

**Knowing Food and Knowing Self by Reference to
the Landscape: The Case of Herdwick Lamb**

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The purpose of this research is to explore respondent's knowledge of food in the pre-product stage i.e. in the landscape. Herdwick lamb is highly visible throughout the year in the Lakeland landscape. This place inspired the Romantic poets, and other artists whose heritage remains as a local influence. Taking a phenomenological stance the research examines the experiential claims of respondents; means-end chain analysis was used to address this broader food concept. Ladder maps were produced to reveal salient connections. Findings show respondents hold a wide range of perceptions, experiences and associations with the 'pre-products' which influences their judgement about the freshness, flavour and quality of the meat. An opportunity exists for the creation of a new set of food product attributes, relating to the experience of 'pre-products' in the landscape.

This paper recognises, explores and analyses regional inhabitants' perceptions of growing food in the landscape. Ovine production is highly visible in the landscape of the Lakeland fells, it has informed the social and economic heritage of the place, including the work of many of the Romantic poets. The study explores the phenomenon of shared identity between local inhabitants and their food-filled landscape and associated heritage.

Convery et al., (2004) discuss the concept of 'lifescapes' used to articulate the relationship between landscape, livestock, farming and rural communities on different levels, from spatial to emotional and ethical. Such relationships can be taken for granted; they form a backdrop to immediate operational aspects of life. Significantly, the epidemic of foot and mouth in 2001, and subsequent culls of livestock caused fissures in these lifescapes as the livestock were removed. Belk (1988) describes as particularly notable, the evidence cited of diminished sense of self, which is brought about when possessions are lost or stolen. This raises the question of how Cumbrians perceive (food) products which are so visible in the landscape.

Cresswell (2005) offers a distinction between landscape and place, where landscape is closely tied to the function of vision, and the viewer is outside of the landscape looking at it. On the other hand places are "to be inside of" and include "attachments and connections between people and place" (p10-11) the latter being akin to Lefebvre's (1991) "social space". This dichotomy offers an interesting approach for the consideration of naturally embedded food products (NEFPs) in the 'landscape' of regions which a person visits, and NEFPs in the 'place' of a person's own origin.

"Wordsworth's Lake District, must be understood in terms of a complex conjunction of factors involving the natural landscape, the pattern of weather and of sky, the human ordering of spaces and resources, and also those individual and communal narratives with which the place is imbued." (Malpas, Place and Experience, 1999:185)

The interplay of mental frameworks involved in perceiving a place, and the reflection of what is seen against what is known, or what has been experienced, leads Malpas (ibid) to cite Combray “a place that is, of course, half fictional and half real” (p185). This interdependence between place and person was noted in Heaney’s observation on Wordsworth and the Lake District Landscape as being both “humanised and humanizing” (ibid. 184).

Wordsworth’s poem about a shepherd, Micheal includes:

*....grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green Valleys, and the Streams and Rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd’s thoughts.”*

(Micheal: a Pastoral Poem, from Poems on the Naming of Places)

Malpas (2011) offers a quote from Paul Cezanne, which illustrates nostalgic emotional ties with the landscape:

“within us they have not gone to sleep for ever, the vibrating sensations reflected by this good soil of Provence, the old memories of our youth, of these horizons, of these landscapes, of these unbelievable lines which leave in us so many deep impressions.” (ibid p13).

The term ‘lifescape’ has been used to represent the perspective of a person within their day to day environment (Convery, 2004). Seamus Heaney (1991) identified two ways in which a place can be known: “*lived, illiterate and unconscious*” or “*learned, literate and conscious*” (cited in Malpas 2011:13). The study will elicit conscious perceptions of the landscape.

Method:

Means-end chain analysis was selected to gather local residents’ values relating to this broader food product concept. Twenty ladder maps and a hierarchical value maps identified the most frequent connections made for the Cumbrian fells. The empirical data was collected from consumers with a minimum of five years residence in the local of Herdwick lamb production. Means-end chain (MEC) analysis was selected because identity of the respondents and products with the region needed closer examination. Credence variables are significant in the communication of gastronomic, “*terroir*” and heritage attributes. MEC analysis involves linking lower level concrete or abstract product characteristics, with functional or psychosocial consequences, arising from consumption, which then contribute towards achievement of instrumental or terminal life values (Gutman, 1982b; 1991).

Findings:

MEC findings showed that people experience place populated with flocks of sheep/local meat in production and perceive its qualities and characteristics to be influenced by *terroir* factors, by season and their own relationship with the landscape and local community.

