to the idea of the 'digital native' who is born into and is fundamentally 'of' a digital generation, the social media native is a user who grows professionally with the platforms they inhabit: in the case of Rebanks, this is evident where we see his digital status evolve through Instagram in relation to his reduced use of Twitter.

Figure 5.5 shows how @herdyshepherd1's use of Instagram markedly increases during the time he is absent from Twitter. Not only does the volume of Instagram posts increase, but we also see a change in the quality of his posts, where Rebanks uses significantly more captions (indicated in blue) on his Instagram posts than previously. In this way, we see that @herdyshepherd1's initial uptake and increased use of Instagram began as a proxy for his use of Twitter as a public outlet. This background to Rebanks is important to understand his Instagram account, as he comes to engage more with the platform once he is already in some ways an 'influencer' in other public spheres and social media platforms. In contrast to the way that we will see The Lakelanders have strategically yet organically developed their Instagram following, Rebanks has a pre-existing audience and 'micro-celebrity' status from his use of Twitter, and so his Influencer position is to some extent an indirectly developed expression of his wider reputation. In this way, Rebanks' engagement with Instagram and his 'vertical' position as an influencer on the Platform can be understood as a top-down development of influence. Nonetheless, his use of the platform has continued to evolve into a compelling visual account of the #lakedistrict, as we shall see in the next section of this chapter.

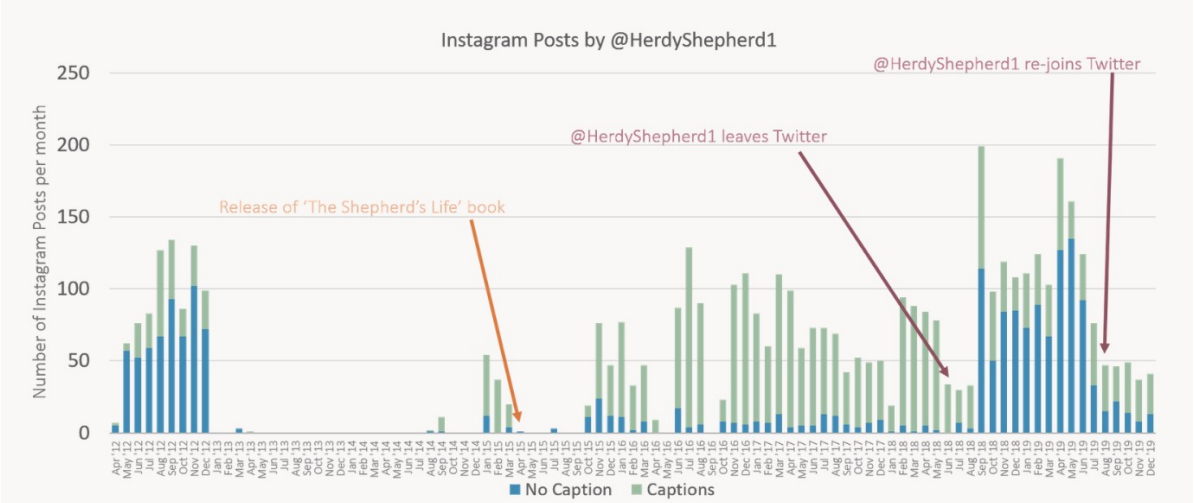


Figure 5. 5: Illustrating Changes in Instagram use by @herdyshepherd1

@thelakelanders as Networking #lakedistrict Influencers

In establishing themselves as one of the most popular visual social media accounts associated with the #lakedistrict, @thelakelanders have employed a number of bottom-up strategies which enabled them to emerge as, it will be argued here, key influencers in the #lakedistrict's contemporary sublime aesthetic. To demonstrate the effect of these strategic choices, I employ the model of the networked audience, outlined by Marwick and Boyd (2010), to illustrate how @thelakelanders have navigated and, at times, assimilated audiences to construct their authentic presence as #lakedistrict influencers. The networked audience 'consists of real and potential viewers for digital content that exist within a larger social graph. These viewers are connected not only to the user, but to each other, creating an active, communicative network; connections between individuals differ in strength and meaning' (Marwick and Boyd, 2010, 16). @thelakelanders' networking influencer status is demonstrated here through three examples of their approaches to generate impact: audience engagement, hashtag utilisation and competition.

Throughout the account's presence there has been a high level of consistent engagement with followers, encouraging them to connect with the account in an enthusiastic manner. From the very early posts, @thelakelanders have consistently made efforts to reply to a large proportion of the comments they receive on their images, demonstrating the value they place upon their followers' remarks, even if this only with a 'Thank you' and some friendly emojis in response to a compliment about the post image. This scale of response is evident throughout @thelakelanders' account history. The two tables in the Appendix show the image comments and @thelakelanders' replies to each follower who commented on the post from two randomly selected posts in 2017 (POST A) and 2019 (POST B). The commenters vary from other Lakelanders, to future Lakelanders who are currently fans of the page, to other unrelated amateur photographers and fans. Each comment is replied to with a jovial thank you, very often made informal and more friendly by the use of emojis alongside text. With the other Lakelanders (see Table 5. 2), we see both commenters use a comfortable tone and sometimes even nicknames to complement their colleagues. This language and familiarity indicate that

the group members have a genuine friendship, and emphasises a sense of community, closeness, and mutual support between the photographers.

POST A	
Danieljtoal	Brilliant mate @will.holligan
Thelakelanders	@danieltoal_photography thanks mate ☺️🍻

POST B	
wandering_the_wainwrights	Sweet shot Timbo!! That's got to rate up there with the best of them!! Top composition 👌 movement and colour of the water and the snow capped tops!! Yeah I like it a lot!! 😍😍😍
thelakelanders	@wandering_the_wainwrights Thanks very much Captain, yeah it was just perfect conditions.

Table 5. 2: Positive Language in and familiarity in @thelakelanders use of Instagram

Furthermore, in engagement with future Lakelanders members, we see evidence of some familiarity and a shared sense of purpose and vocational satisfaction (Table 5. 3). These encounters demonstrate the 'working together' that is done by affiliated Lakelander individuals and their associates to uphold and enhance the self-image of an open and enthusiastic group with which other followers may want to increase their own engagement. This 'impression management' demonstrates an example at an intimate level of what Goffman has called 'symbolic interactionism', wherein social media identities are established and maintained through 'constant interactions with others' (Goffman in Marwick and Boyd, 2010, p. 10). Moreover, the frequency with which these affiliated users engage with @thelakelanders exemplifies that for the networked audience, the following is 'unidentified, but [nonetheless] contains familiar faces' (Marwick and Boyd, 2010, p. 16) who assist the account in the management of its identity.

POST B

Carmennormanphotography	Love deepdale. Great image
Thelakelanders	@carmennormanphotography hey thanks Carmen. Yeah it's such a great place, I can't wait to get back up there 😀👍

Table 5. 3: Shared sense of purpose in @thelakelanders use of Instagram

With other fans, the account always says thank you in an enthusiastic and animated (usually literally with emojis) manner which imbues a sense of real appreciation (Table 5. 4). Even the less-passionate comments from other users are met with the same level of appreciation and affability from the Lakelanders. Therefore, the gratitude that the Lakelanders provide towards their followers is consistently employed, and engenders a sense of reciprocity, recognition and an earnestness which further encourages users to continue their engagement with the page. This conduct goes beyond the usual expected model of social media behaviour, especially for larger 'influencer' accounts, where the relationship between users is a unidirectional friendship model with 'no technical requirement of reciprocity, and often, no social expectation of such'(Marwick and Boyd, 2010, p. 3). That the Lakelanders exceed these social media conventions through their follower interactions emphasises an openness and conscious effort to engage with their networked audience. This is very different from the partial audience engagement we see from @HerdyShepherd, who tends to only reply to limited numbers of comments, mostly to answer a specific question related to the content of his post.

POST A

Weggiesdreamshots	Amazing shot 👌👍🔝😍
Thelakelanders	@weggiesdreamshots Hey thanks very much Mark, appreciate the comments 😀👍👍

POST B

andy_willock_photography	Awesome 🙌
thelakelanders	@andy_willock_photography Thank you very much Andy 😀👍
b_anthony_photography	Cool
thelakelanders	@b_anthony_photography Thanks very much Pal 👍

Table 5. 4: Amiable engagement with other fans in @thelakelanders use of Instagram

Another strategy utilised by @thelakelanders to expand their audience reach is through their use of Instagram's networked infrastructure: hashtags. Briefly returning to the existing

literature exploring hashtags[14], Zappavigna examines the 'meaning in context' of hashtags through three dimensions: experiential meanings of hashtags (such as the 'topic' to which the hashtag refers and thus realises within the post), textual meanings (the way hashtags are ordered around and alongside other words to give the text it's structure) and interpersonal meanings (where hashtags enhance or 'colour' other word meanings within the text) (2015, p. 279).

@thelakelanders began to utilise key hashtags' experiential meanings to both engage with existing audiences and content providers of the Instagram LakeDistrict, and simultaneously to establish their own network. Here, in @thelakelanders' first public post, we can see that they have already included two key hashtags which illustrate their interactions with these two communities: #thelakelanders, the folksonomy they are establishing for themselves, and #lakedistrict, the key folksonomy associated with the National Park, already explored in detail in Chapter 4. Through utilising popular and pre-existing hashtags, starting with #lakedistrict, @thelakelanders intentionally increase their exposure to a wide audience by interacting with and employing the primary *classificatory* function of hashtags (Zappavigna, 2015, p. 282). Viewing hashtags with this basic cataloguing function, they can be understood as 'subjects' or 'keywords' which describe what the post in the image is about.

In later posts, the account begins to significantly increase the number of tags incorporated: exactly a month after their first post, the same contributor @royce_06 shares an image with 29 hashtags (Figure 5.6). In this instance, @thelakelanders again add their own hashtag (#thelakelanders), but here *within* the caption to promote its usage through a chance to

[14] The concept of hashtags is outlined more fully in the thesis literature review

feature on the account (which will be discussed shortly), imbuing the hashtag with a textual dimension.

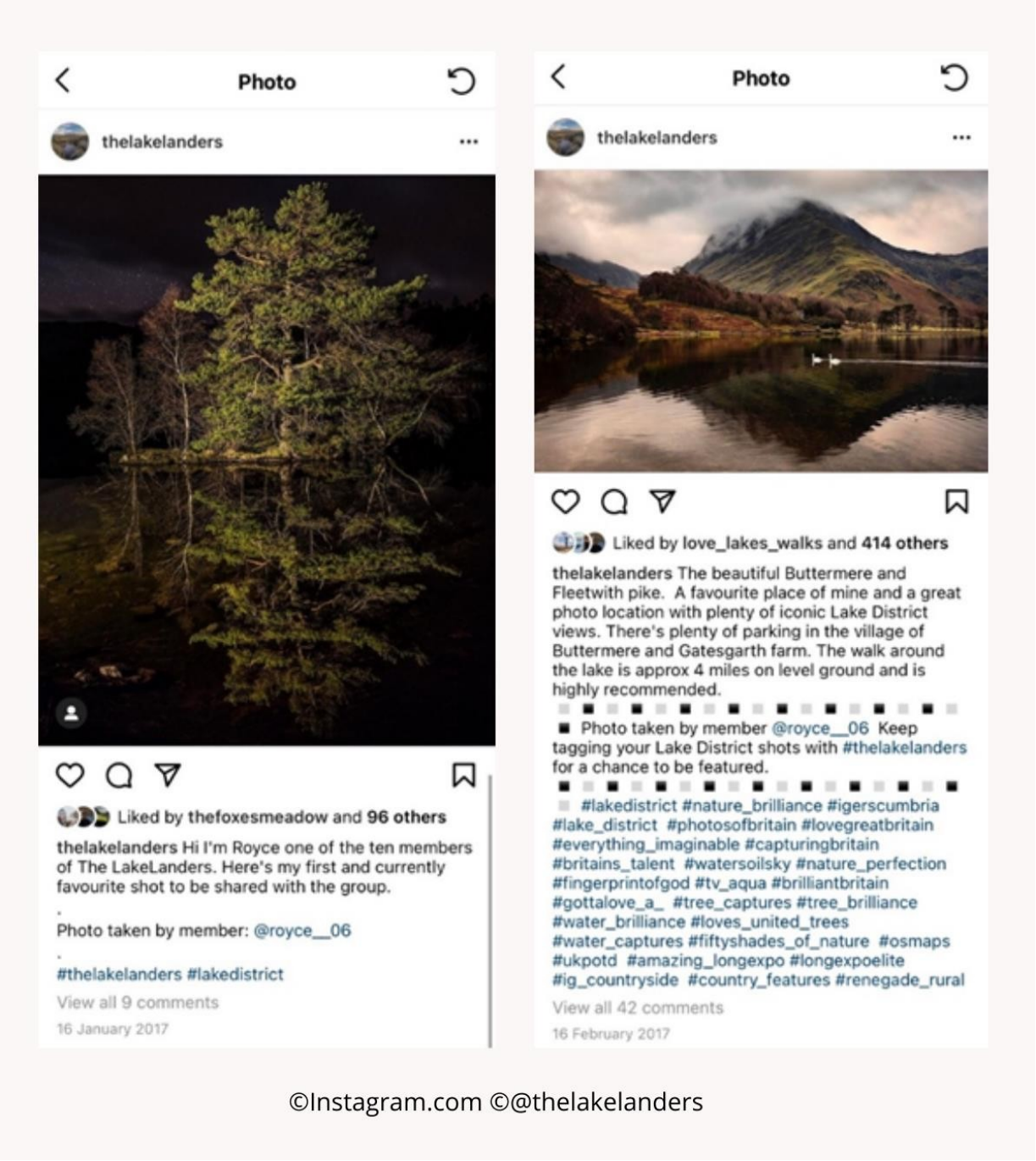


Figure 5. 6: Increased use of hashtags in @thelakelanders' first month of content

More telling, though, of the broader ways @thelakelanders use hashtags, is the wide range of folksonomies illustrated in this post. Since Instagram enabled users to 'follow' hashtags as well as other users , their popularity, and notably the convention for adding so many to increase the exposure of images, has increased dramatically. In Table 5. 5, I have drawn out the themes to which these hashtags relate as local, regional and even global nature-related hashtags, also including a professional dimension with the tags relating to photography.

Local	#lakedistrict #igerscumbria #lake_district
National	#photosofbritain #lovegreatbritain #capturingbritain #britains_talent #brilliantbritain #ukpotd
Rural	#ig_countryside #country_features #renegade_rural
Nature	#nature_brilliance #everything_imaginable #watersoilsky #nature_perfection #fingerprintofgod #tv_aqua #gottalove_a_ #tree_captures #tree_brilliance #water_brilliance #loves_united_trees#water_captures #fiftyshades_of_nature #osmaps
Photography	#amazing_longexpo #longexpoelite

Table 5. 5: Themes in @thelakelanders' hashtags

Many of these hashtags are extremely popular 'forums' for Instagram posts in their own right, with a set of aesthetic conventions that users follow. Some of these conventions are evident from the hashtag title (eg. #lakedistrict or #PhotosofBritain) where others are far less explicit in their experiential, textual, or even interpersonal meanings. To take #fingerprintofgod as an example, this is an extremely popular nature-based hashtag which has been used over 1.5 million times, but it does not describe in its title with any real specificity what images attached to the tag will portray. Figure 5. 7 shows some of the most popular images associated with the hashtag. These nature images show beautiful images of landscapes, flora and fauna with often dramatic or bold colouring and a clean, professional aesthetic. The #fingerprintofgod hashtagged images can be read as earnest celebrations of nature as having an almost transcendental quality understandable as divine creation. These hashtags are not wholly or readily explained through their linguistic meanings as identified by Zappavigna (2015), and so we see that on Instagram a form of 'searchable talk' unique from other social media platforms has emerged, wherein the associated visualities attached to some hashtags have an intimate, reciprocal and equally important role in giving meaning. I argue, therefore, that on Instagram

a visual dimension has become inextricably intertwined with the hashtags as a connective and convocational apparatus, through which aesthetic forums are generated and connected.

To a smaller extent, the creation of the #thelakelanders hashtag aims to achieve similar forum-making goals. This is further evident with @thelakelanders' strategic use of incentive mechanisms which encourage follower engagement. Alongside the original im ages taken by the photographer-members of the account, the profile regularly introduces other accounts to the page through the use of regular 'features' and 'photographers of the week'. To be considered for inclusion, all users need to do is include the #thelakelanders hashtag on their own Instagram posts (illustrated in Figure 5. 8).



public #fingerprintofgod posts on Instagram

Figure 5. 7: The #fingerprintofgod hashtag as a popular nature forum on Instagram

The incentives to be featured on an exciting new account which, over time, has become extremely popular, and the prospect of having your images exposed to a relatively large number of followers is evident. Within the post, a sense of opportunity is emphasised through phrases such as 'chance to feature' which indicate a limited but exciting realm of possibility. Further, by adding 'good luck', @thelakelanders allude to a sense of competition to the post, further highlighting that to succeed in having your image shared by the group indicates an achievement. All these small strategies assist @thelakelanders in subtly encouraging users to not only engage with the account, but also, as the account 'judges' other images, helps them create authority for the account due to its ability to determine who is worthy of inclusion on their page. Here we are folks!

.

Starting from today, we will all be looking through the images used with our hashtag #thelakelanders

This is your *chance to feature* on our page!

.

We will be choosing a photographer on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, so there is plenty of opportunity for you all each week. Remember, your photos should be Lake District related!

.

Get involved and start using #thelakelanders if you haven't already!

.

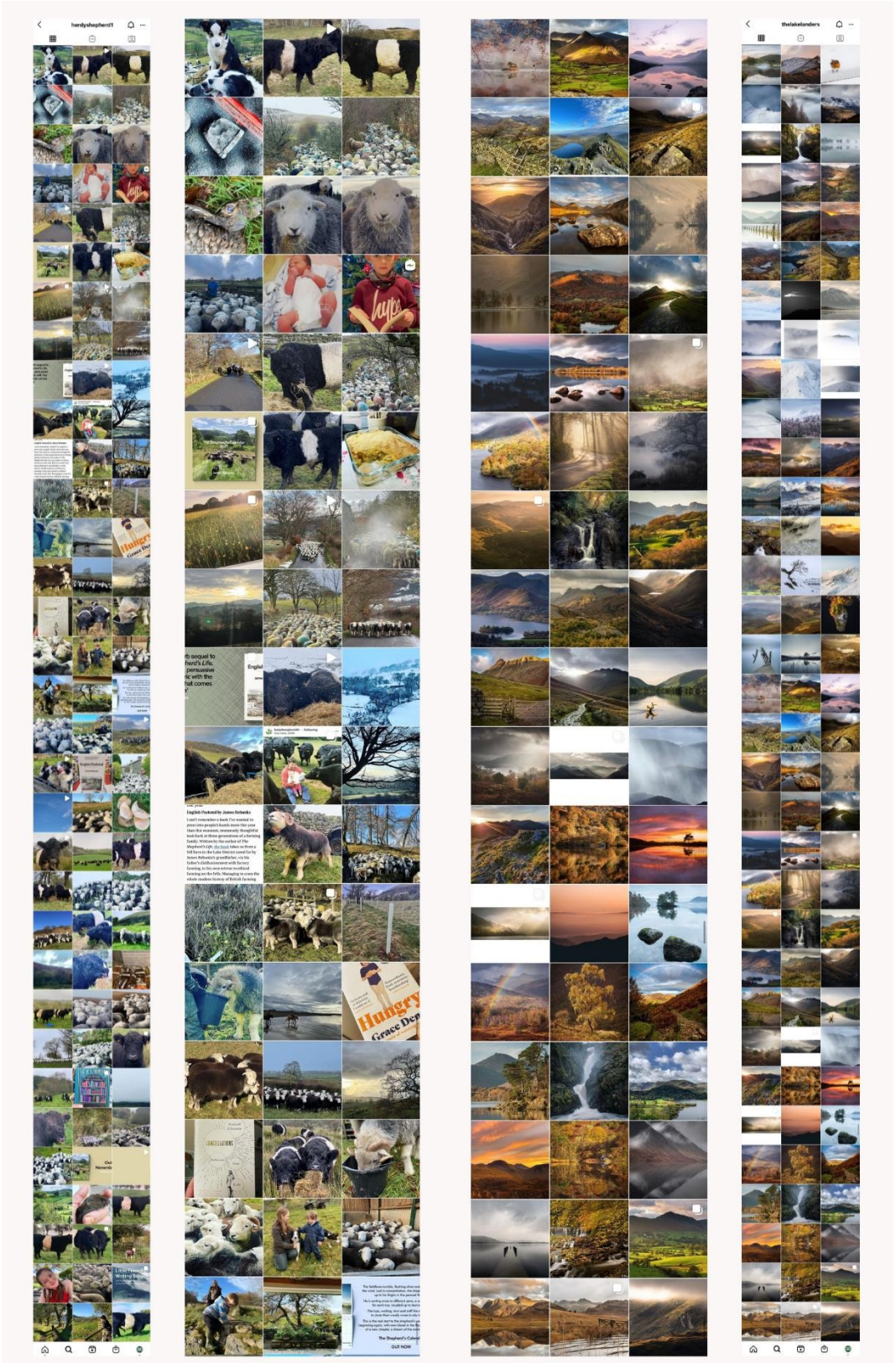
Good Luck 🤞

We look forward to seeing your fantastic photos!

#thelakelanders #lakedistrict

Figure 5. 8: Accompanying caption to first feature-related post, 23/01/2017. Emphasis added.

5.3 Authentic Aesthetic Practices *of* an Instagram #lakedistrict



99 image samples of Instagram grids from @herdyshepherd1 (left) and @thelakelanders (right) on Instagram. Most recent image for both grids (top left) on 27th December 2020.

Figure 5. 9: Instagram Grid Samples for @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders

In this section, I analyse how the unique digital social media 'archive' of the Instagram grid space is utilised by these accounts to curate their own authentic aesthetics of the Instagram #lakedistrict. Where 5.2 examined the 'processes' through which these two Instagram accounts have generated and utilised influence in the #lakedistrict, in this section we explore the 'practices' of making their own #lakedistricts and how they practice producing authenticity as an aesthetic. For this section, we utilise the prompt questions outlined in the visual methodology of Instagram in chapter 3.3 to examine what particular #lakedistricts are produced by these two accounts. To explore this curation, the analysis focuses upon image grids of 99 consecutive images from each author (Figure 5. 9), ending (chronologically most recently) on the 27th December 2020.

Authentic Aesthetics of the #lakedistrict in @herdyshepherd1: The Candid Pastoral.

@herdyshepherd1's Instagram grid curates what I term a 'candid pastoral' online #lakedistrict. His encounters with the landscape reflect an everyday, personal, and subjective account of the Lake District as sustainably managed yet nonetheless idyllic countryside, and the overall authenticity of his aesthetic is engendered through a *candid* style, indicating a sincerity and unposed quality which emphasises his humble rural persona.

@herdyshepherd1's images reflect, in general, an example of what Manovich refers to as 'casual photos', which 'visually document and share an experience, a situation, or portray a person or a group of people' (2016, p.52). The images are used to either document daily activities (the original reason stated for joining social media) or to comment on current affairs. For instance, everyday regular close contact with livestock is facilitated by feeding- we see this interaction explicitly in three of the photos (Figure 5.11: second row left, fourth row centre and right). Many of the images are, from the perspective of 'good photography', 'bad photos' (a key indicator for Manovich of the casual style), as they do not adhere to the characteristics of good aesthetic practice, and instead are more focused upon the content of the images themselves than the composition. This is evident where we see photographs of books which are informally arranged, with poor lighting and backgrounds, and simply and haphazardly held to the camera in the user's hand.



Figure 5. 10: Casual photos in @herdyshepherd1 (zoomed in from Figure 5.10)

The purpose of sharing these images was to let followers know that he was reading them or to share comment on their content, rather than to advertise or promote the books. This distinction becomes yet more clear if we envisage how a publishing house would photograph a book for Instagram advertisements, or even the sharply different (and much more 'designed') images that @herdyshepherd1 uses of his own books where the overall composition, lighting and style of each image appears to be much more considered and professional.



Figure 5. 11: Examples of @herdyshepherd1's more 'designed' Instagram images of his own books

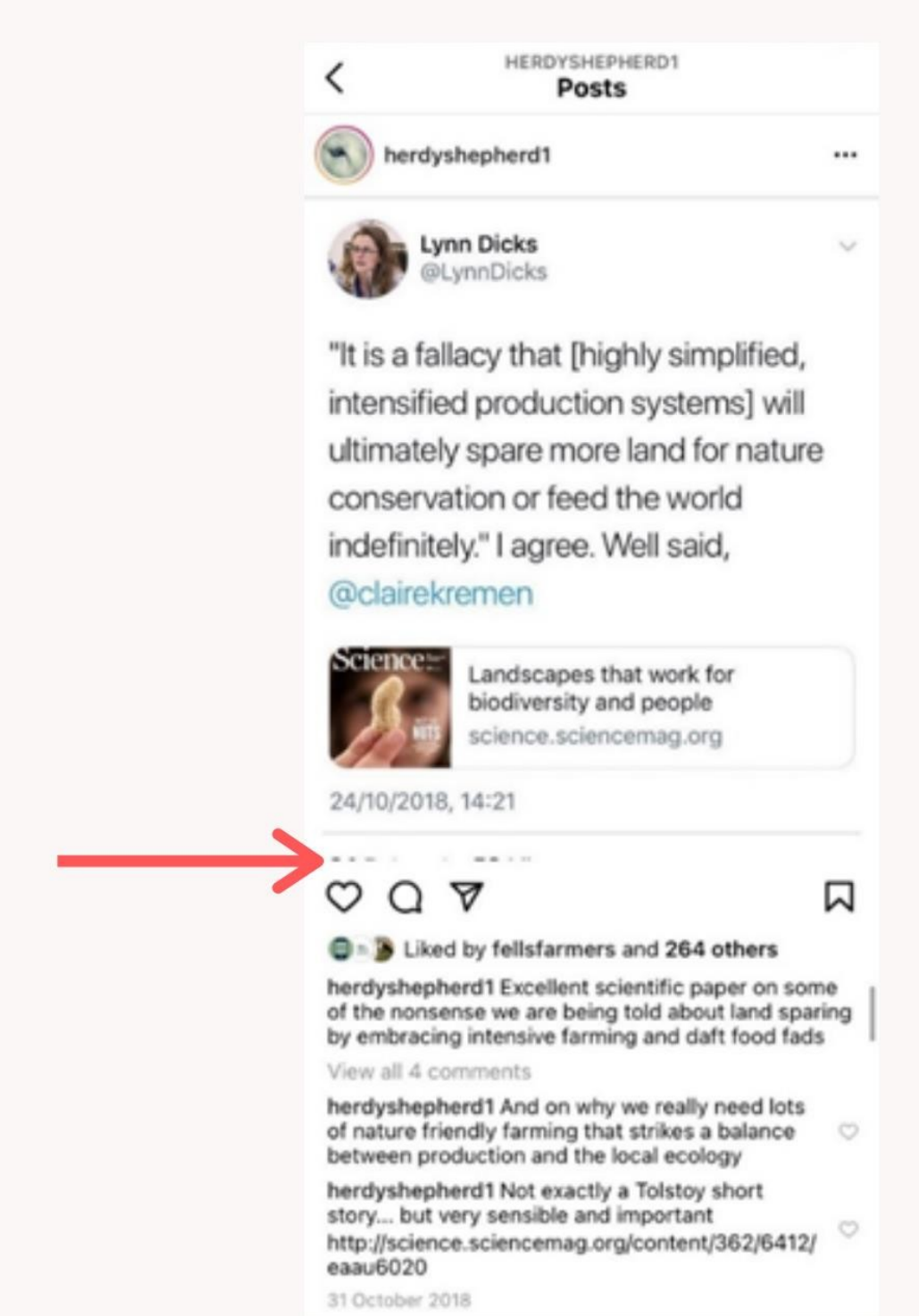
The photos of his books (Figure 5. 11) are evident of a style quite anomalous with the rest of @herdyshepherd1's images. Nonetheless, the more 'designed' quality of some of these images is what we might anticipate for posts which are essentially advertising and therefore run counter, in some ways, to the documenting-based purpose of the other images in the gallery. One photo was almost certainly professionally produced and imbues a dramatic mood though its colouring and composition with the book's angles and shadowing. Other images on this row are more 'casual', one small stack of books on the kitchen table indeed remains reminiscent of the 'documenting' style we see in the majority of @herdyshepherd1's images,

yet the angle at which another image is taken indicates a more reflective arrangement wherein the photographer has purposefully produced a more eye-catching and interesting image, as opposed to the usual 'snapshot aesthetic' which is common within the @herdyshepherd grid.

The bottom images also show a fairly considered composition: the book is lain against a Herdwick sheep fleece and pictured against a bright and leafy backdrop outside. These backgrounds allude to the book's content, emphasising @herdyshepherd1's professed strong connections to both Herdwick sheep and environmentally friendly farming. What better way to subtly remind viewers than to utilise sheep and trees as backgrounds to his book? The final image also emphasises @herdyshepherd1's humble pastoral lifestyle: the book is placed against a warm and soft complementary colour palette with rural patterns in the background, alluding to the homely and bucolic style also evident on the book cover.

@herdyshepherd1's grid also illustrates how screengrabs can constitute another example of images which can be understood as casual. Screenshots are taken by smartphone users as a photographic capture of their current display, which can then be shared as images across other platforms. Most notably in the time when @herdyshepherd1 was absent from Twitter (as discussed in part one of this chapter) he increasingly shared text-as-images (among other screenshots of news articles etc) to comment on current affairs and research in agriculture and the environment. The style and composition of such images is given no real consideration, as with other casual images; their main purpose is simply to share and comment upon their textual content. In @herdyshepherd1's example (Figure 5. 12) the screenshot is not taken with much attention: other text visible at the bottom could easily have been cropped to make the image neater, but one can reasonably deduce that the sharer was prioritising the content over the composition and quality of the image. The trend for sharing tweet-as-images onto Instagram and Facebook has some important consequences, most significantly in removing the fundamental dialogic quality which was embedded in the text-as-tweet (where by 'quoting', 'retweeting' or 'replying' to a tweet it was seen always in context to the original message and enabled response from the original tweet's author) and further indicates

@herdyshepherd1's casual use of Instagram as a proxy for Twitter during the time that he was not publicly using the other platform.



@herdyshepherd1 utilising tweets-as-images on Instagram
red arrow indicates uncropped text from screengrab image

Figure 5. 12: Screengrabs as casual photos in @herdyshepherd1's Instagram Grid

@herdyshepherd1's grid emphasises a close relationship with the immediate countryside of his own farm through performing encounters with the landscape. The three dimensions of 'encounter' (authentic relationship to place, the authentic practices of place, and their relationships with other (more-than-human) authentic 'locals') are all intimately interconnected within the @herdyshepherd1 grid. Figure 5.10 shows a stream of 99 images as they are chronologically presented on the @herdyshepherd1 profile, with the most recent image (top left) from 27th December 2020.

In Figure 5. 13, 25 of these 99 images have been mapped onto a grid to demonstrate how closely they illustrate the interrelated dimensions of encounter. The landscape images which emphasise the greenery, trees and hedgerows in the countryside are all located within the 'authentic relationship to place' section of the diagram. They embody the qualities of the countryside which @herdyshepherd1 values the most and aims to share with his followers and strongly to the 'English Pastoral' narrative that he has developed, celebrating sustainable agriculture and rural heritage. However, many images with these qualities also include elements of authentic 'practices' or 'locals'.

Between the relationship to place and practices of place on Figure 5. 13, the landscape itself is incorporated through inclusion of more scale as a backdrop to the activity which represents the main focus of the image, such as tree-planting, and feeding or moving livestock. To the left, in illustrating a relationship to other authentic locals within the landscape, @herdyshepherd1 relies heavily on demonstrating his close interactions and encounters with nonhuman locals: most significantly his namesake Herdwick sheep and more environmentally uncontentious livestock species such as belted Galloway cattle which are evident in a significant proportion of his photographs.



Figure 5. 13:Mapping interrelated encounters in @herdyshepherd1

Other 'authentic' locals who @herdyshepherd1 frequently features on his page are family members, crucially also usually involved in rural or farming activities. These images of his family with sheepdogs, on stone walls, or looking out over idyllic fields accentuate the impression of @herdyshepherd1 as a small-scale family farmer who epitomises the long-existing cultural heritage branding for which the Lake District received its World Heritage status. Less expected but nonetheless captivating encounters with local 'others' within @herdyshepherd1's grid are instances where local wildlife is included. Two extremes of this encounter are included here: a handheld fieldmouse and a dead hare. The image of the fieldmouse illustrates the romantic impression of the 'nature-friendly' farmer that @herdyshepherd1 has come to exemplify: the creature is small, cuddly-looking and aesthetically charismatic (Lorimer, 2007). The high level of sharpness (for phone camera quality, indicating the care taken with regards to focus in shooting this particular image) emphasises

the contrast between the soft fur and delicate ears of the mouse against the rough farmer's hands carefully holding it. This is an effective visual metaphor of @herdyshepherd1's public persona, and thus works to consolidate his authentic reputation as a gruff farmer- meets-environmentally- conscious conservator, a persona which is carefully developed not only within his visual social media but also in Rebanks' published memoirs, *The Shepherds Life* (2015) and *English Pastoral* (2020).

Moreover, such personal encounters are effectively extended to include the viewer. Zappavigna identifies two visual systems of interpersonal meaning: focalisation, which is how visual choices 'create a relationship' between the viewer and the visible participants, and subjectification, to 'account for the kinds of relationship between viewer and the photographer [or account user]' (2016, pp. 276, 271). Many of @herdyshepherd1's photos illustrate encounters with both human and nonhuman locals through their clear focus on these subjects, or 'with' them situated in the landscape and doing activities related to shepherding, as seen in the images within the 'local' encounters of Figure 5. 13. Yet through subjectification, an even more intimate relationship is built: the viewer is enabled *to imagine themselves as* the photographer or as with the photographer. This imagination is enacted where the photographer's presence is 'inferred' through inclusion of body parts, such as the hand holding the mouse.

In contrast to such intimate, romanticised countryside encounters, the dead hare image illustrates some less congenial encounters of rural life. The dead animal is pictured closely, wide vacant eyes still open, with damp fur among long, wet grass and leaves. Encounters with death are as much of an everyday encounter for farmers as the lively and loveable wildlife and livestock they care for and manage. The image is juxtaposed in the grid with images more typical of @herdyshepherds' everyday posts of Herdwick sheep surrounding it (two portraits of ewes grazing hay come immediately before, and two shots of flocks moving between trees follow). The presence of this encounter within the grid implies that @herdyshepherd1 aims to show a complete account of the everyday countryside on Instagram, despite the sharp contrast to the more romantic imaginations of the rural that the grid often demonstrates. This perception is confirmed in comments on the image: where another user challenged his publication of the image, he replied: 'I post pics of the good and the bad, the beautiful and

the ugly and anything else that takes my eye'. By including encounters with 'the good *and* the bad, the beautiful *and* the ugly', (emphasis added) @herdyshepherd1 further underlines the compelling traits of his images as an authentic record of rural life.

The above comment is an effective summary of @herdyshepherd1's curational style. There is, it seems, no strategic management behind the publication of these images beyond the sustained maintenance of @herdyshepherd1's rural personas. As was seen with the reaction to the dead hare image, @herdyshepherd1 does not appear concerned with other peoples' enjoyment or approval, and posts images based upon his own preferences. This casual, reflexive approach to content generation is resonant with Instagram's original ideation, where 'the neologism Instagram suggests speed, quick decision and fast action' (Manovich, 2017). Therefore, the style of @herdyshepherd1's Instagram curation can be best understood as *candid*: it is presented as a straightforward and honest account of his daily life, which also embodies casual, unposed elements that have ironically become popularised as 'candid' style shots on Instagram.

Authentic Aesthetics of the #lakedistrict in @thelakelanders: The Poetic Landscape.

@thelakelanders' Instagram grid curates what I term a 'poetic landscape' online #lakedistrict. Their images, when viewed in isolation, appear to constitute what Manovich characterises as 'professional' photographs, however when viewed at the scale of the Instagram gallery, the images comprise a more 'designed' aesthetic and atmosphere, through a strong, composed visual style. In contrast to the multiple, interconnected ways that encounters are utilised to establish a personal, everyday authentic aesthetic for @herdyshepherd1, in @thelakelanders it is through the *absence* of encounters that authenticity is established as 'hyperreal' and objective aesthetic of the sublime landscape. In returning to the 'designed' aesthetic, I identify a poetic visual 'rhythm' (Latham and Mccormack, 2009) as the overall curational style, a unique result of the sequential order in which members of the group take turns to share content, either of their own making within @thelakelanders aesthetic, or in a similar style that members identify through featured posts.

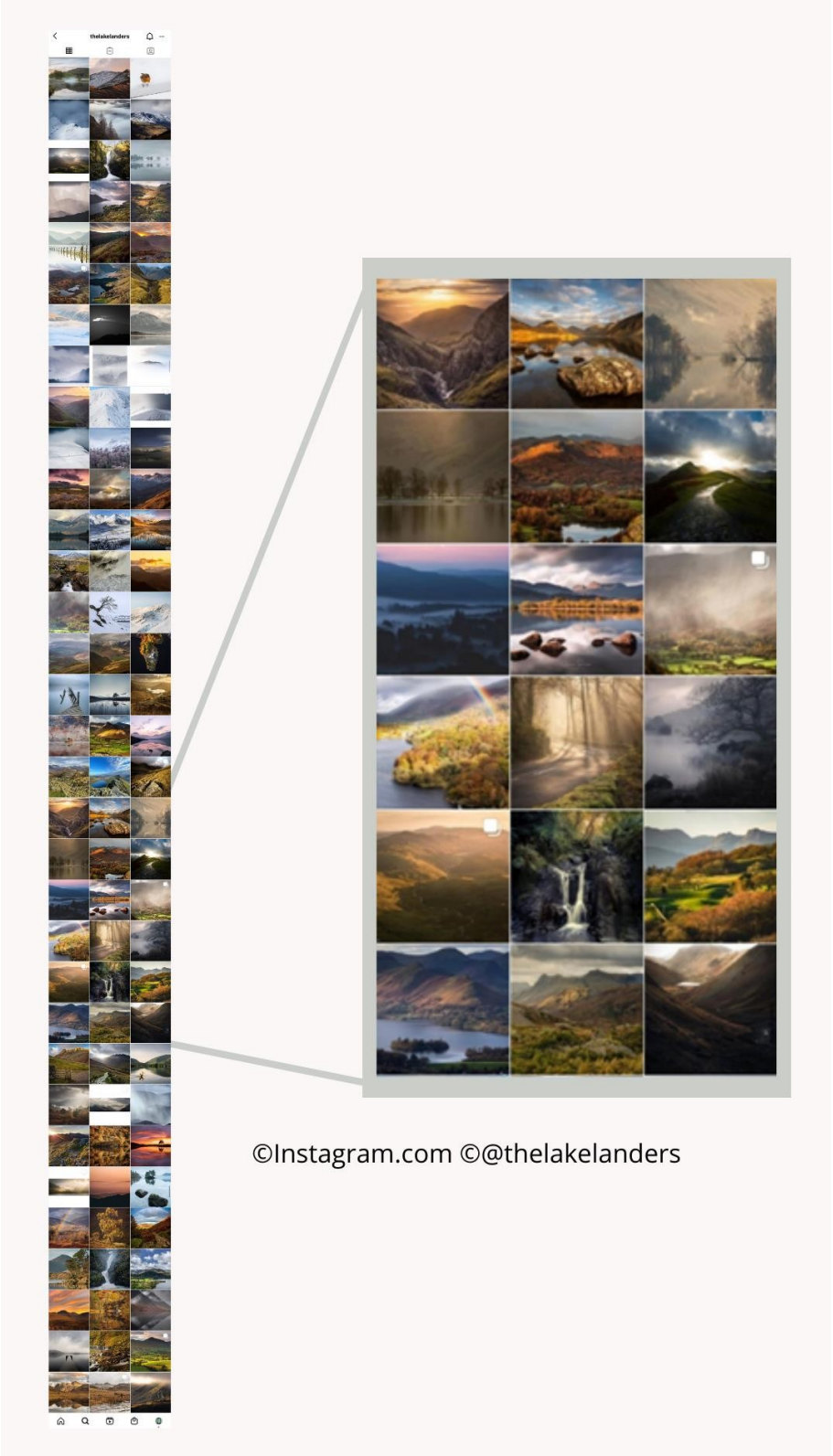


Figure 5. 14: 'Professional' photos? in @thelakelanders (zoomed in from previous figure)

Instagram is a constantly evolving platform. At the time that Manovich's book, including his photo categorisations, was published in 2017, @thelakelanders profile was still in relative infancy having only existed for a few months. Their images do not neatly fit into the three

common categorisations outlined and may in time come to be illustrative of a new common type of Instagram images; a kind of 'designed landscape' image of the outdoors which contains features of both professional photos and yet embody more dramatic and affective atmospheres of designed images.

In general, many of @thelakelanders' images fit into the category of 'professional' photos, referring to the 'systemic use of rules of 'good photography'' (Manovich, 2017, p.59). In Figure 5. 14 we see a section of @thelakelanders' 99 image Instagram grid from autumn 2020 (sample from previous Figure 5. 9). Throughout the grid, there are multiple images which feature the rules that Manovich attributes to 'professional' photos: dimensions of symmetry (through water reflections and balanced framing) and classical, vivid 'realistic' colour palettes. The images are all of a more professional quality than the majority of public-produced images from Chapter One or images shared by @herdyshepherd1; they have evidently been taken with high specification digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) cameras and lenses, then enhanced utilising professional editing software such as Adobe Photoshop.[15]

However, there are also some features within their images which exhibit the qualities of 'designed' photos, most significantly with regards to *colour*. In contrast to the balanced hues of 'good photography', the muted greyed tones of the other images within the grid lend to a sense of drama and marvel within the grid, as seen in Figure 5. 14. The dominance of either darkened deep-blues or muddied yellow-greens contrasts with the windows of brighter tones present in more conventional 'professional' images.

There are also instances where some of the photographers in the group opt for much more abstract shapes in their posts, rather than typical landscape shots. In the screengrab of 6 images from @thelakelanders' grid in 2019 (Figure 5. 15), alongside the muted colour palette we see high contrast and abstract images of mountain ridges and rocks. These images are

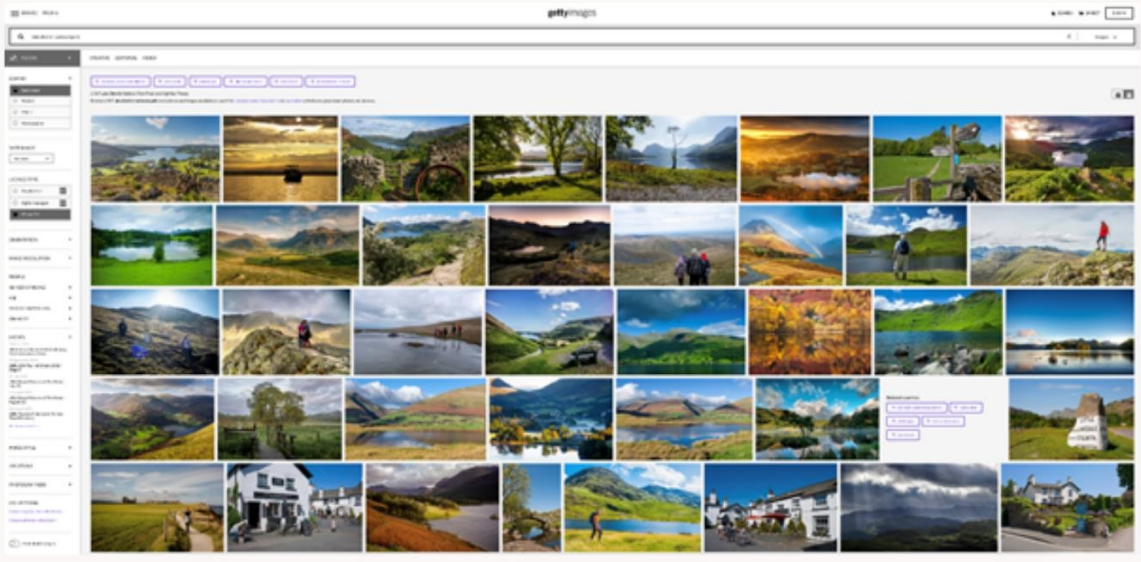
[15] such practices have been shown in editing videos shared on @thelakelanders' Instagram 'stories'

much less recognisable as the online #lakedistrict, yet feature high-quality, sharp detail and



©Instagram.com ©@thelakelanders

Figure 5. 15: 'Designed' shape and form in @thelakelanders' Instagram Grid in February 2019



©Getty Images

Figure 5. 16: Professional Photographs of the Lake District from Getty Images

studies of rock reflecting a professional image aesthetic ideal of 'super-realism' (Manovich, 2016, p.62). Preferences for muted tones and occasional unconventional compositions within the grid are the most apparent divergences from the 'professional' photographs. Contrasts between the @thelakelanders' images and 'conventional' professional images of the #lakedistrict are more thoroughly illustrated when we compare @thelakelanders' grid to the images in Figure 5. 16. The screenshot shows a selection of professionally taken photographs of the Lake District which can be sourced on Getty images. The images are almost universally bright with a strong colour palette[16] including bold greens and blues, and consistently feature the elements of 'good photography' previously outlined.

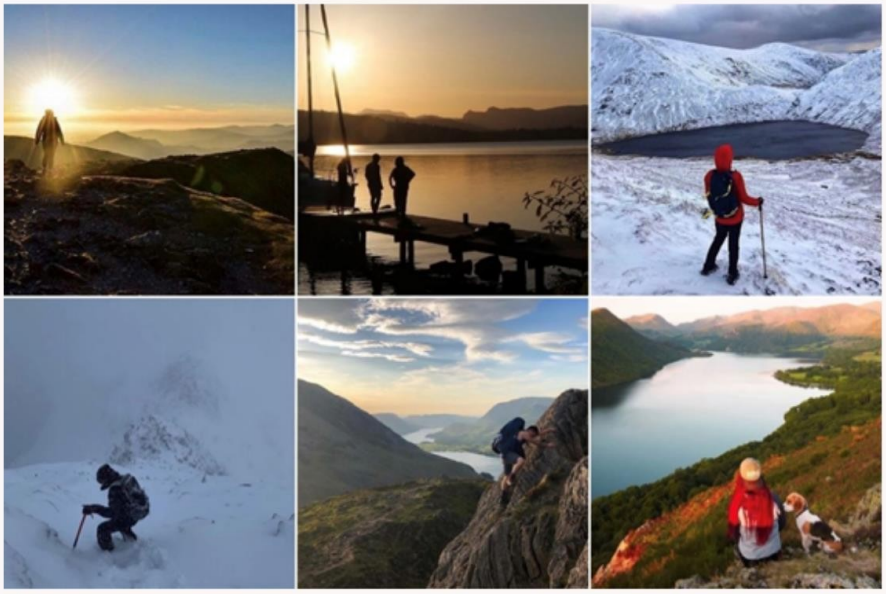
Another significant focus that we see within these professionally produced images of the Lake District is the inclusion of *people*. There are walkers (or tourists) in 11/39 of the Getty images (28%). This is understandable, where businesses and other institutions involved in the place branding (Thelander and Cassinger, 2017) of the #lakedistrict want to utilise a variety of images which celebrate the perceived 'nature' of the area and feature a proportion of images where people are engaged in activities within the landscape(Thelander and Cassinger, 2017). In comparison, of the 99 images featured in the largest section of @thelakelanders' Instagram grid featured here, (Figure 5. 14) no people are visible in the images. This is reflective of the extremely low proportion of images on @thelakelanders grid which include people. Over the first three years of @thelakelanders images (to 25 March 2020), people were featured[17] in just 43 of 2244 images; equating to 1.9%. This has profound consequences for how *encounters* with the #lakedistrict landscape are performed as authentic within the grid, when encounters with other humans are almost entirely absent.

In the few images where people, or other nonhuman animals, are focal within the images, there are several important points to note. Figure 5. 17 shows 12 of the 44 @lakelanders images with humans featured. In Figure 5. 17 A, humans take on a focal role within the image composition, and are shown as active in the landscape. In Figure 5. 17 B, humans are static and distant, their miniature silhouettes in the composition emphasising the sublime and awe-inducing affect of the surrounding landscapes. These images help us identify the ways that

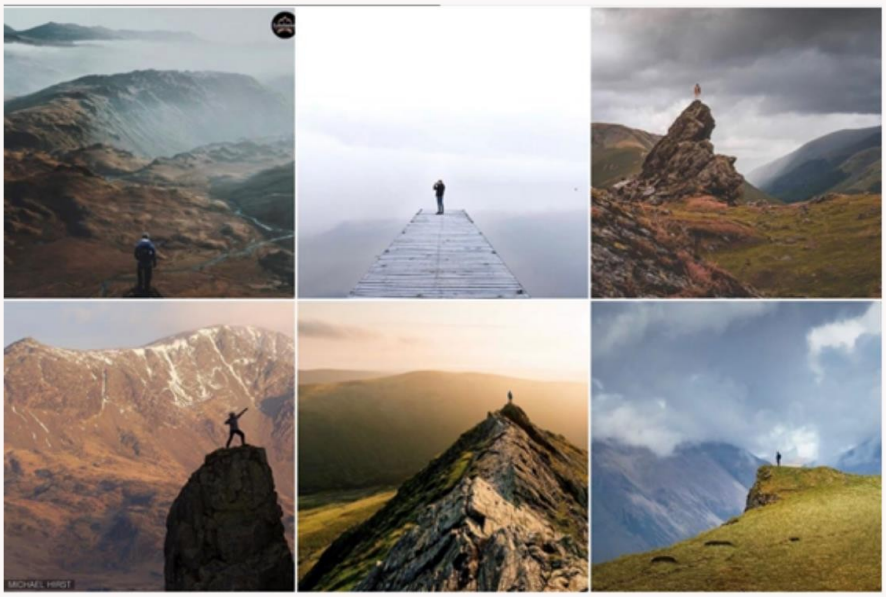
[16] Some exceptions exist: for instance, the darker palette of the image on 2nd row 4th from left
[17] People 'featured' were identified as visible to the human eye

authenticity is encountered through relationships to place and authentic practices of place within @thelakelanders' grid. Figure 5. 17 B is most illustrative of the relationship to place, where a consistent representation of the human as 'engulfed and miniaturised' within picturesque landscapes 'yet standing fearless against the epic scale of nature' is archetypal of the 'promontory witness' (Smith, 2018, 2019) also evidenced in the digital textures of Adventure and Awe in Chapter 4.

A: Active humans in @thelakelanders



B: Humans as promontory witness in @thelakelanders



©Instagram.com ©@thelakelanders

Figure 5. 17: Encountering Humans in @thelakelanders

In Figure 5. 17 A, the closer human subjects are shown as active and mobile: hiking or climbing within challenging terrain, that emphasises the daring and bold authentic practices of travellers-adventurers in a nonhuman landscape. Another significant feature of all the people the @thelakelanders' images with humans, is that they are facing away from the camera, out into the landscape. This outward-facing position is further reminiscent of the promontory gaze over the terrain and strongly reminiscent of Freidrich's 'Wanderer over the Sea Fog', as discussed in the literature review and textures of adventure in Chapter 4, and also emphasises to us a contrast and abstraction from the types of intimate subjectivity encountered in @herdyshepherd1's images.

Nonhuman animals feature as the main focus of the composition in just 20 of @thelakelanders first 2244 images (0.89%). There are 8 birds, 8 sheep, 2 dogs, a cow, and a hare. A selection of these nonhuman animals is shown in Figure 5. 18. A marked distinction between these nonhumans and the humans we encounter in @thelakelanders grid is their stance towards the camera. We have seen that the humans are universally facing outwards, and yet the animals (with exception of the birds) are all *facing inwards* toward the camera. This positionality makes the animal a more explicit subject of the image within the landscape. In the extreme case of one Swaledale ewe (Figure 5. 18,B), social media conventions of the 'photobomb' are utilised to imply that the animal is almost leaning into the shot. These images provide an anomalous divergence in @thelakelanders aesthetic, but not an unpleasant one. The photobombing sheep provides light comic relief and other animal images too (Figure 5. 18,C) evoke a cuddly aesthetic charisma (Lorimer, 2007) wherein the endearing and visually appealing faces of the various sheep and other animals, including wildlife and livestock, are employed to show a softer and more pastoral nonhuman landscape which breaks from the predominant sublime landscapes typical of the vast majority of @thelakelanders' images.

These sublime landscapes, however, are the most telling in terms of @thelakelanders' authentic #lakedistrict aesthetic. In asking the question of how encounter with the landscape is performed, we come to see that it is through the *absence of visible encounter* that sublime authenticity is most evident. That the lack of people featured in @thelakelanders grid only adds to the persuasiveness of nonhuman authenticity can be attributed to what Searle (2020) has described as an 'affective force of absence'. In thinking through the 'traces' of what is not

there, Searle invites us to seek imprints and remnants of the absent (2020). In the nonhuman landscapes of @thelakelanders, these imprints are evident in the hyperreal (Baudrillard, 1983) aesthetic which predominates the grid. Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality and simulation, wherein the version of the world made visible is 'assumed to be real but is nonetheless distorted and exaggerated to the extent that it becomes hyperreal' (Borges-Rey, 2015, p. 577) effectively illustrates where digital editing software are prolifically utilised by @thelakelanders to create awe-inspiring but ultimately non-existent landscapes on Instagram. These almost too-perfect images heighten contrast, colour and clarity to that far beyond what the human eye is capable of perceiving, and indeed to a luminance beyond reality. This 'simulation' of the landscape constitutes a hyperreal staging (Borges-Rey, 2015) through the digital editing and cleaning of these images to the extent that the absent human is made present *through* these editing skills in developing the exaggerated qualities of an aesthetic which has become so subjectively powerful in its implications of authenticity that others are compelled to replicate it (Borges Rey, 2015, p. 582).

And yet, there remain images within @thelakelanders' grid that relate more to a 'professional' photo than a 'designed' type, and there are some images that *do* include humans and other nonhumans which counter the sublime hyperreal landscapes which are mostly encountered on the grid. How can these inconsistencies be explained and how are they resolved within a profile that maintains such a strong identity and aesthetic? I identify @thelakelanders curation as a *poetic* style. This poetic curation can be closely tied to the processes through which Manovich argues that Instagramism is exhibited: the effect of an Instagram grid goes beyond the type and content of a single image, and the overall mood and atmosphere of the grid is manifest in the ways the images interact with those around them. For every more conventional or professional-looking image in @thelakelanders is surrounded by others with muted tones and hyperreal editing which render the aesthetic of the overall grid still an atmosphere of sublime, dramatic nonhuman landscapes. Thie mood established by this configuration of images within the grid is effectively illustrated in Figure 5. 19, a random grid section from within the existing @thelakelandsers' grid sample (see Figure 5.14 previously), where these effects are mapped, where the pops of bright bold green (representative of the more conventional professional photos in Figure 5. 16) become a part of @thelakelanders muted hyperreal mood. Their meaning and their effect changes *because* of their position among

these other images in the grid, therefore @thelakelanders grid is, I argue, the closest we come to a designed and stylised Instagramism of landscape. Vitally different, though, from Manovich's definitions is the assumption that this affect is consciously constructed by a single 'author' (Manovich, 2017).

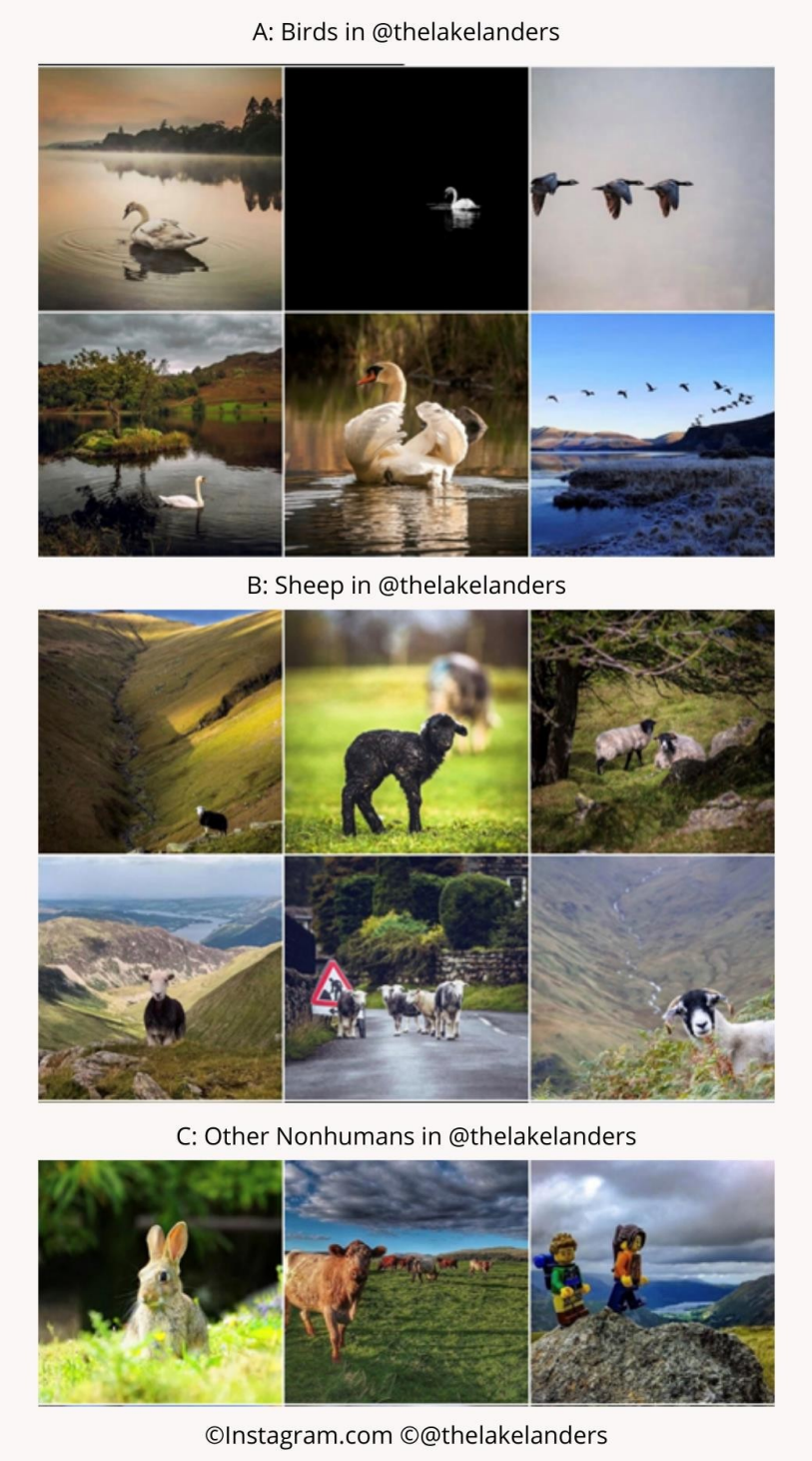


Figure 5. 18: Encountering Nonhumans in @thelakelanders

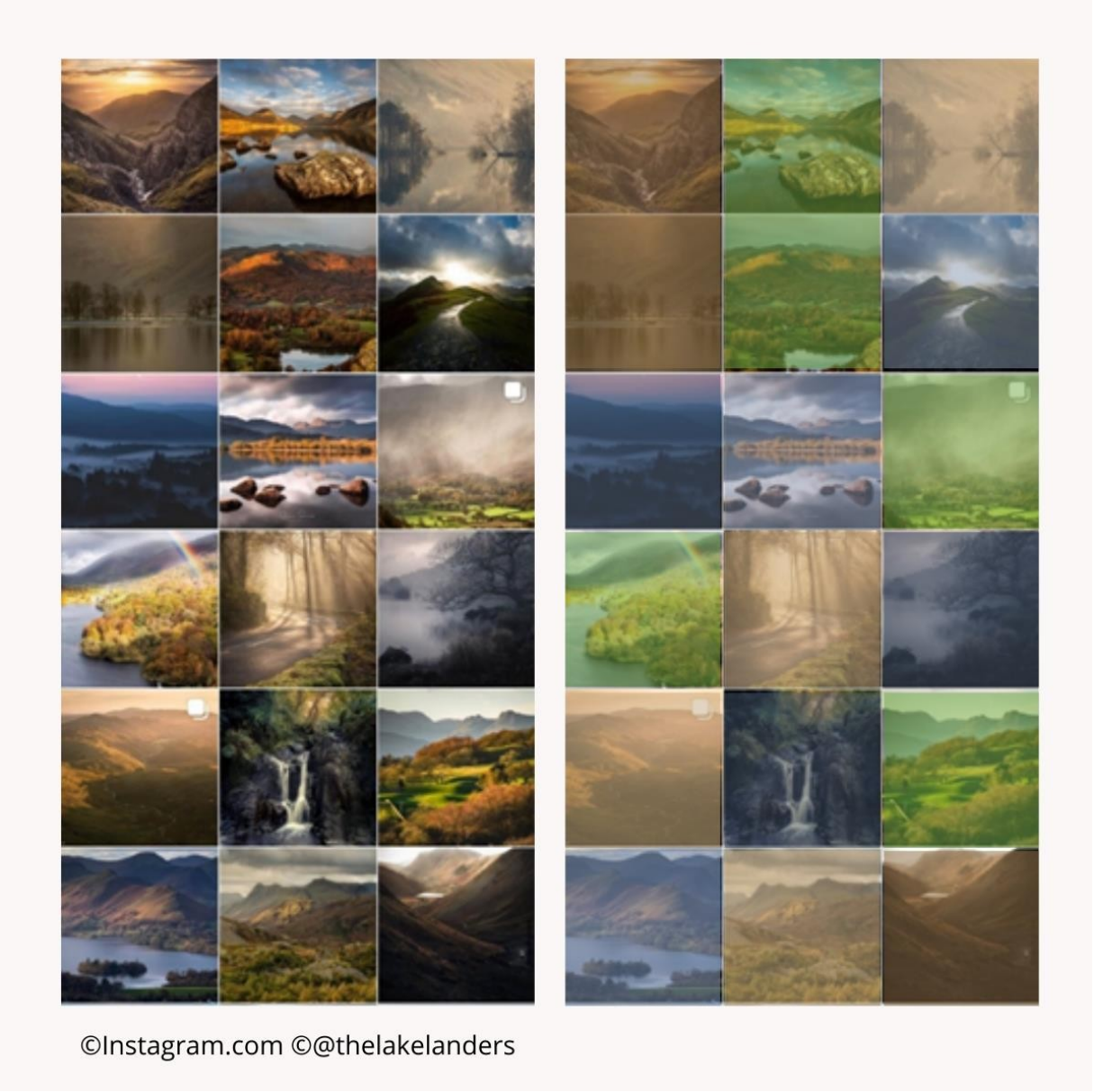


Figure 5. 19: Mapping @thelakelanders grid as a curated poetic aesthetic

What is unique about such photography collectives as @thelakelanders is that each photographers' own style, aesthetic and editing presets become a part of this Instagramism assemblage. The ruptures and breaks from the established mood are not necessarily a conscious choice by a single grid curator, but a direct affect of the 'networked co-curation' process outlined in part one of this chapter. That these individuals work together to collectively produce @thelakelanders means that in taking turns, each photographers' own shots and choices for featured images are added in a pattern. It is this pattern, I argue, that generates a *poetic* and 'rhythmic' affect (Latham & McCormack, 2009) and style within the account's aesthetic.

5.4 Authentic Visions *produced by* the #lakedistrict?

In this closing section of the chapter, I summarise the above sections by highlighting some of the dynamic ways that authenticities of the Lake District are produced by the influence and aesthetic imaginaries of @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders. These dynamics are summarised in Table 5. 6.

	@herdyshepherd1	@thelakelanders
Process: Origin of influence	Top Down Social Media Native	Bottom up Networking Influencers
Practice: Aesthetic curation	Bottom Up Candid Pastoral	Top Down Poetic Landscapes
Producing: Material modes of being in the #lakedistrict?	Horizontal/ External Grazing Schools	Vertical/ Internal Instameets

Table 5. 6: Dynamic Dimensions to Influence, aesthetic and material modes of being of the #lakedistrict

Practices and Processes of Instagram Authenticity in and of the #lakedistrict

To conceptualise and compare the aesthetics of these two Instagram accounts as they have been explored, I draw on the literature on the dimensions of rurality. Figure 5. 20 identifies two broad rural imaginaries through which the Instagram Lake District is produced as an authentic place. On one side, the 'rural idyll' is a bucolic, romanticised pastoral construct of the countryside and its inhabitants (Halfacree, 1995; Yarwood, 2005; Short, 2006). On the other, 'rural wilderness' is a rurality which encompasses many of the idealised 'natural' visual tropes of the countryside associated with the dramatic and sublime landscapes of the romantic movement (Peeren, 2018).

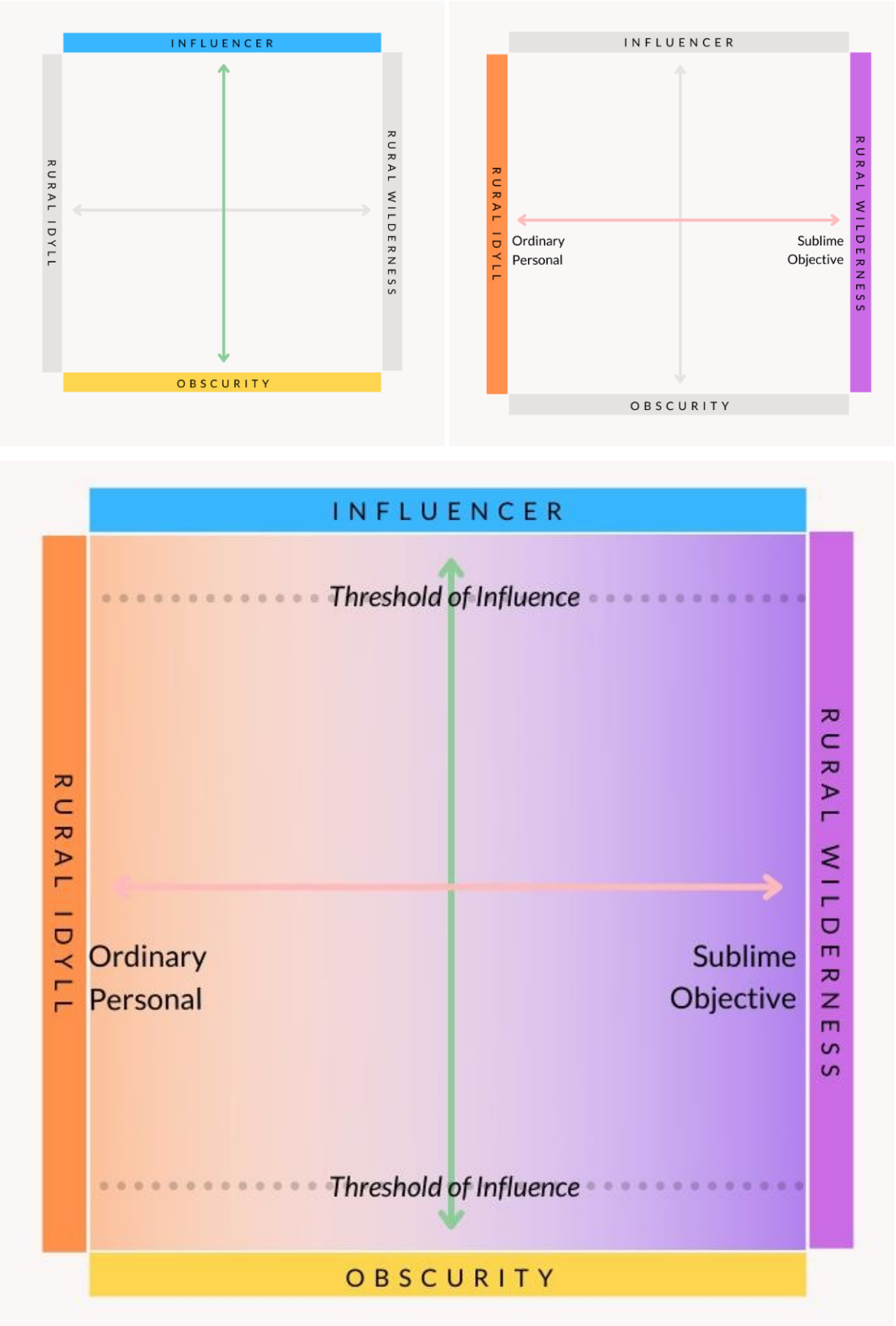


Figure 5. 20: Two axes of Authenticity in an Instagram #LakeDistrict

The horizontal dimensions of these figures illustrate two other well-known rural dichotomies: the ordinary/sublime and the personal/objective. Ordinary/sublime refers to the romantic aesthetic traditions which are present within these two dimensions of rurality. The 'ordinary' is often a feature of the romanticised rural idyll, depicting the 'everyday' through colour, content and affective qualities of regular countryside exploits and practices. In contrast, the 'sublime' is an aesthetic manifestation of the more spectacular and dramatic landscape elements of rural wilderness. Personal/objective refers to dimensions through which authenticity is perceived and valued in places. Personal authenticity refers to an individual's subjective experience of a landscape, shaped by personal memories, family histories, and unique viewpoints. Objective authenticity, on the other hand, tends to be associated with more formalised or detached representations of the landscape.

These two axes of authenticity are used to 'map' @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders as they have been examined in this chapter. Table 3 outlines how this conceptual framework enables us to plot the accounts at particular coordinates on the axes, and to chart the *directions* that the accounts have taken to reach their current position on the framework. This helps capture the flux of influence and aesthetics which is inherent to the ever-evolving nature of social media platforms such as Instagram.

In section 5.2, I demonstrated that @herdyshepherd1's influence was constructed through social media, where a duality of 'native' personas exists. Rebanks' persona as a landscape native has been produced, honed and expanded over time *through* his status as a social media native. Where the relationship between his Instagram and Twitter use has evolved over time, I conceptualise @herdyshepherd1's dynamic of influence-building in Instagram as a *horizontal process* (Figure 5.21). Rebanks amassed a large following and fan base more predominantly through his use of Twitter, and the opportunities which directly related to that engagement. This following and influence has been horizontally transferred to his status as an influencer on Instagram, where his engagement changed most notably following his temporary departure from Twitter in 2018. In this way, Rebanks' influence within the platform can be characterised as 'top down' (Table 5. 6), where he has come to the platform in a more meaningful way with a substantial viewership already behind him.

In contrast to this horizontal process, I conceptualise @thelakelanders' construction of influence as a *vertical process* (Figure 5.21). I demonstrate in part one that @thelakelanders' generate their influence exclusively within Instagram's own ecology, and utilising Instagram's social and digital mechanisms, such as positive follower engagement and heavy utilisation of hashtags, as a means to climb 'upwards' within Instagram's #lakedistrict hierarchies.

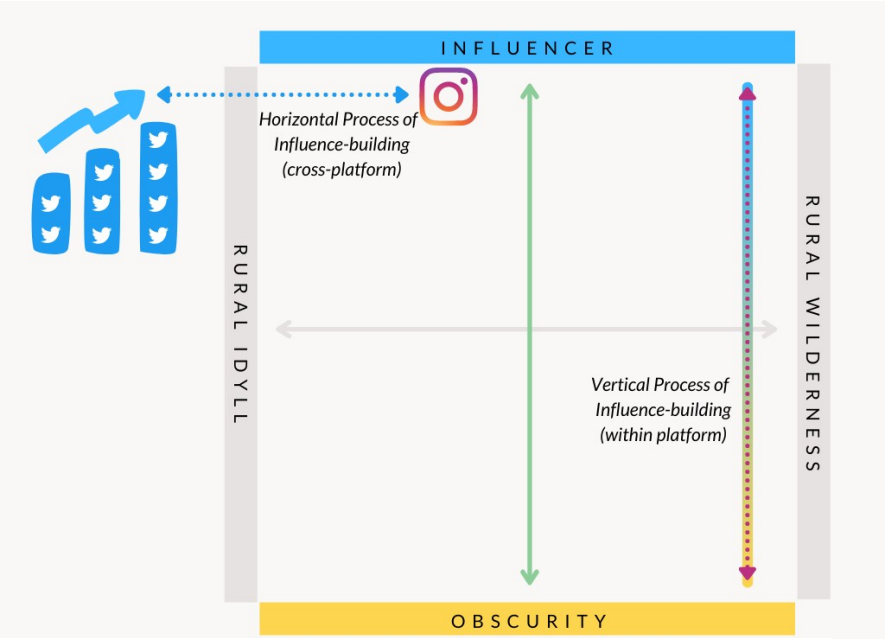


Figure 5. 21: Dynamics of Influence Building in @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders

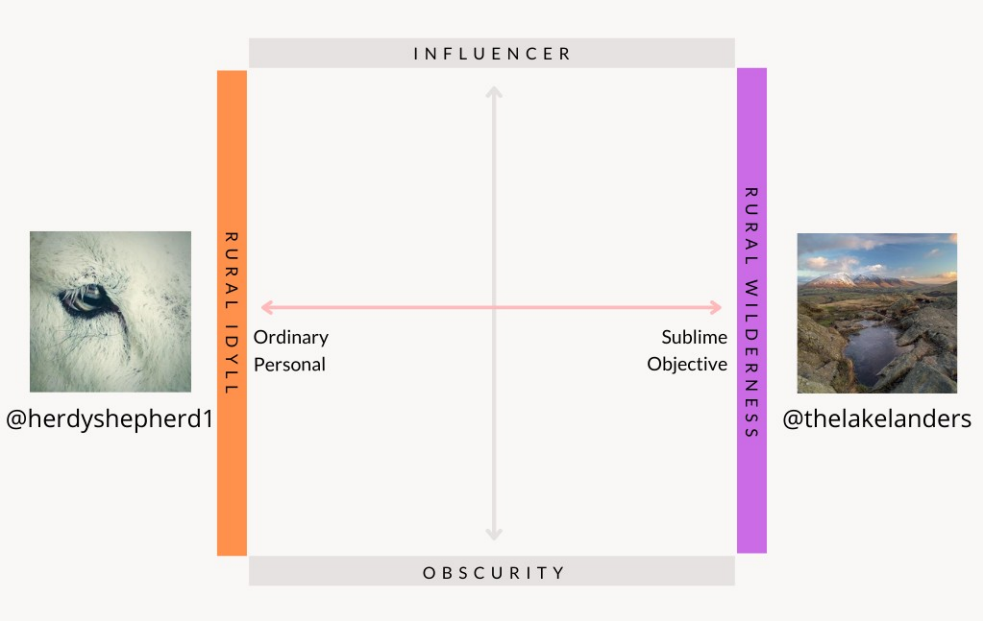


Figure 5. 22: Dynamics of Authentic Aesthetics in @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders

@thelakelanders' influence can therefore be characterised as a 'bottom-up' approach, wherein they started in relative obscurity and generated their influence more organically upwards rather than 'importing' influence from another social media platform.

In part two, we have explored the ways that authentic accounts 'of' the Instagram #lakedistrict were curated by each user. Where @herdyshepherd1 has curated a 'candid pastoral' #lakedistrict through his use of casual photos, emphasis on rural encounters, and unplanned approach to grid curation, I locate @herdyshepherd1 at the 'Rural Idyll' side of the aesthetic spectrum (Figure 5. 22). Furthermore, due to his personal, non-professional and everyday approach to image-making, I characterise the aesthetic dynamic of his #lakedistrict as 'bottom-up', where there is no particular photographic skill or strategy that goes into the production of his #lakedistrict.

Again, in sharp contrast to @herdyshepherd1, @thelakelanders' Instagram #lakedistrict is located at the opposite end of this rural spectrum, and the focus on sublime, nonhuman, professional images with designed aesthetics locates their grid at the 'Rural Wilderness' side of the rural spectrum (Figure 5. 22). @thelakelanders grid is a thoughtful, skilled, hyperreal and professionalised 'poetic' vision of the #lakedistrict, and the use of editing software and high quality cameras gives the profile an aspirational 'top-down' aesthetic dynamic that followers may aspire to.

However, in characterising these developing visual #lakedistricts, both @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders can be identified as having *aesthetics in flux* (see typology). In addition to a 'bottom-up' dynamic, I also identify @herdyshepherd1's aesthetic as emerging and improvised. @herdyshepherd1's images increase in both picture quality and his engagement evolves over the long life of the platform, often coinciding with improvements made to the platform itself. @thelakelanders aesthetic is also in flux, where it can be characterised as both rhythmic and designed, wherein a unique and unfolding pattern evolves in synchronicity with the changing members of the group and their own individual tastes and styles of image-making, within the broader @thelakelander aesthetic.

Finally, I tentatively point to the worldly impacts of @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders' authentic #lakedistricts as producing new 'authentic ecologies.' In Figure 5. 23, I illustrate how @herdyshepherd1 has utilised Instagram as a means to advertise, enable purchases and share moments from his various rural and nature-friendly-farming focused training events in the Lake District National Park. Notable examples over the course of this ethnography have included: The Rural Writing Institute, a writing retreat course in 2018 which focused upon rural-based

nature writing, with authors James Rebanks and Kathryn Aalto, and most recently, the 'Grazing School': a short course in environmentally friendly land management hosted by James Rebanks and led by regenerative grazing consultant Caroline Grindrod. The second Grazing School was hosted in October 2021, and they have continued to be hosted annually at the farm in Cumbria. Through these events, @herdyshepherd1 has material impact upon the terrestrial #lakedistrict, utilising his social media authenticity and authority to educate other land users in particular ways of writing about and managing the environment. This process can be conceptualised as 'extractive', where Rebanks takes his influence from Instagram and other media as a means to have impact in other realms.

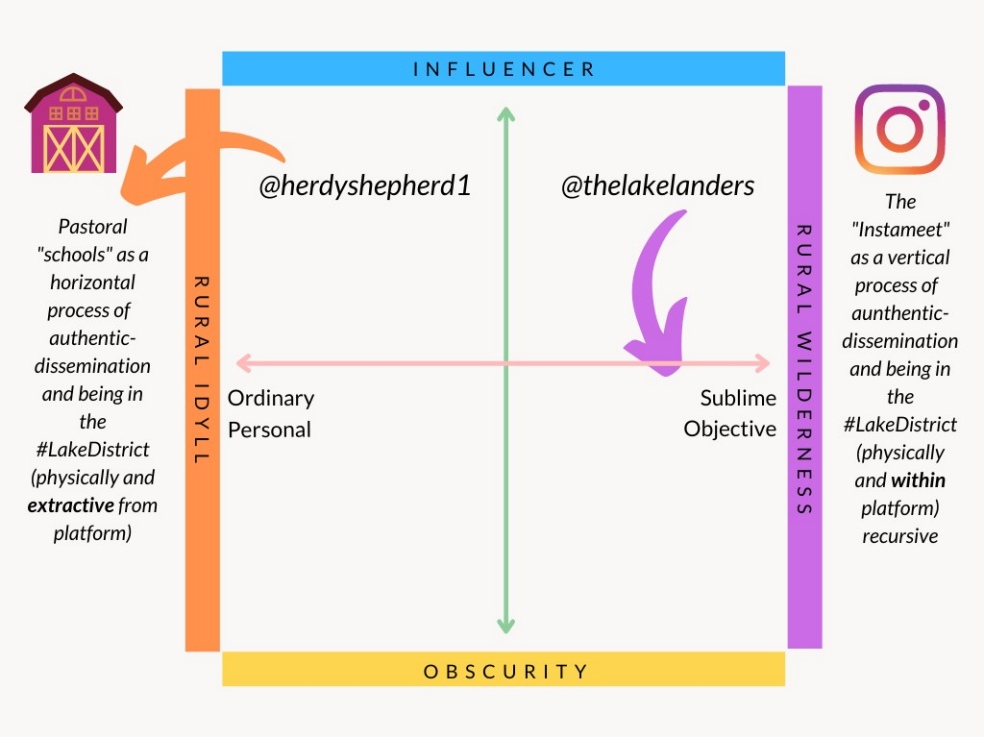


Figure 5. 23: Authentic digital ecologies of Instagram #lakedistricts?

@thelakelanders have also made 'terrestrial' interventions into the #lakedistrict through the use of 'Instameets'. Instameets are 'a way for people in the Instagram community to meet one another and take photos around their [city] together.' (Instagram Help Centre, no date). @thelakelanders held several Instameets in 2018, and used them as opportunities to coach other amateur photographers to visualise particular parts of the #lakedistrict landscape. I characterise these Instameets as a vertical and recursive means of producing authentic ecologies with Instagram. It is vertical wherein @thelakelanders utilise their 'top-down' professional aesthetic and skills in envisioning the LakeDistrict to other users. It is recursive

where these images eventually also contribute to the #lakedistrict and, indeed, #thelakelanders. With more space this chapter would explore these material dimensions in further detail, but for here it suffices to conclude that authentic #lakedistricts can have powerful, intimate and real-world impacts upon the people and places who inhabit these landscapes.

5.5: Perceptions of the hyperscene #lakedistrict

In this chapter, we have seen how the #lakedistricts of the candid countryside and poetic landscape are inscribed through distinct practices by @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders. They have each utilised a unique approach, embedded in their own online and offline modes of being in the landscape, and their own curated #lakedistricts create compelling, authentic visions of the #lakedistrict which, in turn, arguably condition how other people come to perceive and also create their own #lakedistricts. The hyperscene typology of the #lakedistrict outlined in chapter 4 is extended in Figure 5. 24 to summarise these digital-spatial practices.

The following 'interlude' will consider in detail the consequences of the powerful #lakedistrict visions which have been explored throughout Chapters 4 and 5, and examine who remains missing from these evocative accounts of the Lake District. In the following two chapters, the project seeks to make positive interventions into these online #lakedistricts, by participating in the development of #alternativerurals of the Lake District with the fell farming community.

Hyperscene typology of the #lakedistrict: Conceived Space

Hyperscene representations of English Nature in the #lakedistrict	**Rural Idyll**	**Rural Play**	**Rural Wilderness**
Rural Idylls (Bell, 2006)	Recreational	Sporting	Natural
Media Representations: *Aesthetic Traditions of Rurality*	Beauty/ Picturesque	Picturesque/ Sublime	Sublime
Representations of the Rural: *Nature Based Tourism Discourses*	Rural & Heritage Tourism	Adventure-Sport Tourism	EcoTourism, Tourism Incognita
Digital Textures of the Hyperscene #LakeDistrict	Attachment	Adventure	Awe
Precense of Human in Rurality	Human Central	Human *in-Situ*	Nonhuman
Hyperseen characteristics of images identified in digital textures	Warm Glow	Bold Radiance	Vivid Luminosity
Affective Qualities of Digital Textures	Comfort	Invigoration	Exhilarating
Characterising Hyperseen Digital Textures of the Hyperscene	Warm, soft, comforting, familiar	Refreshing, pleasing, luscious	Hard, shining, sharp, unsettling

Hyperscene typology of the #lakedistrict: Perceived Space

@herdyshepherd1's Authentic Aesthetic	**Candid Countryside**		
@thelakelanders' Authentic Aesthetic			**Poetic Landscapes**
Types of Photos	Casual		Professional
Landscape Encounters	Subjective		Objective
Curation of Aesthetic Authenticity	Candid		Poetic
Aesthetics in Flux	Emerging/ Improvised		Rhythmic/ Designed
Directional Processes of Material Influences in the #LakeDistrict	Horizontal (out of platform)		Vertical (within platform)

Figure 5. 24: How #lakedistricts are enacted through the curation of authenticity and aesthetic in a hyperscene typology

Interlude

Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis have examined what already exists as the online #lakedistrict. We have so far studied at varied scales the ways that digital landscapes are both consumed and produced by both the everyday and exceptional stakeholders. To take stock of the key implications of the thesis' findings so far, we return briefly to the interconnected triad of spatiality for digital landscapes that was outlined in Chapter 2.5, to examine how the Instagram #lakedistrict is being socially produced. Lefebrvre's triad of spatiality is summarised as representations of space ('conceived' space), spatial practices ('perceived' space), and spaces of representation ('lived' space).

In first considering the representations which have illustrated how the #lakedistrict is conceived, we saw in Chapter 4 that previous romantic imaginations of the idyll, the picturesque, and the sublime, which were perpetuated by elite and privileged cultural figures such as Wordsworth and Turner are perpetuated. The chapter demonstrated that particular ways of seeing and the work of preserving the visions from these situated views, is now being maintained by the masses. It is no longer a requirement for elites to maintain the social capital necessary to preserve particular ways of seeing: the hyperseen Instagram #lakedistrict is now a ***self-propelling mode of image-making*** and sensing. Its affective hyperseen features are manifest in the compelling hyperscene #lakedistricts of attachment, adventure and awe. These elicit sensations and imaginations through their encounter which make these digital textures worthy of continual 'circulation and mediation' as users can be influenced by each other and the vast wider corpus of the #lakedistrict (Jansson, 2013).

The spatial practices which inscribe the #lakedistrict as a distinct 'local' hyperscene place are effectively deepened and explored further in the cases of the two unique users explored in Chapter 5. The #lakedistrict is being produced, among myriad ways, on a spectrum of ruralities including the 'candid pastoral' of @herdyshepherd1 and the 'poetic landscape' of @thelakelanders. Each user has constructed their role as an influential and authentic mediator of the #lakedistrict, utilising contrasting strategies of existing social capital (as in @herdyshepherd1) or through incentivised engagement (seen in @thelakelanders) to ensure that their contributions to the hyperscene #lakedistrict are more compelling and even indispensable to the understandings of the #lakedistrict by other users who follow them.

Chapter 5 also touched upon the material impact of these representations and productions of the #lakedistrict in terrestrial land management and encounters.

I hope it is evident that what is still missing from our explorations of the #lakedistrict is the third dimension of 'lived space', the spaces of representation as they are encountered everyday by those who remain unseen and who have not played a meaningful role in the production of the online #lakedistrict. It is on the everyday lives of the fell farmers of the Lake District National Park that the remainder of this thesis will focus. I developed multipurpose methods for this thesis and explained in the methodology how the key approaches of cultural analytics, participation and allyship form the cornerstones of the project. The first half of the thesis has developed and deployed innovative new approaches to cultural analytics to develop the concepts of the hyperseen, the hyperscene, and digital textures. Whilst the remainder of the thesis will continue to work with cultural analytics methods, it focuses strongly on notions of participation and allyship. Chapters 6 and 7 aim to demonstrate approaches to working with farmers in the development of tentative interventions into the online #lakedistrict. As stated in Chapter 3, this challenge to the status quo, to 'authority' and 'expertise' about the #lakedistrict as a digital landscape, is a central aim of this thesis, which my methods seek to enable. Nonetheless, there is a tension between this challenge and the possibility of producing a 'change' which would be meaningful to the everyday lives of farmers during the course of a PhD. The following pages thus embark on a journey of optimistic experimentation, utilising methods already developed in Chapters 4 and 5 to tentatively explore my second two research questions, to ask 'what if'?

What would the #lakedistrict look like if the groups less visible within the digital landscape were empowered to use Instagram to represent their everyday lives?

How well does the fell farmers' Instagram #lakedistrict reflect their lived experience of the digital landscape?

Let's see!

Chapter 6

Overshadowed and Inbetween: Alternative rurals of an online #lakedistrict

Overshadowed and Inbetween aims to explore who and what is missing from the current construction of the #lakedistrict on Instagram and examine what happens when these invisible groups were empowered to represent their #lakedistrict on social media. Rural families from across the National Park have contributed to this collaborative project by producing images of their everyday #lakedistrict over several months, which were shared by the author on Instagram. Their images aim to reflect the reality of #lakedistrict for rural communities, or more specifically, fell farmers of Herdwick sheep. This chapter examines the extent to which Instagram can empower and perform #alternativerurals as a part of the narrative, experience, and affect of #lakedistrict. The notion of the shadow that was introduced in Chapter 2 provides an apt metaphor for analyses and interrogations of colour, brightness, influence, and visibility. A multiple platform photovoice method was developed and utilised as a participatory approach to data collection, as outlined in Chapter 3.

The analysis then returns to methods of digital textures utilised in Chapter 4 to visualise images from @fellsfarmers and compare them to both a year of public online #lakedistrict images from Instagram, and the curated accounts of influential #lakedistrict Instagrammers. It illustrates how @fellsfarmers' images are conceptually and literally either 'overshadowed' or fall 'in-between' existing online #lakedistricts. This penultimate empirical chapter aims to offer both novel analyses of digital landscapes on Instagram, and a demonstration of how the innovative digital methods developed earlier in the thesis may be deployed to understand how particular perceptions of place are unevenly manifest on social media.

There are three main sections to this chapter, wherein the images produced by @FellsFarmers for this research are compared and contrasted with the images explored in Chapters 4 and 5. First, I apply the cultural analytics methods developed and employed in Chapter 4 to holistically examine in more detail the 'hyperscene' #LakeDistrict. Through the multiple lenses of different Instagram #lakedistrict accounts and datasets at the zoomed-out scale of the visualization, I expand the work in Chapter 4 by analysing multiple 'zoomed out' #lakedistricts,

comparing the public dataset from Chapter 4 with @herdyshepherd1, @thelakelanders and @fellsfarmers' images.

Next, I 'zoom in' (Hochman and Manovich, 2013) to the image scale to explore how the hyperscene, local #lakedistricts manifest in @fellsfarmers. I compare and contrast the @fellsfarmers images with the archetypal images from the digital textures of the hyper-scene #LakeDistrict in Chapter 4 across four analytical categories: a) how the digital texture of attachment is encountered as the hyper-scene #LakeDistrict; b) the characteristics of this digital texture of attachment, c) the presence of humans in the Shadow Landscape; and d) the hyper-scene digital landscape that emerges through the images. I demonstrate how many images of the @fellsfarmers are *overshadowed* by digital textures of attachment

Finally, I demonstrate how the majority of the remaining @fellsfarmers' images illustrate an *in-between* rural which sits between the digital textures of awe and adventure. Throughout sections two and three, I outline how the curation of the @fellsfarmers images evolved, in comparison to @herdyshepherd and @thelakelanders, as an agrarian 'vernacular' #lakedistrict, illustrating an account of farming which is particular and local to the Lake District valleys in which the images are taken.

Shades of the #LakeDistrict: Digital Shadows of Shadow Landscapes

> *'Shadows conceal but they never entirely obscure what falls below them.'*
>
> (Bryant et al., 2011, p. 464)

A shadow is darkness cast upon a surface when light is obstructed. One who 'shadows' follows another. The notion of the shadow provides an apt metaphor for the analyses and interrogations of colour, brightness, influence and visibility which run throughout this thesis.

As I explained in the literature review, the notion of Shadow Landscapes was first outlined by Bryant *et al* as a way to understand rural 'in-between places', which are 'neither densely populated nor pure wilderness' (2011, p. 460). They outline four elements, (marginality, scale, socio-nature and cultures of depopulation) as some conceptual tools which can help to describe the 'essential otherness' which characterises these rural places. Bryant and

colleagues' analysis, perhaps understandable given that the paper was published over a decade ago, crucially misses the importance of *the digital* as a conceptual element that is significant to the production and consumption of 'shadow landscapes' such as the Lake District, which the first two analytical chapters of this thesis have sought to illustrate through the example of Instagram images. In this chapter, I intend to demonstrate that digital shadows are prevalent within the shadow landscapes of rural locales such as the Lake District, through illustrating how the prominent, dominant layers of #LakeDistrict visual data, as discussed in chapters 4 and 5, eclipse and obscure the data contributions made by local farming families.

Chapter 4 has demonstrated that dominant romanticised conceptions of the #lakedsitrict as varied chocolate box-appropriate English natures (Bunce, 1994, 2005; Cloke, 1997, 2003; Van Den Born *et al*., 2001; Short, 2006; Readman, 2018a) of attachment, adventure and awe remain pervasive and powerful, reinforcing not only particular imaginaries of idyllic England, but also specific ways of seeing, visual modes of conceiving rural spaces (Woods, 2011, Abram, 2003), from the Claife glass to Instagram, from the armchair (or desk chair) countryside (Bunce, 1994; Sutherland, 2020) to the smartphone hyperscene. Literature continues to document that these powerful idylls are persistently obscuring perspectives and lived experiences of the rural from marginalised groups (Philo, 1992, 1997; Short, 1992; Garland and Chakraborti, 2006; Chakraborti, 2010).

6.1 The (Digital) Mountain's Shadow: the hyper-scene #lakedistrict and @fellsfarmers

Here, I explore how the dominant hyperscene #lakedistrict examined in Chapter 4 compares to the hyperscene #LakeDistrict as it is produced by the recruited farmers, and also by the two accounts explored in Chapter 5, @herdyshepherd1 and @thelakelanders. This approach presents a new means of utilising the cultural analytics methods developed by Hochman and Manovich: these visualisations have previously been utilised to great effect to compare the different temporal 'visual rhythms' (after Lefebvre, 2004; Hochman and Schwartz, 2012) of different places, with a strong focus upon comparing different 'Instagram Cities' (Hochman and Manovich, 2013). But no one has used them in this comparative fashion – unlike with work on other media.

As we have seen in the first half of this thesis, the Lake District is made hyperscene by many different actors. This in-depth examination of one physical place employs the 'mutable, multimedial and mass' (Rose, 2015) characteristics of digital visual culture as a means to extend our earlier analysis of the Instagram #lakedistrict: the mutability of the digital #lakedistrict image files meant I was able to select, organise and visualise multiple large-scale datasets of the #lakedistrict with identical methods utilising code and software. These new visualisations, which materialise the individual images and the #lakedistrict in new ways, and for different ends, presumably, to the intentions of the images' original posters, illustrates the instability and multi-medial nature of the Instagram images. The mass quality of these digital images is reflected by the large number of images which are visualised. In Figure 6. 1 alone, 38,440 individual Instagram images of the #lakedistrict have been plotted onto the four graphs respectively. The plotting of so many images enables a comparison of the different ways the digital textures of the #lakedistrict are manifest within the different accounts.

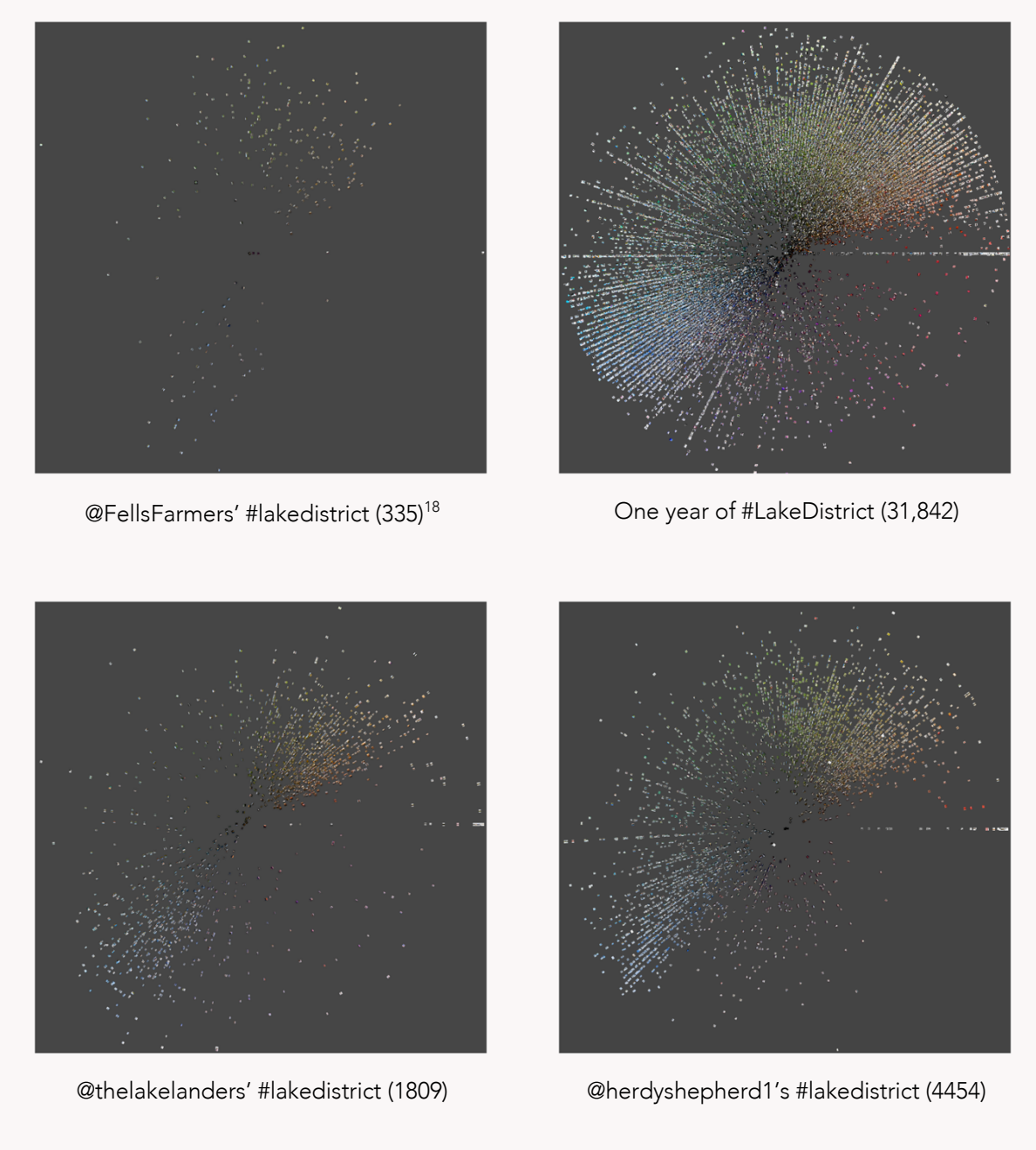


Figure 6. 1: Comparing hyperseen Instagram #lakedistricts

Figure 6.1 shows four visualisations each pertaining to the hyperseen #LakeDistrict. The @fellsfarmers visualisation (top left) shows the 335 images elicited from farmers and shared to Instagram for this research between August 2018 and September 2019. The one year of #lakedistrict shows the visualisation made and analysed in Chapter 4 (top right). On the bottom row are two visualisations which show all of the images within @thelakelanders and

[18] The posts examined in the hyperseen analysis are images only (.jpg), as the videos (.mp4) cannot be plotted onto the ImageJ visualisations.

@herdyshepherd1 Instagram accounts from their inception to the 30th September 2019 (bottom left and right respectively). In showing these visualisations of the core datasets examined in the thesis side by side, we are able to begin identifying some of the nuances, similarities and differences within the hyperscene #lakedistrict, as it is manifest from varying scales and angles.

Firstly, we can identify a broadly similar pattern of density and sparsity across the four visualisations. The public's #lakedistrict, @herdyshepherd1's, @thelakelanders' and @fellsfarmers' all generally show a denser clustering around the warm green and cool blue segments of the visualisations. As noted in Chapter 4, this 'first glance' already confirms for us that the Instagram #lakedistrict, from multiple perspectives, is consistently populated with images broadly containing colours which we associate with the outdoor environment: blue for water and skies, green for 'nature' (Meerwein, Rodeck and Mahnke, 2007, p. 21). The spaces of sparsity also identified within the first visualisation, where purples, reds and oranges might appear are more sporadically populated across all the visualisations.

Looking more closely, we can see where there are differences within the spread of colours across these different #lakedistricts. For example, on the bottom row it is evident that whilst the cooler blue zones of @thelakelanders and @herdyshepherd1 are similarly placed, the warm zone occupied by @herdyshepherd's images has a much wider spread that also includes a significant portion of green, where @thelakelanders' warm images are mostly concentrated in the orange segment of the visualisation (See Figure 6. 1, Bottom). This difference reflects the more muted, earthy tones within the @thelakelanders' aesthetic (see Chapter 5: Figure 5. 14, Figure 5. 15, Figure 5. 17, and Figure 5. 19) in contrast to the broader green colour palette of @herdyshepherd1's Instagram account (for example see Chapter 5, Figure 5.10 and Figure 5. 13).

Furthermore, by comparing and contrasting the public #lakedistrict dataset of Chapter 4, and the @fellsfarmers' images, we begin to see where the images of everyday farming are located and start to conceptualise how the digital textures of @fellsfarmers are manifest in shadows. Figure 6. 2 shows how the digital textures mapped for the #lakedistrict in chapter 4 (top) are overlayed onto the @fellsfarmers images (bottom). The most evident similarity we see is that the digital texture of attachment (green) *does overlap* with the @fellsfarmers green cluster.

However, the dispersion of the farmers' images in this area is wider, rather than the 'thinning' that occurs towards the edge of the top visualisation. What does this spread tell us? There is also a significant difference with the other cluster of the @fellsfarmers images, which sits directly *in-between* the key textures of adventure and awe identified in the hyperseen #lakedistrict explored in Chapter 4. That the farmers' images occupy this 'in-between' space from the hyperseen #lakedistrict provides very effective verification of the ways that unseen, local perceptions of shadow landscapes are also reflected in their digital shadows.

Sections 6.2 and 6.3 of this chapter will go on to explore these two clusters within the @fellsfarmers visualisation in more detail as evidence of how the digital shadows of shadow landscapes are made visible. The analysis demonstrates how @fellsfarmers' images diverge from the rural idyll, the dominant tourist-centric #lakedistrict of chapter one, to a rural 'everyday', conceptualised by Shirley as 'a perspective that allows an exploration of the 'countryside' as a populated place with lived rhythms and routines, rather than a 'landscape' which is primarily to be looked at or visited' (2015). What is the aesthetic of this everyday?

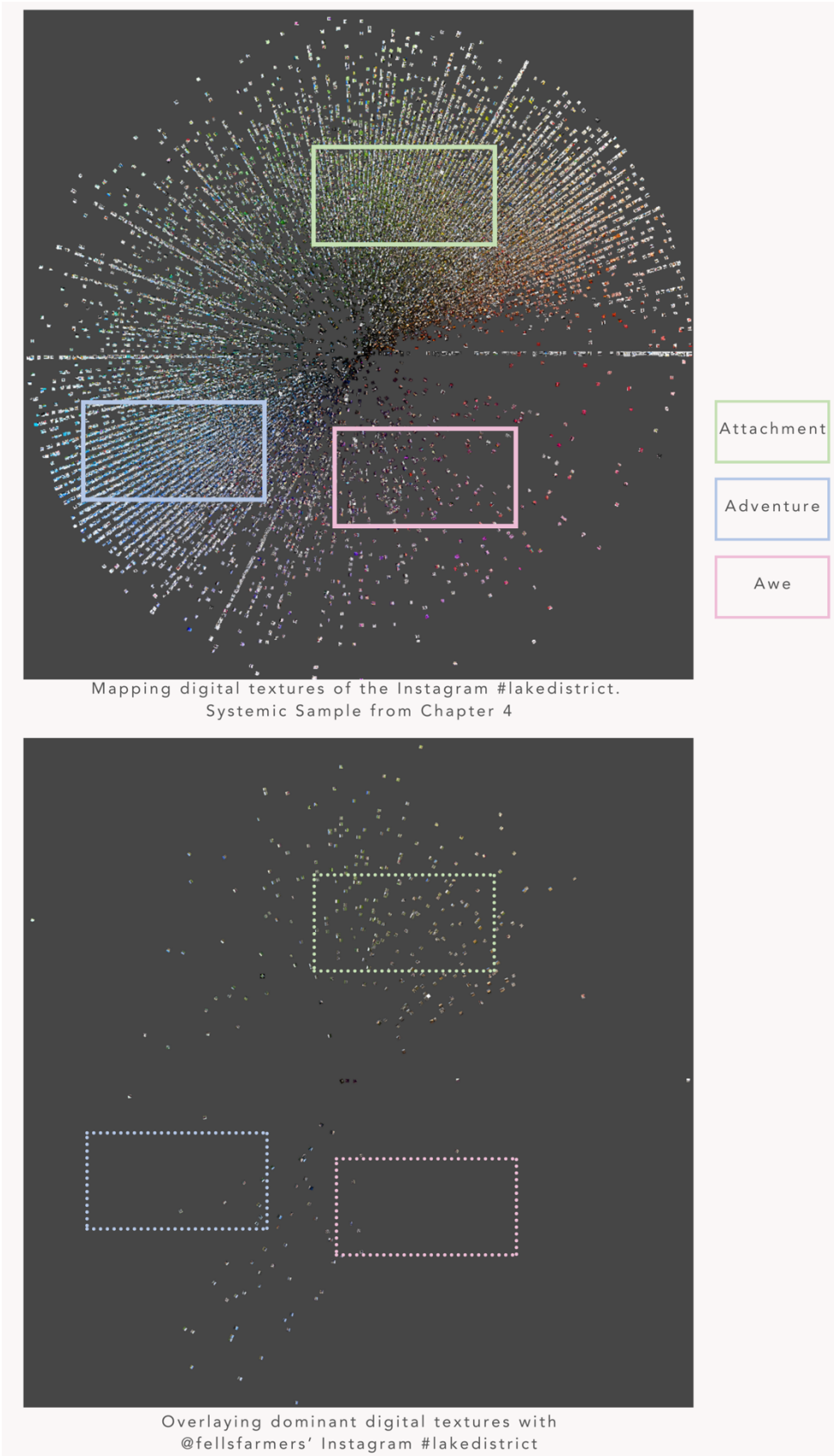


Figure 6. 2: Comparing Digital Textures of Instagram #lakedistricts

6.2 Overshadowed: The Rural Everyday of @FellsFarmers

In this section, I offer a close reading of the @fellsfarmers' textures of attachment as a 'rural everyday'. I draw comparisons between the archetypal images of attachment in Chapter 4 (Image Plate 1: Digital Textures of Attachment in the #lakedistrict) and the @fellsfarmers images which also occupy this textural affective territory (Rose & Willis, 2018) to document their similarities and differences. I conceptualise how @fellsfarmers and other farming images of the #lakedistrict are less visible because they are *overshadowed* and, as the visualisations show, literally eclipsed by the dominant idyllic, thicker textural fabric of the #lakedistrict-as-attachment explored in Chapter 4.

Figure 6. 3 shows the cluster area for the texture of attachment in @fellsfarmers (right, solid green border), also indicating where the texture of attachment was mapped in the larger #lakedistrict visualisation analysed in Chapter 4 (left, solid green border). In Image Plate 4, fifty of these @fellsfarmers images of attachment are presented to compare with the archetypal images of attachment in Image Plate 1 (Chapter 4). These images have been assembled into ten columns which are broadly summarised in the bottom row. In this section, I draw upon the concept of the rural everyday (Shirley, 2015) and argue that attachment is evoked as 'livelihood' to characterise the digital texture of Attachment in @fellsFarmers.

Shirley's rural everyday can be utilised to demonstrate how, in contrast to the tourist-centric idylls of Chapter 4 and carefully curated aesthetics of Chapter 5, the overshadowed texture of attachment is evoked through the routine farming practices of @fellsfarmers, how these practices are permeated with modern elements, and how these more 'everyday' pursuits and foci result in a farmscape which is overshadowed by the more sensational rurals of the leisurescapes in Chapter 4 and curated pastorals of @herdyshepherd1.

To this end, the analysis is presented in three cumulative arguments which aim to demonstrate how the images: a) consistently include content reflecting practices of work and tradition b) how the presence of humans, nonhumans and technology are always intermingled, and c) how the affective quality of these images is less compelling than the affective rural attachment examined in Chapter One. Together, the presence of these characteristics manifests in an everyday 'farmscape' which remains overshadowed.

The term livelihood, conventionally the means through which a person 'makes a living', takes on additional qualities when related to communities intimately entwined with environments. As I explained in the literature review, Ingold has argued against the orthodox separations we saw in anthropological literature between the ways in which people interact with the natural environment to make this living and 'how their lifeworld is imaginatively constructed', because such separations normalise and remove opportunities to explore the assumed distinction between nature and culture (Ingold, 2000, p. 9). I argue that @fellsfarmers images of attachment are an effective visual illustration of the inextricable entangling of the environment-as-livelihood and an intrinsically valued farming *way of life* for these fell farming communities (Gasson, 1973; Price and Evans, 2005, 2009).

These qualities are evident in Image Plate 4 through the ways that practices of work and tradition are evident and made entangled within the images. Many images highlight the lively and physical dimensions of 'work', indeed, hard work in attachment of livelihood: images in columns E (5), F (3,4), G (1, 2), H (1, 2, 4, 5) and I (3,4, 5) all illustrate farmers doing often strenuous work, with livestock or even building walls on mountainsides (I 3,4, 5).

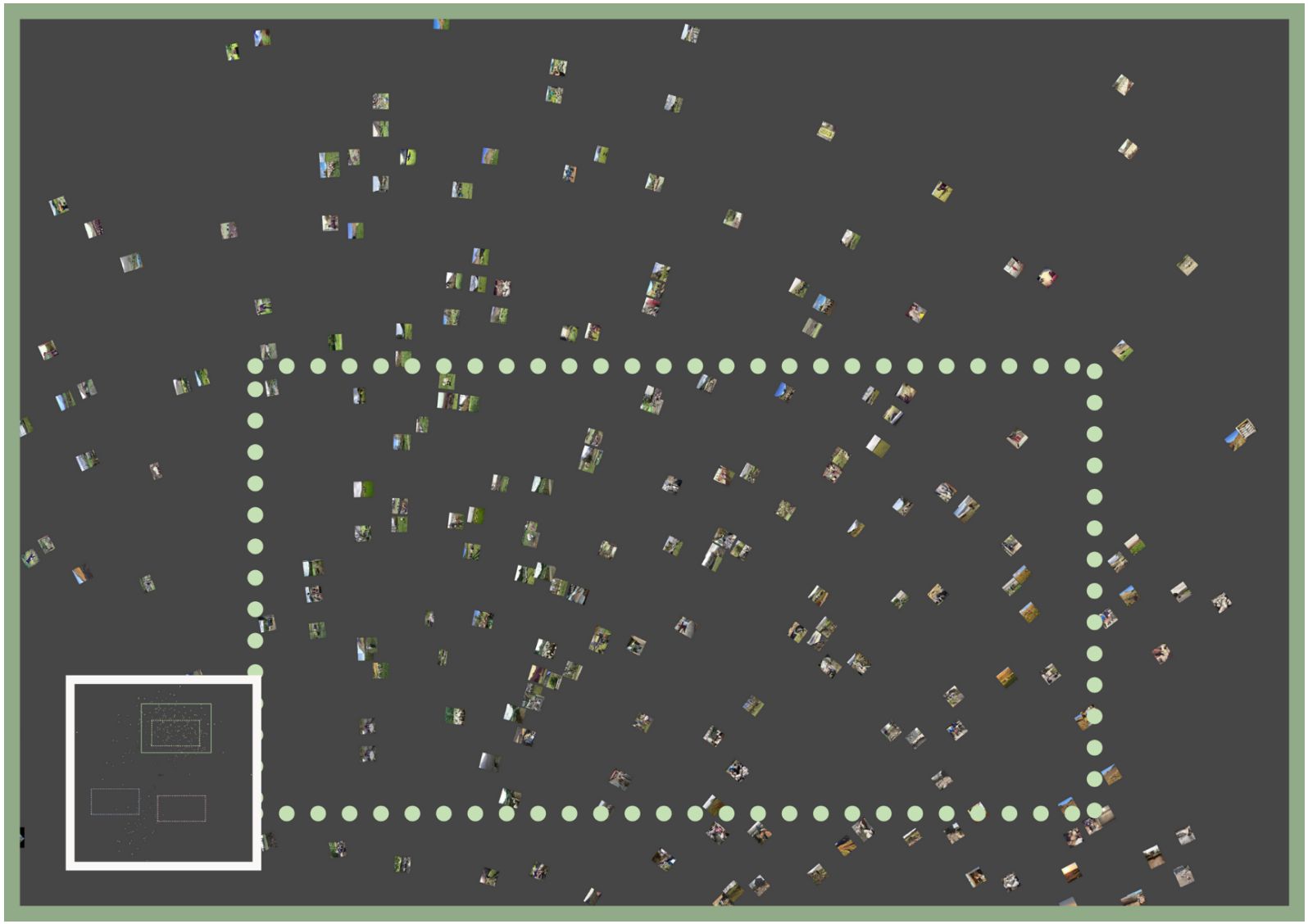


Figure 6. 3: Mapping overshadowed Landscapes of Attachment with Digital Textures

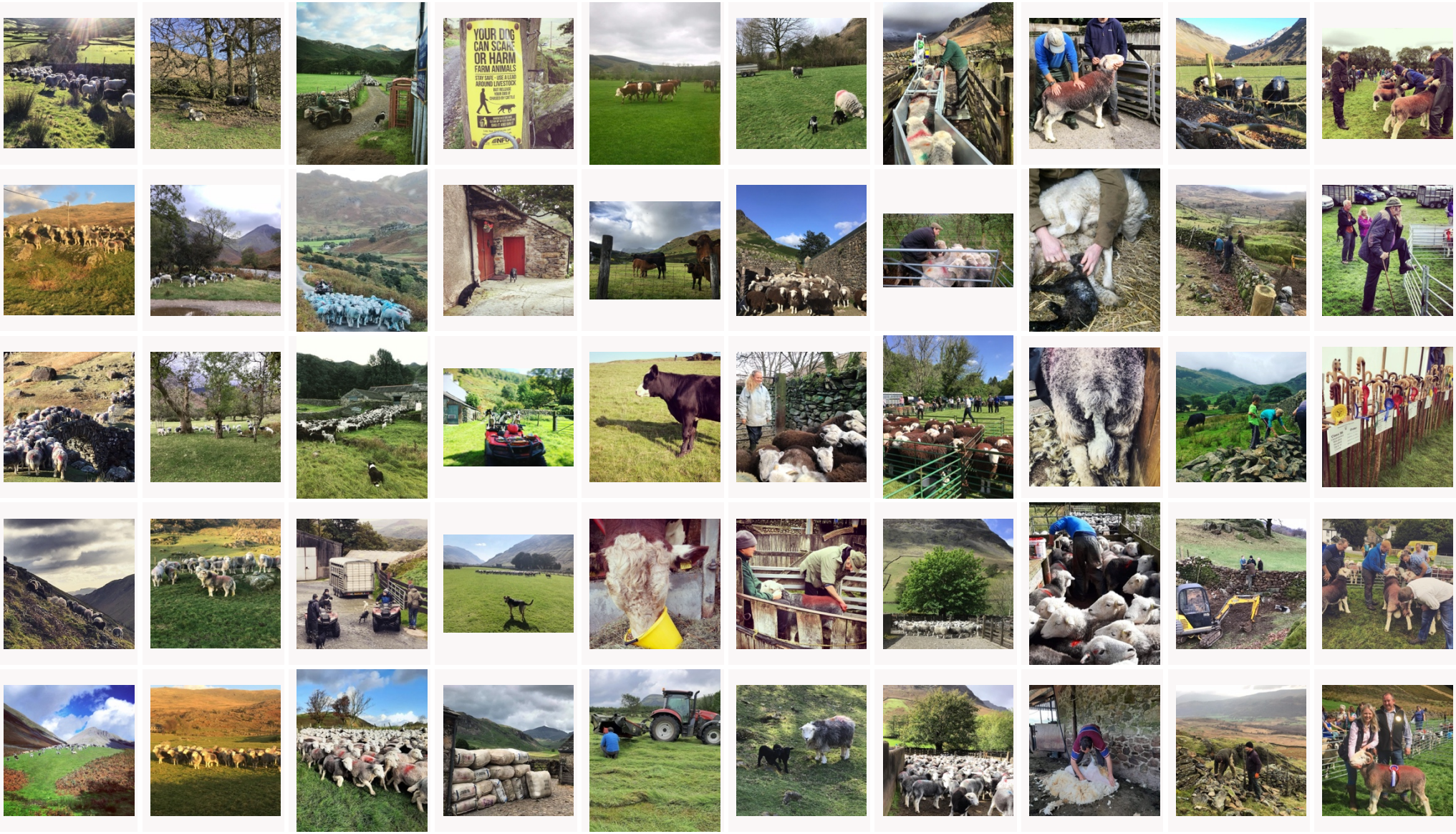


Image Plate 4: Digital Texture of Attachment in @FellsFarmer: Finding Farmscapes in the #LakeDistrict

The first example that I will utilise to illustrate how work and tradition are illustrated in @Fellsfarmers relates to the consistent co-mingling of traditional and modern agriculture. Across the @fellsfarmers images, we are constantly confronted with this juxtaposition, where unexpected and modern interventions or innovations are included in images which might otherwise fulfil conventional expectations of the rural idyll. Indeed, there are some images which strongly reflect this idyll (3A, B and C), nonetheless the majority of @fellsfarmers overshadowed images of attachment disrupt the idyll with the animals, technologies and even fashions of contemporary farming livelihoods.

Elements of modern working practices are included alongside the more traditional elements of the Lake District. With regards to livestock, the use of medicinal treatments for fluke and worms are represented in the images (G1, H4) sit alongside much more traditional, and place-based practices such as the fell gathering (A 1,3 5), Herdwick tup redding (F4), registering of tups with breed associations (H1) ewe tail dodding[19] (H3). In addition to the expected rural elements such as green foliage, blue skies and woolly fleeces, we also see the sharp lines of metal gates and races, and the bold modern colours of medicine bottles. These are the routine elements of the 'everyday' which do not usually make it to the more popular and influential grids of the Instagram #lakedistrict, as we will see in comparison to @herdyshepherd1's images.

These qualities are further evident in other working practices, most effectively illustrated through images of dry-stone walling. There are several instances here where we see traditional and modern elements collide: in I3, the family works together rebuilding a stone wall in one of the Lake Districts most well-known and visited valleys. A cow grazes nearby and trees blanket the midground, with fells sloping behind the scene. It has many of the qualities reminiscent of Turner's Churchyard scene in Kirkby Lonsdale (previously discussed and shown in Figure 4. 4): children, foliage, the respective picturesque elements of an idyllic scene. Yet, the children are dressed in neon t-shirts, the young girl is bent double straining to assist with rocks, whilst her brother takes a short rest, hands on hips. Kane has noted how 'synthetically coloured clothing' when juxtaposed to 'nature's majestic complementary contrasts and

[19] 'Dodding' and 'Dagging' are colloquial farming terms for cleaning and shearing any dirty wool away from the rear end and tail of a sheep, usually to prevent a build-up of muck which may result in fly strike (maggot infestation).

spectral hues' instead emphasise the 'hyper-saturated colours of machine processing' reflective of the industrial, and modern world (2018, p. 134). It is evident they are hard at work, and in modern clothing, in contrast to the children playing in Turner's churchyard. The colours are dark and dramatic- bold greens dominate among brown rocks and blue-grey foggy skies diverge from the sepia tinted landscape of Turner's idyll.





Figure 6. 4: Walls, work and recreation: @fellsfarmers walling (left, I3 in Image Plate 4) and @herdyshepherd1's family (right)

Furthermore, there are also evident contrasts between this @fellsfarrmers image and a similar composition from our @herdyshepherd1 dataset (see Figure 6. 4). Rather than the bold colours of the children's t-shirts and modern branded joggers in @fellsfarmers, @herdyshepherd1's son is in a pale pastel-striped jumper and miniature traditional green wellington boots. Where the @fellsfarmers children are clearly hard at work, the @herdyshepherd1's child is playing on the rocks of a tumbled down wall. Though we perhaps would not expect a toddler to help with walling, @herdyshepherd emphasises the message of play and fun, rather than putting up a wall which many farmers would consider in need of repair, through the commentary for the image: 'his poor mother is run ragged keeping him safe'. We can deduce this comment as a humorous remark, given the mother's laughing face, blurred in the background. This blurring, in fact, shows further compositional difference, where the photo has been shot in 'portrait mode', focusing on the foreground subject, where the @fellsfarmers image is in 'landscape mode' and shows less focus on a particular subject; the cow, the fells, the stones and the children are all in shot yet it is unclear what or who is the central focus: indeed, they are *all* the focus. Imagining @herdyshepherd1 behind the camera, we can see there a clearer

and more intentional element of curation, positioning and design within @herdysheperd1's image composition with his iPhone, just as with Turner and his paintbrush. The family have not all looked up and are not even all fully in the @fellsfarmers image: it appears as it is taken in the moment, capturing a 'rural everyday event', to routine a task to pose whilst doing, despite their impressive and atmospheric surroundings.[20]

Another key and related way that @fellsfarmers images confront conventional notions of the pastoral are through their consistent intermingling and representations of humans, livestock and technology. As the above examples of medicine and machinery illustrate, the @fellsfarmers often utilise modern technologies to aide their farming, and this is evident throughout the images. Further, the close relationships between man and sheep, or man and dog are also prevalent across the images. The vast majority of @fellsfarmers images contain sheep, and many of the images reflect this through moving sheep, sheep through the year, handling sheep and traditional sheep events. In contrast to more romanticised images of animals in the Lake District, such as the dogs in Chapter 4, or Rebanks' more curated images in Chapter 5, these images reflect an inconsistent attention to composition. Whilst some of the images reflect a remarkable and impressive level of consideration in relation to the image layout and style (A1, A4) many others effectively show a lack of this attention, resulting in less aesthetically pleasing, (but no less authentic) images than we might see from @herdyshepherd1.

To illustrate, in the vast majority of images with people, the subjects are not facing the camera and at times are turned completely away, and focused instead on their task (E5, F3, F4, G1, H1, H2, H4, H5). This compositional feature of @fellsfarmers images is important for two reasons: firstly it highlights to us that the image arrangement is as important to the farmers than it is to the majority of #LakeDistrict users in Chapter 4, who opted to show more posed images of particular moments, special memories within the 'leisurescape' (Gammon and Elkington, 2015, p. 6) or the Lake District as a recreational idyll, than the pastoral everyday of getting on with the job that we see from farmers here. Secondly, this lack of faces has an

[20] In I 4 and 5, again we see where traditional practices are aided by modern technology, and the pragmatics of everyday livelihood disrupt the idyllic qualities of @fellsfarmers images, for instance where a yellow digger has been utilised to aide in the wall building.

important impact for the colours in the images, the skin was an important feature in the hue of many images of attachment. This warming colour, combined with the warming affect evoked in us from seeing a smiling face versus a person who is turned away, almost ignoring us, has significant impact on our emotional response and, indeed, *attachment* to the image.

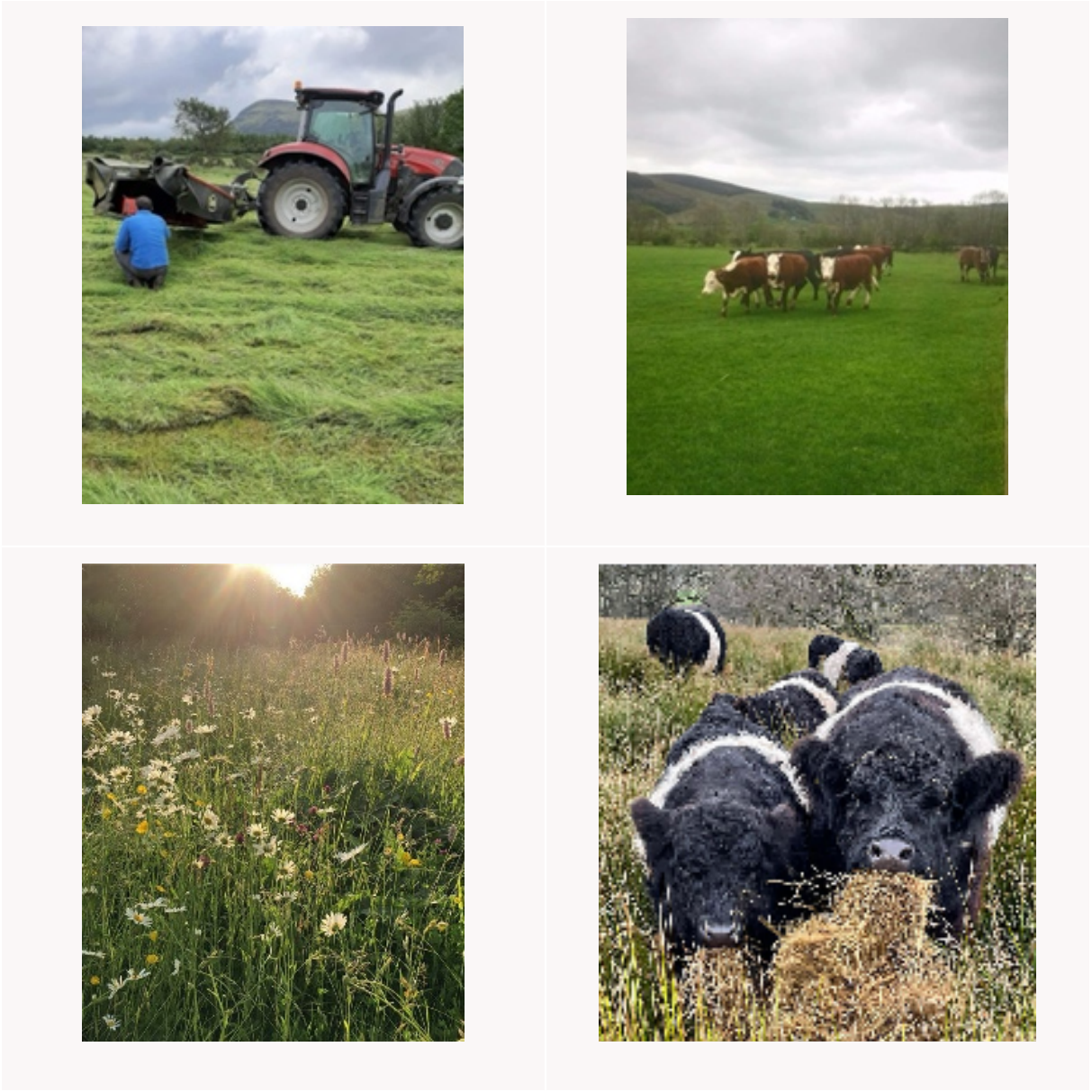


Figure 6. 5: Contrasting aesthetics of grassland and grazing:
Top: a @fellsfarmer making silage (left) and @fellsfarmer cattle on conventional improved grassland (right)
Bottom: a meadow from textures of attachment (left) and grasses as fodder in @herdyshepherd1 (right)

Some of the images which effectively illustrate how @fellsfarmers images are less compelling than the dominant images of attachment in Chapter 4 and also in @herdyshepherd, are essentially images of field and fodder. Grass is a fundamental element of farming, and of the Lake District landscape, but it is reflected very differently across @fellsfarmers, @herdyshepherd and the dominant attachment images of Chapter one. For instance, in E5,

we see a farmer fixing his grass cutter whilst making silage. The image includes a large red commercial tractor, and the farmer facing directly away from the camera, more concerned, it seems, with the farming equipment than the image being taken. The grass is still wet and just cut, it has not yet been tedded out at all (silage still requires some drying, though not to the extent of haylage or hay). The making of silage, fermented grasses more easily digested by livestock, is a more contested process in upland areas due to its less environmentally friendly image, most visibly evident through the high use of plastic for storage, and for the more aggressive end waste product (slurry). In E1, we also see the hue of improved grassland, which has likely been harrowed, seeded and fertilised to result in the flattened pasture, both in terms of the smooth land level and even green colour.

In Figure 6. 5, we see how these images of grass diverge from the images both in Chapter 4 and in the @herdyshepherd1. In contrast to @fellsfarmers images of neat fields and semi-modernised practices, the meadow image in Chapter 4 is replete with myriad messy wildflower stems, overlapping and interlaced to create a soft bed of many hues. The warm light behind the meadow creates an almost painterly romantic quality to the grasses and daisies, in sharp contrast to the lawn-like grasses of the improved field. The relative flatness of the grass in the @fellsfarmers images creates more uniform blocks of colour which contrast with the messier textures of the grasses and the cattle hair in @herdyshepherd1's image.

In @herdyshepherd1's image, we see not silage but hay as the preferred grass for his cattle. The small, belted Galloways are fed in a field of tall rough grasses far more similar to the meadow from chapter one than either of the fields from @fellsfarmers. These differences emphasise how the aesthetic of @herdyshepherd1's images support his underlying message of tradition and nature friendly farming. The 'native' breed of cattle on rough grassland, fed with roughage, illustrate effectively the anti-modern methods of farming that @herdyshepherd1 has promoted in his books: 'The more of progress we saw, the less we liked it' (Rebanks, 2020, p. 142).

Related, then, the commercial cattle breeds we see in @fellsfarmers images provide a stark contrast to @herdyshepherd's cattle. In images E 1,2,3 and 4 there are lowland beef breeds such as Herefords (E 1 and 4). These breeds are native to the UK and conventionally seen in the lower land pastures, such as E1, that we do not usually associate with the mountainous

uplands of the Lake District. The inclusion of this breed in this area reflects the modern mobility of livestock but does not reach the extremes of breeding purely 'continental' breeds from Europe which are often assumed to be indicative of the industrial agricultural practices where bigger (and more) is better, and dependent upon fast growing yet intensive production systems associated with intensification in the 1980s, and which Rebanks remarks upon in English Pastoral as 'being drawn into the darkness' (2020, pp. 125–126). Through his many platforms, alongside his Instagram imagery, @herdyshepherd1 arguably overshadows, though subtly and indirectly, the perspectives of many of his neighbours who continue to include some variety of commercial livestock, including continental cattle breeds, within their farming systems. These images nonetheless reflect a landscape which is familiar to viewers who have encountered English countryside, but not what they might associate specifically with the Lake District.[21] Figure 6. 5 makes visually explicit the stark contrast in cattle breed visuality between @fellsfarmers and @herdyshepherd1. The two images in the right of Figure 6. 5 effectively illustrate how cattle breeds are made more or less evocative of rural #lakedistrict farming.

These images constitute the livestock as strikingly different environmental subjects: the @fellsfarmers Herefords as commercial, conventional farming animals we might see in fields across England, who are typically assumed to be bad for the environment. In contrast, @herdyshepherd1's cuddly, charismatic (Lorimer, 2007) Galloways are suggested as a natural part of their surroundings- the height of the grasses around them make them appear smaller and well-fitting. The messy grasses reach well above their bellies. There are two important things to note here: firstly, the immediate impact of the digital textures which evoke very different imaginaries about nature and cattle, and second, the importance of the 'situated eye' (Rose and Tolia-Kelly, 2012) of the viewer, who may or may not recognise the significance of these different breeds for the landscape, culture and economy of Lake District farming.

Together, these overshadowed @fellsfarmers images reflect the #LakeDistrict as an everyday *farmscape*. Haedicke conceptualised farmscapes as a rejection of the traditional dualistic view of farmland, which sees it either as a space for food production or as a picturesque rural idyll for tourism. Instead, Haedicke describes farmscapes as a 'hybrid of agricultural land that

[21] Interestingly, some of these farmers do utilise continental breeds for crossing, such as Charollais and Texel tups or Limousin bulls, to produce commercial fat lambs and beef alongside their native herds and flocks.

produces food and bucolic agrarian scenery that is visually consumed', shifting focus from solely concentrating on the land and instead also recognising the vital lived experience of landscape: 'farmscapes live in the words, experiences and encounters of farmers, non-farmers and nonhumans; in the rhythms and repetitions of seasonal farming practices associated with a particular place; and in the traces and echoes left in the land by living creatures and natural forces alike' (2021, p. 2). As an everyday, or 'working' farmscape, @fellsfarmers' overshadowed images reflect 'a narrative of progress achieved through hard work', where modernity and tradition are as entangled, and animals, technology and people which constitute the work.

6.3 The in-between: Agro-Pastoral Vernaculars of @FellsFarmers.

In this section, I examine the @fellsfarmers' images that sit between the existing textures of 'attachment' and awe' which were examined closely in Chapter 4. Similar to the @fellsfarmers images which are 'overshadowed', 'in-between' images reflect a sense of the everyday work done by farming families in the Lakeland fells. Yet, as the analysis will show, this everydayness is distinct in its place-based character: everyday farming livelihoods is everyday *fell*-farming in the in-between. Image Plate 5 shows all 50 @fellsfarmers images which fall 'in-between' the boundaries of the dominant digital textures Adventure and Awe, as shown in Figure 6. 6.

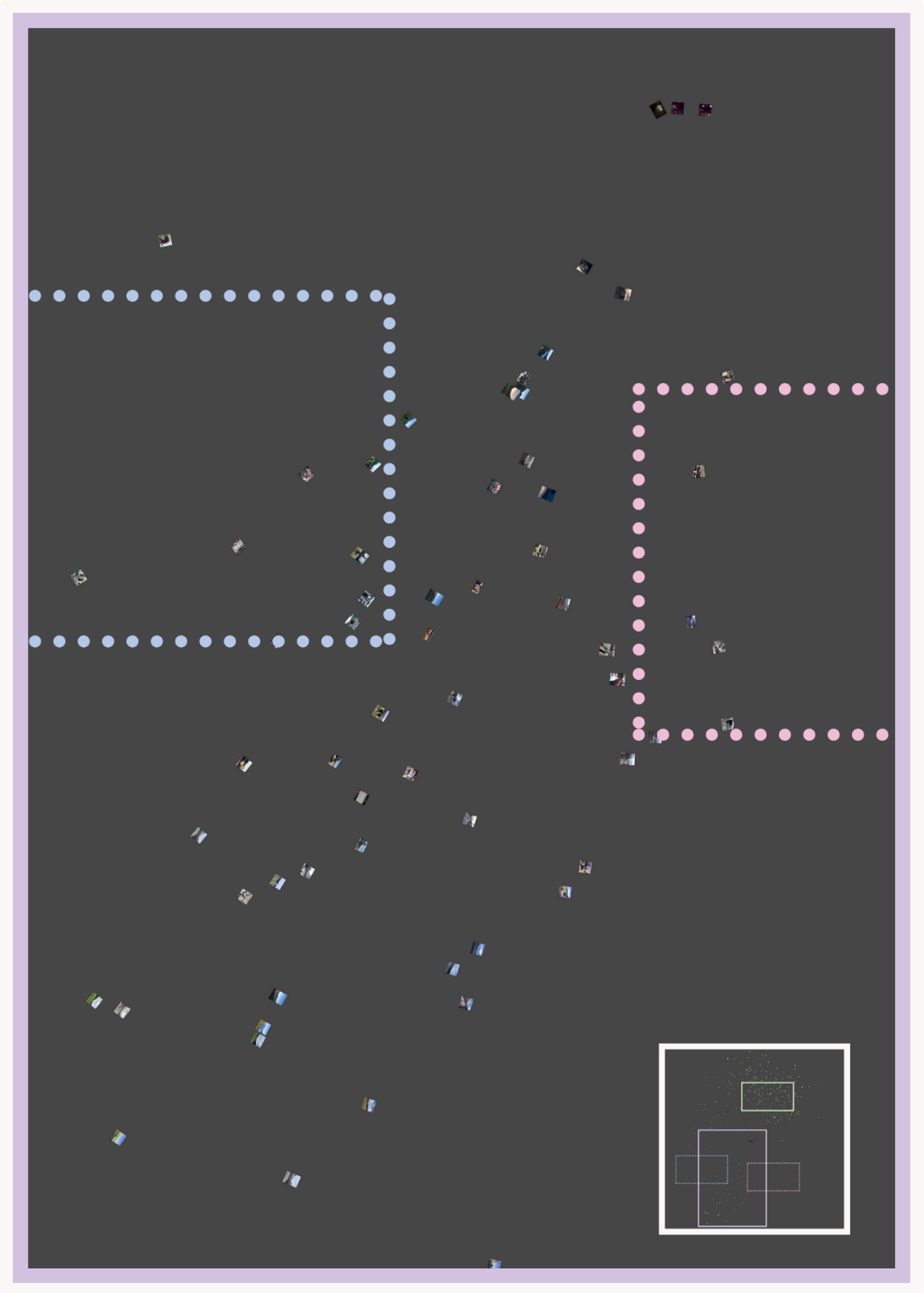


Figure 6. 6: Mapping in-between Landscapes with Digital Textures

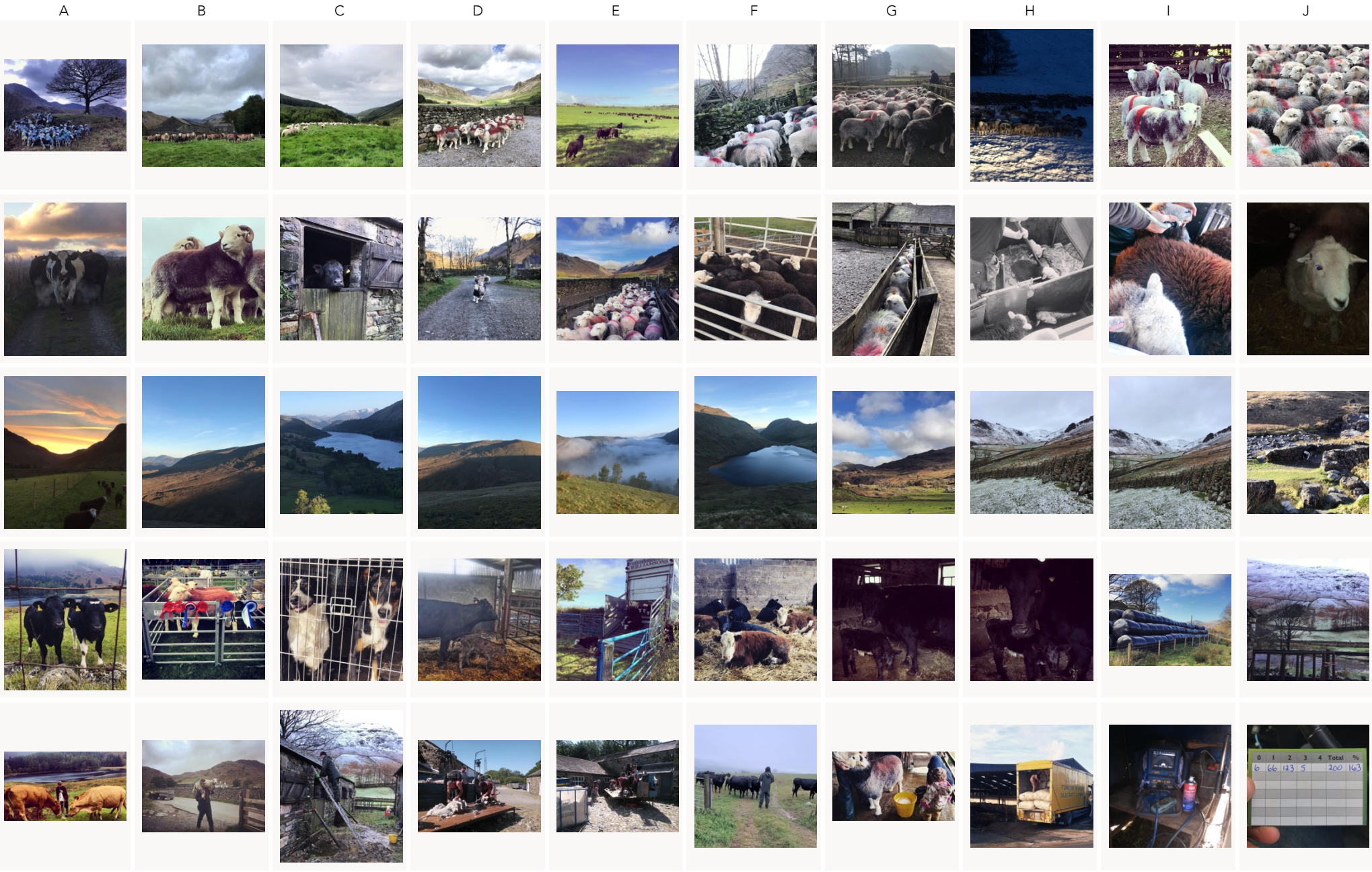


Image Plate 5: @FellsFarmers In-between Digital Textures of Attachment in Awe

The analysis is again presented in three cumulative arguments which aim to demonstrate how the images: a) consistently include content which concurrently includes elements of both tradition and technology b) how the setting of the in-between images is simultaneously fell and farm, and c) how practices of care and the use of bad lighting in covered spaces leave space for ambiguity and alternate understandings of animal experiences. Together, these characteristics reflect an 'in-between' #lakedistrict which is simultaneously intimately local and globally entwined, comforting and unsettling, everyday and awe-inspiring.

Just as modern technologies were included in images of the overshadowed, the constant interplay of tradition and technology in everyday work is a key element of tension evident in @fellsfarmers images of the in-between. Many of these images also contain either direct or implied references to the use of modern technology. Figure 6. 7 shows four images from Image Plate 5 which show direct and indirect reference to modern agricultural technology from @fellsfarmers. These are: a scanning machine, a clipping machine, silage bales, and a scanning percentage card. Two of these images relate to a key element of breeding sheep farming, but show neither the sheep, the farm or the human. Instead, they focus on the modern technology which has aided fell farmers to better predict and manage their stock in the weeks before lambing time commences. The scanner is also pictured next to a can of marker spray, used to differentiate ewes pregnant with single, twin, or triplet lambs.



Figure 6. 7: 'Exposing' Modern Technologies in Traditional Farmscapes

These images reflect simultaneously very global and localised dimensions: a tourist viewer of the #lakedistrict who encountered these images may have no idea of the equipment's use or importance to the farming which takes place in the farming landscape, and so it is local where perhaps only those who are familiar with these farming practices will recognise their relation

to the landscape- determining which sheep will be on the fell, in the fields, or kept close to if they are in need of further care. The images of course reflect very global dimensions of technological advancements: from the first clinical of the ultrasound in the 1950s, to its expanded use in agriculture for high volumes of stock, and the eventual introduction of mobile scanning units in 2009 which could be taken by specialists to smaller, more remote farms such as those of the @fellsfarmers.

Further, the image of clippers also reflects these advances in technology, where mobile battery-powered electronic clippers are used to shear the wool from sheep in the summer months. Interestingly, this image makes this juxtaposition of tradition and technology all the more apparent, where the clipping unit is parked next to a listed barn- this particular dwelling is owned by the National Trust and has been present since 1540 AD.

The fourth interesting example here is that of the silage bales. These black bales evoke much of what Sullivan, building upon Morton (2008), has described through the concept of the dark pastoral as the 'ignored costs of global industrial capitalism such as the industrial waste that is intimately connected to modern agriculture but not shown in lovely photos of green farms' (Sullivan, 2017, p. 26). The black wrap on silage bales is not widely recyclable and is regarded as a key symbol of waste from forage production. However, that @fellsfarmers have made visible this element of farming as a part of their #lakedistrict highlights that how the dark pastoral can enable us to make sense of some of the key tensions which exist for many farmers in these areas. In contrast to the forage shown by @herdyshepherd1, explored in chapter 5, who represents himself on Instagram as a nature-friendly farmer using hay, these bales reflect the pragmatism of farming for many in the lake district who may not have been able to gather hay, or for whom hay might not be financially viable. In this way, the in-between brings to the fore the 'dark pastoral' elements which Sullivan has argued are usually unshown, or indeed, are 'exposed' as strong critiques of post-industrial consumer excess (Kane, 2018). For @fellsfarmers, these less 'pleasant' or 'green' elements of farming do not need to be 'exposed', the farmers do not see them as something to hide or disparage, as we have seen from @herdyshepherd1's earlier commentary, in the first place.

Also relevant here to how technology and tradition are situated in the fell farms is the *greyness* of the many in-between images. The overall effect of encountering this group of images

together, as in Image Plate 5, is a sense of coolness, significantly enhanced by the number of wintertime images present in the dataset. Unlike the inclusion of modern technologies seen above, these grey images evoke and 'expose' the feeling of hard work, both as it is represented through human activities, and how it is felt and anticipated in images without human presence. In Figure 6. 8, on the left we see two images of fell and farm together, intakes and mountainside, in wintry conditions. The green of the grass and brown of bracken is dappled with wet snow on top. This dappled texture of the snow's surface and the cool, grey colour give a real sense for the slushy fields, and how difficult they will be to navigate underfoot, for humans and livestock alike. Performing everyday tasks is made that bit more difficult struggling across the claggy and slippery terrain. Farmers are shown in wet fields and up metal ladders, continuing their duties in adverse weather. Even the metal of the ladder and piping is further reminiscent of the exertion from working outside in the cold for those familiar to it. The muted coolness which is both reflected and evoked in the images of in-between is further distinct from the digital textures explored so far in this thesis: the rich blues of adventure are more refreshing than cold, and the dark tones of awe are punctuated with often warm and vivid bursts of bright colour.



Figure 6. 8: Grey as Evoking Hard Work on Fell Farms

Yet in contrast to these images reflective of modern technologies and difficult work, several of the images reflect and even celebrate traditional farming practices within the dramatic fell setting. In Figure 6. 9, we see these images consistently include both fell and farm, and highlight traditional farming practices within the dramatic setting, such as Herdwick sheep redding or hand feeding livestock in field. In the foreground, we see close-ups of freshly 'redded' Herdwick tups, a young shepherd feeding cattle and carrying a lamb, or a newly

smitted[22] flock of Herdwick ewes. In the backgrounds, the composition highlights the rugged terrain of the hills or, in one case, the nearby lake and forest evoking similar sensations of 'wildness' which are reminiscent of picturesque tropes of the Lake District discussed earlier in this thesis. Dramatic clouds and even a dark tree silhouette enhance the atmospheric sense of the background in the images, juxtaposing the livestock populating the foreground.

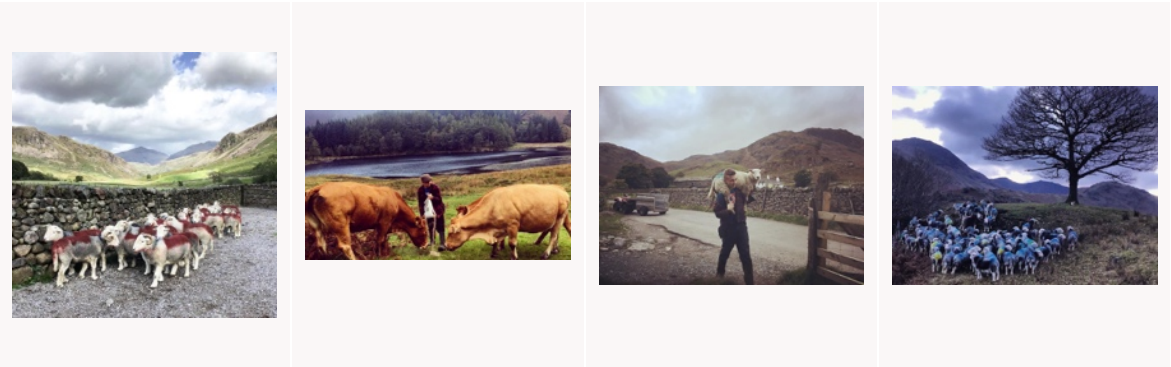


Figure 6. 9: Traditions of Farming in the Fells

Another key element of tension evident in the @fellsfarmers images is thus between fell and farm, where everyday farming activities are so often situated within and simultaneously producing elements of the sublime landscape images which were prevalent in the textures of 'awe' and 'adventure'. In contrast to these textures, which did not feature farming as a visible element, @fellsfarmers images often show themselves and their livestock as *in situ* within the dramatic topography of the Lake District mountains. For instance, in Image Plate 5, images E2, D1, and A1, 3, 4 and 5[23], livestock are being photographed with the fells also as a central element of the composition. The positioning of the images mean that the viewer's eye will equally focus upon the livestock in the foreground and the dramatic skylines in the background. Indeed, in several cases we see instances where the background is more prominent. In Figure 6. 10, a @fellsfarmers image is compared to one from @thelakelanders in Chapter 5. The @fellsfarmers image (right) bears some striking similarities to the @thelakelanders' image (left) with the dramatic horizon and the silhouette of the mountains against a beautiful, coloured sky. However, if we move beyond the composition, we can also see some key differences between these two images which significantly impact how both the

[22] A 'smit mark' is the farmers' flock mark on the side of the sheep which identifies to him and other farmers which flock the animal belongs to. They are used to differentiate farmers flocks from one another particularly on common land.

[23] Framing, all images in row A from same family.

overall image and component parts play a role in the affect of the image upon the viewer. For example, the editing skills of @thelakelanders become more apparent when we consider how even the texture of the rocks in the foreground of their image are made clear and sharp.

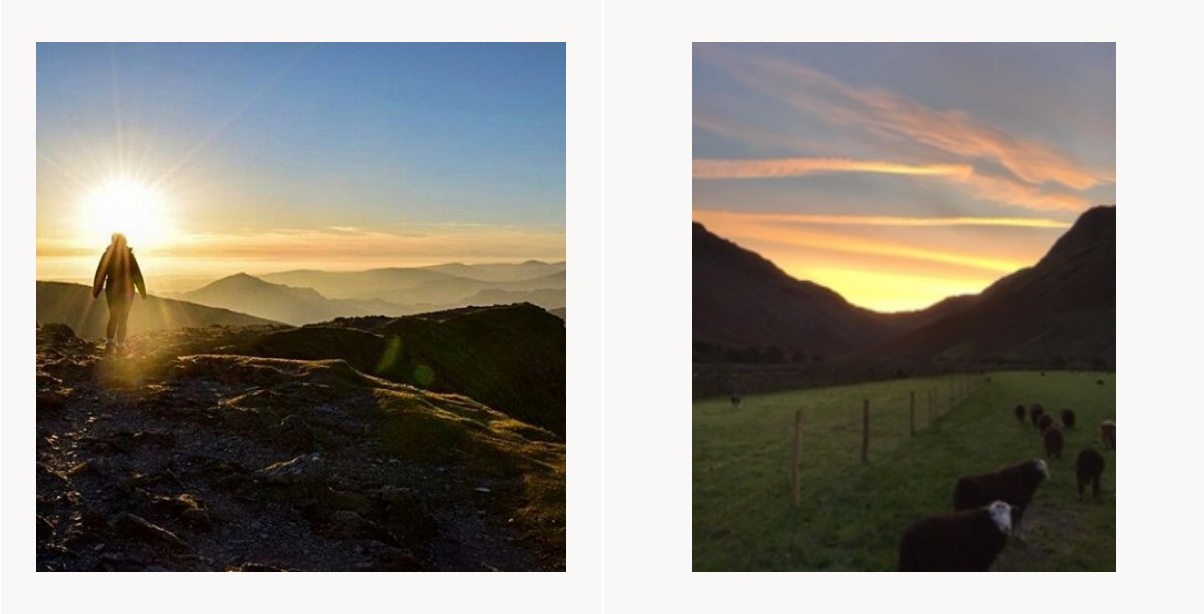


Figure 6. 10: Comparing dramatic horizons from @thelakelanders and @fellsfarmers

In contrast, the sheep are actually quite difficult to notice at first glance, reflecting the lower quality camera and lack of time spent enhancing any images through sophisticated software such as photoshop to highlight fine-grain details, which we can reasonably assume has been done by @thelakelanders in order to bring such detail to the viewer's attention. In this way, even though the @fellsfarmers image contains a human, I argue that the @fellsfarmers image reflects a more human and entangled image. The rockiness of @thelakelanders image highlights the sense of difficult and nonhuman terrain, and the way that the walker is also encapsulated into the silhouette further enhance the sense of adventure and awe within a nonhuman landscape in this image. On the other hand, the @fellsfarmers' image, with the sheep and the field in the foreground under the shadow of the mountain portrays a more even and balanced image of both farming and the fell landscape *together*: roughly half of the image each is divided between the fell and the farm, the soft grass in the foreground is even, and even a commercial fence is included, stretching backwards towards the mountain. The farm itself is always a *part* of these dramatic landscapes. In this way, the fell and farm's consistent entanglement for @fellsfarmers is aptly conceptualised through the notion of

vernacular landscapes, a means to understand how many different types of landscape are shaped, produced and maintained through local *everyday* human practices:

> 'As opposed to the highly-engineered scenery produced by designers such as Frederick Law Olmsted, most of the landscape of a country or region is produced by the way relatively free ordinary agents act in the world according to their own innate sense or shared cultural templates.' (Jackson in Farminer, 2017, p. 119)

Therefore, in the 'in-between', we move beyond the 'everyday rural' explored in section three, which focused upon how practices of work and tradition were situated and embedded *in* the landscape to evoke a sense of attachment, towards a notion of how these practices also *shape the landscape itself*. The earlier images of tradition and technology, alongside imagery which situates the farm in fell contexts, illustrate how the vernacular landscape is related to Ingold's 'dwelling perspective', because not only are farmer's everyday activities shaping the landscape, it is their *inhabiting* of that particular fell, that particular farm, which shapes the landscape as a meaningful place for them (Ingold, 2000, p. 173).

The final element of tension explored in this chapter is expressed through understandings and evocations of 'care and cover'. Through care and cover, I refer to representations of animals receiving treatment and shown in various types of housing other than the outdoor fields and fells we see in many of the images. These images, I argue, can be read as 'anti-pastoral' where some viewers may encounter the images as both discursively and affectively reminiscent of animal suffering. The anti-pastoral is thus a useful concept here for highlighting that there are elements of the Lake District landscape which are not only neutrally absent of the 'romantic', but they can also be perceived as the opposite of pastoral idylls, reflecting dimensions of suffering, death and horror.

For example, in Figure 6. 11, we see an image of a Herdwick sheep shared by one of @fellsfarmers alongside an image of a dairy cow. The cow image is the cover from the documentary called Cow (2021) by Andrea Arnold. This image was utilised as the headline image for an article in The Conversation magazine (Wills, 2022), discussing how the film's critique of the dairy industry highlights the need for more legal rights for animals. The dark images evoke an unsettling sense of exposure and mistreatment, the need for 'undercover' documentation and the harsh glare of cameras on uncertain and alarmed animal faces. This

aesthetic is effective in multiple examples of the 'exposition' of industrial agriculture, and alludes also to the methods of this exposing: photographer Francesco Pistilli, for example, highlights the use of 'undercover investigations and overnight missions' for documenting animals' living conditions in Italian agribusinesses (2022). That the image of the Herdwick sheep is inadvertently so reminiscent of such imagery, through its slightly blurry, rushed looking composition, speaking to the style of 'undercover' imagery, and high black-and-white contrast indicating the same night timing as the exposé missions, highlights the space for potential misinterpretation of this image as documentation of similar suffering. Importantly, here the anti-pastoral is a relational lens- some of the images we will see may be read as 'anti-pastoral' by some viewers, but not by others.



Figure 6. 11: An image reminiscent of 'exposing' animal welfare in @fellsfarmers

In Figure 6. 12, below, we see several variations upon this notion of cover and care, which may be read as animal suffering or animal care, depending upon the viewer. Herdwick ewes are lined in the wooden race ready for dosing and shown being dosed in the top left two images. Two shepherd dogs are shown in a cage in another image. For farmers, the use of medicine is seen as an act of care, to prevent sheep getting diseases and vaccinating them from more common ailments whilst they are on the fell. The dogs are placed in car crates to prevent them being hurt if the pickup unexpectedly stops and they are loose in the rear of a vehicle. Yet, these acts of care are not encompassed within a single still image, highlighting the partiality and ambiguity which remains a constant issue with social media imagery (cite), particularly

with images that do not conform to standard conventions of 'good photography' or utilise the in-app editing functions which may brighten and improve the aesthetic of images within the Instagram platform, (Manovich, 2017).

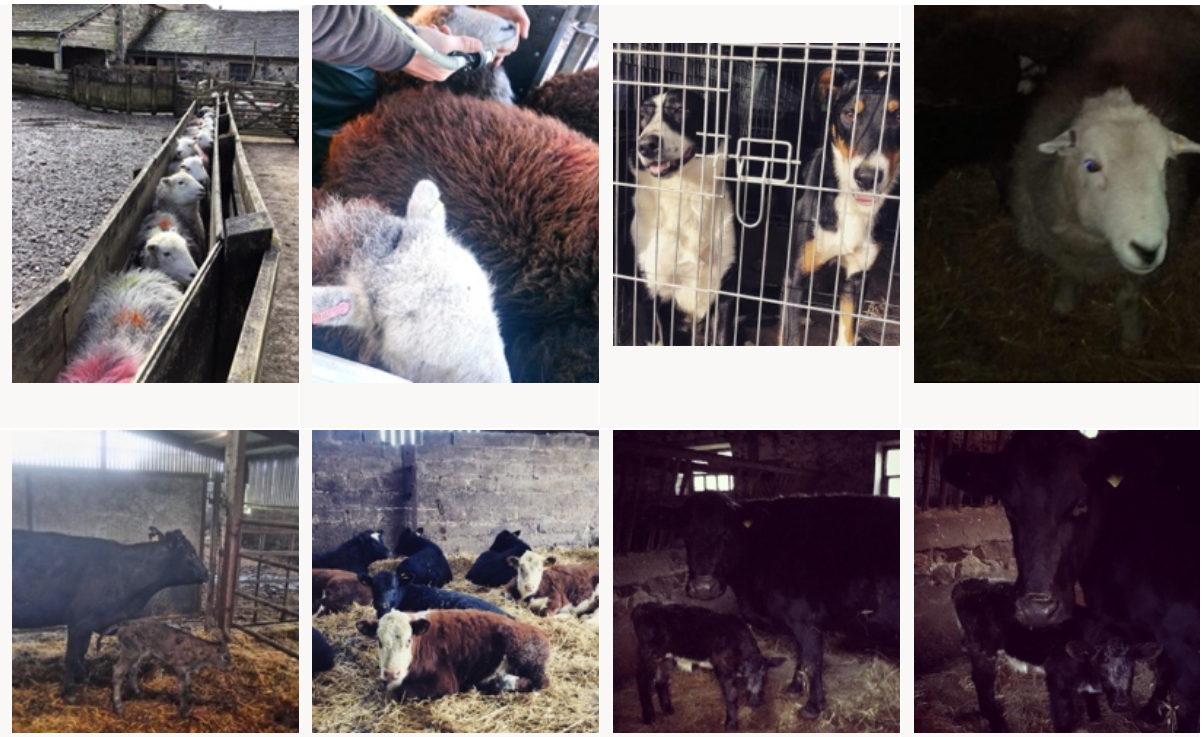


Figure 6. 12: Anti-Idylls or 'bad' photography in @fellsfarmers

This issue of light is particularly reflected in the images of cattle we see in Figure 6. 12. The lack of natural light or additional exposure has made the images quite dark, thus feeling quite dreary, despite windows being visible in the sheds, and having such aesthetically pleasing content as new-born calves. Thus, issues of livestock being under cover further impact and disrupt the composition's affective quality. Where Bell has argued that the anti-idyll moves us from the 'armchair countryside' to the frightening, hiding 'behind the sofa countryside' (1997, p. 95), I propose an understanding of the @fellsfarmers' images which may be evocative of the anti-idyll as an 'in the shed countryside', as it is pragmatically lived by the more-than-human fell farm inhabitants. The anti-pastoral enables us to conceptualise the differing ways that elements of @fellsfarmers' vernacular landscape are seen as either upsetting (negative) or everyday (neutral and positive) by different viewers.

Throughout this section, I have sought to illustrate that, in contrast to the less compelling and 'overshadowed' images explored earlier in the chapter, in-between images occupy spaces of

contradiction and tension. They are characterised by ambiguity of interpretation seen in cover and care, entanglements of tradition and technology, and dualisms of dramatic fell and 'everyday' farm. The in-between reflects a 'fellfarmscape' which is distinct from the farmscape seen in the 'overshadowed' in both its idiosyncrasies and embraces of tension, and the most intimately local scale on which these tensions are played out. We have seen that the fellfarmscape performs conflicting elements of the 'industrialised farmscape' with sophisticated machinery yet none of the economic and political power (Haedicke, 2021, p. 172). The fellfarmscape embodies elements of the 'working farmscape', evoking strong senses of endeavour and hard work through documentation of tasks and even the way the fellsides emphasise the challenging terrain in which farmers must continue to work. Each individual farm in the #lakedistrict we see here navigates and performs these tensions differently, as is reflected across the images. The individual lived experience of the fellfarmscape which we see in the in-between is often made distinct by the mountain itself with which the farm exists. The farm, family and flocks are always becoming with the fell. To conclude this chapter, I attempt to conceptualise how these differing 'shadows' of the #lakedistrict can be understood together as the digital mountain's shadow.

6.4 The (digital) mountain's shadow: bringing light to hyperscenes

In this chapter, we have seen the ways in which @fellsfarmers images are obscured by more dominant, powerful images of the #lakedistrict. They are overshadowed by more compelling images, or are in between compelling #lakedistricts, where tensions pull the images towards different dominant textures, leaving them neither here nor there. They are less attractive, they have less connectivity to powerful stories already in the media, they can be easily misread. The content of @fellsfarmers images reflects these obscured, everyday digital landscapes, showing viewers the #lakedistrict as it is perceived by those who inhabit it. Figure 6. 13 demonstrates the extension of our hyperseen typology of the #lakedistrict to summarise how these 'lived' elements of the #lakedistrict we are uncovering compare to the analytical features previously explored in chapters 4 and 5. In the following chapter, we dig deeper into these situated and individual fell-farmscapes, by sharing the stories of the farming families who inhabit the different fells present in the in-between.

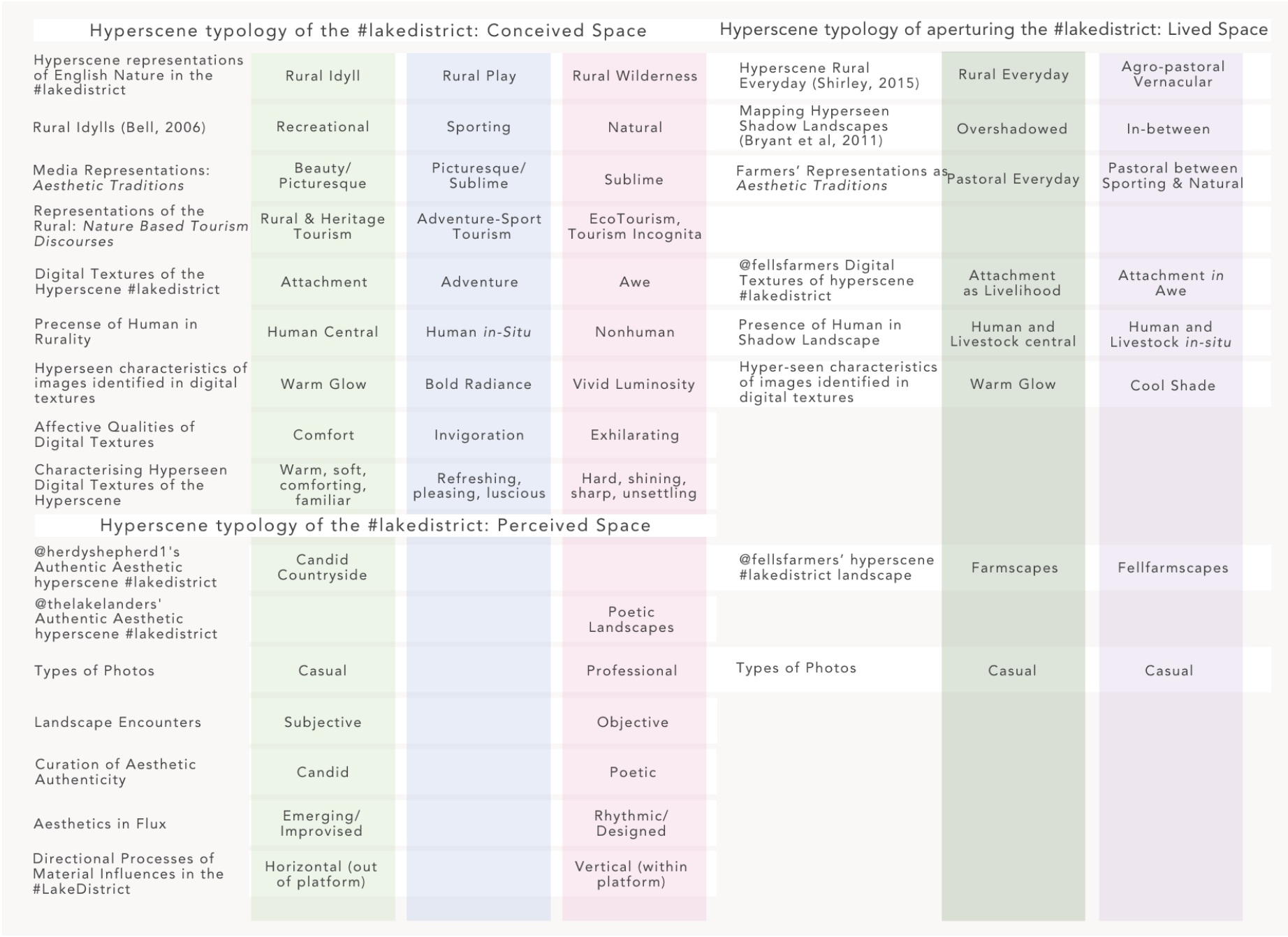


Figure 6. 13: Shadows of the lived #lakedistrict as everyday in a hyperscene typology

Chapter 7

Hands, Blood, Hefts: Envisioning and Embodying an Alternative #LakeDistrict Landscape with @fellsfarmers

'If we read images with the same literacy skills as we use to read words, we will not be able to see what images are and what they do.'

(Fendler, 2017, p. 751)

In the first half of this thesis, I began by examining a wide dataset of images, and then looking more closely at the individuals behind two key accounts of the popular Instagram #lakedistrict. The second half of the thesis mirrors this move from the focus on images to the people behind them. In Chapter 6, I analysed the images of @fellsfarmers as a group and how their aesthetic, composition and affect differ from those images which came previously, and I now turn to the people behind @fellsfarmers, the families with whom I spent several months undertaking participatory digital visual research and with whom I have now been discussing fell farming in the Lake District for several years. Throughout this chapter, I draw out some of the embodied politics surrounding vision, visibility and influence which impact farmers' capacity to articulate their perceptions of past, present and future #LakeDistricts on social media. I reflect on the potential of this novel methodology in the following, concluding chapter.

The images examined in Chapter 6 highlight for us the tensions which exist within the @fellsfarmers' #lakedistrict: we observed entangled evocations of technology and tradition, of work and identity, of fell and farm. To these tensions, this chapter will also examine unseen elements which weave through the @fellsfarmers' stories, the practices which remain unseen in online spaces. Through the series of three visual vignettes which are detailed in the following, these tensions are drawn out and situated within single farming families.

7.1 Aperturing: bringing to light

The concept of aperturing developed in this thesis offers a powerful framework for illuminating and deepening the analysis of previously gathered visual data. By uniting participants' images,

my own photography, and other imagery with ethnographic fieldnotes, aperturing enables a multi-layered narrative that brings to light alternative and more nuanced visions of place. This process does not merely present data but actively opens up new ways of seeing, letting in more light, and uncovering hidden or overlooked details. Through aperturing, I can interweave different perspectives and contexts, creating a more holistic, embodied, and vibrant story that captures the complexity of the landscapes and experiences being studied. This method, thus, enhances the richness and depth of the ethnographic record, making visible the interplay between digital, visual, and lived understandings of place.

In these visual vignettes, I draw together images from the farmers themselves, my own fieldwork images and those from grey literature, along with my fieldnotes to develop a dataset that offers a holistic and rich account of the families discussed. This approach follows the rationale of Vellanki & Davesar, who argue that 'drawing on field notes, conversations with participants and community members explores the pluralistic possibilities of photographs. Engaging with photographs across the areas of production, consumption, and reflection, opens up the possibilities for varied interpretations and understandings to emerge.' (Vellanki and Davesar, 2020, pp. 223–224)

I selected the three families whose vignettes are outlined below for several reasons. First, these families reflect the variety of the hill-farming models which exist in the Lake District: they vary in terms of their farm size, land tenure, business commerciality, and social status within the Herdwick farming community. It is important to consider that not all fell farms fit the romanticised image of small, multi-generational National Trust steadings (though a substantial number do). Second, these families were all able to share a significant number of images over several months during the data collection, resulting in a strong data set of images to accompany the fieldnotes and to develop a robust, rich visual vignette. Third, despite the many overlapping similarities in the tensions that many of these farmers face, they all also have unique and powerful stories of the #lakedistrict which each add to and uncover significant elements of 'silence', a dimension of the #lakedistrict which is unseen in the dominant and more powerful versions that have been explored in earlier chapters of this thesis.

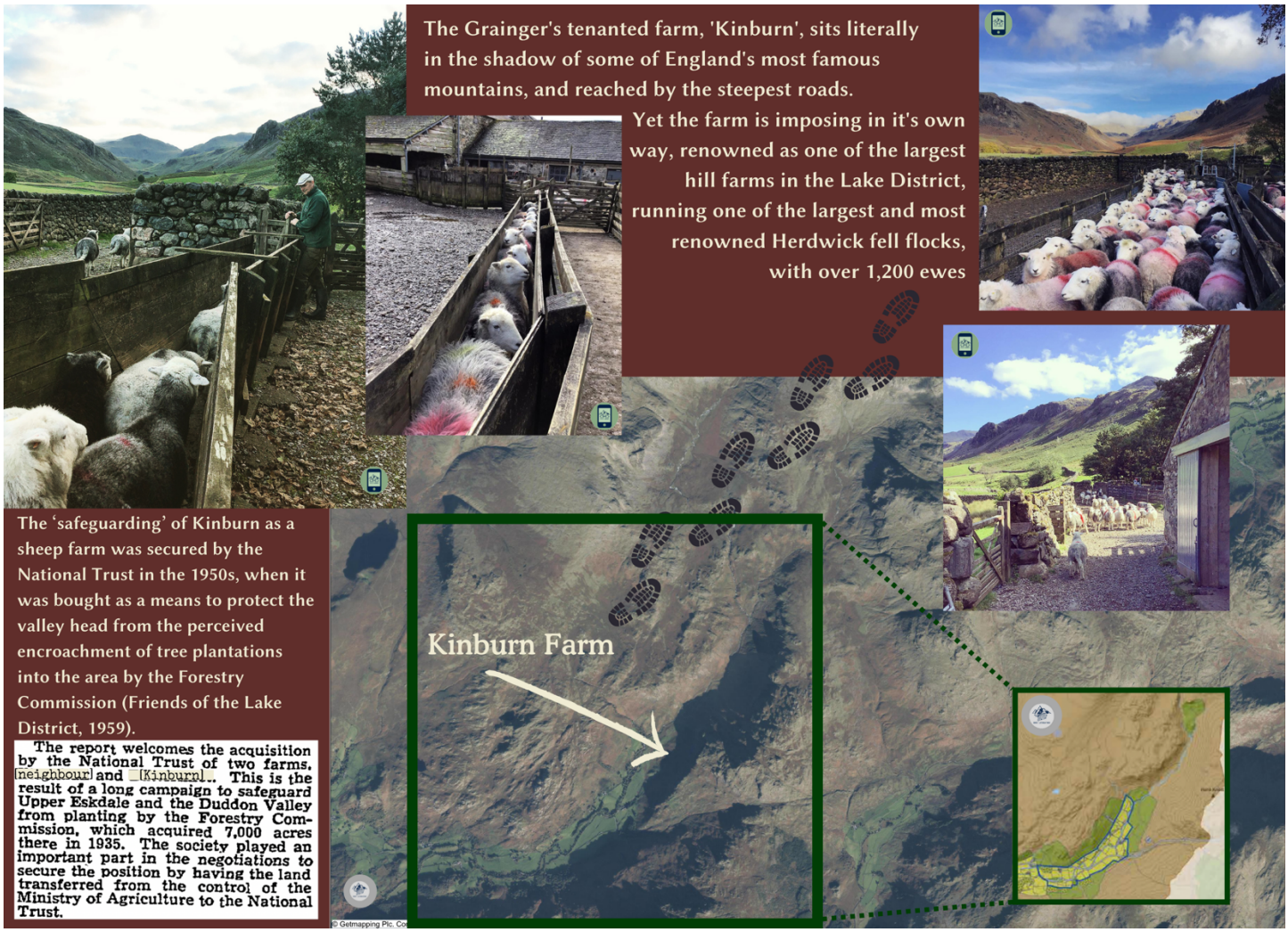
Following visual vignettes of the Graingers, the Williamsons, and the Taylors, the main analysis explores how three 'silenced' practices drawn from the vignettes, redding, dry-stone walling, and the gather, are brought out of the shadows, or 'apertured' by @fellsfarmers. The study explains how comprehending @fellsfarmers' images through the lenses of the aesthetic and embodiment enables us to see more of their lived reality within the #lakedistrict and highlights the fundamentally different modes of engaging with the landscape by @fellsfarmers versus the other sources this thesis has examined. I conclude by considering what this aperturing tells us about the politics of seeing the #lakedistrict through Instagram. Aperturing, or shedding light on, the everyday working practices of @fellsfarmers is the crux of not only what this project hoped to achieve on Instagram, but an apt motif for the myriad different ways of becoming seen that @fellsfarmers have realised over the six years that I have been working with them.

7.2 Visual Vignettes: Capturing the unseen of @fellsfarmers

In the three visual vignettes which follow, I surround the collected imagery with an ethnographic portrait of each family and descriptions of the visuals to outline a particular motif of @fellsfarmers, evident in both their imagery and my fieldwork with the families, which has been previously obscured or shadowed in other dominant configurations of the online #lakedistrict (Figure 7.1).



Figure 7. 1: Visual Vignettes Image Source Key



Red Hands A: Introducing Kinburn Farm

Red Hands is a short portrait of the Grainger family. Mark, his wife Sally, and their son Tom (along with the help of Uncle Fred) farm at 'Kinburn', a tenanted hill farm owned by the National Trust since the 1950s. I was grateful to spend time with the Grainger family helping (or trying to) with moving or dosing sheep, tup registrations, and watching on as they competed at local Shepherd's Meets. One of the most impactful experiences I had with the family was a day spent redding tups. Redding is a practice performed exclusively by Herdwick farmers, where they coat the backs of the sheep (always their tups, and sometimes their very best ewes too for showing) with a red covering, made when oil or water is combined with 'Herdwick Show Red': a powder which can be bought only at one of the farmers' merchants in Penrith.

Kinburn farm reflects the strong heritage of sheep farming in the Lake District, where monastic records show taxes and rental payments due from the 'herdwyk' (today, a 'sheep pasture') in the farm's name dates from at least as early as 1537 (Whyte, 1985). And whilst this is certainly where the breed's name comes from, as over time the local name for the holdings became synonymous with the sheep of their fells, the bodily origin of the breed is less clear. There is much store set by the idea, from the Herdwick Sheep Breeders Association, to the various companies who have built up brands around the heritage of the Herdwick, that the breed are modern descendants of sheep initially brought to England by Vikings (Brown, 2009). Where the majority of modern, commercial sheep breeds can be traced through genetic similarities, and often existing written records, to the purposeful enhancements or crosses of existing breeds to make the most of particular strengths or suitable features for a given task, the Herdwick has indeed maintained a certain mystique in the uncertainty of its origins.



The Herdwick's uniqueness is scientifically proven through its genetic distinctiveness from other commercial types, instead sharing more genetic similarity with primitive breeds- demonstrated by its' uniquely high proportion of the 'RO' retro-type, found so far in only 10 breeds across the world (Bowles et al, 2014).

Red Hands B: Herdwicks as Heritage at Kinburn Farm

In combination with the physical uniqueness of the breed are the unique cultural traditions of Herdwick farming which continue to exist today. In the case of tup 'redding', there are again many stories about why this practice began. The most mentioned of these is that the 'red' was haematite (iron ore) extracted from Cumbrian mines and used to distinguish the tups (rams) from the females and easily locate them on the fells during mating season.



Red Hands C: Herdwick 'Redding' as Culture

Today, and for many years, tups have not been sent out onto the fells for mating, and instead the ewes are brought into fields, where farmers can be selective in their breeding strategies, choosing particular males for particular groups of females, and aiming for the most commercial viability in their flock. The last haematite mine in Cumbria closed for good in 1968, and yet the distinct red colour and the practice of redding tups continues.

I arrived at Kinburn early in the morning, a commute over the two winding, narrow lanes that are the steepest roads in England, and turned sharply at the bottom down the sweeping farm track to meet Mark to get started for the day. We went inside for a brew and Auntie Gladys's homemade ginger cake (a practice I far too easily became accustomed to) and waited for Uncle Fred to arrive. 'Uncle Fred always reds the tups,' Mark told me. Fred and his brother (Mark's father) had previously farmed at Kinburn together for over 40 years. The Grainger family has been at Kinburn for well over 100 years now. It is clear that 'to red the tups' is understood by the family as a skill and an honour, well learnt and hard earned, evidenced in Uncle Fred's industrious, graft-worn hands, as shown in Image C.

Red Hands D: Herdwick 'Redding' as Custom



Once Uncle Fred had arrived, and the tups were brought in, I was surprised at the quiet, calm and considered way that the red was applied. For each sheep, Uncle Fred stood back while Mark caught each tup by the horns (I was on gate duty) and pulled him into the small sorting ring for redding. Through the images in Image D, I try to capture the consideration, concentration, and precision of Uncle Fred's well-practised movements as he applies the deep red paste to each sheep. With the rest of his fist closed, Fred starts by outlining the top of the redded area across the shoulders, a shape which emphasises the breadth of the tup in a show ring. Each stroke is short and gentle, and by using just his index finger Fred creates a defined outline. With the paste warmed inside his hand, once the shape is outlined Fred would use longer strokes with his hand outstretched, adding coverage and depth to the red across the fleece.

Whilst Fred is alternating between these two techniques, Mark holds the sheep quietly. The tup's head is held between his waist and in the crook of his elbow, with his hands resting across his ears. Once he settles, the tup lifts his head to rest his chin on Mark's arm a while. Whilst not 'tame' by any means, the tups also don't show any significant signs of distress during their redding: at Kinburn, the redding is a calm and intimate method, and the farmers talk together in quiet murmurs about the process, the sheep, the day. Once both men are happy that the sheep's red coat is complete, I open the gate and he trots back into the yard amongst his companions, stopping briefly to give a little shudder as he goes, sensing the paste now painted across his back, seeping into his 'jacket', but not reaching the inside, waterproof 'waistcoat' of wool for which primitive sheep are distinctive. As we see in Figure 4. 4, Mark and Fred watch him go and take just a brief moment, after each and every sheep, to reflect and admire the animal. There is a deep devotion and passion for the sheep evident between the family members: they cannot help but point out the strong-yet-bonny faces, the good 'bone' of the legs, the hardy confirmation of each and every animal, whilst discussing how they bred him, or where he came from. The affection is infectious. It's hardly a wonder I've started my own little flock.

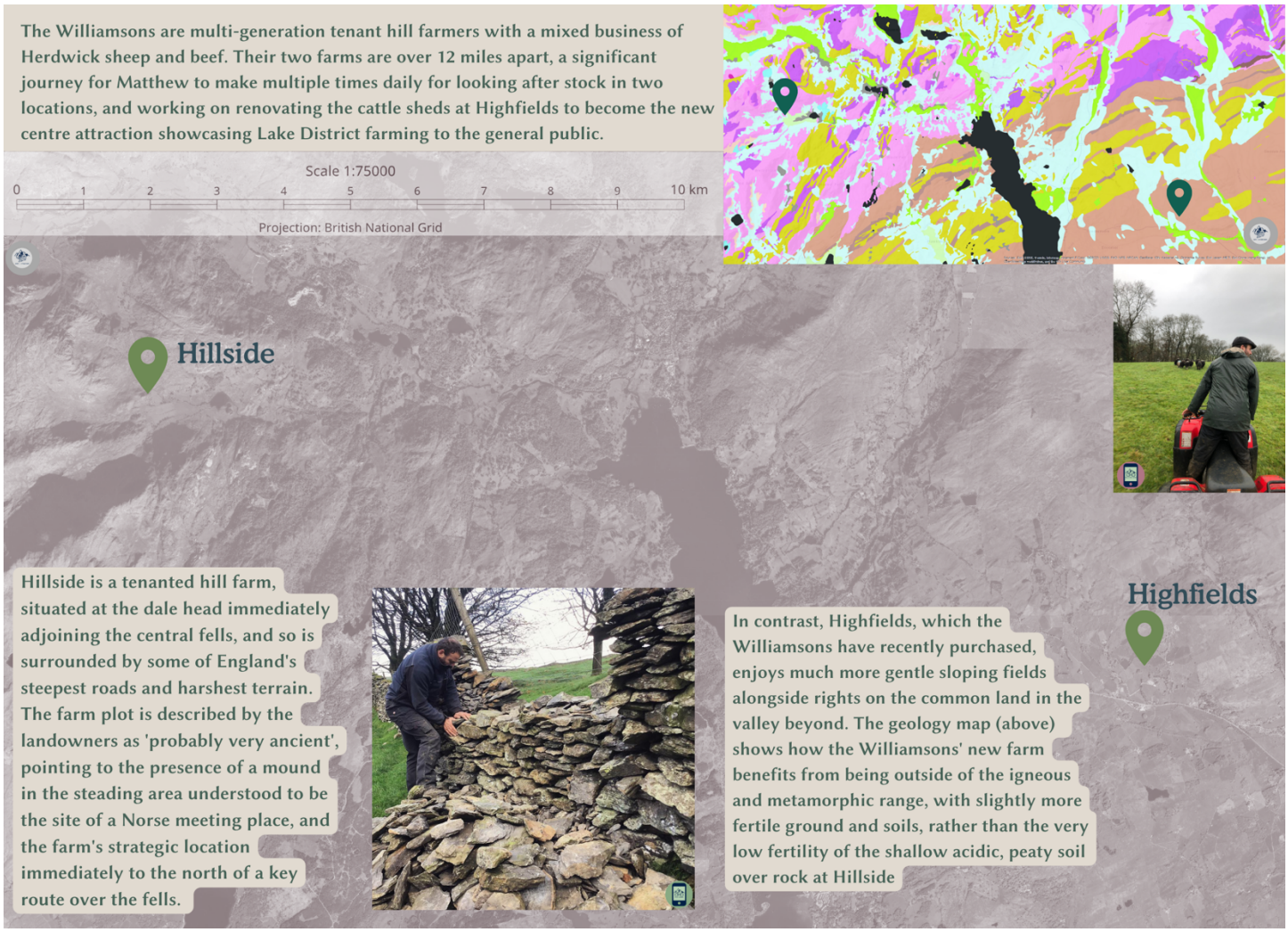


Red Hands E: Herdwick 'Redding' as Care and Heritage

Watch My Video of Tup Redding with Mark and Fred

2. Bleeding Landscapes

Bleeding landscapes is a story of the hard work, commitment and determination of fell farmers in their everyday lives, as it is embodied by the Williamson family. Matthew is one of three brothers who continue to farm in the same valley (each brother separately rents a farm from the National Trust); their ancestors have been farming sheep here since the 1700s. On my first visit to the Williamsons' farm 'Hillside', I sat down with Matthew at the kitchen table to talk about his views of the fells and farming. He leans back in his chair, lifts his right arm up and holds it out to the side: *'if you cut me open, I would bleed this landscape',* he states, with a cutting motion through his upper arm using his left hand. 'These fells, this way of life, it's in my blood'. The strength of Matthew's dedication and attachment to his livelihood is striking.



Bleeding Landscapes A: Hillside and Highfields in context

Hillside farm is situated right at the other end of the two steepest roads in England, mountain passes traversing across Cumbria's central fells, from Kinburn where the Grainger family lives. Hard work is part and parcel of days with the Williamsons. As it's the middle of summer on my first visit, Matthew and Charlotte's children Tucker, Louise and James are all out helping too. We venture across meadows to move some ewes, who have come to the end of a grazing period on one of the marshy, species rich SSSI grasslands which surround Hillside. Bringing the ewes back through to the meadows, its youngster James's turn to handle his young dog Tan under his dad's careful guidance, and eldest Tucker is tasked with catching a lame ewe in need of treatment. Louise and I keep a hold of her in the quad trailer while Matthew and Tucker check over the rest of the ewes, and then we move them back to some of the more improved fields for their next grass.

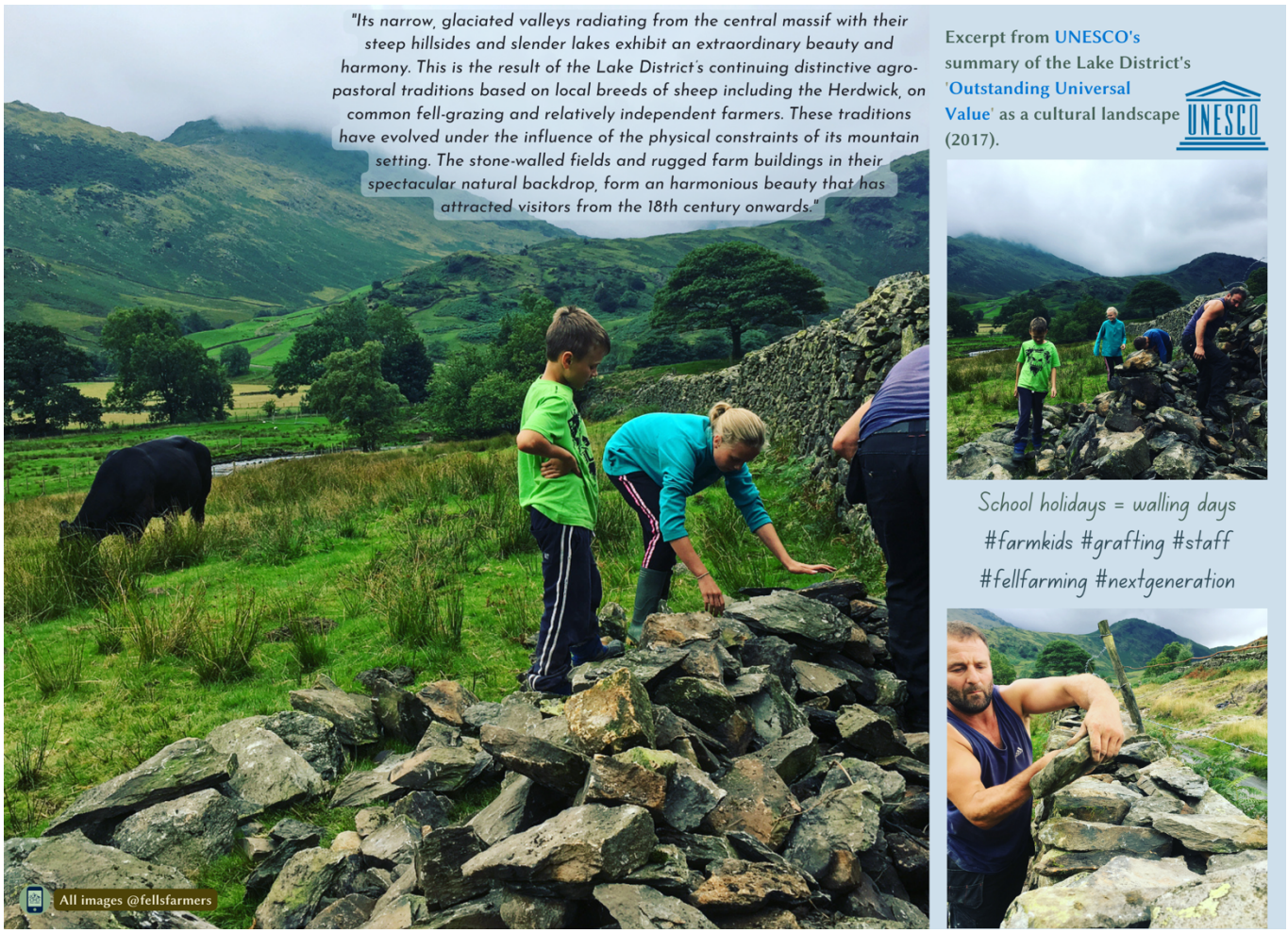
The motif of transferring farm skills and involving the 'next generation' in the running of the farm runs throughout many of the Williamson family's images. In Images B & C, we see a series of images uploaded by the Williamsons from a day spent dry stone walling together as a family. In Image B, the images emphasise this transference of skills, where Matthew is working closely with eldest son Tucker, and the two younger children are keen to help.

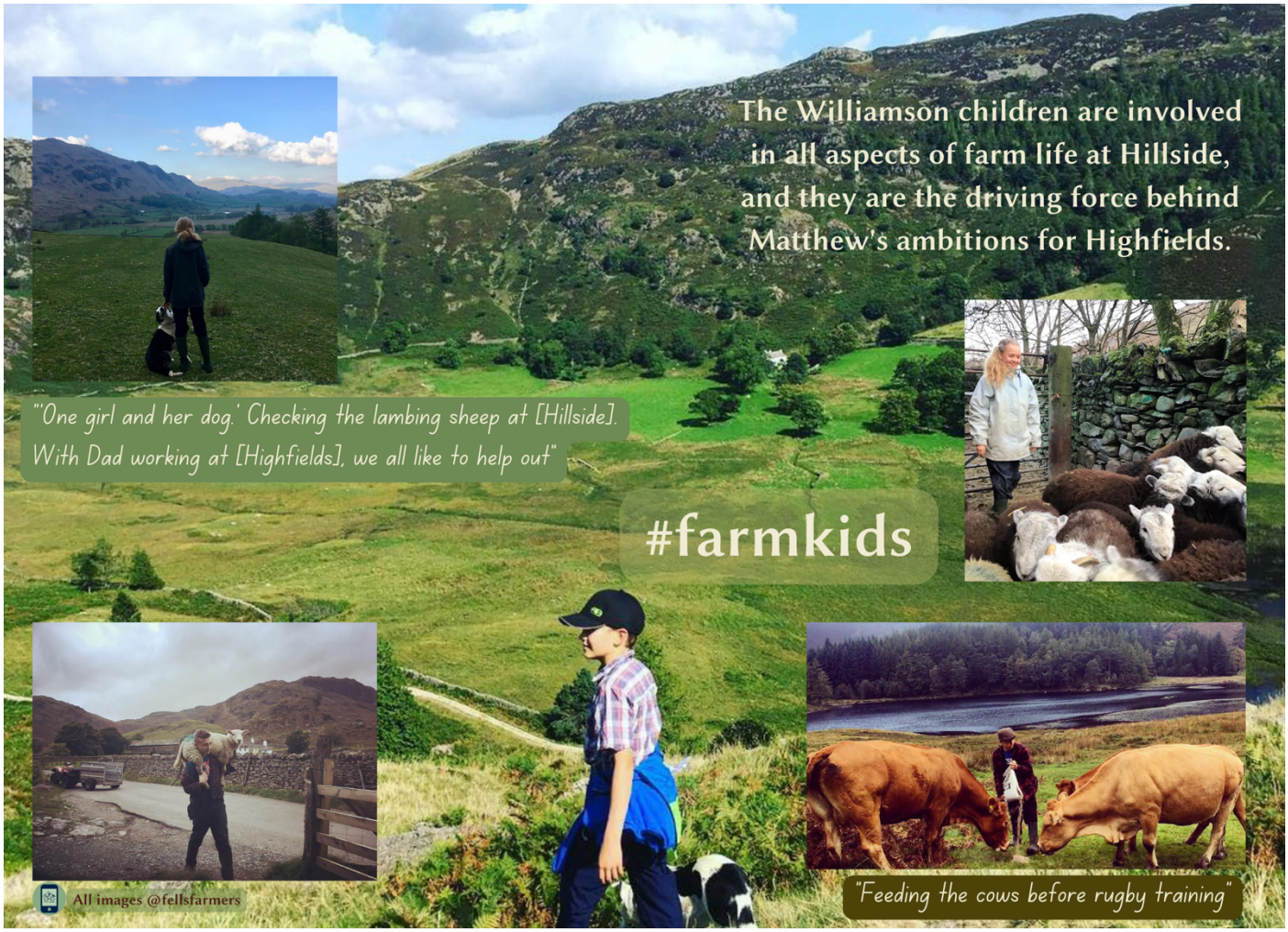


Bleeding Landscapes B: Dry stone walling as family transferring skills

In Image C, the images also focus on the family working together, but also offer more insight into the walling as work in context, with the fell range clearly visible, wet grasslands and even grazing cattle nearby. The emphasis on activities like walling in many of the Williamsons' images reflects Matthew's keen interest in reflecting the heritage of his farming way of life. The traditional agropastoral practices, situated in the unique Lakeland landscape, were of course a significant element of the Lake District's 'Outstanding Universal Value' as an UNESCO cultural landscape world heritage site.

Bleeding Landscapes C: Transferring skills in heritage landscapes



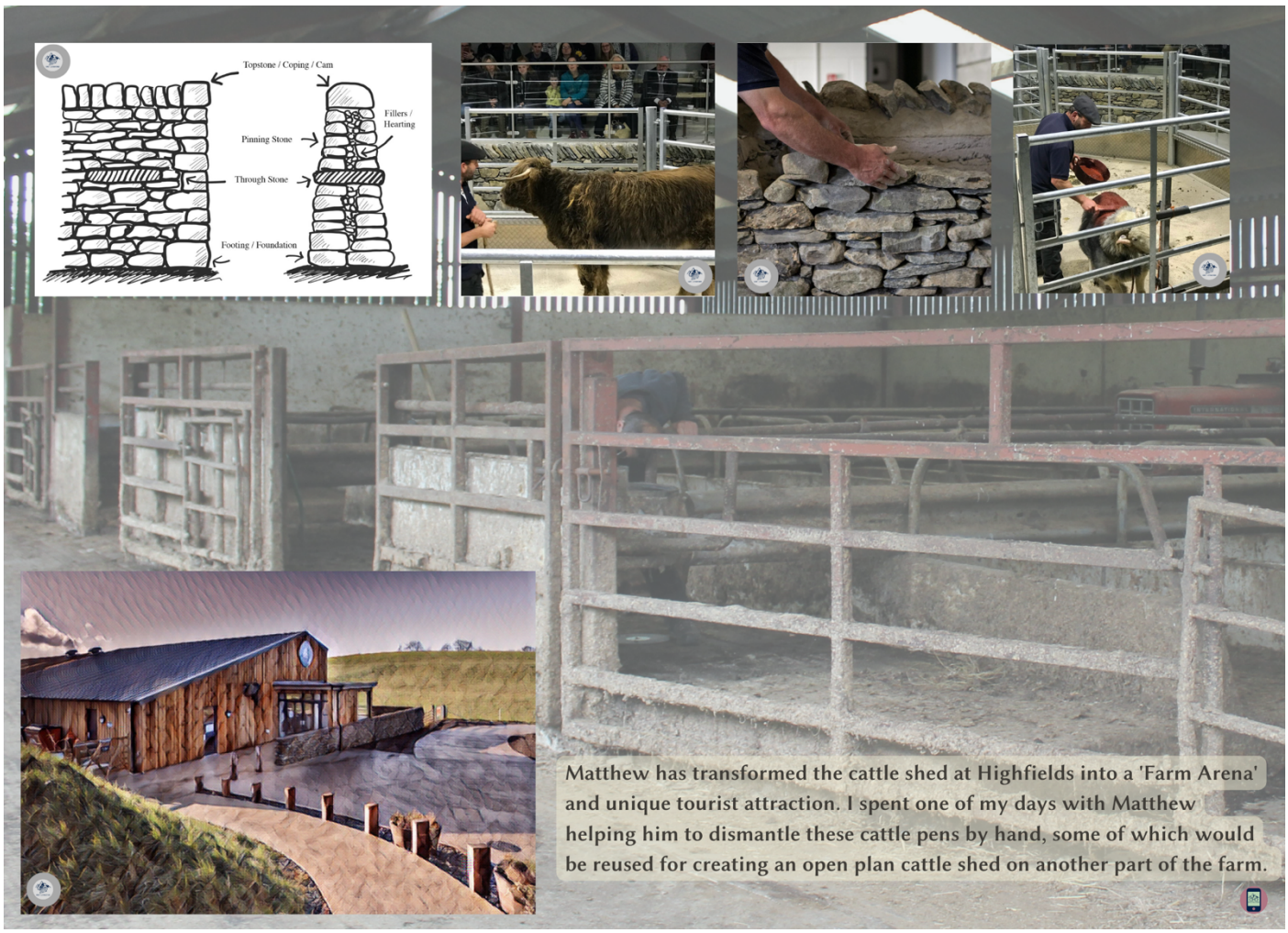


Bleeding Landscapes D: working together. #farmkids and family life on a fell farm

As their images show, fell farming is a family affair for the Williamsons. Moreover, and demonstrated in Image D, the three children are actively involved in the running of the farm and have indeed taken on additional responsibilities in recent years as the family embarks on a new venture. The Williamsons' use of words such as #grafting (see their caption in Bleeding Landscapes C), emphasis on how 'we all like to help out' (Bleeding Landscapes D), and the continuous use of #farmkids and #nextgeneration (see C & D) indicates the family are focused on transferring a holistic way of life to their children: local skills, a maintained landscape, and a hard-working ethos.

I've met the Williamson family at a time when they are already on a journey towards making visible their family farming values with the general public: they have just bought another farm, Highfields, over 12 miles away from Hillside (see Image A), which they run alongside their tenanted steading. Matthew has big ideas for Highfields farm, and he is already well on his way to realising them. He has been granted planning permission to extend and diversify the existing cattle sheds, turning them into a visitor attraction with an on-site butchery, a café, and a demonstration area for local crafts. Most significantly, the new venture will include an exhibiting 'arena' built in the image of an auction mart ring, for Matthew to provide demonstrations about elements of farming life, from the breeds and roles of his sheep and cattle to farming activities like shearing and dry-stone walling. Matthew and Charlotte are not only transferring their way of life to their children, they are also translating it for the public.

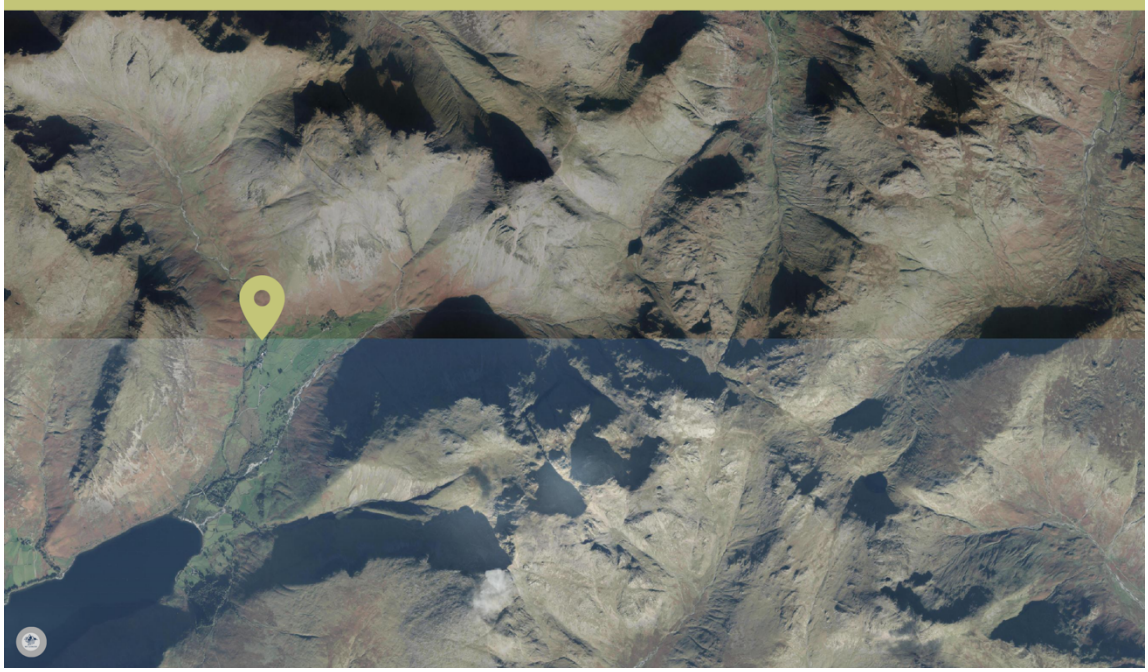
In Image E, I show how elements of the traditions we have seen throughout the Williamsons' @fellsfarmers images have also been present on their own website, and more recently even their own business's Instagram page! There is a keen emphasis on the various activities that are done in the everyday work of farming in the Lake District, and how these activities can be made into an engaging experience for visitors. In the background of Image E, a fieldwork image of my own shows the cattle shed well before the centre opened, when I spent a day with Matthew dismantling the interior gates, pens and cattle cubicles by hand, definitely one of my more physically tiring days, but great fun! Matthew chuckled at the end of the day when I mentioned I was stopping in at the shop on the way home for some tea: 'you best look in the mirror before you go anywhere!' Mud and muck splatters freckled every inch of my face and hair. Getting stuck in is a part and parcel of everyday life for the Williamsons, and hands on graft is a key element of both my experience with them and what their images show about fell farming. Their success has been hard earned.



Bleeding Landscapes E: Translating skills and landscapes to the public

Penny is the kind of farmer that everyone locally knows but is not visible to the broader public. Penny was the very first Lakeland farmer I met, at a shepherd's meet in a neighbouring valley to her own. I approached Penny and her friend as they were stood alongside the sheep pens at this meet, which is one of the most competitive and prestigious in Cumbria. It was nearing the end of the sheep judging, the Breed Champions, a Herdwick and a Swaledale tup, were both in the ring being examined by the judge. 'We can't have a swaa'dle win Lendale show!' Penny exclaims to her friend and I, as the judge looks keenly around the sheep.

Penny and her husband Leonard are multi-generational sheep farmers in one of the Lake Districts most iconic yet isolated valleys. They are the second of three potential generational tenants, following Penny's parents, on a Lifetime Agricultural Tenancy. These tenancies, unlike the post-1995 farm business tenancies, normally offer "lifetime security of tenure." As it was in place before 1984, Penny's tenancy also has "statutory succession rights", which means potentially another generation could take on the tenancy. However, Penny has no children to take on the tenancy when she retires. Penny is extremely fearful for the future of her farm when she is no longer able to run it herself.



We are deep into the heart of Herdwick country here, and for Penny, as with Mark and Matthew, the sheep and the land are a part of her. I think Penny's affection for her fells and flocks is palpable in the images she shares. In a landscape so dramatic as Thendale, it would, perhaps, be difficult to take a 'bad photo' of the sheep and the hills: so many of Penny's are conventionally beautiful in ways which capture the light, the moment, the movement and the land.

Viral Gathers B: 'Research Skills', complexities of participation, photography and digital media





Hi Jennifer
Sorry I am really struggling with this ipad with me being thick and also the internet , do you think it would be better if you gave it to someone where the internet is OK and also someone with more idea than me , I am just thinking from your point of view and for the good of your project ! I have tried really hard and taken a lot of photo's even a video but that's as far as I can manage !!!!
Penny ☹

This is an email from 'Penny' one week after receiving her iPad, when she was struggling to get the hang of it. I went to see her later that same day and go through the iPad some more. Over the next few weeks she gained confidence, and over the year of image collection she became the most prolific photographer of the group. 30 days after this message, one of Penny's videos of a gather became @fellsfarmers' most viewed and engaged with post, gaining over 15,000 views and being shared onto multiple platforms by other accounts.

And yet, Penny was the most nervous and uncertain of the participants who became involved in @fellsfarmers. As Figure 4. 10 illustrates, Penny was not confident in her use of the iPad, and after a few days emailed me expressing her concerns. One of her videos of gathering Herdwicks from the fell has become the most popular posts shared over the @fellsfarmers platforms, reaching a viewership of over 15,000. Over time, she became the most enthusiastic, inventive contributor of images and short videos.

There were several mechanisms through which Penny overcame her concerns about involvement in @fellsfarmers. The first of these, shown in two of the images from Image C, related to Penny's digital literacy and confidence with using the iPad. She eventually became more proficient and used to sharing her comments to the shared album to accompany her images, but on occasion found more inventive ways to share her captions! We also see in Image C how Penny sometimes would use the 'edit photo' feature on the iPad to literally write her caption onto the images she shared using a blue digital pen: 'old lad asleep' and 'Beck getting low'. The writing is not very clear, and not very visible for users who scroll quickly through images once they are uploaded to social media, but this annotating process enabled me to still use Penny's own words as the captions for her images. The caption of the tup really emphasises her affection for the sheep; old lad is a common term of endearment in Northern England, and the term invokes the simultaneous sense of affection in a viewer from the same region who can hear the term, 'ord lad', accent and all.

Viral Gathers C: Overcoming digital barriers to visibility



The other key barrier to Penny's contribution initially was the issue of synching and uploading her images. Penny lives in one of the most remote valleys in the Lake District, and her internet connection is extremely slow: the farm is over seven miles from the local street side broadband exchange, and the speed of her connection is next to nothing. To upload the images from her own home would take hours and exclude Penny from using the internet for other purposes. Whilst I was still in Cumbria, we tried various means to resolve this- sometimes with me visiting and us travelling out of the valley into phone signal, so that I could use my own data to upload her images. To resolve the problem in the longer term of the project, a family member from nearby would on occasions take the iPad into work in a nearby village and use Wi-Fi there to sync all of Penny's images and comments.

Once Penny had found a mechanism for sharing her imagery, she soon became the most prolific sharer of images on @fellsfarmers.



Viral Gathers D: Capturing the process of a fell gather, from Penny's perspective

As well as frequent 'snapshots' of enmeshed moments of work, scenery and livestock on the farm, Penny often took videos or sequences of images to detail particular practices, as seen effectively in Image D, which captures the process of a fell gather, from Penny's perspective on the fells. The long-distance initial shot (shows the sheep coming down the mountain, and we see her view change as Penny moves up just through the fell gate to let the sheep pass. She follows on behind the other shepherds as the sheep are brought down an ancient path and into the farm, and the changes in light and colour as well as the changes in landscape are effectively captured.

In her other images, Penny often is able to capture the farm, fell, and flock simultaneously. By virtue of Thendale's unique valley shape and the farm's position, we see mountain, field, and lakes among her images of sheep grazing, and even in the farmyard. The time of year when sheep are on the farm, in late spring as lambing commences, has also meant that the weather is particularly warm and beautiful in many of these on-farm shots, as seen in Figure 4. In stark contrast, Penny's winter images, from shadowy images of sheep and cattle stored inside to her husband working hard outside on the farm buildings in the hard, dark winter months illustrate less of the conventional features of 'beauty' and 'good photography'.

Viral Gathers E: The farm in context: seasonal representations of stock





Watch Penny's Viral Video Clip of the Sheep Gather

Nonetheless, in Image F we see some examples from Penny of how picturesque and beautiful @fellsfarmers' photography can be. The framing, colour, light, and the experiential impact on the viewer are all generated by images which strike a balance between the beauty of more romantic imaginations of the landscape and the 'roughness' of texture and composition which makes picturesque the 'in-between' or the romantic and the sublime. Each of these posts shows an important element of the farming calendar for Penny, from atmospheric images of the sheep arriving at their winter grazing and idyllic gathers around the farm to symmetrically composed shot of routine health checks in the yard.

7.3 Shadows made visible in @fellsfarmers.

'Though we do not see light, we do see in light.'

Tim Ingold, 2011, p.96.

In this section, I utilise crosscutting themes of the aesthetic and the embodied to explore ways in which @fellsfarmers has brought various dimensions of the everyday, lived farming experience in the #lakedistrict to light.

Aperturing aesthetics of @fellsfarmers' #lakedistricts

Aesthetic aperturing of @fellsfarmers highlights for us the 'in-between' approach to aesthetic appreciation of the #lakedistrict, wherein @fellsfarmers illustrate both a cognitive and affective comprehension of their surroundings through the practices of redding, dry stone walling and the gather. I outlined the notion of the in-between in Chapter 6 as a means to conceptualise how @fellsfarmers' images fall in a space unoccupied by dominant imaginations of the #lakedistrict. Each of the three practices discussed here is embedded in an expressive and inherited knowledge of the holistic environment, the sheep, and the culture in which the farmers live and work. As the visual vignettes aimed to show, @fellsfarmers also have strong emotional and sensory connections to their local environments and the practices which are a part of their traditional land management.

Redding is an aesthetic practice which highlights Herdwick @fellsfarmers' significant local visual traditions with their own niche aesthetic appreciations which relate to the animal, the landscape and the community. In contrast to Brady's assertion that, as functional landscapes, the design and appearance of agricultural environments are 'a means to an end' (2006, p. 6), the practice of redding is an important exception which calls to our attention that the beauty of the #lakedistrict for @fellsfarmers goes beyond the more generic aesthetic appeal of pastoral landscapes (which this thesis has already explored) to the culturally important aesthetic qualities of fell farming. There is a very local aesthetic appreciation for Herdwick redding, it is not a practice conducted or indeed always even known by sheep farmers of other breeds. It has no 'functional' purpose, and instead is practiced as an aesthetic tradition, relating back to its previous function in highlighting tups on hills.

Redding is a practice done to all tups on the farm, and all ewes who are taken to local shepherds' meets to compete. Redding is therefore done to the best examples of stock a @fellsfarmer has. As *Red Hands* documents, the practice of redding also provides a particular and intimate time and space for this type of locally assembled aesthetic appreciation, where the farmers would together discuss the qualities of each animal and his breeding whilst they coloured his fleece. As with many other @fellsfarmers, Mark and Fred are experts in picking out individual animals, assessing their traits as good specimens of their breed in a manner which Grasseni calls 'breeding aesthetics', and also relates to the shared, co-constructed local standards of 'recognising *beauty*' within a given livestock breed (2009, p. 92).

A sheep who has been redded is always a ewe or tup who meets breed aesthetics, as they are deemed worthy of breeding, of competition and aesthetic appreciation from other farmers and visitors at the shepherds meets, shows and sales. *Red Hands* shows us previously shadowed elements of Lakeland farming where the 'redding' aesthetic is an apt illustration of what Grasseni (2009) has called 'skilled vision'. In reference to her hosts' ability to distinguish individual cattle, Grasseni remarks that 'to be able to 'see' became shorthand for being well-integrated into the environment of one's practice, and especially to have *certain socially accepted skills*- including that of knowing how to learn by paying attention to the right people and the right features in one's environment', which also emphasised the intimate and interconnected connections 'between skill, identity and place' (2009, p.85, emphasis added).

Stonewalling is another traditional practice with significant aesthetic qualities, which is arguably more visible and associated with pastoral landscapes than Herdwick redding in its permeance and already-acknowledged aesthetic significance as an element of the Lake District's 'Outstanding Universal Value' as an agro-pastoral cultural landscape (UNESCO, 2017). Some contemporary interpretations of stonewalling and the #lakedistrict aesthetic, most notably the 'Borrowdale Banksy'[24] (see Figure 7. 2), have highlighted the continuing picturesque traditions which continue to dominate visitors' aesthetic appreciations of stone structures in the #lakedistrict, through a stone-walls-as-art aesthetic and framing which mirrors earlier picturesque notions of aesthetic appreciation of landscape discussed in Chapter 4.

[24] The 'Borrowdale Banksy' is the title which was given by locals to the unnamed creator of these circular stone sculptures which appeared in and around Borrowdale Valley in the central fells.



Figure 7. 2: stone walling as picturesque framing by the #borrowdalebanksy

Brady argues that both hedge-laying and dry stonewalling have an 'aesthetic component' for the general landscape-appreciating public, but that this visual dimension sits alongside, and secondary, to the manmade feature's 'utilitarian aims', despite both practices being well 'situated within an aesthetic taste for the countryside' in England (Brady, 2006, pp. 10–11). Where Brady has pointed to regional differences in stone walling between Yorkshire and Cumbria (2006, p.15), @fellsfarmers have highlighted the stark differences even between valleys in the #lakedistrict, where the small, round mound-shaped walls of Penny's valley contrast the sharper conventional stone of the Williamsons' walls. What is most significant about the Williamsons' accounts of stonewalling, however, is the familial and labour-intensive emphasis of their imagery. Their images of stonewalling all emphasise the notion of a situated *transferring* of skills to other family members in a family-run business further extended and intermingled with *translating* these skills alongside their cognitive and non-cognitive aesthetic values in the landscape, to paying customers through the visitor centre.

The previously unseen aesthetic of stonewalling for the Williamsons is intimately tied to notions of family and of labour. Through their imagery and their tourist centre, they are curating new ways of becoming active participants in the generation of new narratives around

stonewalling, embodiment and heritage: the Williamson's images highlight that stonewalling as a fundamental element of 'why the #lakedistrict looks like it does' is also an *inherited* and *local* practice. Furthermore, the Williamsons have capitalised on their unique aesthetic engagement with the landscape as a mode of 'work', wherein they produce a 'particular, stylised workplace performance' (Willment, 2019, p. 3) of stonewalling, evident in both their images and at their tourist attraction. This approach of bringing their own practices out of the shadows is arguably an alternative and unorthodox approach by the Williamsons of bringing their own more lived, real and even authentic perspectives into the long history of commercialisation in the English pastoral tradition (Groom, 2017).

The existence of an 'authentic persona' as embedded and reputable members of the hill farming community have been crucial elements in enabling the Williamson family to establish and maintain their business model, and these forms of what Willment (2019) calls 'aesthetic labour' in the case of drystone walling, have enabled Matthew to stage these performances in a setting quite abstract from the terrain in which he undertakes the work every day. In some ways, then, we can compare the 'orchestration' or material, aesthetic labour and it's impact on the landscape by farmers like Matthew with the forms of authentic 'curation' examined in Chapter 5, and the subsequent influence and material impact on the landscape of @thelakelanders and, in particular, @herdyshepherd1. Matthew has, at the fell farm, focused on working with his family to build stone walls and to continue the traditions of his ancestors in maintaining the landscape. Yet the livestock ring where he performs his demonstrations has come to form his own commodified public arena, in ways parallel to how the arena of the phone screen has enabled @herdyshepherd1's influence. @herdyshepherd1's authenticity is arguably much more concrete in online spheres, on the aesthetic and the material land management of the #lakedistrict, where Matthew's authenticity as a shepherd and a landshaper is visible through shades of @fellsfarmers only. The Williamson's images of dry stone walling therefore effectively illustrate an 'in-between' aesthetic of grappling with two extremes: their inherited and intimately familial practices and the wider public upon whom their way of life has come to depend. The embodied and performative dimensions of this practice is further explored in the next section.

The third aesthetic dimension that I discuss here is exemplified in Penny's imagery of moving sheep in *Viral Gathers*. Key elements in aesthetic appreciation of environment more generally, and dominant understandings of the Lake District more specifically (discussed in Chapter 2) (Donaldson, Gregory and Taylor, 2017; Szász, 2017), rely on an acknowledgement and celebration of beauty (Palmer and Brady, 2007; Brook, 2013; Scruton, 2013; Brady and Prior, 2020). Following from the earliest popular descriptions and depictions of the Lake District and surrounding areas as a picturesque landscape have, as we have seen, been continuing modes of understanding the #lakedistrict today in social media. In relation to agriculture, 'the aesthetic appreciation of agricultural landscapes, like that of natural environments, has been problematised by the overemphasis on the appreciation of scenic landscapes which stems from the picturesque' (Carlson, 2009, p. 89). Sheep are seen to fit into these romanticised modes of viewing the Lake District, but only as ornamental decorative elements of the landscape, in line with stereotypical views of sheep as passive, docile and unthinking objects (Marino and Merskin, 2019). However, it is through @fellsfarmers, I argue, that an aesthetic recognition and representation of sheep as simultaneously *beautiful and functional* in the #lakedistrict is made visible.

As I explained in the literature review, Gilpin, an author and artist central to the development of the picturesque, conceptualised sheep as passively beautiful objects within the picturesque landscape which must be viewed exclusively in small foreground groups or at a great distance: 'as pastoral subjects sheep are often ornamental, when dotted about the sides of distant hills. Here little more is necessary, than to guard against regular shapes- lines; circles; and crosses; which large flocks of sheep sometimes form' (Gilpin, 1786, p. 259). This perception also aligns with Gilpin's view of sheep in the Lake District, where he observed of the Grasmere fells that 'All these partitions of desolation, as they may be called, have their inhabitants; each maintaining a few stunted sheep, which picking the meagre tufts of grass, which grow under the sheltered sides of craggs, and stones, earn, like their owners, a hard subsistence' (Gilpin, 1786a, p.165). Yet in @fellsfarmers, as illustrated in Penny's images, we see a previously unseen beauty in these sheep. In Penny's images, sheep are not just an adornment of a desolate landscape, nor docile and ornamental as a singular foreground focus: they encapsulate an in-

between beauty which is overshadowed by the picturesque, as sheep illustrate elements of beauty always with movement and function.

To demonstrate, the dramatic sublime landscape of Penny's Gather images (for example in Image D) is often disrupted by *a line of sheep* being moved across it: a 'regular shape' at odds with Gilpin's call for sparse ornamental figures in the distance (1786 b, p.259). This is an aesthetic combination which is *only made visible* through the work of gathering: when the sheep are being moved as flocks and long lines of sheep follow one another up and down the hillsides, as opposed to their more static and 'picturesque' positioning, as viewed by painters (and tourists) who pass them grazing on hillsides in scenic viewing. The movement of the sheep down the mountains and across landscapes brings these shapes of beauty.

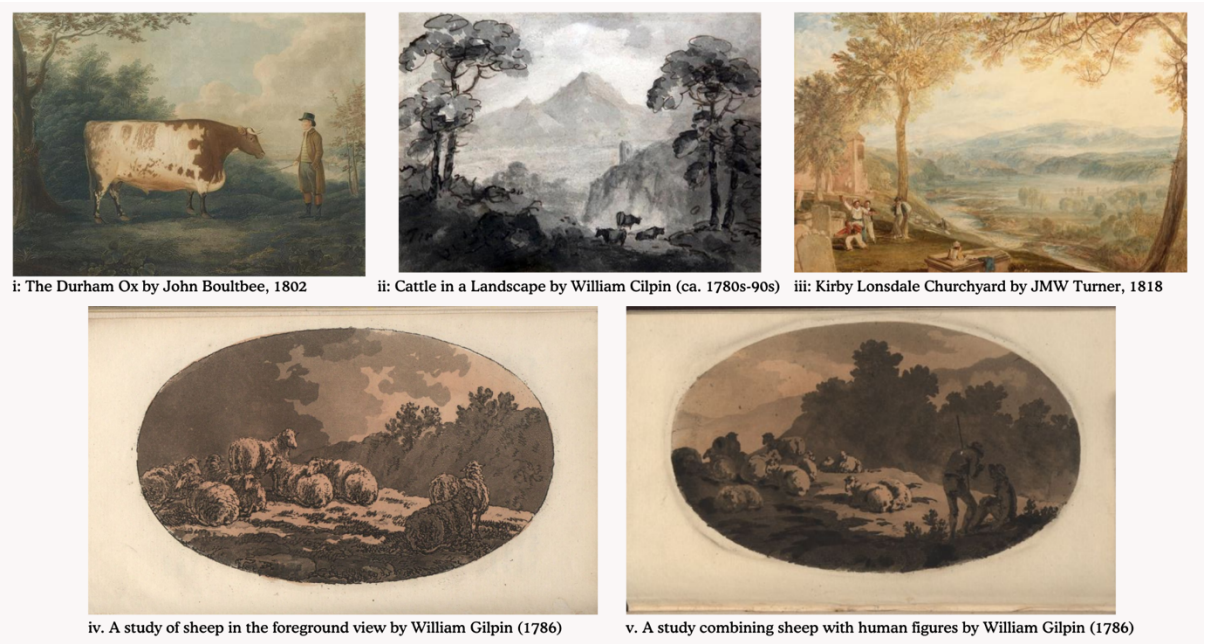


Figure 7. 3: Aesthetic conventions of livestock in the picturesque movement

Additionally, several of Penny's images evoke the colours and composition of picturesque conventions. Figure 7. 3 shows some of Gilpin's own drawings (i) where cattle are seen grazing within a picturesque composition, strikingly similar in arrangement to Turner's romantic and idyllic painting of Kirby Lonsdale Churchyard (iii) with trees framing a long view of the landscape and the more dramatic mountainous horizon in the distance. For example, Penny's image of the sheep crossing the bridge in the farmyard contains a tree as a key framing element in a manner inverted to the trees framing the scene in (ii), and (iii), and with a strikingly similar composition to the shape of background foliage in (v).The colour composition of the

formative 'romantic cow', Boultbee's *Durham Ox* (i), also conveys many of Gilpin's recommended picturesque elements, with soft harmonising sepia colours, the use of trees and grass for framing the foreground, and the landscape horizons as background (Broglio, 2005, p. 49). Penny's photographs, as seen in Images B and F, convey many of these colour conventions, displaying warm tones from summer sunlight dappled on grass and leaves or in evening sun on rough grassland.

Aperturing embodiment in @fellsfarmers' #lakedistricts

In *Red Hands*, I describe the intimate care and attention to detail which the Graingers take in redding. Here, I demonstrate that redding is a distinct and entirely unique place-based practice in human-animal relations. I analyse the Graingers' practice of redding as an embodied, relational interaction between sheep and shepherds, as a performance and intensely local expression of attentiveness and skill (after Gray, 2014's description of hefting). There are no concrete historical record of when the practice of redding began in Herdwick sheep, but it is a practice not known in any other breeds or established in any other places. In James Rebanks' account of redding, his description reads as quite perfunctory:

> 'Herdwick Show Red is like a kind of raddle. It replicates the colour of the iron ore rust in the fell sides. It has been applied for so long we don't exactly know why we do it. The Herdwick Show Red is mixed with a dash of water or oil to make a sticky paste. Then both your hands are covered in it and pulled towards your body, from the sheep's neck to its tail. If the sheep is a good colour then you don't need to apply much. If it's a whiter-fleeced sheep, then you can plaster it on in a vain attempt to hide this flaw. It is traditional to get covered in raddle yourself, until you look like a mass murderer covered in dried blood.' (Rebanks, 2016, pp. 50–51).

Whilst evidently written in dry humour, this description of Herdwick redding leaves invisible the care and pride in the practice which were so evident in my time with the Graingers. Rather than dragging two hands down the sheep's back, Uncle Fred used shorter, gentler, softer strokes along the fleece to carefully line out the shape of his marks. Rather than getting covered in raddle, Fred opted for using his dominant hand alone. Rather than the messy, chaotic imagery of a farmer who has been redding evoked by Rebanks' description, the

images in C and D of *Red Hands* emphasise the time and consideration involved in the process. The image of Fred's hand particularly shows the consistent and deep coverage of red across his palm: that every crinkle and furrow of his hardworking hands is visible through the paste emphasises the dependable pressure and repetition of his movements which have enabled the coating of colour to burnish his own hand so evenly with colour. This redding is more than a mechanical act of preparation for sale, it has ritualistic and revered dimensions which these farmers hold dear.

The embodied act of redding is further shown to be unique in the Red Hands vignette through the interaction between the skilled vision (Grasseni, 2009) previously discussed and how this visioning affects the embodied performance of redding: the animal's presence, while of course essential also makes the shepherd's discussion muted, calm, and quiet. This peacefulness further enhances the other senses in the practice of redding; the gentle brushing sound of the hand and paste on the fleece is more acute, the smell of the paste and lanolin intermingle, the other sheep move more gently than in loud and busy conditions, and the quiet muttering of the farmers as they work amplifies the less tangible, sensory elements of the interaction between sheep and shepherds.

Bleeding Landscapes details how the Williamsons have sought to emphasise and, eventually, monetise the role of @fellsfarmers in maintaining the #lakedistrict landscape. One of the most visible practices which the family frequently recorded in their images was of dry-stone walling: the practice of maintaining an explicit characteristic of the Lake District referenced in UNESCO's World Heritage description of the landscape (UNESCO, 2017). In focusing on this practice both in their images and in the performances at their visitor attraction, the Williamson's thus have emphasised and brought into light their role as land 'shapers'. Ingold conceptualises landscape in this alternative way of understanding places not only through seeing but through shaping of the land, through *doing*:

> 'In medieval times, the land was scaped by the people who, with foot, axe and plough, and with the assistance of their domestic animals, trod, hacked and scratched their lines into the earth, and thereby created its ever-evolving texture. This was work done close-up, in an immediate, muscular and visceral engagement with wood, grass and

> soil – the very opposite of the distanced, contemplative and panoramic optic that the word 'landscape' conjures up in many minds today' (Ingold, 2011, p. 126)

Nettleton has highlighted how the practice of dry-stone walling also resonates with this embodied description of farming as "done close-up, in an immediate, muscular and visceral engagement' (2015, p. 764). The Williamson's images also represent these embodied dimensions of dry-stone walling through the active captures of the family; images in B and C capture the strain on Matthew's arms from the weight of moving heavy stones into place.

The Williamsons' focus on dry-stone walling at the visitor centre also highlights the continued transformation and translation of dry-stone walling which occurs through the practice, as it is experienced by the family in the field and as it is presented and performed with visitors. It is important to acknowledge that the heritage of dry-stone walls is also connected to the Enclosure Acts which very negatively impacted local rural communities, despite its importance as a celebrated practice today (Brady, 2006). The performance of dry-stone walling by the Williamson's translates all of these pasts into a pragmatic and digestible present which, internally as a family, allows this embodiment of land-shaping to be continued, and externally to the public, for this land-shaping to be made visible in new and interactive ways. The way that the daily activities of sheep farming, including maintaining the walls to keep the flocks secure, are expressed through the Williamson's images and through their performances, highlight how farmers' bodies are 'made and remade' through their daily encounters with the animals (Jones, 2022, p. 6).

Further, the familial transference of knowledge and skill from generation to generation is evident throughout all three of these vignettes, and through all three practices of redding, walling and gathering. As Gray has stated, 'family farms come to resemble their flocks' hefting relation to the hills where they graze: both are descent groups associated with a particular territory over several generations.' (2014, p. 231).

7.4 Bringing @fellsfarmers into the light? In-between and altogether.

There are three interrelated features that have been made uniquely visible in their combination through the analysis of this aperturing: practice, place, and purpose.

In the visual vignettes, I illustrate how @fellsfarmers have made visible the important practices of redding, walling, and gathering within the farming #lakedistrict. These activities emphasise how @fellsfarmers' everyday presence in the #lakedistrict is an ongoing performance, an active *practice* of *'doing';* of inhabiting, maintaining, and reproducing elements of the landscape with other human and non-human actants (Ingold, 2000, 2011; Sutherland, 2022).

Further, these activities are always situated and place-based, with significant implications when they are removed from their landscape context. The remote, hard-to-reach and private scale at which many of these activities usually occur (redding within the farmstead, gathers on early mornings, walling away from footpaths) have impacted their invisibility to the wider public despite their popular locations, and it is through the publication of these particular farmers' purposeful sharing *in alternate places* that their own everyday practices have entered a visible sphere. The example of the stonewalling being replicated by the Williamson's in their visitor centre shows how @fellsfarmers are becoming engaged in ways of making such activities more visible to the public, but also emphasises that to enable this visibility relies on an extraction of both the practice and practitioner from their key *place* of *being*.

Finally, I argue that the most significant element made visible through @fellsfarmers' vignettes is *how practice and place are given character and quality through the strong sense of purpose* which runs throughout. Each of these vignettes has attempted to highlight through images and stories the strong sense of passion and determination that @fellsfarmers have for their unique way of life. They have a drive and commitment to their farms, fells, and flocks which is invisible in most dominant representations of the #lakedistrict. Jones has previously referred to the ways in which certain conservation movements, which might seek to move farming towards a system with high emphasis on ecosystem services, 'underestimate the emotive power of sheep' (2022, p. 5). There is *meaning* imbued in the entangled lives of sheep, landscape, and the everyday practices of @fellsfarmers, seen through these vignettes that is invisible within dominant recreational modes of the #lakedistrict as idyllic, playful, or wild, and in influential accounts of the #lakedistrict as a candid countryside or poetic landscape.

The aperturing of these elements which the chapter also highlight that the meaning is most apparent, or visible, when these elements are seen altogether. This altogetherness speaks to both the features of practice, place and purpose, and the methodological innovations which

this thesis has developed. The images alone do not tell the story of meaning, for example, without the words which provide context and flesh to what they show. There is certainly an affective and emotive power to the images, which this thesis has sought to conceptualise throughout, yet in the end, to do @fellsfarmers justice, their images needed more. Aperturing as a means of bringing @fellsfarmers into the light has been more than a move of a dial or click of a shutter, it calls attention to the expansive purposes of images as also conveying, creating and invoking emotion, critique, erasure, and activism (Fendler, 2017).

7.4 The lived shade of the #lakedistrict.

In this chapter, we have utilised visual vignettes to explore that which could not be fully conveyed in the online #lakedistrict of @fellsfarmers, that which was present in the images we have seen in the overshadowed and in-between, but which could not be hyperseen, and which comes alive and is given flesh through encounters mediated by, but always intermingled with the beyond of digitised mediums. Embodied presence was a fundamental ingredient to uncovering the practice, place and purpose of the #lakedistricts we examined in chapter 6.

In the concluding chapter, I will present the full final typology of the hyperscene #lakedistrict, introducing these final elements of the @fellsfarmers' #lakedistrict as beyond the conceived space, perceived space and lived space of Lefebvre's triad of spatiality that has been a conceptual reference throughout this thesis, and draw together the unseen dimensions of the #lakedistrict as lived shade: that which space, even in digital landscapes, cannot quite grasp.

Chapter 8

Hefts, Hope, and Home: Conclusions

A shadow is darkness cast upon a surface when light is obstructed. One who 'shadows' follows another. But where are shadows? A shadow is formed upon a surface when light becomes obscured through the intervention of another object. How do we make sense of the shadows we encounter?

Imagine you are stood at the base of a mountain. The sun is on the other side of that mountain, you are stood in the mountain's shadow. The height of the mountain is what obscures the light, placing you in the shadow. The terrain around you, to your sides is the breadth of the landscape itself that is also obscured in the light of the mountain's shadow. Your experience of the shadow is your own viewpoint, what you see of how the landscape between you and the mountain, and beyond, is changed by the mountain. More than what you see, the mountain's shadow affects how you feel, obscuring the sun's warmth from your body. Being in the shadow, as Ingold describes being in the light, has distinct qualities that enable what we see, how we see, who we see.

8.1 A summary of aperturing

In this thesis, I have sought to show how the mountain's shadow is an effective allegory for the ways in which power, place and embodiment impact how unseen @fellsfarmers versions of the #lakedistrict are encountered and performed. Together, these dimensions, expressed as height, breadth and depth, illustrate how obscuration occurs, where it occurs, and how it is experienced. The relationship between these factors is intimate, though in this thesis I have explored component parts in detail, when we encounter the #lakedistrict online, they are always experienced together.

In chapter 4, this thesis sought to explore how Instagram constructs and performs English natures in digital landscapes of the #lakedistrict by exploring a year of '#lakedistrict' images. I identified the continuation of dominant romantic representations of the #lakedistrict through digital textures of attachment, adventure, and awe, and deployed methods from cultural analytics to locate and map these textures both 'ex-situ' and 'in-situ' on the Instagram platform. English nature in the #lakedistrict continues to be expressed as ruralities which have been replete in popular media and academic literature for centuries. And yet, as I outlined in

the interlude, it is no longer the purview of elites alone to represent and conceive how the #lakedistrict is framed: the hyperseen Instagram #lakedistrict is now a self-propelling mode of image-making and sensing.

Nonetheless, there remain important power dimensions at play in terms of whose #lakedistrict is most seen, and most influential. In chapter 5, we zoomed in on two influential accounts, author @herdyshepherd1 and photographers @thelakelanders, to examine how divergent modes of networking and engaging with online communities can be similarly compelling. I used Instagramism as an analytical approach to demonstrate how the curation of #lakedistricts within single account Instagram grids is formed of both content and feeling, and showed how divergent authentic aesthetics of the #lakedistrict have mapped onto the spectrum of ruralities developed in the hyperscene typology of the #lakedistrict.

At this stage in the thesis, we paused for ten o'clocks (at a farm kitchen these always involved a brew and a biscuit) and changed direction from looking at *what already exists* in the Instagram #lakedistrict to what is missing. Chapter 6 set out to explore what might the #lakedistrict look like if the groups less visible within the digital landscape were empowered to use Instagram to represent their everyday lives. Through a participatory approach of platform photovoicing, we generated alternative rurals for Instagram with a collective of @fellsfarmers, manifesting the 'lived space' of the #lakedistrict. By applying the same 'in-situ' and 'ex-situ' methods of large-scale visualisations and image analysis used in chapter 4, I located and characterised @fellsfarmers' digital textures of the #lakedistrict as overshadowed and in-between. The overshadowed texture was stitched of images which occupied the same affective territories as textures of attachment, but the rural everyday of @fellsfarmers is less dense, less idyllic, and for publics potentially less compelling than dominant aesthetic traditions. The in-between texture occupied a space less seen and which contained images with localised meanings imbued with global dimensions: technology and tradition, fell and farm, care and cover, collided in images of the in-between which were replete with elements familiar to other @fellsfarmers, but which would be more easily misunderstood or misread by global publics who may anticipate encounters with the #lakedistrict romantic digital textures and curated authentic aesthetics explored in chapters 4 and 5. Through chapter 6, the lived space of the #lakedistrict is made visible online, but is some of the meaning of the encounter lost in the hyperseen?

In chapter 7 then, we immersed more fully in @fellsfarmers' lives through a series of ethnographic portraits presented as visual vignettes. Through Red Hands, Bleeding Landscapes and Viral Gathers, I shared the embodied practices of three farming families, and shared through a triangulated set of images and stories to share that which the images and captions of @fellsfarmers had not yet been able to convey: *the lived shade*. Chapter 7 was the crux of the aperturing this thesis has set out to achieve, bringing light to practices of redding, walling, and gathering which are unseen in conventional contemporary #lakedistricts.

8.2 Reflecting on the Hyperscene #lakedistrict: light, landscape, and lenses

The questions that remain: has it worked? Do we see more of the #lakedistrict? A richer #lakedistrict? Is it important to pay attention to these unseen #lakedistricts? What more do we learn from seeing these in-between and overshadowed rurals?

Light

The methodology of this thesis can be illuminated through the notion of aperturing, of providing more light. Just as widening an aperture in a camera admits additional rays, revealing hidden contours and textures, so too have the methodological choices in this thesis shone more attention on the Instagram #lakedistrict, allowing us both to see more and to see differently.

At one end of the spectrum, sophisticated digital methods serve as a broad-beam spotlight, harnessing cultural analytics (Manovich, 2009, 2013, 2020; Hochman and Manovich, 2013; Software Studies Initiative, 2015) to develop what I have termed digital textures, this research has processed and visualised over 36,000 images drawn from social platforms, mapping patterns of colour, composition, and framing at multiple scales. From panoramic overviews that trace the collective imagination of the district, down to the pixel-level grain of a single photograph, these visualisations have enabled my analysis to zoom in, to shine light onto digital textures, piercing through a potentially overwhelming volume of data to reveal subtle shifts in how the #lakedistrict is portrayed online.

Yet too much light can be hard to see through, the sun in our eyes can be just as difficult to see in as the dark, and rinse away nuance. To counter this, the thesis employs a complementary participatory aperture, a method that invites local voices to become seen.

Building on photovoice (Wang, 1997; 1994) and critical image-making techniques (Tolia-Kelly, 2007), I worked directly with @fellsfarmers, a group often rendered invisible by dominant tourism narratives, to co-create and share images that reflect their own #lakedistricts. This participatory process functions like a diffused glow, softening harsh contrasts and bringing marginal perspectives into view. In their hands, the light captures everyday farmscapes and fellfarmscapes, from drystone walls to redding, with a particular authenticity that my thesis show has been previously unseen in the Instagram #lakedistrict.

Together, digital textures and participatory photovoice operate as twin apertures: one widening our field of vision across vast datasets, the other focusing light on underrepresented storytellers. In doing so, this methodology doesn't merely uncover more of the #lakedistrict, it demonstrates how, by deliberately letting more light in, research can both broaden and deepen our understanding of a place that is as digitally imagined as it is physically felt.

Landscape

The conceptual contributions of this thesis are outlined as a digital ecology, a digital landscape of #lakedistricts. The digital landscape offers an enriched topography of understanding, additional dimensions in how we comprehend the online #lakedistrict. Whereas more light described how the methodology opened new apertures, the digital landscape of the #lakedistrict maps out the new conceptual terrain that those apertures have revealed.

Chapter 5 demonstrates this expanded landscape, where I introduced two axes of authenticity to analyse existing #lakedistrict accounts of @herdyshepherd and @thelakelandsers in depth and detail. These axes of aesthetic and influence give shape and character, contour lines to these #lakedistricts. The thesis goes on to build a typology of the #lakedistrict's digital ecologies, illustrating categories of online landscapes that had previously lain off the map.

Through this typology, I not only demonstrated that 'in-between' and 'overshadowed' #lakedistricts exist, but in Chapter 6 I characterise their distinct qualities. The notion of shadow is advanced in this thesis as a means for illuminating these contours within the #lakedistrict digital landscape. Shadows in this landscape are not mere absences of light but indicative contours: they mark accounts that sit beneath more dominant imagery or drift between aesthetic poles, drawn by competing textures yet never fully aligned.

Through the digital landscape this thesis does more than diversify our inventory of online landscapes. It provides a structured conceptual vocabulary for understanding how different #lakedistricts coexist, interact, and redefine each other. In doing so, it moves us beyond simply seeing more to *knowing* more, charting a multidimensional terrain in which the #lakedistrict's many facets can be named, navigated, and critically engaged.

Lenses

Even with methodological approaches that widen apertures, and even when we map out the digital landscape, charting axes of authenticity, typologies of ecologies, and textures of shadow, our view remains framed and partial. Every lens carries its own blind spots: algorithmic biases, platform affordances, and the linguistic filters through which digital content is produced and consumed. Every view captured is 'from somewhere'. This thesis has insisted on a critical reflexivity: acknowledging the partialities and boundaries of each vantage point and making those limits clear, rather than masking them under claims of comprehensiveness.

The final typology (Figure 8.1) and the visualisation of the digital mountain's shadow (Figure 8.2) attempt to make these absences explicit. White spaces on the typology mark the #lakedistricts that elude our current methods, communities who speak different dialects, practices unphotographed or untagged, shadows within shadows. Each additional view reveals new contours but also uncovers fresh blind spots. In this way, the concept of lenses functions doubly: as instruments for illumination and as reminders of partiality. There is always more to explore, more to uncover, and more to listen to, if we continue to refine our apertures and remain humble about what they can, and cannot, reveal. In the #lakedistrict, or any other digital landscape, there will always be more to explore and uncover.

So why attend to these unseen #lakedistricts, like those of @fellsfarmers, when the Lake District already occupies such a celebrated place in English identity, now enshrined as a UNESCO World Heritage cultural landscape? In any contested landscape, however renowned, the lived experiences of those who have cared for and continue to care for these landscapes provide indispensable insights. @fellsfarmers embody generations of tacit knowledge about soil, water, vegetation, and seasonal rhythms. Their daily labour stitches together ecology and culture, sustaining habitats for breeding waders, upland flora, and the very character of the fells themselves. In the midst of a nature and climate emergency, their expertise, and the social

networks that support it, are not merely local assets but critical nodes in national and global efforts toward nature recovery and landscape resilience.

So, we see more of the #lakedistrict, though it is by no means a complete digital landscape. There is no such thing. Instead, I hope that this thesis has demonstrated mechanisms by which we can become more attuned to the harder to see- the shaded crevices and pathways of the digital landscape, the uneven edges and even the scars of the mountain which provide depth and texture. In figure 8.2, I give shape and body to the typology of the hyperscene #lakedistrict which has developed through this thesis to the hyperscene *as* the mountain. At first glance, we see the front face in full sun. It is bold, and we see initially the main colours and shape. As our eyes become accustomed, we learn to see and to be affected, we notice the textures, the unevenness, and unexpected patterns and pathways. It is only by moving around the mountain, looking to the side in the shadows, we come to comprehend more of its form. It is here, I argue, we have opportunity to see much of the previously unseen, and to enable aperturing to give light to the shadows of the mountain. However, there remain elements even by looking from these alternate viewpoints, that we cannot see of the #lakedistrict. The lived shade itself is the space we stand in. I return finally to Ingold's (2005) bodily experience of immersion in light and in atmospheres, to remind you, reader, that we see as an experience of *being in* light, and that when we are also *being in* shade, we see through the medium of the shadow, but elements of that shadow remain impossible to then re-present. This is the conclusion that the hyperscene typology aims to leave you with.

Alongside the conceptual and empirical contributions I have summarised, this thesis has sought to develop and present accessible and participatory new methods for doing digital ecologies in each chapter. In chapter 4, I applied the method-concept I have called digital textures which draws together very large scale quantitative with intimately qualitative techniques to examine and characterise imagery of digital landscapes. In doing so, digital textures demonstrate that sophisticated visual quantitative methods such as cultural analytics can generate rich insights when combined with visual qualitative analysis.

In chapter 5, I develop an analytical approach to 'Instagramism' which is attuned to the ways an individual Instagram grid can evoke atmospheres and affects which are more than the sum of image contents. In chapter 6, the participatory approaches of platform photovoicing

through the use of iPads will, I hope, encourage more research and more attention to the power and accessibility of digital devices as well as alternate ways of seeing, particularly considering the longitudinal capacity for data collection that this approach made possible, despite the complexities which are discussed in chapter 3. Finally, in chapter 7, I apply the visual vignette method to draw together participatory data, historical data, and visual, digital ethnographic data to create rich portraits of people and practices unseen in the online #lakedistrict. These methods are exciting, adaptable, and interactive, and I hope set a precedent for continuing experimentation in the development of digital ecologies methods for rural geographies.

The comparison of these different datasets, from the large corpus of #lakedistrict posts, to the grids of influential accounts, and the @fellsfarmers images with visual vignettes, reveals important dynamics of power and identity in the #lakedistrict. Applying visual cultural analytics methods across these materials, this thesis offers innovative quantitative-qualitative evidence for how certain perspectives, particularly those of @fellsfarmers, are systematically rendered less visible within the #lakedistrict digital landscape.

Through the digital textures approach developed in Chapter 4, images were physically arranged and their constellations compared according to their proximity to, or distance from, the most compelling textures identified in the original #lakedistrict dataset. This process of identifying, measuring, and positioning each image made the presence of overshadowed textures, and, most significantly, those that fell in-between dominant forms, immediately visible, even at a 'first glance', and these visual impressions were reinforced by numerical data.

Comprehensive qualitative approaches then enriched these comparisons, drawing on detailed analysis of both the affective and discursive qualities of images in the first half of the thesis, and in the second half, exploring the juxtapositions present in the lived, everyday imagery of @fellsfarmers. Many of the experiences shared through @fellsfarmers, as explored through the vignettes, did not fully translate in meaning or affect into the digital #lakedistrict of Instagram. These potential glitches, or points of incompatibility between online and offline representations, highlight intangible elements of the terrestrial, lived experience that have not yet found a way into the digital landscape. The findings point to an important deficit in power and representation: the structural disadvantage faced by local rural communities in

inhabiting digital landscapes is not only a matter of limited broadband access, but of *a different kind of disconnection*. @fellsfarmers' images were frequently eclipsed, or exposed a #lakedistrict chasm, caught between dominant textures that continued romantic visions of the landscape.

The methodological blend of quantitative analysis followed by qualitative interpretation thus enabled a deeper, more nuanced comparison and understanding of these images. It revealed how certain identities are structurally disadvantaged in gaining visibility within the algorithmically mediated flows of Instagram. The resulting narrative offers a compelling analytical lens: one that traces how power operates through the aesthetics of digital representation, while exposing the subtle ways in which local identities of the #lakedistrict are reframed, overshadowed, or pushed to the margins within a steep and uneven digital–visual terrain.

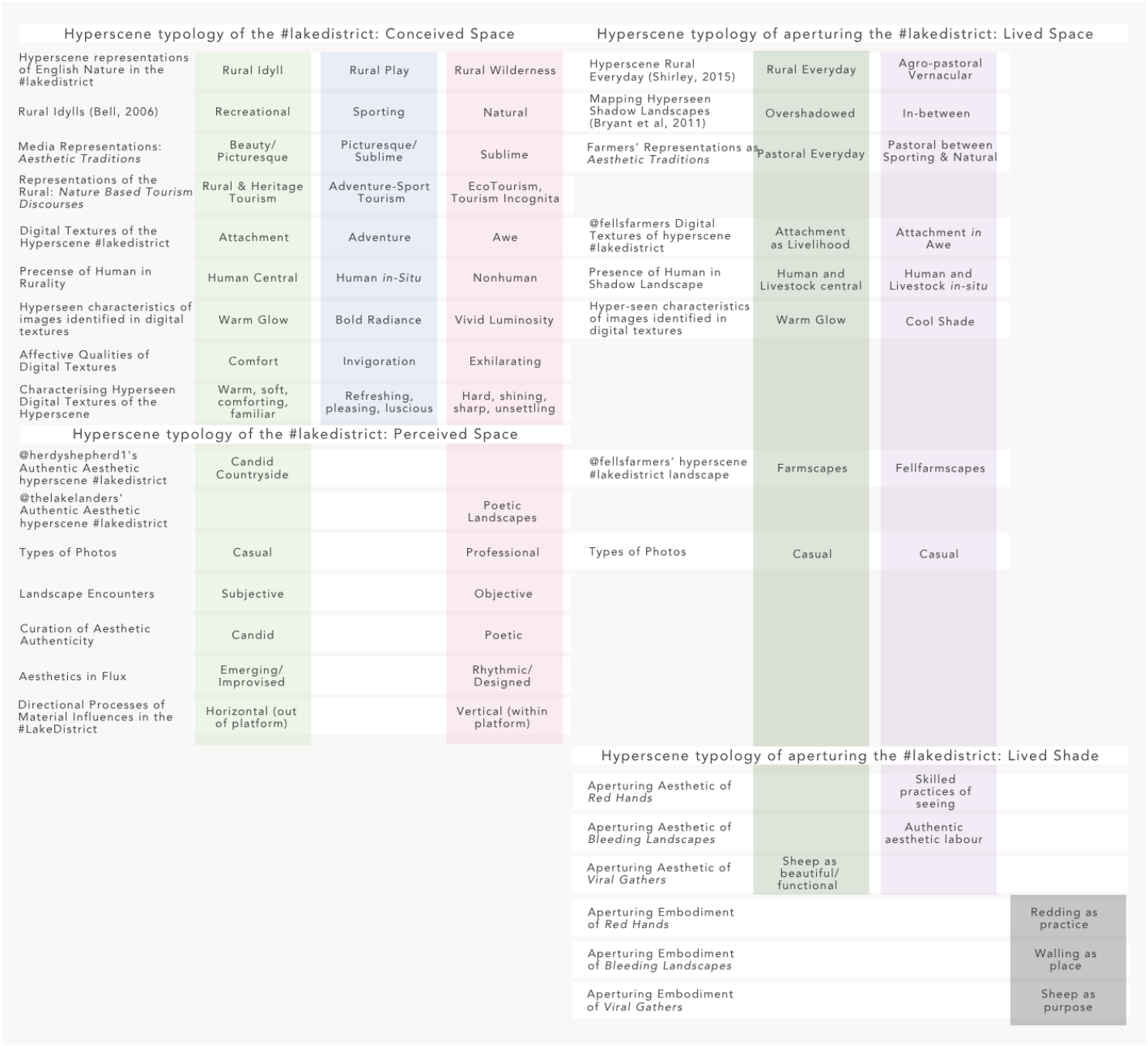


Figure 8. 1: A hyperseen typology of the #lakedistrict as conceived space, perceived space, lived space, and lived shade

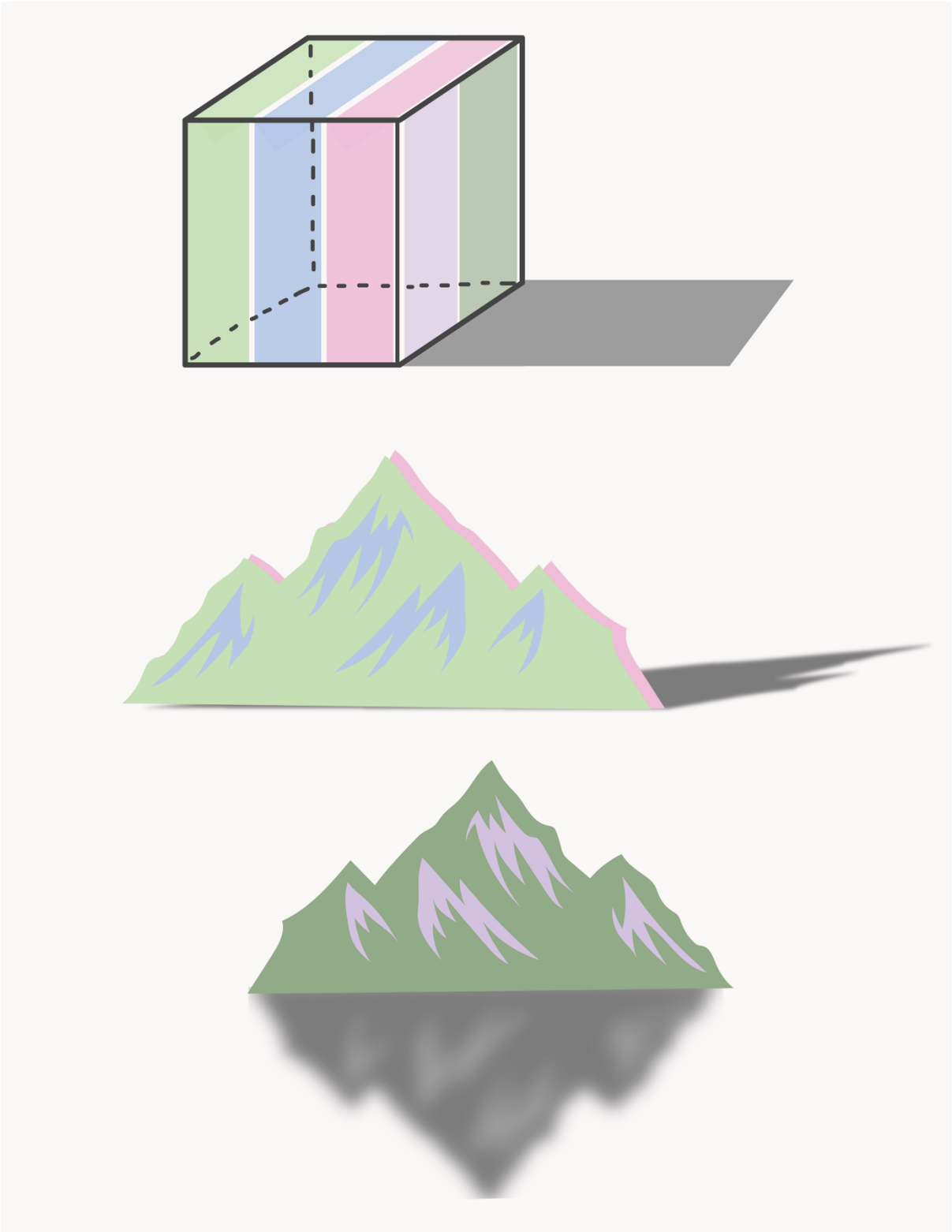


Figure 8. 2: Spatiality of digital landscapes and their shadows

8.3 Whatever next? @fellsheepcam and the more-than-human unseen #lakedistrict

In concluding this thesis, I want to briefly reflect on that which there just wasn't space to squeeze in. When I first saw that Instagram post of the Herdy on the banks of Windermere, the ambition of this thesis was, after exploring the @fellsfarmers unseen #lakedistricts to turn to a multispecies vision of the #lakedistrict and the sheep's perspective. In my final period of fieldwork, I conducted a pilot study to explore the complex contemporary role of Herdwick sheep in both the physical and digital Lake District. I experimented with ways to move from a passive incorporation of the Herdy™ we saw in the introduction of this thesis, to an imperfect but active collaboration with 'sheepcam', aiming to uncover a rural, more-than-human perspective of the Lake District. Together with a semi-feral Herdwick gimmer, I attempted to make and aimed *to share* new knowledge about the Herdwick's existence through an appealing (if gimmicky) new emergence into the virtual #LakeDistrict: @fellssheepcam.



Figure 8. 3: the v-ewe from @fellssheepcam



Figure 8. 4: @fellssheepcam in action

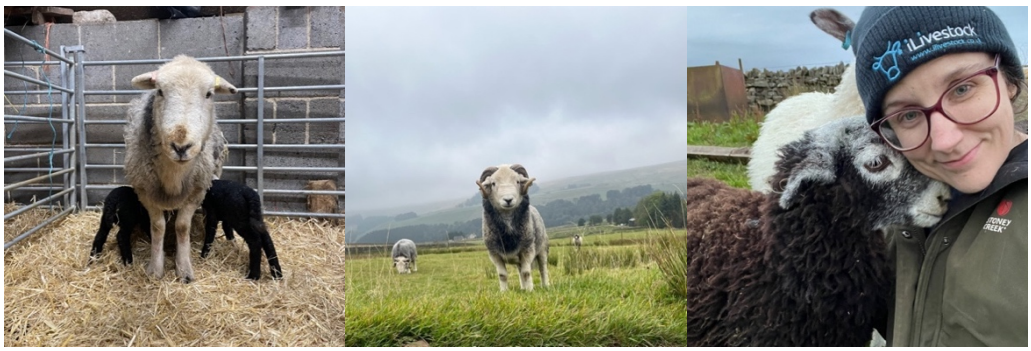
I am grateful to my Confirmation examiners for convincing me there just wasn't space in the thesis to do her justice, but I look forward to continuing the collaboration with the work of @fellssheepcam. Her purpose-build camera was attached (Figures 8.3 & 8.4) through a handmade harness and took images every 30 minutes during daylight over a three-week period on the fells. I am eager to continue experimenting with the ways in which this study may uncover further shadowy (perhaps, even 'woolly') dimensions of the digital landscape. There is much texture left to explore.

Thank you for reading.

Epilogue

I am a farmer. A girl who grew up farming, but never expected to stay, has found herself at home among the fells, the fields, and the flock. Over these seven years, what began as research became a life. The Herdwick sheep I met through this work are now not just subjects of study but companions in the rhythms of my days. The farmers whose stories I have learned and whose wisdom I have sought are not only collaborators now but part of my world. This journey has changed me forever, mingling the academic with the everyday, the digital with the pastoral. I carry them with me, the knowledge, the land, the life. The impact of the farmers and fells I have encountered throughout this project has been utterly profound. In the years since my fieldwork ended, I have remained in close contact with all of the families whom I was lucky enough to spend time with and who shared their images for @fellsfarmers.

The blood of their flocks and fells is now the blood of my own: my foundation flock of Herdwick sheep is comprised of several sheep from every family that used an iPad in this research. I speak to many of them often, and visit others on occasion, but always, now, I am greeted as a friend. Following her years on the fells, @fellssheepcam was generously gifted to me by her farmers when she was drafted[25]. She has spent two years with me now and had twin tup lambs both years. I've got all my fingers crossed for a gimmer[26] this year, so even once she retires, her genetics will continue. In many ways, Sheepcam's journey has mirrored my own- a move from the high, wild fells to a different kind of farm life, yet with roots still deeply connected to the landscape and community that nurtured us both.



P.S. Sheepcam has had a gimmer lamb- I have named her Shadow.

[25] A 'drafted' ewe is one which is removed from the open fell and returned to a field flock once she is a few years old, usually on lower ground.

[26] A young female sheep

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Appendix

A. Chapter 3

1. Excluded images

The following words found in the captions of #lakedistrict images, but which are commonly associated with other 'Lake Districts' around the world than the English Lake District, were used to locate and exclude images from the originally scraped dataset:

Fermanagh
Enniskillen
LoughErne
Lougheirne
Nechako
Babine
Francois
Ootsa
Trembleur
Takla
StuartLake
Omineca
Edmonton
Alberta
BelleRive
CrystallinaNera
Eaux Claires
Klarvatten
Lago Lindo
Mayliewan
Ozerna
Schonsee
BritishColumbia
ZonaSur
Panguipulli
Calafquén
Riñihue
Pirihueico
Neltume
Pellaifa
Pullinque
Villarrica
Quetrupillán
Lanín
MochoChoshuenco
Ranco
Puyehue
TodosLosSantos
SenodeReloncavi
GrandedeChiloe
Llanquihue
Rupanco
Finland
JärviSuomi
Lappeenranta
Imatra
Jyväskylä
Mikkeli
Pieksämäki
Varkaus
Joensuu
Savonlinna
Kuopio
Inari
Saimaa
Päijänne
Ladoga
Franconian
Altmühl
Brombach
Rothsee
Dennenloher
Hahnenkamm
Mecklenburg
Plauer
Fleesensee
Tollensesee
SchmalerLuzin
Kölpinsee
LakeGarda
Jamno
Karwowo
Miedwie
Morzycko
Studnica
Swidwie
Kashubian
Kartuskie
Masuria
Masurian
Śniardwy
Giżycko
Mikołajki
Węgorzewo
Pisz
Iława
Krutynia
Turkish
Anatolia
Taurus
Acıgöl
Sanaos
Akşehir
Philomela
Beyşehir
Koralis
Burdur
Ascanius
Eğirdir
Akrotiri
Akgöl
Çavuşçu
Çivril
Karamık
Karataş

Liquiñe
Choshuenco
Mocho
Pichillancahue-Turbio
LosLagos
Caburga
Colico
Calafquen
Neltume
Pirihuico
Panguipulli
Rinihue

LakeComo
LakeLugano
Maggiore
Queenstown
Otago
Wakatipu
Wanaka
Hāwea
Poland
Pomerania
Dąbie
Drawsko

Kovada
Salda
Aulindenos
Suğla
Trogitis
Yarışlı

2. Top 100 Hashtags in #lakedistrict dataset

Count of top 100 hashtags used in the clean #lakedistrict dataset (350,482 images)

#lakedistrict	350482	#mountain	9793	#osmaps	5840
#cumbria	81888	#ukpotd	9699	#travelgram	5746
#nature	37170	#derwentwater	9689	#sun	5630
#mountains	35799	#clouds	9652	#landscape_captures	5590
#landscape	31571	#ullswater	9401	#nikon	5387
#hiking	29038	#Cumbria	9359	#lovegreatbritain	5318
#lakes	28523	#autumn	9082	#buttermere	5298
#photography	25928	#ambleside	8999	#climbing	5265
#england	25489	#water	8979	#photographer	5233
#lake	25322	#sky	8239	#visitbritain	5220
#adventure	22046	#hike	8161	#canon	5132
#travel	21582	#walk	7963	#capturingbritain	5120
#uk	20911	#picoftheday	7935	#happy	5028
#fromlakelandwithlove	20772	#views	7665	#photo	4983
#windermere	19959	#theplacetobe	7653	#lovethelakes	4807
#landscapephotography	19307	#scenery	7601	#dog	4784
#walking	18824	#trees	7583	#instatravel	4772
#keswick	18763	#hills	7464	#helvellyn	4694
#igerscumbria	17669	#fells	7417	#landscapelovers	4644
#outdoors	17051	#nationalpark	7397	#mtb	4632
#lakedistrictnationalpark	16475	#visitengland	7368	#kendal	4631
#getoutside	14204	#nofilter	7234		
#beautiful	13978	#lakeland	7231		
#thelakes	13732	#camping	6973		
#explore	13061	#hikingadventures	6937		
#thelakelanders	12679	#igerslakedistrict	6934		
#photooftheday	12643	#photosofbritain	6816		
#snow	12494	#scenicbritain	6765		
#love	12236	#coniston	6763		
#countryside	12134	#travelphotography	6703		
#summer	11592	#lakedistrictuk	6507		
#sunset	11428	#dogsofinstagram	6501		
#naturephotography	11021	#grasmere	6475		
#instagood	11001	#thegreatoutdoors	6348		
#winter	10501	#lakewindermere	6311		
#wanderlust	10453	#naturelovers	6270		
#view	10189	#nationaltrust	6210		
#thelakedistrict	9992	#instadaily	5937		
#holiday	9888	#family	5893		

3. Script for sampling images

Script for organising images into folders and creating sample datasets which were used for each 'hashtag' analysis and chronological sample of images which were utilised for the visualisation in Figure 4.6 Systematic Sample of #LakeDistrict, Every 10th image

```
import os
from shutil import copyfile
import csv
class Row:

    def __init__(self,rawRow):
        self.postId = rawRow[0]
        self.link = rawRow[1]
        self.likes = rawRow[2]
        self.comments = rawRow[3]
        self.createdTime = rawRow[4]
        self.filter = rawRow[5]
        self.type = rawRow[6]
        self.username = rawRow[7]
        self.caption = rawRow[8]
        self.tags = rawRow[9]
        self.ukenggb = rawRow[10]
        self.ukenggbCnt = rawRow[11]

#     def toString(self):
#         print self.postId + self.link + self.likes + self.comments + self.createdTime + self.filter +
self.type + self.username \
#             + self.caption + self.tags +  self.ukenggb + self.ukenggbCnt
#

def findPicture(name, path):
    for root,_, files in os.walk(path):
        if name in files:
            return os.path.join(root, name)
# takes a predicate on a row element, function that takes a row element and returns true or
false
def findAndCopyImages(nth, rowPredicate, csvFilePath, picturesFolderPath, newFolderPath):
    assert os.path.exists(csvFilePath), "CSV file does not exist."
    assert not os.path.exists(newFolderPath), "New folder already exists."
    assert os.path.exists(picturesFolderPath), "Pictures folder does not exists."

    os.makedirs(newFolderPath)
    newCsvFilePath = os.path.join(newFolderPath,"new.csv")
    missingCsvFilePath = os.path.join(newFolderPath,"missing.csv")
```

```
   with open(csvFilePath,"r") as csvFile, open(newCsvFilePath,"w") as newCsvFile,
open(missingCsvFilePath,"w") as missingCsvFile:
      counter = 0
      newCsvFileWriter = csv.writer(newCsvFile, quoting=csv.QUOTE_MINIMAL)
         missingCsvFileWriter = csv.writer(missingCsvFile, quoting=csv.QUOTE_MINIMAL)
#       lineno = 0
      for line in csv.reader(csvFile):
         row = Row(line)
         if counter == 0:
            counter = nth
            if rowPredicate(row):
                        pictureFilePath = os.path.join(picturesFolderPath, row.postId+".jpg")
#findPicture(row.postId+".jpg", picturesFolderPath)
                        #assert pictureFilePath != None, "Picture "+ row.postId +" not found!"
                  if os.path.exists(pictureFilePath):
                              newCsvFileWriter.writerow(line)
                        copyfile(pictureFilePath,
os.path.join(newFolderPath,row.postId)+".jpg")
                              newCsvFile.flush()
                        else:
                              missingCsvFileWriter.writerow(line)
                              missingCsvFile.flush()
         counter -= 1
#           lineno += 1
#           print lineno

def hasTag(tag, tags):
#    print tags.split(' ')
   return any(s.lower() == tag for s in tags.split(' '))

def HasTagPredicate(tag):
   def pred(row):
      return hasTag(tag, row.tags)
   return pred

def HasOneOfTagPredicate(tags):
   def pred(row):
      foundTag = False
      for tag in tags:
         foundTag = hasTag(tag, row.tags)
      return foundTag
   return pred

def TruePredicate(row):
   return True
```

```
# Move all remaining images in folder '2.Phd Digital Dataset' into one folder (currently 47 folders)
# Create new folders with copies of images and accompanying csv files for popular hashtags
# A folder each for images including:
#  - #Cumbria (81,888 images)
#  -  #nature (37,170 images)
#  -   #mountains (35,799 images)
#  -   #landscape (
#  -    #hiking
#  -    #lakes
#
# A single folder containing copies of images with multiple 'farming' related hashtags, eg:
# -    #sheep
# -    #farmlife
# -    #shepherd
# -    Etc etc
# Create a sample folder with copies of images of a systemic sample (every 10th image in chronological order) from '2.Phd Digital Dataset'

GOLD_CSV_PATH = "/mnt/c/Users/Jennifer/Desktop/GoodPics/new.csv"
PICTURES_FOLDER_PATH = "/mnt/c/Users/Jennifer/Desktop/photos"
PATH_TO_FOLDER_WHERE_NEW_FOLDERS_WILL_BE = "/mnt/c/Users/Jennifer/Desktop"

if __name__ == '__main__':

# Move all remaining images in folder '2.Phd Digital Dataset' into one folder (currently 47 folders)
   #findAndCopyImages(1, TruePredicate, GOLD_CSV_PATH, PICTURES_FOLDER_PATH, os.path.join(PATH_TO_FOLDER_WHERE_NEW_FOLDERS_WILL_BE, "GoodPics"))

# Create new folders with copies of images and accompanying csv files for popular hashtags
# A folder each for images including:
#  - #Cumbria (81,888 images)
   #findAndCopyImages(1, HasTagPredicate("#cumbria"), GOLD_CSV_PATH, PICTURES_FOLDER_PATH,
os.path.join(PATH_TO_FOLDER_WHERE_NEW_FOLDERS_WILL_BE, "Cumbria"))
#  -  #nature (37,170 images)
   #findAndCopyImages(1, HasTagPredicate("#nature"), GOLD_CSV_PATH, PICTURES_FOLDER_PATH,
os.path.join(PATH_TO_FOLDER_WHERE_NEW_FOLDERS_WILL_BE, "Nature"))
#  -   #mountains (35,799 images)
        #findAndCopyImages(1, HasTagPredicate("#mountains"), GOLD_CSV_PATH, PICTURES_FOLDER_PATH,
os.path.join(PATH_TO_FOLDER_WHERE_NEW_FOLDERS_WILL_BE, "Mountains"))
#  -   #landscape (
```

```
        #findAndCopyImages(1, HasTagPredicate("#landscape"), GOLD_CSV_PATH,
PICTURES_FOLDER_PATH,
os.path.join(PATH_TO_FOLDER_WHERE_NEW_FOLDERS_WILL_BE, "Landscape"))
# -   #hiking
  #findAndCopyImages(1, HasTagPredicate("#hiking"), GOLD_CSV_PATH,
PICTURES_FOLDER_PATH,
os.path.join(PATH_TO_FOLDER_WHERE_NEW_FOLDERS_WILL_BE, "Hiking"))
# -   #lakes
  #findAndCopyImages(1, HasTagPredicate("#lakes"), GOLD_CSV_PATH,
PICTURES_FOLDER_PATH,
os.path.join(PATH_TO_FOLDER_WHERE_NEW_FOLDERS_WILL_BE, "Lakes"))

# Create a sample folder with copies of images of a systemic sample (every 10th image in
chronological order) from '2.Phd Digital Dataset'
  findAndCopyImages(10, TruePredicate, GOLD_CSV_PATH, PICTURES_FOLDER_PATH,
os.path.join(PATH_TO_FOLDER_WHERE_NEW_FOLDERS_WILL_BE, "Every10th"))
```

B. Chapter 6

1. comments

Lakelanders' Engagement with followers via comment responses

	User	Comment
@thelakelanders [Caption] Skiddaw Horizon by thelakelanders member @will.holligan - you can't go too wrong on a wintry morning from the top of Catbells. #cumbria #theplacetobe #thelakedistrict #uk #england #photosofbritain #ukpotd #bestukpics #capturingbritain #omgb #igerscumbria #igerslakedistrict #landscape #landscapephotomag #instalandscape #lakescollective #fromlakelandwithlove #lovelakeswalks #landscapephotography #outdoorphotography #tgo #getoutside #osmaps #outdoors #wanderlust #sky #explore #nikon #nikon_photography		
1	royce__06	Loving the light on this one mate [ß)
2	menlina	What a lovely golden morning!
3	menlina	@menlina or maybe evening...
4	billy.redden	Lovely @will.holligan
5	crafternickie	Great! [ß)
6	travelingdazer	Nicee picture!
7	voila_nadja	Awesome!!!({n4○Ç
8	sophiekuzio	Beautiful light, Will! Great photo ;ë H @will.holligan
9	darylswalker	Very nice guys! @thelakelanders ...beautiful soft light @will.holligan it's not a bad walk up to catbells either. Easy on the legs in the morning ◆ç
10	atomicography	Stunning shot '
11	oliviajlphoto	◆ç– s\
12	mammut_uk	Gold
13	ke3en	@will.holligan This is perfect! Brilliant capture! s \s\
14	Philipshand	Stunning shot mate[ß)
15	life_in_the_dog_house	Beautiful
16	Danieljtoal	Brilliant mate @will.holligan
17	thelakelanders	@royce__06 thanks! [ß) ¯0—.ç$
18	thelakelanders	@menlina thanks, yes quite slippy underfoot! ◆v˝◆:
19	thelakelanders	@diary_of_a_hampshire_lady thank you, yes, I think it is such a 'good value' hill!
20	thelakelanders	@crafternickie thank you, much appreciated ◆:˝v
21	Thelakelanders	@travelingdazer very kind ◆:˝v
22	Thelakelanders	@voila_nadja thank you ˝v:◆
23	Thelakelanders	@sophierowles_ thanks Sophie V ¯˝V´ ·'"
24	Thelakelanders	@bobmickspix thanks)ß['ˊfiM y5v;◆
25	thelakelanders	@darylswalker thank you, bit slippy going back down that morning ◆.˝
26	Thelakelanders	@atomicography thank you)ß[◆:˝v
27	Thelakelanders	@olivia.lennn very kind [ß)
28	Thelakelanders	@mammut_uk [ß)◆◆:v˝ç¯$˜ˆ 0—. ®˙•ˆ—•
29	Thelakelanders	@philipshand thanks [ß)◆v˝:◆
30	Thelakelanders	@the_builders_daughter thank you ˙ ®•—ˆ:v˝◆
31	Thelakelanders	@danieltoal_photography thanks mate ˝v:◆fi''M y5v;◆
32	Thelakelanders	@louisville_music_seen thank you, much appreciated [ß)
33	Thelakelanders	@amandawoods9 thank you ◆:˝vß)[

Comments and Replies to post from February 15th 2017.

	User	Comment
@thelakelanders [Caption] DEEPDALE ---------- Good morning People $ Tim @timdovephotography taking control of proceedings today ---------- A bit of dramatic mood for you today and one of my favourite places .... Deepdale. You will be hard pressed to find a more rugged, dramatic and remote location in the Lakes. This image was taken on a cold February morning, I made the 30-40 minute walk up the valley in the dark. As the light improved I could see a touch of snow on the fells and dramatic dark clouds.....perfect conditions. It was bloody cold standing in the Beck for about 40 minutes but well worth the frozen toes for these spectacular views The walk starts from the small hamlet of Bridgend which is between Brothers Water and Patterdale. Park at the lay-by with the old style red telephone box. It's a good 30-40 minute walk from Bridgend to the small setof waterfalls, which is about half way up the Valley. There are further falls at the head of the valley and the valley is worth a good explore on its own. ---------- As always a big big thanks for following the page and remember to tag your images #thelakelanders and you could be tonight's or a future feature. Have a marvellous day and you all stay classy #thelakelanders #britians_talent #fiftyshades_of_nature #fromlakelandwithlove #cumbriaguide #ordanancesurvey #scenicbritain #gloriousbritain #landscapephotography #landscape_lovers #ukpotd #ukbestpics #lakedistrict #thelakedistrict #sonyphotography #sonyalpha #earth_shotz #mefototripods #lakesography #naturephotography #naturelovers #outdoorphotography #landscape_lovers #igerscumbria #onelakedistrict #outdoorphotographymagazine #uk_greatshots #nature_perfection #kasefiltersuk #awesome_earthpix		
1	Keswicklimey	Great photo Tim.
2	Thelakelanders	@keswicklimey Thank you very much David, much appreciated sir
3	tom.w.green	well worth it
4	thelakelanders	@tom.w.green Thanks very much Tom, yeah fecking freezing but definitely worth it
5	manis1098	Fantastic colour, depth and composition. your Photography inspired me I also try to good Clicks so if you are nature lover and interested in nature Photography then please visit to my profile..
6	thelakelanders	@manis1098 Thanks very much Manish, much appreciated
7	matthew_pate	I love it here, I'll have to plan a visit!! Great dramatic shot!!
8	thelakelanders	@matthew_pate Thanks Matthew, aye it's a cracking spot alright, can't wait for my next visit
9	matthew_pate	@thelakelanders
10	adrianharrisonlandscapes	One of my favourite little walks tim. I was up there on Sunday afternoon just having a potter a out. Great shot buddy
11	thelakelanders	@adrianharrisonlandscapes Yeah it's a great walk. I haven't been for ages, tendto stay away in the summer due to the bracken, can feel a visit coning in soon
12	khaledhadiphotography	Awesome landscape shot, nicely composed and exposed!
13	thelakelanders	@khaledhadiphotography Thanks very much Khaled, very kind comments
14	will.holligan	A stunning shot Tim
15	thelakelanders	@will.holligan Thanks very much Will, appreciate your comments captain
16	mikey_twadags	Fab shot, I love Deepdale, the way Greenhow End looms over the valley is perfect. It's a great moody conditions location.
17	Thelakelanders	@mikey_twadags Thanks very much Mikey, yeah it's a brilliant location, I absolutely love it. Could happily spend many hours there

18	b_anthony_photo graphy	Cool
19	thelakelanders	@b_anthony_photography Thanks very much Pal
20	alexwm_photos	Love that water

Comments and Replies to post from September 18th 2019.