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Heritage, endangerment and participation: alternative futures in the Lake District

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ABSTRACT

Cultural heritage policy in the UK puts a high value on participation, and heritage agencies often encourage that participation through appealing to the endangered status of the landscapes, sites and monuments in their care. Participation takes many forms, and can involve influencing policy, contributing to cultural outputs and enjoying cultural activities. This paper critically examines the literature and discourse underpinning the endangerment/participation axis and presents a case study of heritage participation in the English Lake District. In order to ground critique in empirical investigation, the case study focusses on the practice of a particular fell shepherd, whose participation in heritage is not motivated by endangerment. The paper then explores the implications of this research for wider thinking about heritage and public life, arguing for the importance of moving beyond endangerment narratives for the creation of resilient heritage futures.

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1. Introduction



“Don’t it always seem to go, that you don’t know what you’ve got till its gone”

Joni Mitchell, Big Yellow Taxi

‘Change is part of life as a farmer, it changes every day’

Andrea Meanwell, Lake District shepherd

Heritage practice and policy are closely linked to assumptions about the value of public participation, through a discourse that gained currency in the 1990s but still has influence today, particularly in decisions about the allocation of public funds (Smith 2009; Department of Culture Media and Sport 2018). Public participation in heritage is organised around two forms of participation, each of which have a slightly different relation to the present, and the future. The concept of cultural participation is underpinned by a normative expectation that people engage in cultural activities largely for pleasure, and the associated well-being benefits derived from doing enjoyable things. Political participation describes a change in governance practice to include stakeholders outside the traditional realm of politics. Heritage organisations have claimed to support and facilitate both these types of participation by linking them through an endangerment narrative: the significance of heritage is framed through reference to perceived threats to that heritage, which motivates people to participate in its protection and access its benefits.

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This paper problematises the link between participation and endangerment and describes a form of heritage participation which is not dependent on endangerment for its perpetuation, but which is nonetheless socially powerful. In light of recent critiques of endangerment, notably Fredheim's recent paper in this journal (2018), I aim to show how the notion of heritage as inherently 'endangered' and under threat and creates potentially problematic futures. Using a case study from the English Lake District, and focusing on UK heritage policy, the paper demonstrates how a different future orientation—based on patience, complexity and continuity—provides a viable alternative basis for participation in heritage and its contribution to public life.

Heritage is often understood to consist of elements of a shared human legacy preserved for the benefit of future generations. However, it typically remains unclear precisely when these future generations will live and how heritage professionals can make the right decisions in the present with their best interests in mind. As Harrison has argued '*different forms of heritage practices enact different realities and hence work to assemble different futures*' (Harrison 2015, 24 emphasis original). This paper is concerned with a heritage practice that assembles a future through patient complexity and embodied engagement, rather than through anxiety and anticipated loss.

For the past three years, I have been conducting ethnographic fieldwork on heritage practices in the English Lake District. My work has followed the 2017 inscription of the Lake District as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in recognition of its value as a cultural landscape. The occasion of the inscription provided an opportunity to consider how global heritage practices intersect with traditional, landscape-based local practices, such as shepherding and rambling. The World Heritage bid was brought forward by a consortium representing a very wide cross-section of stakeholders in the Lake District (Lake District National Park Partnership 2016). While many heritage practices, like management and designation are professional, the role of the consortium highlighted a wider participation in shaping the future of the landscape, including participation by non-professionals. The case study sought to understand how individual participation in heritage, its both cultural and political contexts, can be framed as a practice that constructs particular futures and presents alternatives to endangerment narratives.

In this paper, the case study discussion is preceded by a literature review which examines the policy discourses related to cultural and political participation. I identify the link made between the two forms of participation using a narrative of endangerment, with particular reference to Thurley's notion of 'The Heritage Cycle', which he promoted as a model for English Heritage when he was Chief Executive Officer of that organisation (2005b). A summary of literature critiquing the endangerment narrative follows, with a particular emphasis on how endangerment produces anxious futures centred on the anticipation of loss. Much of the literature on endangerment and heritage has focused analysis at a relatively high level, often looking at discourse and policy. In this paper, I will be presenting a case study based on small stories and fine detail because I want to ground these complex theoretical arguments in practice. For this reason, I will unpack the endangerment literature in some depth before moving on to the case study.

The case study begins by looking at broadly at heritage participation in the Lake District, then focusses in on the practice of an individual participant. The discussion draws out the role that endangerment plays in participation within the case study and identifies alternatives for inspiring cultural and political participation. Waterton has discussed how heritage policy discourse supports the legitimisation narratives that underpin the power relations in heritage (2010, 18). This paper moves from a discussion of discourse to an exploration of practice. In particular, the case study supports the observation of Chilvers and Kearnes that participation creates publics (Chilvers and Kearnes 2016, 8). A narrow focus on endangerment, I argue, limits the range of futures that these publics may be working toward.

1.1. Participation in public policy

The term 'participation' is a feature of 21st UK policy which originates in two separate but connected domains. Cultural policy seeks to measure and encourage participation in the arts

and culture as a social benefit and a justification for sustained investment. Planning policy, and particularly planning for infrastructure, seeks to encourage participation in planning to strengthen democratic principles but also to improve public acceptance of unpopular infrastructure, such as nuclear waste repositories (Chilvers and Kearnes 2016). In her formative work on participation, Sherry Arnstein states, ‘Participation of the governed in their government is, in theory, the cornerstone of democracy’ (1969, 216). But she goes on to expose the ways in which aspirations to participation can also become empty rhetoric, without true sharing of control. Since publication of Arnstein’s paper, the policy discourse surrounding participation has become more sophisticated and the range of activities for citizens to participate in has proliferated.

In the 1990’s participation became a watchword of the UK Labour party’s ‘third way’. The assumption was that the troubled relationship between the state and the market would be mediated by citizen participation (Smith 1998). As Chilvers and Kearnes have pointed out ‘democratic forms of public participation are presented as necessary in limiting the transgressive potential of technological innovation and as providing an accountability mechanism that functions as a counterweight to systems of technical expertise’ (2016, 3). Meanwhile the idea of cultural participation led to a shift from funding the supply of arts and culture to participate in arts and culture (Smith 1998, emphasis mine). But while both cultural and political participation are important in contemporary policy, they have different functions and expectations.

In January 2018 the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) of the UK announced a public inquiry into the social impact of participation in culture and sport. The inquiry takes the benefits of cultural participation, including greater ‘community engagement’, as an accepted fact and seeks contributions only on how such participation can be increased (DCMS 2018). But not all researchers are convinced. Recent analyses of policy and practice across Europe argues that celebration of cultural participation can function primarily to legitimate the state subsidy of arts organisations that cannot be reliably linked to other social goods (Jancovich 2015). Analysing cultural policy in Scotland and Denmark, Stevenson et al. have argued that policies to increase participation in the arts and culture presume that participation is good for individuals, without demonstrating what benefits would accrue from that participation (2015).

As political ‘participation’ has become a more important policy objective in planning arenas, publics have become warier of it, expressing ‘consultation fatigue’ (Hayward, Simpson, and Wood 2004; Diduck and Sinclair 2002, 585; Chilvers 2016). Dawson et al. have recently drawn attention to the fact that participation in science communication (in which they include heritage and museum participation) is a factor of social inequality. Wealthier people are more likely to participate in science communication; the more political weight that such participation carries, the more significant such exclusion is. As they argue, ‘if we consider science communication socially or personally valuable, we must consider issues of inclusion/exclusion’ (2018, 5).

1.2. Heritage participation and endangerment

The link between participation in policy and participation in heritage activities is constructed through the idea that heritage is inherently endangered and framed through the anticipation of its loss, and the forms of care through which loss might be avoided. In 2005 Simon Thurley, then English Heritage CEO, drew upon both cultural and political participation in a model he referred to as ‘The Heritage Cycle’, where appreciation of heritage leads to a desire to protect it, which in turn leads to further appreciation (Figure 1) (Thurley 2005). This is, in essence, a deficit model suggesting that if people do not participate sufficiently in heritage it is because they do not have enough concern for its vulnerability.

Thurley derived this model through attempting to create a business model which linked the statutory roles of English Heritage (designation and advising government on policy) with the presentation and management of publicly accessible heritage properties, which he termed ‘the portfolio’. In 2004/2005 DCMS had identified a series of five objectives for English Heritage

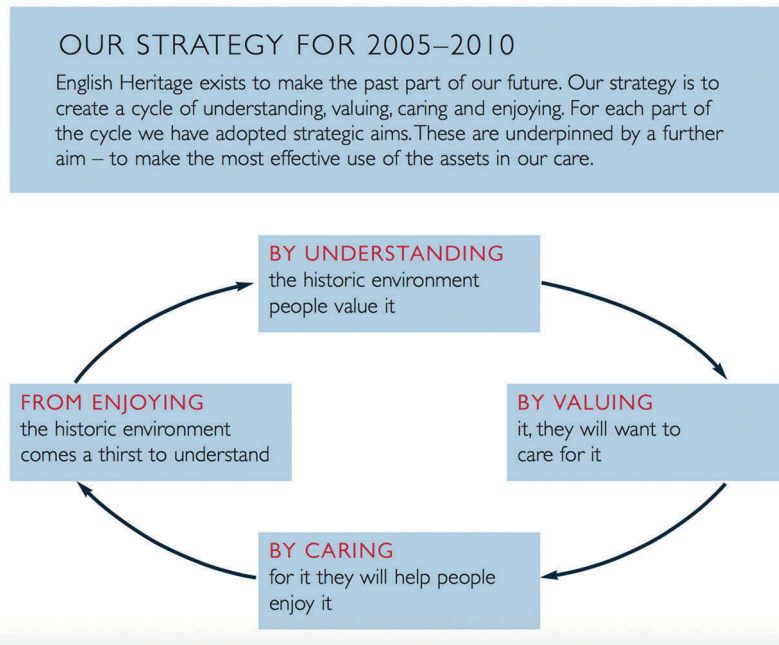


Figure 1. The Heritage cycle (Thurley 2005).

which required them support key government initiatives for heritage, while at the same time reducing their funds and asking them to ‘increase the level of income generated by [their] sites to support English Heritage’s underlying financial position’ (English Heritage 2005a, 13). The strategy designed to achieve this was called ‘Making the Past Part of our Future’ (English Heritage 2005b)

The core idea of ‘The Heritage Cycle’ was that public participation in the form of visiting and enjoying the properties would both increase funding and increase political support for the statutory wing of the organisation. In the end, Thurley was unsuccessful in keeping the two functions together and the organisation was split in 2015 into English Heritage, a charity which manages and presents the properties, and Historic England, a Quasi Non-governmental Organisation (or Quango) that fulfils the statutory roles (English Heritage 2014).

Neither organisation refers to ‘The Heritage Cycle’ in contemporary policy, yet initiatives such as the Heritage at Risk programme indicate that the thinking behind it still motivates both organisations (and indeed others in the sector). Historic England every year publishes the Heritage at Risk report, with the explicit intention of encouraging ‘people to become actively involved in looking after what is precious to them’ (Historic England n.d.). The appeal to endangerment as a driver of participation remains central to heritage discourse outside the UK as well. Europa Nostra, a European citizens organisation, runs an annual competition to identify the seven most endangered sites in Europe. As their website states: ‘The 7 Most Endangered’ is not a funding programme. Its aim is to serve as a catalyst for action and to promote ‘the power of example’ (Europa Nostra n.d.). Vidal and Dias have argued that endangerment, combined with participation in this way, removes the distinction between research and advocacy. As will be discussed in more detail below, they explain that conservation agencies, including heritage agencies, create a list which instigates endangerment by the creation of lists; the appropriate form of participation is to remove the target of concern from the list (2016, 16–17). Indeed, the annual Heritage at Risk report always reports how many sites have been removed from the list since the previous year (e.g. Historic England 2017).

Fredheim has recently critically examined how the endangerment narrative as a driver for participation can cement the ‘authorised heritage discourse’ by drawing on neo-liberal structures of governance (2018). He argues that the endangerment narrative encourages volunteers to follow corporate procedures and priorities by implying that deviation from these puts heritage ‘at risk’. He notes that ‘controlled participation is radically different to the more direct notion of devolving power traditionally associated with the idea of democratisation’ (Fredheim 2018, 6). Fredheim sees the endangerment narrative as complicit in framing potentially exploitative relations with heritage volunteers.

Fredheim draws on a range of scholars who argue that community engagement and involvement can be an exploitative cloak for austerity-driven de-professionalisation (Waterton 2015; Perry and Beale 2015; Richardson 2017). Although he joins these scholars in critiquing current engagement practice, he argues that the culprit is endangerment, claiming that as long as the driver of heritage participation is endangerment, volunteers will always work to professional and state agendas. Engaging with the work of Lorna Richardson, he states, ‘Richardson is unable to offer a solution to this neo-liberal dilemma because her critique of neo-liberalism is offered from a position of believing in the necessity of protecting archaeology’ (Fredheim, 2018, 15).

Rachael Kiddey’s work on homeless heritage offers a contrasting example of how participation focused on the needs of the participants, rather than the protection of heritage, can be empowering and positive (2017a, 2017b). In her work with homeless people in Bristol and York, she shows no interest in protecting the heritage that her participants describe and record. The work is intended to contribute ‘to the democratisation of knowledge, aiding negotiation of the complicated politics of homelessness in valuable ways’ (Kiddey 2017b, 694). Participation in heritage, in this case, has a direct link to politics, without requiring that heritage to be under threat. This kind of participation, driven by personal attachment rather than the anticipation of loss will be explored in the case study below.

1.3. Critiques of endangerment

The endangerment narrative, of course, serves other purposes in heritage practice and policy, beyond simply being a driver for participation. Rico reminds us of its centrality to the whole project of heritage. ‘Heritage is constructed against specific perceptions of processes of destruction and their effect’ (Rico 2016, 64). Holtorf has questioned whether heritage can be threatened by destruction or transformation of material remains, arguing that heritage is a creative process in the present that grows through change (Holtorf 2003, 2015, 2016). Furthermore, the management of intangible heritage often emphasises continuity rather than conservation as such, and indeed attempts to conserve intangible heritage can actually work to undermine that continuity (Hafstein 2007). Nonetheless, the idea of a threatened material past continues to underpin many heritage policies, as discussed above.

Vidal and Dias have argued that this idea of heritage arose in tandem with the existential anxieties of the Cold War (Vidal and Dias 2016, 12). The philosopher Hans Jonas observes that the anticipation of loss clarifies what is valued ‘as long as the risk is unknown you don’t know what needs to be protected and why ... we don’t know what’s at stake, till it’s at stake’. He argues that the threat of nuclear annihilation set us on the path to an ‘ethics of long-term responsibility’. With everything threatened, everything at stake, we were forced to take responsibility for the things we value (Jonas 1984, quoted in Buser 2015, 32). The anticipation of loss becomes a tool to identify what current societies care about. As the Joni Mitchell quote at the beginning of the paper puts it ‘You don’t know what you’ve got till it’s gone’.

The effort that heritage puts into constructing endangerment is not neutral, though it may neutralise political criticism. Indeed, Meskell has argued that the identification of a World Heritage Site as endangered, and its inscription on the ‘World Heritage in Danger List’ is a matter of political diplomacy rather than heritage management (2012, 150). Nonetheless, ‘endangerment depoliticizes cultural issues by turning culture into an extension of nature’

(Vidal and Dias 2016, 11). Holtorf and Ortman suggest that endangerment is an emotional device, part of the staging in the experience society (Holtorf and Ortman 2008). I have also argued previously that endangerment can be a domestication strategy, positioning potentially dangerous creatures and objects as vulnerable and needing our care (May 2009). Rico has gone further, arguing that “‘at risk’ frameworks should be seen as an instrumental arm of an ‘Authorized Heritage Discourse’ (AHD) (Smith 2006, 11)’ (Rico 2014, 161, see also 2016).

‘The practices relating to endangerment are about changing the present for the sake of the future’, argue Vidal and Dias (2016, 5). But, as they go on to argue, the future created by these practices, is a future of rupture, and this forces our engagement with futures to be dominated by the anticipation of loss. Heritage practices, like those in the case study below, that are focussed on continuity and adaptation sit uncomfortably in these visions. Rico has also demonstrated, in her work on post-disaster heritage in Banda Aceh, that a focus on the anticipation of loss undermines resilience in the face of actual loss. The communities she worked with were creating new heritage from the destruction post-tsunami (2014, 2016). The endangerment narrative shuts down potential futures in which communities thrive despite destructive and transformative events. In his discussion of traditional dance in Oklahoma, Jackson argues that ‘framing culture as endangered signals not only its ongoing or timeless importance but also describes it as being ... on the verge of disappearance’ (2007, 38) This duality is template for anxiety. The very thing that makes us feel that the experience should continue, is the thing that makes us feel that it will not.

Recent discussions of how to stimulate political will to implement climate change mitigation policies have focused on the question of whether endangerment is a suitable motivator. A recent assessment of media coverage of climate change ‘refugees’ in the US concludes:

Just as communities have been constructed by journalistic storytelling as distant, disempowered victims of a changing climate, communities have also tactically reframed this victimization narrative by grafting their own visual storytelling of resilient culture, identity, and traditional knowledge onto the established journalistic grid to empower themselves in their fight to secure a viable future (Herrmann 2017, 213)

This short review has drawn together three related bodies of literature: analyses of public policy on participation; an assessment of how heritage participation policy is linked to an endangerment narrative; and critiques of that narrative. Participation is a key feature of policy in both planning and culture. Heritage agencies draw on both sets of policy to frame heritage participation as both cultural, producing personal well-being, and political, producing a politically engaged populace.

The link between these two aims is the unspoken assumption that participating in heritage helps rescue it from its inherently threatened status. As yet, scholarly critiques of endangerment narratives, and their social function, have not been reflected in changes to heritage policy or practice. Perhaps this is partly because scholars have focused more on discourse, than on practice. The case study which follows shows how endangerment is framed as generative of both heritage and heritage participation in the English Lake District in discourse and in professional practice. I then present ethnographic material from non-professional heritage practice, in which participation is not driven by endangerment, but by alternative forms of engagement and action.

3. Heritage, endangerment and participation in the Lake District

The Lake District is a large and complex region in the northwest of England which has been managed as a unit since 1951, when it was created as one of the UK’s first National Parks. It comprises 13 separate valleys, the hills (also known as fells) between them, and the many lakes and rivers in the valley bottoms. Inscribed in 2017 as a World Heritage Site, it is now managed by a partnership of 25 different organisations, who came together for the nomination process and have jointly agreed a management plan. Each of these groups have a different relationship with the site. Some own land, some are run by members, some are government-funded and have statutory responsibilities. Some of them, like the Environment Agency, Historic England, and the National

Trust, have national remits, while some are local governments, charities, and businesses. Some of these are represent groups of individuals who have had traditional responsibility for land management, such as the Herdwick Breeders Association.

The campaign to inscribe the Lake District as a UNESCO World Heritage Site was a very long process largely governed by the demands of technical reporting (Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) 2016). But it was only possible because of a long political process to convince organisations to come together and form the partnership described above. It was also a very public process, with a marketing campaign to encourage people to ‘Back the Bid’ (Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP)n.d.). This is in significant contrast to the experience surrounding the inscription of the first two UK World Heritage Sites, Hadrian’s Wall and Fountains Abbey, where even the managers of the sites were not told until the inscription had already happened (Chris Young, former head of World Heritage for English Heritage *pers comm*). But public participation in the Lake District case was directed. Those outside the LDNPP weren’t invited to define the bid, or implement it, but simply to show their support.

The site is inscribed as a Cultural Landscape under Criteria II, V and VI of the World Heritage committee guidelines. All of these criteria mix tangible and intangible aspects of heritage, and in the Lake District, they refer to a range of landscape forms, architectural features, and cultural traditions, ranging from the Romantic poets to fell shepherding. Endangerment is a key part of Criterion V:

“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.”

It is also a key feature of the heritage narrative applied to the Lake District. The nomination document for World Heritage Inscription highlights the historic conflicts over conservation in the region, with claims that this conflict led to the development of the modern conservation movement:

“By the late 19th century, awareness of the significance of this landscape and its farming culture was infused with an appreciation of its vulnerability. As threats – notably railways, reservoirs and commercial afforestation – increased during the 19th and 20th centuries, the response was a series of hard-fought conservation battles. These, although sometimes unsuccessful, began a chain of events which established the English Lake District as the birth-place of an innovative conservation movement committed to the defence of its landscape and community” (Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) 2016, 468).

The history of the hard-fought nineteenth-century battles to conserve the landscape has become part of the heritage of the region, now celebrated in the WHS nomination document with an assertion of present-day harmony, achieved through careful protection and management. ‘The essence of the harmonious beauty of the English Lake District landscape, combining natural and agro-pastoral features and later designed landscape has also been maintained through traditional management, conservation initiatives and planning control’ (LDNPP, 2016, 481). Traditional agropastoral management practices exist in harmonious relation with the landscape natural features and a designed landscape of villas and gardens. ‘The interaction between agro-pastoral farming and the natural features of the English Lake District has produced a landscape of great harmonious beauty which in the 18th century attracted the interest of the Picturesque Movement’ (Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) 2016, 271).

The battle to prevent the construction of the Thirlmere reservoir in the 1880’s demonstrates both the long history of public participation in the Lake District and also reveals how conflict is contained through heritagisation. The reservoir was constructed as a water supply for Manchester, approximately 80 miles distant. Although the campaign to stop the construction was unsuccessful, that campaign is now lauded as an early progenitor of environmentalism (Ritvo 2009). Thirlmere itself became valued for its role in developing a nascent conservation movement. While this conflict has become part of the heritage narrative of the site, becoming heritage has removed its

force, so that Thirlmere itself is considered a valued part of the landscape and no longer an imposition to be resisted. In fact, outside of heritage documents, the conflict has largely been forgotten. The conflict is so contained by this narrative that in 2014 United Utilities could celebrate the 120th anniversary of the ‘feat of Cumbrian Victorian engineering, which brought hope and prosperity for one of England’s most successful cities’ without a single reference to the resistance to its construction. (United Utilities 2014). In fact, the first campaign to protect the Lake District since its inscription as a World Heritage Site has been to protect Thirlmere from increased tourism by resisting a planning application for a ‘zip line’ (Halliday 2018).

There have been other more recent thorough programmes of participatory politics in the Lakes. The Loweswater Catchment Project (or LCP) was a project to engage people in the management of a lake and its surrounding catchment (Waterton and Tsouvalis 2015). Although the academic project was completed in 2010, the partnership lives on in the Loweswater care programme associated with the West Cumbria Rivers Trust <http://westcumbriarivertrust.org/projects/the-loweswater-care-programme>. A perception of endangerment, in part, inspired the project: the water quality of Loweswater was threatened by an increase in cyanobacteria. But the response of the project, understanding the issue as a matter of networks in which cyanobacteria was only one actor, built participation that has lasted over a decade. The project may have improved water quality in the lake and has also influenced the development of participatory catchment management by DEFRA but the project leads are most pleased by ‘commitment to interrogating, collectively, the deeply relational understanding of socioecological realities, whilst also making collective resolutions to create provisional evidence upon which actions might be based’ (Waterton and Tsouvalis 2015, 491). This participation moved beyond a desire to ‘save’ a lake, suggesting forms of participation grounded in narratives that move beyond endangerment, a theme explored more fully in the next section.

3.1. *Shepherding as participation*

As noted above, fell shepherding is a core aspect of the inscription of the Lake District as a UNESCO’s World Heritage Site under the category ‘cultural landscape’. While the statement of Outstanding Universal Value references many aspects of the landscape’s history, from the Romantic poets to the development of conservation values (Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) 2016, 31), fell shepherding, and in particular the keeping of ‘native breeds’ including Herdwick and Rough Fell, has the largest public profile, as shown by the wide distribution of ‘Herdy’ the sheep stuffed toys (See Figure 2) to celebrate UNESCO’s agreement to the inscription (see Figure 3).

Indeed, the Herdwick sheep breeders association, represented by the National Farmers Union (NFU), are a key partner in the consortium that brought the bid for World Heritage Status to UNESCO. What’s more, the successful bid followed on an economic feasibility study carried out by James Rebanks (2009) who has since found fame as ‘the Herdwick Shepherd’. His books about his life and his farm have been on international bestseller lists (Rebanks 2015, 2016) and he has a Twitter following of 50 thousand which shares images and details of farming life, including live Tweets of lambing (@herdyshepherd). Though the economic report is not mentioned in the nomination document, it was crucial to creating the partnership that put forward the bid. In a clearly provocative PowerPoint presentation that he gave to Culture Cumbria in 2010 describes partnership as: ‘the suppression of mutual loathing in the pursuit of public funding’ (Rebanks 2010, slide, 2). Nonetheless, the LDNPP bears resemblance to the landscape-focused partnership that he proposes in that presentation (Rebanks 2010, slide, 24). He specifically argues against a model of dissent, stating ‘No one will pay you to throw stones at them’ (Rebanks 2010, slide, 14). All the same, he was not formally involved in the final World Heritage bid and his public profile is now very heavily framed through his farming activity. The complexity of his relationship with the process, and with heritage in the Lake District is beyond the scope of this paper, but it indicates the centrality



Figure 2. Herdy the Sheep (photo Sarah May).



Figure 3. The UK delegation as the Lake District WHS inscription is announced. Note woman on the left holding Herdy the Sheep.

of fell shepherding to the heritage of the Lake District. The Cultural Landscape designation on the World Heritage list always requires the presence of a mixture of tangible and intangible heritage features and values. As such, the tension between the two discussed above, in relation to conservation versus continuity, is important here. Fell shepherding creates the landscape of the Lake District, and shepherds must participate in that practice in order to perpetuate it.

3.2. A shepherd's participation

Being a shepherd, running a hill farm, is clearly a way to participate in the heritage of cultural landscape that draws on that activity as part of the framing of its value and its identity. In the Autumn of 2015 and in the spring and summer of 2017 I spent time with a shepherd named Andrea Meanwell. I made contact with her through Twitter because she expressed interest in both heritage and the future and was interested in the research I was carrying out as part of the Heritage Futures project. Andrea has published two books (Meanwell 2016, 2017, 2018) writes for *Cumbria* and has her own substantial following on Twitter (@ruslandvalley), so she is used to reflecting on and discussing her practice and its importance. In the section that follows, I describe how my time with Andrea, observing her practice and listening to her talk about it, helped me explore questions of participation and endangerment. Although the case study is focused on one engaged individual, and as such may over-represent participation within the Lake District as a whole, this methodology was chosen to allow me to more fully understand the forms of participation that emerged in the course of one individual's engagement with a specific heritage landscape.

When I met her Andrea had been farming for 6 years. She had a small-mixed flock of sheep which she kept on a patchwork of land, both near her house in Rusland Valley and separately on land associated with Blawith Fell. In addition to her 50 sheep, she had some cattle and some fell ponies. Although her aim was to develop a strong flock of Rough Fell sheep, she had other sheep as well. Some, like the Ronaldsay sheep, because she was participating in research about rare breeds and some, like the Ouessant, because they were more profitable. Although her family had a history of farming, she had pursued a successful teaching career before returning to farming in search of a more meaningful life.

During my visits, Andrea took me on her daily rounds and introduced me to her sheep and to her family (Figure 4). When I first met with her, her flock was under five years old and she was making a substantial loss, as most new businesses do. She developed her strategy through the following two years to focus on financial viability and as a result is now, at the time of writing, keeping her head above water, but she does not foresee a breakthrough to substantial profitability in the near future. At a sale of cattle, she was told 'this breed will only lose you £20 per annum'. In



Figure 4. Joining Andrea and her sheep (photo Sarah May).

addition to farming, she runs a holiday cottage, teaches in the local college, knits and sells hats from her alpacas and now writes books on her life.

Visiting Andrea during lambing was a surprise for me. I was expecting time pressure, drama, and rescue – assuming that the role of the shepherd would be to respond to situations of risk and endangerment, that necessitated her intervention and participation. Instead, the day was largely about patience and complexity. Rough Fell sheep need very little help lambing. One ewe had given birth to twins, and one of the twins wasn't standing. We watched the three sheep for awhile. Then Andrea gave the struggling lamb a rub with a towel and stood him up. We waited again. Would the mother come back and lick him? Would he find the strength to go to her and feed? Andrea checked again, was there something wrong with his foot, would she need to take him in? Finally, the ewe came back for him and he followed her, slowly.

As we looked at the new lambs, Andrea tagged their ears and checked them once their mothers had licked them and they could stand. She assessed their value to the flock. Males would be sold for meat – with current prices they represent a loss. Females could be good examples of the breed, if so, she would have to decide whether to breed them or sell them. The future flock takes shape through the detail of her decisions, her care.

Of course, much of our conversation focused on sheep: their care; what makes a good flock; and to a lesser extent land management, drainage, fencing. But, just as her practice is more focused on the future than the past, the practical details of her work are an expression of her navigation of a huge range of policies, regulated through a network of agencies, public bodies and institutions with responsibility for the Lake District. She weaves her futures from land, animals, people, water, and policies. In that sense, her practice is a form of participation that creates the continuity–adapting to change and oriented to the future–so necessary for the perpetuation of intangible heritage and living traditions.

Her small-scale farming of Rough Fell sheep echoes the agropastoral land uses that Wordsworth was already bemoaning the loss of in 1835, in his *Guide to the Lakes* (see below). But Meanwell's practice is heavily future-focused. She does not farm Rough Fell sheep because they connect her to the past, but because they can create a future that she wants to inhabit. This future-focus is shown in how she purchased her land. Most land is sold by auction and speculation pushes prices beyond her means. She managed to buy both her house, with its land, and the first plot she brought me to by direct reference to the future. As soon as the auction signs went up, she came, with her children, to the seller and said. 'Don't sell this by auction. Please sell it to us, we have a stake in this place, we want to live here and make our future here'.

Patience and complexity ran through the rest of my discussion with Andrea, in different contexts. Andrea owns a series of small patches of land, some of which comes with commonage rights on the nearby fell. The commoners who have rights to this fell meet regularly to discuss its management. The fell is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which adds another layer of complexity to their management. While Andrea has rights to graze her sheep there, if she did so there would be more sheep on the land than the Natural England recommend. She could assert her rights and graze her sheep, but this would cause trouble with the other commoners. So, she maintains her rights by taking a pony up on the fell once a year.

At the commoners meetings, they discuss farming issues beyond the management of the fell: the price and health of sheep; Brexit and agricultural policy; rewilding; the practical politics of the area. The first step in joining the group was buying the land, but it has taken many years for Andrea to feel truly part of it. Participation and meaningful collaboration take time and effort. Andrea's shepherding practice is particularly relevant in a discussion of alternatives to the endangerment narrative because she herself frames it as future-making. Although she is well aware that shepherding is a key component in the World Heritage landscape of the Lake District, she participates and perpetuates the practice not to save a dying past, but to create a desirable future for herself and her family.

4. Discussion

A World Heritage bid, by its nature, is rarely predicated solely on endangerment. The purpose is to show both the Outstanding Universal Value of the site, and the capacity of the State Party to manage that Value to secure it for the future. Indeed, Meskell has argued that in fact the political processes of the World Heritage convention have “recast UNESCO as an agency for global branding rather than global conservation’ (2014, 217). Harrison has argued that endangerment has a central place in that branding (2013, 88–92). But, as with any World Heritage Site bid, endangerment is not the only relevant narrative in the Lake District.

Care, love and ownership are also expressed in attachments to the landscape, and these qualities are sometimes entangled with the anticipation of loss. This is one of the reasons for the regular repetition in heritage documentation of Wordsworth’s claim that the Lake District is ‘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’ (1835, 88). The ownership is contingent on the care. This often-quoted comment comes after a lament over change in land use from small-scale farming to tourism. And yet the full sentence reads:

In this wish the author will be joined by persons of pure taste throughout the whole island, who, by their visits (often repeated) to the Lakes in the North of England testify that they deem the district 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 (1835, 88)

The ownership stems from their enjoyment, but to claim their ownership they are asked to accede to the endangerment of that they love and recognise their own role in enhancing its vulnerability. The use of endangerment to stimulate heritage-based participation is therefore not neutral. Framing participation as a form of rescue establishes the idea of ownership by concern, rather than by the complex and patient practices that make for resilient participation (though see Carman 2009 for further discussion on the idea of cognitive ownership).

Raising awareness of threats to heritage is positioned as a way of increasing interest in heritage (Thurley 2005), but lack of interest is not a significant barrier to participation. As Simon and Diduck conclude in their research on non-participants in Environmental Impact Assessment ‘It is clear that nonparticipants were interested in the decisions to be made, and yet did not become involved in the case’ (2002, 586). The sense that endangerment inspires participation may be related to common measures of participation drawn from cross-sectional survey data. The value of such data to understanding participation has recently been questioned by the *Everyday Participation* project (Miles 2016). The ‘rich canvass of participation’ is more in keeping with the kinds of observations presented above.

Research on political participation is moving from a methodological focus on ‘how can we get participation for this decision’ to exploring what participation does and how. Chilvers and Kearnes in their recent volume *Remaking Participation* (2016) argue that rather than mobilising existing publics, participation creates emergent publics that both influence and are influenced by the process. They also point out that participation is defined by exclusion. It only happens by defining boundaries and excluding people and things beyond those boundaries. So rather than being an aim, participation becomes a practice for the creation of publics. For any given issue, participation is constitutive of that issue, rather than a bolt-on to it.

Participation has always been understood to be about the future: as Arnstein declares ‘It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future’ (Arnstein 1969, 216). But the use of endangerment to inspire broader participation obscures its role in challenging inequality. Further, when the endangerment narrative becomes too pervasive then the ability of anticipated loss to define value is diminished. If everything is under threat, how can action be prioritised? Further endangerment can only motivate action in the near future. The very act of imagining perpetuity undermines it.

If a target of concern is imagined in the distant future, that imagination undermines its precarity, in some ways removes it from risk, obscuring its value (see also Höberg et al. 2018).

As Fredheim has argued, freeing heritage from the discourse of endangerment should increase, not decrease its value to society (2018, 5). He draws attention to the fact that the endangerment narrative supports the participation of a predominantly white middle-class constituency (see also BOP Consulting 2011). While Richardson has demonstrated that this is primarily a function of the economics and power relations of volunteering more broadly (2017, 8), the essentially conservative endangerment narrative silences critical stances which could break through some of the boundaries involved. This is apparent in the work of the ACCORD project, in which communities and researchers decide together which monuments to record, capturing the sense of community value at the same time as the physical details of the sites (Jones 2017). The recording is not a rescue of an endangered past, but method of inquiry to explore how heritage value is encountered in place.

Returning to Meanwell, her practice is demanding, and economically precarious. So why does she do it? She says that farming is a never-ending project, a growing challenge. Unlike building a house, where there is a clear endpoint, the project of being a farmer never ends. Yes, there is a connection to her family, and an attachment to the place. But she believes that shepherding maintains the landscape she loves, and the keeping of upland sheep is crucial to the genetic health of the national flock. These are motivations that stretch beyond endangerment to establish a constructive and generative relationship with the future.

5. Conclusion

This paper has explored what participation in heritage looks like in the English Lake District, with a focus on the practices of fell shepherding. It has identified the role that endangerment plays in the framing of the Outstanding Universal Value of the landscape and discussed how the perception of continued endangerment is undermined by the harmonious management that the nomination document also seeks to celebrate. Threats to the landscape-galvanised community response in the 19th and early 20th century, but the management plan agreed by the 25 partners in the LDNPP, and the designation of the site under multiple regulatory designations removes that driver for participation. Dissent and conflict have been incorporated into the heritage narrative and in the process, they have been rendered unavailable as drivers for participation.

When heritage is framed as inherently threatened, participation in heritage is framed as a battle against those threats. Conflict between those forces threatening heritage and those preserving it obscures other conflicts which may be inherent in the heritage, for example, conflicts of ownership, imperial histories and national and international conflicts. In so doing, endangerment domesticates dangerous pasts. However, endangerment also closes down futures by positioning present communities in a constant state of anxiety where the future is only apprehended as a threat to the past. But there are ways to participate in heritage—to enjoy it, create it, sustain it—not linked to endangerment. The practice of fell shepherding described here does not depend on endangerment to create futures but creates a future from patient care in the present.

While endangerment narratives can seem like a quick route to increasing participation, this participation only lasts as long as the threat. A future-focused participation outside of endangerment is possible. Undoubtedly the anticipation of loss can inspire interest but is not the strongest platform for participation. Calling on people to save an endangered past for an imagined future will get short-term results, but future-thinking thrives where people see their participation as creative. This participation can strengthen communities and allow for real political movement, not based on the anticipation of loss but on the patient nurturing of complexity and collaboration.

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