Dignity and Dionysus: Doing Wildness on the West Coast of Scotland

by

Miggie Mackenzie Cramblit

Department of Cultural Anthropology
Duke University

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Stuart McLean

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of
Cultural Anthropology in the Graduate School
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2018

ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This is a dissertation about attachment and survival in a small community on the West Coast of Scotland: a tiny village on the edge of a vast landscape, a scenic area valued for its exceptional remoteness and wildness. Glenmara contradicts itself, and this tension creates value. It is a place that is both distant and connected, warm and wild. Remote and hospitable. A place that needs exposure but also carefully tends to its insularity. Falling in love with Glenmara is easy: everyone does. But staying the course takes work. This dissertation cares about endurance as a way of life and the sacrifices that are made for the sake of remoteness and wildness. It is a story about the exhilaration of an otherworldly place and how we struggle to live with each other when we try to hold onto things we can't keep.

This dissertation is based on 18 months of ethnographic research conducted on the West Coast of Scotland between 2014-2016. It is situated in a small place that dramatizes everything that is human about living together: the promise and impossibility of social cohesion, the pleasures and dangers of intimacy, and the ways we both help and hurt each other, collectively.

Dedication

For wild women.

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Author's Note

This dissertation adopts pseudonyms for places, organizations, and people consistent with scholarly norms in the field of cultural anthropology. Names of public bodies working at a national level (e.g., Scottish Natural Heritage) have not been changed. Care was taken to adopt pseudonyms that are sufficiently generic; any resemblance to actual names of places, organizations, and people is incidental.

As an anthropologist, I carry the responsibility to tell the story of a place and its culture from my own experience living there. The time I spent in Glenmara was both beautiful and at times difficult. I came to understand this duality as a structural feature of social life in a remote place, and it called to be written about. In researching and writing this dissertation, I took care to bring to life the complexity of a place like Glenmara, and to truthfully relate my experiences and perspectives.

I acknowledge that what follows is a personal and scholarly account of Glenmara, written from the perspective of a trained anthropologist who lived there. It takes place during a particular time in my life and the community's between 2014-2016. People change, and places change. By the time this dissertation appears, it will already have become a historical document, one that does not reflect the community as it is today. This dissertation should be read with that understanding, and with grace for the world as it appeared to me then.

1. Introduction

Rowan didn't know he was leaving until about two weeks before he actually took off. He just thought he was taking a break. He would find a house sitter, go work at a ski resort in the Alps for a season, and come back. It didn't work out that way. When Rowan couldn't find a house sitter, he impulsively downsized, getting rid of most of his belongings, and storing what was left at his parents' house outside Edinburgh.

Moving away from Glenmara was not a decision Rowan took lightly, even if it happened quickly in the end. Leaving is difficult when you've lived in a place for seven years. You get used to the way things are, and maybe you don't realize how unhappy you've become. It's only natural: habits, even damaging ones, are comforting. So it takes something big to make a change. Something like a revelation, or a breakdown. You don't leave because you need a break, although this is what you tell yourself. You do it when it becomes impossible to stay.

Nothing, Rowan says, is quite as bad as the worst times in Glenmara. One of the things about living here is that "you can't get away from the people who give you trouble." Perhaps that was Rowan's undoing: his sensitivity, his humanity. He liked being liked, and he found it increasingly difficult to live with people who didn't like him. Avoidance, here, becomes a survival strategy. When you don't know how to *leave* leave, you learn to get lost in other ways: running 16 kilometers across the peninsula just

to get some distance, or finding yourself in a bottle. Running for your life: that's no way to live.

Everyone chooses to move to Glenmara for their own reasons. There are pensioners in search of retreat and entrepreneurs looking for a business opportunity. There are antisocial types longing for a place to disappear: the ones, locals say, who couldn't survive anywhere else. There are others who are running away: from addiction, from failed relationships, from the exhaustion of competing in the so-called rat race. And there are those who come for work and stay for love. Glenmara is an odd place. Rowan calls it an artificial community. He says that even communes have a shared philosophy. In fact, the only thing people have in common in Glenmara is Glenmara itself. It's why no one talks about life "before Glenmara." Living here marks a definitive passage: everything elsewhere becomes irrelevant under the spell of the wild.

But if Glenmara is paradise for all, it's not in the same ways. Everyone brings a different perspective, and everyone has something to protect. There are different ways of doing love here. There are different ways of doing care and value and work. Often, these don't agree. And maybe they can't. Living here – surviving here – means figuring out how to make room for yourself while putting up with others who are uncomfortably proximate. Glenmara may be wild, but it is not natural. It is a place that coheres stubbornly because no one wants to fall out of love.

This is a dissertation about attachment and survival in a small community on the West Coast of Scotland: a tiny village on the edge of a vast landscape, a scenic area valued for its exceptional remoteness and wildness. Glenmara contradicts itself, and this tension creates value. It is a place that is both distant and connected, warm and wild. Remote and hospitable. A place that needs exposure but also carefully tends to its insularity. Falling in love with Glenmara is easy: everyone does. But staying the course takes work. This dissertation cares about endurance as a way of life and the sacrifices that are made for the sake of remoteness and wildness. It is a story about exhilaration and love in an otherworldly place and the ways we struggle to live with each other when we try to hold onto things we can't keep. What does it mean to live and work in a place that exists for others, and what does it take to survive?[1]

Situating Glenmara requires understanding something about conservation and tourism in Scotland, and how reputations for remoteness and wildness come to be. Both conservation and tourism make essentializing assumptions about Scotland's nature, and

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[1] The refrain of survival comes from a literature at the intersection of feminist philosophy, environmental studies, and anthropology that deals with the stakes of living in a world of climatological chaos and species extinction on a mass scale. Thom van Dooren beautifully describes how lives are entwined in species survival plans. Thom Van Dooren, *Flight Ways: Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014). Anna Tsing discusses survival as both an ecological process and an emotional one: it is a question of how to hang on and animate life in the midst of decay. Tsing describes how survival is both risky and relational: "Precarity is a state of acknowledgement of our vulnerability to others. In order to survive, we need help, and help is always the service of another, with or without intent…If survival always involves others, it is also necessarily subject to the indeterminacy of self-and-other transformations" Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 29. Kath Weston has also written about the "new animism" that springs from unusual encounters on a planet imperiled by ecological ruin. Kath Weston, *Animate Planet: Making Visceral Sense of Living in a High-Tech, Ecologically Damaged World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

both value Scottish landscapes, particularly in the Highlands and on the West Coast, as remote and wild. These archetypal perceptions[2] are not new: they have a basis in popular myth, and in historical and geographic portrayals of the landscape.

In histories of Scotland written by English-speaking elites, wildness was primarily found in typified images of warring Gaelic clans.[3] Modern accounts generally agree on the events that led to the Highlanders' suppression by the British government throughout the 17th-18th centuries.[4] But Scottish historians also emphasize the role of 19th-century landowners in further subjecting the region during a period of mass out-

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[2] See Hayden White for a literary history of wildness. Hayden V. White, "The Forms of Wildness: Archaeology of an Idea," in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 150–182. Michael Taussig also examines the colonial history of wildness tropes in Colombia. Michael T. Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

[3] For a description of these historical associations, see Michael Fry, *Wild Scots: Four Hundred Years of Highland History* (London: John Murray, 2005).

[4] There is a centuries-long and at times fraught relation between Scotland and England, and many Scots continue to experience English cultural influence and Parliamentary governance as an unwanted, even "colonizing" intrusion. A popular landmark in this modern history is the Battle of Culloden in 1746, where British troops defeated Jacobites supporting the Stuart claimant Bonnie Prince Charlie (Charles III). Culloden was the culmination of a half-century of British Parliamentary and military efforts to contain Highlanders during the Jacobite Risings. The Disarming Act of 1716 made it illegal for Highlanders to bear arms, and the Dress Act of 1746 banned traditional tartan dress. For a critique of British influence in Scotland and Ireland, see Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

migration and forced evictions commonly known as the "Clearances."[5] According to these scholars, Scotland's perceived "wildness" is the result of a history of systematic, often violent, depopulation. In other words, far from natural.

But there are other arguments for natural wildness, which locate this quality in a mountainous terrain that historically made passage through the Highlands difficult and dangerous.[6] Indeed, glaciers conspired to mould a landscape that geographers find "naturally divides itself"[7] into three regions, from cuts made by the Highland Boundary Fault and the Great Glen Fault. The tallest hills in the British Isles are found above the Highland Boundary Fault, and the terrain above the Great Glen Fault is especially rugged. From a prehistoric and petrographic perspective, wildness is solidly a physical feature of the landscape.

These longstanding perceptions of wildness are becoming concrete as conservationists and sympathetic politicians advocate for the protection of landscapes

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[5] The events known as the Clearances have mostly been studied and written about by Scottish historians. James Hunter is considered to be a leading voice in this arena. His debut book was the first to consider Highland smallholders – "crofters" – as a social class (following E.P. Thompson's scholarship on the English working class). Hunter's career has been devoted to uncovering the history of the Clearances, seen through the lived experience of crofters who emigrated or were displaced. See in particular James Hunter, *The Making of the Crofting Community* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2000); James Hunter, *On the Other Side of Sorrow: Nature and People in the Scottish Highlands* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1995). For other influential accounts of this history, see Thomas M. Devine, *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and People in Scotland, 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2006); John Prebble, *The Highland Clearances* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1963); Eric Richards, *The Highland Clearances: People, Landlords and Rural Turmoil* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2000).

[6] For descriptions of geological formation and geography in Scotland, see Archibald Geikie, *The Scenery of Scotland: Viewed in Connection with Its Physical Geology* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1887); David Roger Oldroyd, *The Highlands Controversy: Constructing Geological Knowledge through Fieldwork in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Robert J. Price, *Scotland's Environment during the Last 30,000 Years* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1983).

[7] Geikie, *The Scenery of Scotland*, 98.

newly identified as "wild land." In 2014, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), a conservation policy and guidance organization funded by the Scottish Government, published a map that identified 42 regions that conservationists called "core wild land areas." These were landscapes with the highest degree of a quality identified as "wildness," and they covered 1.5 million hectares, or about 19.5% of Scotland.[8] The wild land category was significant due to its scope, but also in the clarity of its articulation. Wild land was the satisfying culmination of a long history of valuing Scottish landscapes for a palpable but in many ways indescribable quality, and was quickly accepted by government as a value worth protecting. Following the publication of the Wild Land Areas Map, wild land was recognized as a "nationally important asset" in Scotland's National Planning Framework (NPF3).[9] This was a significant commitment to a new, unstable, and relatively controversial landscape category: it was an endorsement of the symbolic value of wild land, and a speculation on its economic viability.

But while there is a growing consensus in Holyrood that wild land is valuable, it has not always been clear what wild land is. Conservationists, ecologists, and geographers at Scottish Natural Heritage spent years trying to figure this out. English

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[8] Scottish Natural Heritage originally identified wild land areas covering 20.3% of Scotland, but this total was revised in the official 2014 map. See "Core Areas of Wild Land 2013 Map: Scottish Natural Heritage's Advice to Government" (Scottish Natural Heritage, June 16, 2014), https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-02/CAWL%202013%20map%20-%20Advice%20to%20Government%20-%20Revised%20Final%20-%2017%20June%202014%20.pdf.

[9] "Ambition, Opportunity, Place: Scotland's Third National Planning Framework" (The Scottish Government, 2014), http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00453683.pdf.

and Scots, they shared a love of the hills and the feeling of wildness they found there, this impression of being exceeded by oneself in nature. They knew that this quality of experience was being threatened by large-scale wind farms and housing tract developments, and so they set about trying to protect it the only way they knew how: by identifying and mapping it, by translating feeling into policy.

There has been a steady movement towards recognizing and placing wildness in Scotland.[10] Momentum gathered in the 1970s as the eco-consciousness movement spread worldwide. In 1977, a PhD researcher at the University of Aberdeen named Bob Aiken wrote a dissertation that proposed to study how the concept of "wilderness" in Scotland evolved in relation to changes the physical landscape, finding that Scottish wilderness areas were "emptied, not empty."[11] Throughout the 1980s, scholars and conservation groups like the Sierra Club were inventorying and mapping undeveloped "wilderness" areas around the world.[12] In 1986, the John Muir Trust was founded as a registered charity in Scotland with a mission to "promote and protect wild places." Ambitions to identify and protect wild areas were well established by the time conservationists at Scottish Natural Heritage began pursuing this agenda in the late-1990s. At that time a

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[10] For this timeline, see Steve Carver, "Mapping the Scottish Wildlands: From Idea to Policy in the Last 10 Years" (PowerPoint, Wildland Research Institute, February 22, 2015), https://www.slideshare.net/WildlandResearchInstitute/sheffield2014-carver.
[11] Robert Aitken, "Wilderness Areas in Scotland" (University of Aberdeen, 1977), https://search-proquest-com.proxy.lib.duke.edu/docview/301320954?pq-origsite=summon&accountid=10598.
[12] J. Michael McCloskey and Heather Spalding, "A Reconnaissance-Lavel Inventory of the Amount of Wilderness Remaining in the World," *Ambio* 18, no. 4 (1989): 221–27.

geographer named Steve Carver at the University of Leeds had produced his own maps of what he called "relative wildness" across the UK, employing the same wilderness continuum model[13] as previous wilderness inventories used. Carver's colorful maps experimented with different markers of wildness, including remoteness from major urban areas and transport, apparent naturalness, and biophysical naturalness. Validated by the authority of geographic science, the maps seemed to visually confirm the popular perceptions: that the Scottish Highlands were notably more remote and wild than other parts of the UK.

[13] The "wilderness continuum" model illustrates gradations of (rural) nature from wilderness to developed agriculture/forestry. It was originally developed by environmental studies scholar Roderick Nash at UC-Santa Barbara, and is used by conservation groups throughout Europe to identify rewilding action areas. See description at "What Is the Wilderness Continuum?," *European Wilderness Society* (blog), June 13, 2016, http://wilderness-society.org/what-is-wilderness-continuum/.

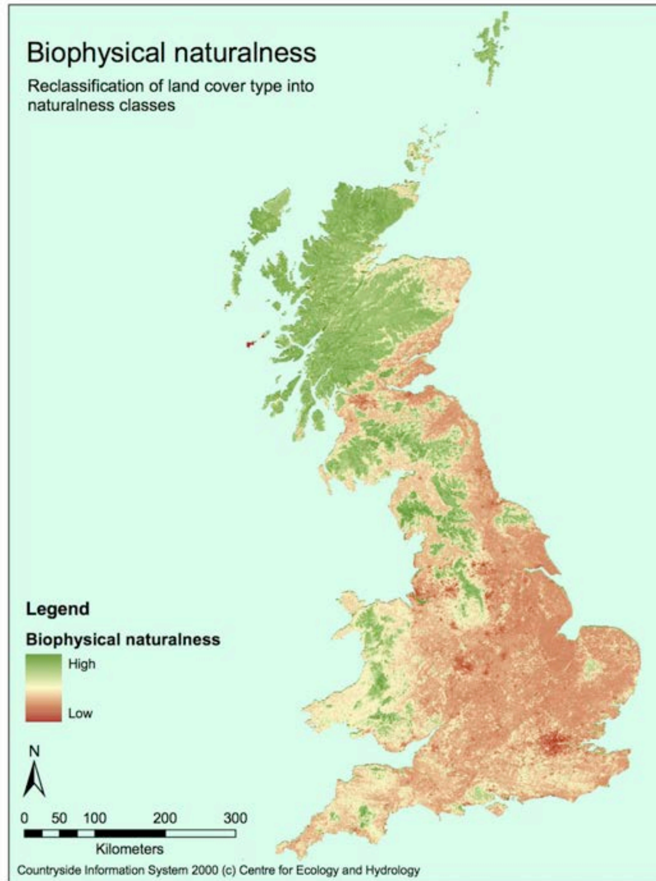

Figure 1: Biophysical Naturalness across Britain

Source: Wildland Research Institute, University of Leeds. Analysis and cartography by Steve Carter. Map commissioned by the John Muir Trust.

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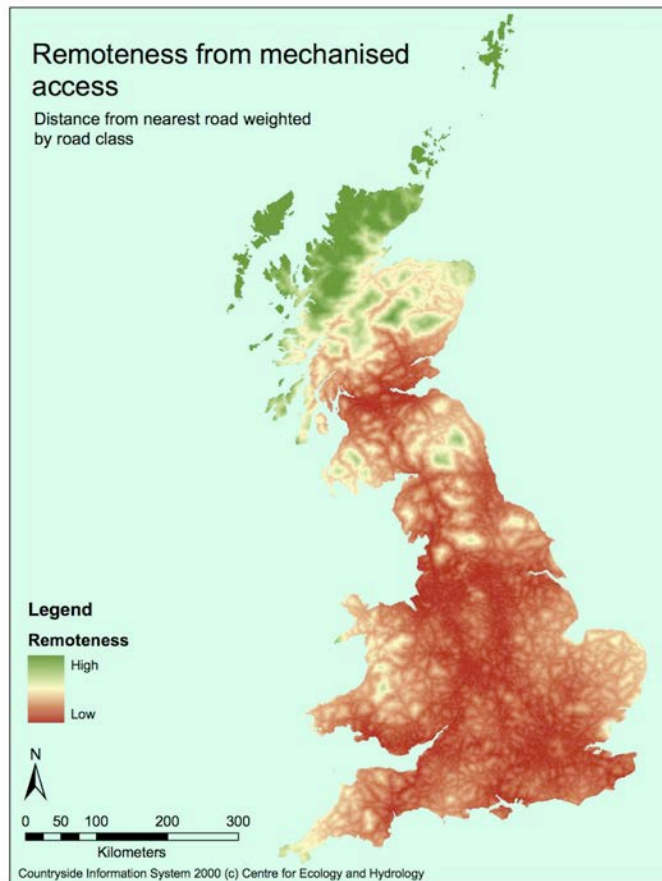

Figure 2: Remoteness from Mechanized Access across Britain

Source: Wildland Research Institute, University of Leeds. Analysis and cartography by Steve Carter. Map commissioned by the John Muir Trust.

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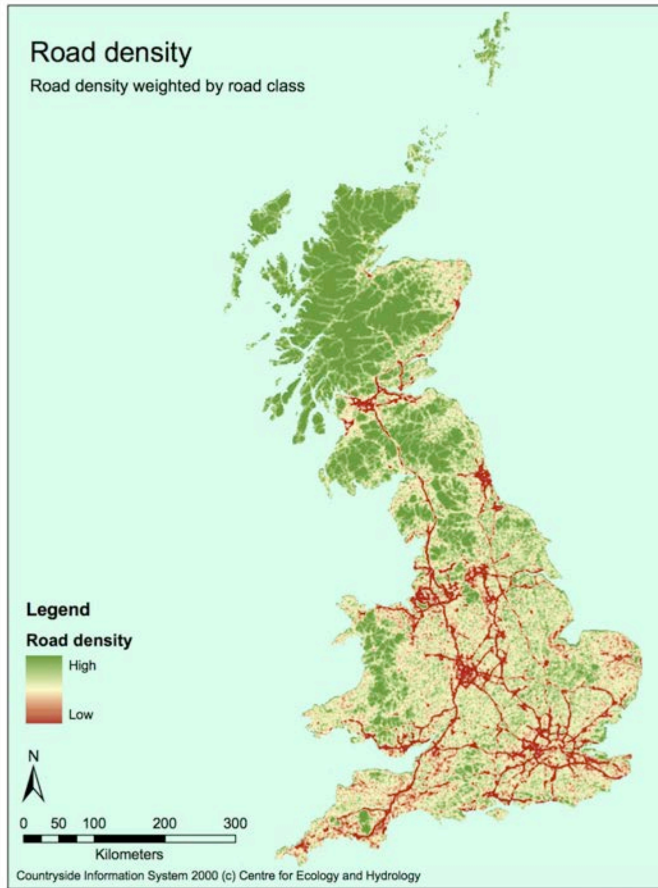

Figure 3: Road Density across Britain

Source: Wildland Research Institute, University of Leeds. Analysis and cartography by Steve Carter. Map commissioned by the John Muir Trust.
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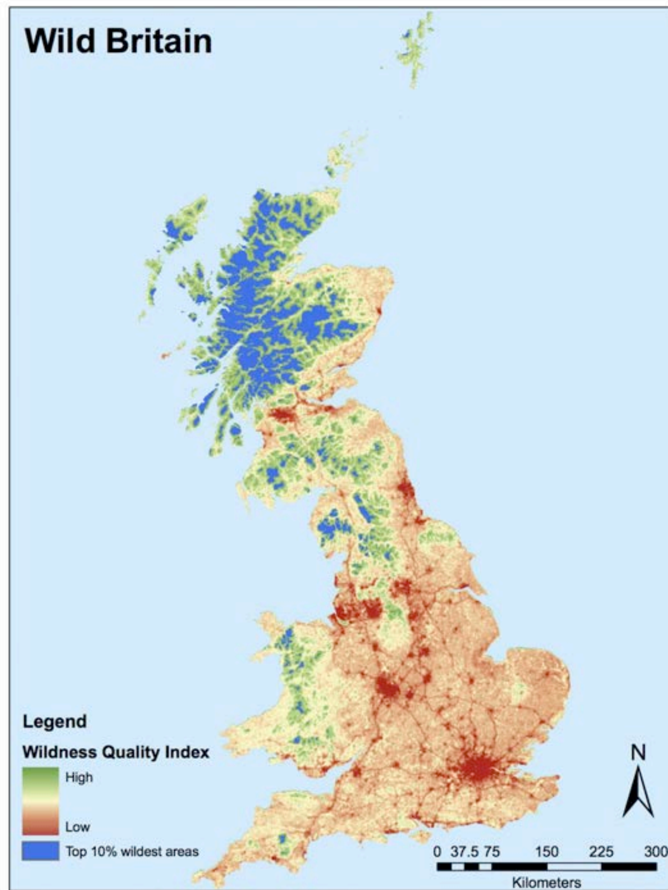

Figure 4: Relative Wildness across Britain

Source: Wildland Research Institute, University of Leeds. Analysis and cartography by Steve Carter. Map commissioned by the John Muir Trust.

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Conservationists acknowledged that a history of human habitation in the British Isles did not allow for claims to true "wilderness" in Scotland,[14] but they agreed there was something sublimely wild about Scottish landscapes, particularly in the Highlands and Islands. The word "wildness" seemed to capture this essence.

In an early policy statement draft, Scottish Natural Heritage recognized the difficulty of pinning down what it called an "elusive and sometimes contentious quality."[15] But a horizon of intensive wind energy development and modest population growth were a strong argument for trying. If wildness was unstable and ineffable, it was nevertheless a powerful motivator. The Scottish Government articulated the value of wild land in its first planning framework, published in 1999,[16] and Scottish Natural Heritage quickly committed to a strategy to protect it.[17] This would require some work.

Several years of desk study produced a set of guidelines to agree on attributes of wild land, followed by numerous excursions on the ground to locate places of exemplary wildness. Once these surveys were completed, Steve Carver's relative wildness maps had a role to play. The Wildland Research Institute (WRi), a program

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[14] Scottish Natural Heritage, "Wildness in Scotland's Countryside – Policy Statement No. 02/03," July 26, 2002, http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A150654.pdf.
[15] Scottish Natural Heritage, "Wildness in Scotland's Countryside: Draft Policy Statement," 2002, http://www.snh.org.uk/data/boards_and_committees/main_board_papers/0213.pdf. This document was an internal paper submitted alongside the SNH Policy Statement on wild land, drafted in 2002. The actual Policy Statement acknowledges the same difficulty in locating wildness. See Scottish Natural Heritage, "Wildness in Scotland's Countryside – Policy Statement No. 02/03."
[16] Scottish Government, "NPPG 14: Natural Heritage," Publication, January 1, 1999, http://www.gov.scot/Publications/1999/01/nppg14.
[17] Scottish Natural Heritage, "Wildness in Scotland's Countryside – Policy Statement No. 02/03."

that Carver founded in 2009 at the University of Leeds, had the resources to help Scottish Natural Heritage produce maps that would support its policy agenda to protect wild land. Much like Carver's original maps of relative wildness in the UK, the Scottish Natural Heritage maps used different layers to give a composite picture of wildness.

Figure 5: Scotland's Wildness – Perceived Naturalness

Source: Scottish Natural Heritage. Analysis and cartography by Geographic Information Service, SNH. https://www.nature.scot/wild-land-2014-maps

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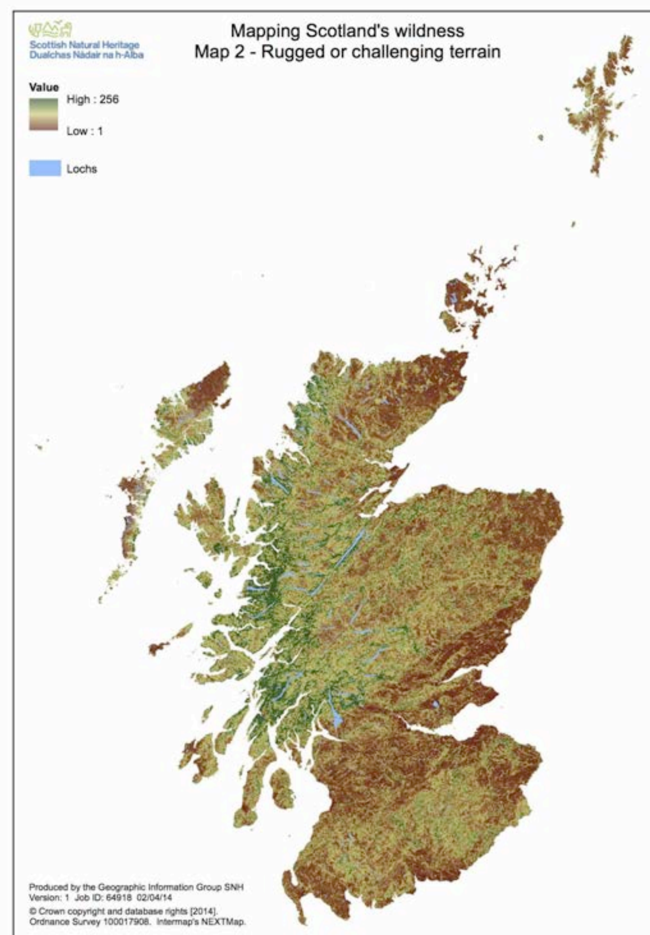

Figure 6: Scotland's Wildness – Rugged or Challenging Terrain

Source: Scottish Natural Heritage. Analysis and cartography by Geographic Information Service, SNH. https://www.nature.scot/wild-land-2014-maps

© Crown Copyright 2014.

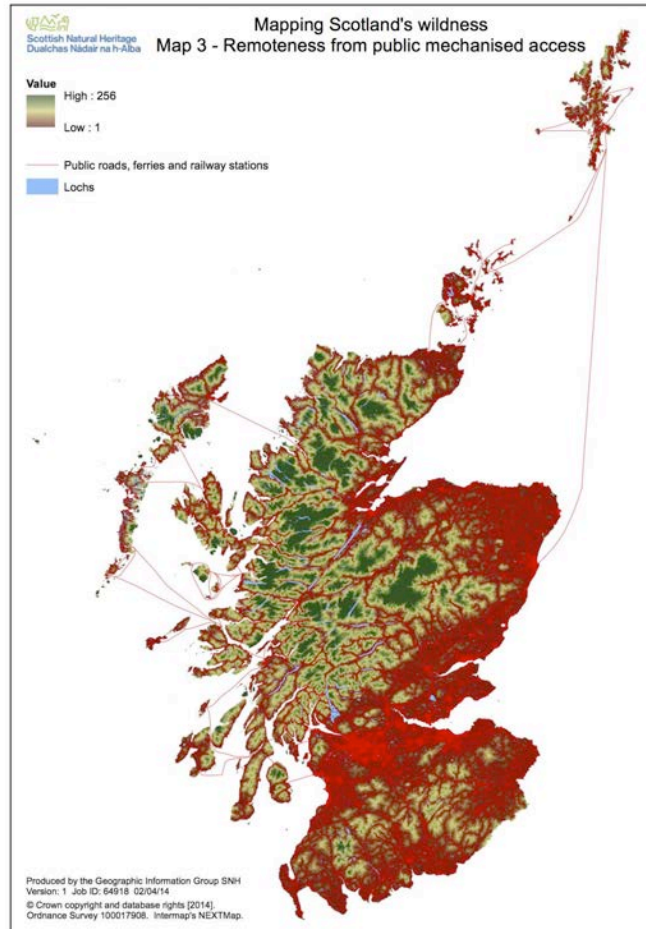

Figure 7: Scotland's Wildness: Remoteness from Mechanized Public Access

Source: Scottish Natural Heritage. Analysis and cartography by Geographic Information Service, SNH. https://www.nature.scot/wild-land-2014-maps
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Figure 8: Scotland's Wildness – Lack of Built Modern Artifacts

Source: Scottish Natural Heritage. Analysis and cartography by Geographic Information Service, SNH. https://www.nature.scot/wild-land-2014-maps © Crown Copyright 2014.

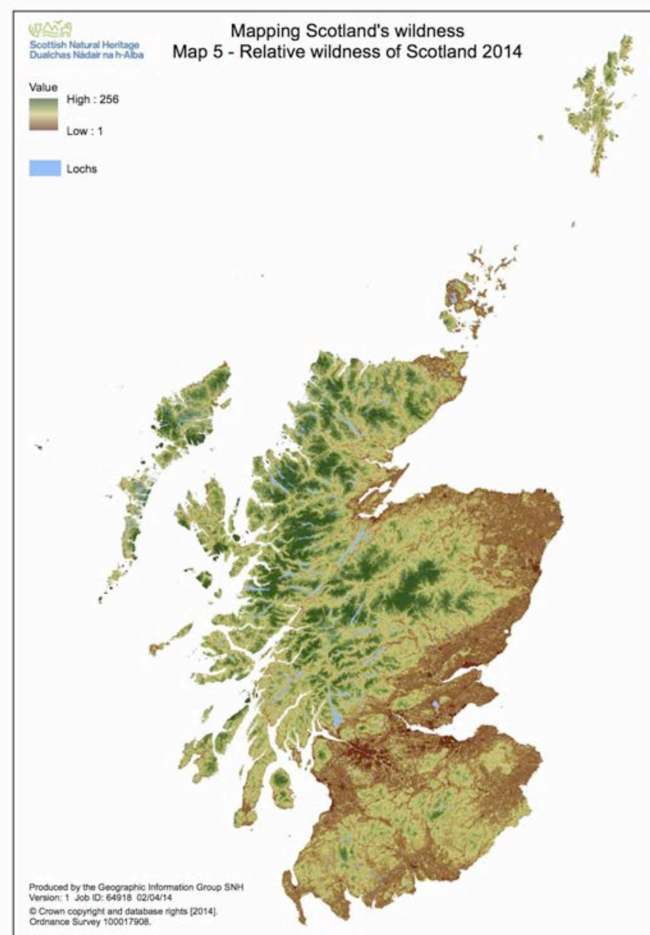

Figure 9: Relative Wildness across Scotland

Source: Scottish Natural Heritage. Analysis and cartography by Geographic Information Service, SNH. https://www.nature.scot/wild-land-2014-maps
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There were reasons why this mapping project had to be layered. It was exceedingly difficult to visualize a feeling that was essentially indescribable. Different people experience wildness differently, and this was part of the problem. Initially, the notion of "remoteness" was helpful in this regard. It's where you have to put walking boots on to experience it, an SNH officer said. Most people can agree on that, but there are different distances one has to travel from city centers to experience land that requires walking boots. Are we talking about Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh, or somewhere off the beaten track, like Applecross in the Northwest Highlands? Again, the variability of different people's perceptions and experience inhibited attempts to define, locate, and therefore protect wild land. Map layers based on the wilderness continuum model that Steve Carver had used were useful because they depicted wildness as a gradient quality, rather than a Boolean one.[18] Again using Carver's earlier work as a model, Scottish Natural Heritage defined four perceptual criteria that together qualified land as "wild":

> [1] Perceived naturalness of the land cover
> [2] Ruggedness of the terrain
> [3] Remoteness from public roads, ferries or railway stations
> [4] Visible lack of buildings, roads, pylons and other modern artefacts[19]

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[18] Carver, "Mapping the Scottish Wildlands: From Idea to Policy in the Last 10 Years."
[19] "Landscape Policy: Wild Land," Scottish Natural Heritage, accessed February 21, 2018, https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape-change/landscape-policy-and-guidance/landscape-policy-wild-land.

If the physical and perceptual attributes of wild land were themselves difficult to specify, its value was too. There was something intuitive and immediate about the feeling of wildness, but this had to be communicated in discrete terms in order to argue for its protection. The issue with wild land, according to one SNH officer, is that its value is both economic and symbolic, and it's impossible to put data on that. And so, as with the physical attributes, the complexity of wild land's value had to be translated in at least four ways. According to Scottish Natural Heritage, wild land:

> [1] Is a big part of Scotland's identity
> [2] Brings significant economic benefits – attracting visitors and tourists
> [3] Offers people psychological and spiritual benefit
> [4] Provides increasingly important havens for Scotland's wildlife[20]

Clarifying the value of wild land in multiple registers – social, economic, psychological, and ecological – was crucial to persuading the Scottish Government and other stakeholders to take action recognizing its significance.

The wild land project required conservationists to adopt positions that were both confident and humble. They had to mobilize techniques to specify and fix wild land as a feature of the physical landscape, while also acknowledging that "measuring wildness is inherently difficult, as it's a subjective quality experienced differently by different

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[20] "Landscape Policy: Wild Land."

people."[21] The project was born in the haze of an ineffable experience, but gradually became more boxy as it went through the process of visualization. In order to become policy, indescribable sensations had to be converted to gradations of wildness, which then had to be aggregated into discrete regions and summarized by clearly articulated value descriptions. Layers facilitated the process of translating feelings into values that could be promoted and defended. Using gradient map overlays and boundaries developed with the technical guidance of Steve Carver and the Wildland Research Institute, Scottish Natural Heritage released an initial "Core Wild Land Areas" map in 2013, with a revised map of "Wild Land Areas" (WLA) published in 2014.

[21] "Landscape Policy: Wild Land."

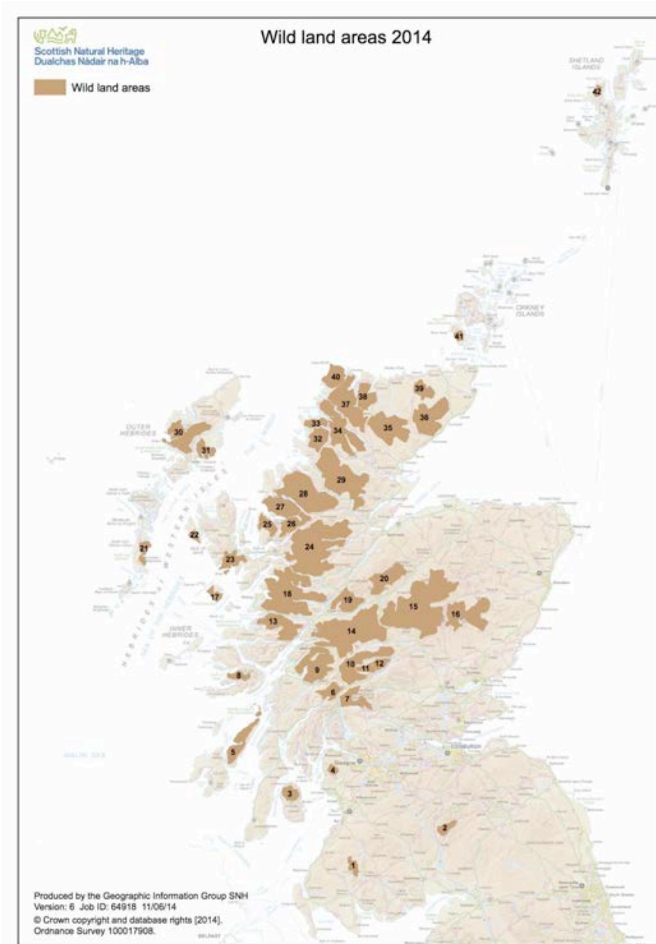

Figure 10: Wild Land Areas 2014

Source: Scottish Natural Heritage. Analysis and cartography by Geographic Information Service, SNH. https://www.nature.scot/wild-land-2014-maps

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While the 42 WLAs were visually well defined, they lacked force in practice. The Scottish Government reiterated its commitment to promoting wild land as a "nationally important asset" in 2014,[22] but wild land did not have teeth. Indeed, wild land itself was a layer, which covered but did not take precedence over statutory designations, including the National Scenic Areas (NSA)[23] and the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).[24] Because wild land was not itself statutory, it couldn't be used on its own to prohibit development. However, the category became useful in combination with these other designations, because it provided an additional layer of scrutiny in the planning process for large projects with significant landscape impacts, like wind farms. Wild land status couldn't obstruct such developments, but it could delay the process by requiring developers to address "impacts to wild land" within the standard Landscape and Visual

[22] "Ambition, Opportunity, Place: Scotland's Third National Planning Framework."
[23] National Scenic Areas are areas of "outstanding scenery" designated in 1980. There are 40 designated NSAs covering 13% of Scotland. As a statutory designation, NSA status can be used to prevent certain types of development deemed inappropriate in Scottish Planning Policy. See Scottish Natural Heritage, "National Scenic Areas: Scotland's Finest Landscapes," December 2010, http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/nsa/National%20Scenic%20Areas.pdf.
[24] Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) were created in the Nature Conservation Act of 2004, and cover 12.7% of Scotland. The SSSI designation recognizes areas of exemplary natural heritage features, including geology, wildlife, and plant species. SSSI status is also a statutory protected area, but it carries more stringent requirements than the NSA designation. For a general description of the SSSI designation in Scotland, see "Sites of Special Scientific Interest," Scottish Natural Heritage, accessed March 12, 2018, https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/safeguarding-protected-areas-and-species/protected-areas/national-designations/sites-special-scientific-interest. SSSIs often overlap with Natura 2000 conservation sites designated by the European Commission. For a description of the Natura 2000 program, see European Commission, "Management of Natura 2000 Sites," accessed March 12, 2018, http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/index_en.htm.

Impacts Assessments (LVIA) that are submitted with development proposals.[25] This meant more business for landscape consultants, who are hired to conduct field research and produce additional maps to show that proposed wind farms will not be visible from vantage points located within the core wild land areas. It also meant more support for tourism and ecosystem services delivery, which the Scottish Government has identified as key areas of economic growth.[26] In Scotland, as in other underdeveloped and postindustrial landscapes, tourism and conservation flock together.

The creation of Wild Land Areas was a well-meaning effort to preserve a character of Scottish landscapes that conservationists perceived to be under threat by large-scale developments. But like all projects that put nature to work in service of cultural ideals, it also had a politics.[27] Community activists and academics objected passionately to the WLA maps. It mattered that most of the Wild Land Areas were found in the western Highlands and Islands, a largely deforested region beset by histories of agricultural failure, rural out-migration, large-scale land seizures, and forced

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[25] Scottish Natural Heritage, "Assessing the Impacts on Wild Land Interim Guidance Note," February 2007, https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2017-11/Guidance%20Note%20-%20Assessing%20impacts%20on%20Wild%20Land%20Areas%20-%202014.pdf.

[26] For a discussion of the economic and conservation value of wild land, see A. McVittie et al., "A Review of the Social, Economic and Environmental Benefits and Constraints of Wild Land," Commissioned Report (Scottish Natural Heritage, n.d.), https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2017-08/Publication%202017%20-%20SNH%20Commissioned%20Report%20919%20-%20A%20review%20of%20the%20social%2C%20economic%20and%20environmental%20benefits%20and%20constraints%20linked%20to%20wild%20land%20in%20Scotland_0.pdf.

[27] See Ralph Litzinger, "The Mobilization of 'Nature': Perspectives from North-West Yunnan," *The China Quarterly* 178 (2004): 488–504.

evictions of rural crofters.[28] Upon the release of the initial wild land map in 2013, MSP Rob Gibson commented that wild land should be called "Clearances country." Cultural geographer Fraser MacDonald, based at the University of Edinburgh, wrote a passionate and widely read critique of the WLAs, using rhetoric that will be familiar to political ecologists:

> So here's the paradox: wildness is a human attribute that we ascribe *to* the landscape, not a quality that adheres *in* the landscape. And wildness is only achieved through a great deal of cultural, material and ecological "work" on our part, whether this takes the form of making art or erecting fences or writing conservation policy. At the same time, however, the very notion of 'wild' prohibits any acknowledgement of the human agency from which it is constituted, demanding instead that we see only the workings of an external, pristine Nature.[29]

MacDonald argued that so-called wild land was the ideological inheritance of "elite ways of seeing" that used persuasive Romantic imagery to cover their own tracks: varnishing layered histories of human settlement and land use, and masking landowners' complicity in the suffocation of rural livelihoods. It was a position that exposed a discursive politics of nature in order to advocate for the little guys: small

[28] Historians of Scotland disagree about the root causes of Highland depopulation, but each of these problems gets some attention in the literature. In particular, Jim Hunter shows that the Clearances were not a single event, but a process that took place over the course of the late-18th to 19th centuries, as national legislation incentivized rural Highlanders to emigrate to the colonies, and some landowners later sought more direct, and sometimes violent, means of removing crofters from their estates. See Hunter, *The Making of the Crofting Community*. For a description of how the Highlands' natural environment resisted agricultural development, see Fredrik Albritton Jonsson, *Enlightenment's Frontier: The Scottish Highlands and the Origins of Environmentalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

[29] Fraser MacDonald, "Against Scottish Wildness," *Bella Caledonia* (blog), July 17, 2013, http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2013/07/17/against-scottish-wildness/.

communities in the Highlands and Islands that just want to get a bit bigger and more stable by hosting a few wind turbines. For MacDonald, calling the lie on the fantasy of "wild land" is an effort to make the Highlands livable, precisely by valuing them as such.

These public debates surrounding the Wild Land Areas in Scotland are an emblematic summary of the political ecology literature, which assumes that nature has no pregiven state or meaning. This work has understood "wilderness" and "nature" to be ideological constructs, produced and imposed on landscapes that are deeply cultural and historical.[30] Enclosures and violence done in name of wilderness have particularly painful significance in American history,[31] motivated by a conservation logic that has always been about masculinity and power.[32] Nature and biodiversity conservation are

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[30] William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996), 69–90; David Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996); Roderick P. Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Neil Smith, "The Production of Nature," in *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, 3rd. ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 49–91.
[31] William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983); Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); Paul Robbins and April Luginbuhl, "The Last Enclosure: Resisting Privatization of Wildlife in the Western United States," in *Neoliberal Environments: False Promises and Unnatural Consequences*, ed. Nik Heynen et al. (London: Routledge, 2007), 25–37.
[32] Donna Jeanne Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936," in *Primate Visions*, 1989, 26–58; Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).

highly stratified and contested projects,[33] and have become crucial sources of value in both postindustrial and underdeveloped settings, where tourism, particularly in scenic areas, is an important economic driver. Political ecologists have kept pace with these trends, mobilizing Marxist frameworks to critique what they see to be an expansionist neoliberal politics lurking in biodiversity conservation.[34] As conservation dovetails with tourism, studies of "ecotourism" deal with ways that nature is experienced, presented and performed,[35] and the danger of treating ecotourism as an economic and ecological win-win.[36]

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[33] Arun Agrawal, *Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Ralph Litzinger, "Contested Sovereignties and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund," *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 29, no. 1 (2006): 66–87; Celia Lowe, *Wild Profusion: Biodiversity Conservation in an Indonesian Archipelago* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Paige West, *Conservation Is Our Government Now: The Politics of Ecology in Papua New Guinea* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). Kath Weston has also written about the "new animism" that springs from unusual encounters on a planet imperiled by ecological ruin. Weston, *Animate Planet*.

[34] Tor A. Benjaminsen and Ian Bryceson, "Conservation, Green/Blue Grabbing and Accumulation by Dispossession in Tanzania," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 39, no. 2 (March 15, 2012): 335–355; Bram Büscher et al., "Towards a Synthesized Critique of Neoliberal Biodiversity Conservation," *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 23, no. 2 (June 1, 2012): 4–30; Jim Igoe and Katja Neves, "Uneven Development and Accumulation by Dispossession in Nature Conservation," *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 103, no. 2 (2012): 164–79; Roderick P. Neumann, "Africa's 'Last Wilderness': Reordering Space for Political and Economic Control in Colonial Tanzania," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 71, no. 4 (2001): 641; Katja Neves, "Cashing in on Cetourism: A Critical Ecological Engagement with Dominant E-NGO Discourses on Whaling, Cetacean Conservation, and Whale Watching," *Antipode* 42, no. 3 (June 1, 2010): 719–41.

[35] Robert Fletcher, *Romancing the Wild: Cultural Dimensions of Ecotourism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Litzinger, "The Mobilization of 'Nature': Perspectives from North-West Yunnan"; Shiho Satsuka, *Nature in Translation: Japanese Tourism Encounters the Canadian Rockies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

[36] Jim Igoe, Katja Neves, and Dan Brockington, "A Spectacular Eco-Tour around the Historic Bloc: Theorising the Convergence of Biodiversity Conservation and Capitalist Expansion," *Antipode* 42, no. 3 (June 1, 2010): 486–512.

In Scotland, tourism and conservation are vital collaborators in the creation of national wealth – and increasingly so, as fishing and North Sea oil industries enter decline. The Scottish Government recognizes this: tourism is everyone's business. Government figures estimate that tourist spending contributes £12 billion to the national economy, and that tourist sector employment accounts for nearly 8% of total employment.[37] While it is a significant contributor to the national economy, tourism is not a pure good. It also creates deficits for small communities in the Highlands and Islands, including negative contributions like increased waste production, and significant losses to small businesses and public services that close down during the six-month "off season." Statistics are helpful for seeing these trends in the aggregate, but they can only tell part of the story. Statistics can't nuance the ways tourism and conservation influence sociality in these areas: what it means practically speaking, but also relationally and affectively, to be economically dependent on seasonal tourism and grant funding for conservation work – and, crucially, what it looks and feels like to do these forms of care. This dissertation visits the remote, scenic community of Glenmara to attend to the vitality of tourism and conservation in sensory detail.

The existing literature treats tourism primarily as a problem of representation and commodification. Sight is the relevant sense here: a kind of seeing which fixes an

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[37] Scottish Government, "Tourism," August 30, 2017, http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/Tourism.

image and consumes it at the same time. You see this optico-centrism played out in different guises: the branding of heritage,[38] the staging of emotional and cultural authenticity,[39] the performance of scenes and scenery that meet expectations,[40] the invitation to a "game of make-believe."[41] All of these portrayals have a common target: the regulating tourist "gaze," which decides what counts as exceptional, strange, and therefore valuable.[42] The tourist is always looking, and the native is always wearing the mask.

These metaphors have particular purchase in relation to Scotland, a place that has been famously toured and written up for centuries. The uncharted *Caledonia* in Ptolemy's geography and the Annals of Tacitus[43] is the same Scotland that beguiles Early Modern travel writers – Scots and Englishmen in search of remote islands,[44]

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[38]John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
[39] Arlie Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
[40] Jeremy Boissevain, *Coping with Tourists: European Reactions to Mass Tourism* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1996); Hayden Lorimer, "Ways of Seeing the Scottish Highlands: Marginality, Authenticity and the Curious Case of the Hebridean Blackhouse," *Journal of Historical Geography* 25, no. 4 (1999): 517–33; Fraser MacDonald, "Viewing Highland Scotland: Ideology, Representation and the 'Natural Heritage,'" *Area* 30, no. 3 (1998): 237–44.
[41] Erik Cohen, "A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences," *Sociology* 13, no. 2 (May 1, 1979): 179–201.
[42] Dennis O'Rourke, *Cannibal Tours* (Los Angeles: Direct Cinema Limited, 1987); John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd ed. (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2002).
[43] Cf. John Pinkerton, *An Enquiry Into the History of Scotland: Preceding the Reign of Malcolm III, Or the Year 1056, Including the Authentic History of That Period* (London: John Nichols, 1794).
[44] Martin Martin, *A Late Voyage to St. Kilda, the Remotest of All the Hebrides, or the Western Isles of Scotland* (London: Brown and Goodwin, 1698), http://eebo.chadwyck.com.proxy.lib.duke.edu/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=V199743.

unusual cultures,[45] and opportunities for trade and development.[46] Scotland, or at least the idea of it, is typified by romance[47]: Walter Scott's Waverley novels, Queen Victoria's Balmoral, Macpherson's fictive *Ossian*. These are seductive myths, invented traditions, stubborn stories that we inherit and absorb.[48] This is the lineage that gives us *Braveheart* and *Outlander*, knee-length kilts, Glenlivet, and golf. The idea is not that these objects or images have no historical basis, but that they have become caricatures of themselves. It's Scotland in a hall of mirrors, refracted and replicated always in the same ways. You can understand the feeling of being trapped in this redundant spectacle, the compulsion to write your way out of it. This writing athwart representation has become its own genre. There are critiques that identify clingy signs, and there are those that imagine ways to interrupt them.[49] Writing from North Uist, Fraser MacDonald finds subversion in rubbish: in cast-offs that are both unruly and unintentional, materials that stand for a

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[45] James Boswell and Samuel Johnson, *Johnson and Boswell in Scotland: A Journey to the Hebrides*, ed. Pat Rogers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
[46] Daniel Defoe, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, ed. Pat Rogers (Exeter, UK: Viking Penguin, 1989).
[47] Peter Womack, *Improvement and Romance: Constructing the Myth of the Highlands* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989).
[48] John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, *Imagining Scotland: Tradition, Representation, and Promotion in Scottish Tourism since 1750* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995); Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 15–41.
[49] Semiotician Walker Percy writes about the problem of how to experience famous landscapes directly, when they are already fixed as images of themselves. Percy proposes several techniques and events that would disturb the symbolic order of the Grand Canyon. These include playfulness (interrupting the guided tour), war, and pandemic. See Walker Percy, "The Loss of the Creature," in *The Message in the Bottle: How Queer Man Is, How Queer Language Is, and What One Has to Do with the Other* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975), 46–63. Novelist Don DeLillo also writes satirically about the "aura" (parodying Walter Benjamin) of The Most Famous Barn in America. Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (New York: Viking, 1985).

"waning disregard for appearance," and a "dignified ignorance of the picturesque and its formal etiquette."[50] Rubbish is disruptive – not just because it is unsightly, but because of its offensive presentation as "stuff."[51]

There is a similar impulse to salvage pride in the Teuchter[52] wagon memes: images of "Highland vehicles transporting sheep, shite, or Teuchters": cars and trucks that are ingeniously cobbled together just as they are falling apart.[53]

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[50] Fraser MacDonald, "The Scottish Highlands as Spectacle," in *Tourism: Between Place and Performance*, ed. Simon Coleman and Mike Crang (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 68.

[51] Anthropologist Kathleen Stewart reads trash differently in western Appalachia. For Stewart, abandoned homes and belongings are the ruins left by a declining coal industry. Both MacDonald and Stewart view trash as "other" to a dominant symbolic order that values propriety and scenic beauty. See Kathleen Stewart, *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an "Other" America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[52] "Teuchter" is Scots slang for (Gaelic-speaking) Highlanders. Pejorative unless used with intentional irony by Highlanders themselves.

[53] See images posted on "Teuchter Wagons Facebook Page," Facebook, accessed March 12, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/TeuchterWagons/. The image of a Land Rover attached to a trailer was posted by Jake Carpenter on January 10, 2018. For additional images, refer to
Martin Little, "17 Pictures of 'Teuchter Wagons' That Will Definitely Make You Laugh," *The Press and Journal*, October 15, 2014, https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/lifestyle/name-it/372118/17-pictures-teuchter-wagons-will-definitely-make-laugh/.

Figure 11: Teuchter Truck

Source: Martin Little, "17 Pictures of 'Teuchter Wagons' That Will Definitely Make You Laugh," *The Press and Journal*, October 15, 2014, https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/lifestyle/name-it/372118/17-pictures-teuchter-wagons-will-definitely-make-laugh/.

Figure 12: Teuchter Sheep

Source: Little.

Figure 13: Teuchter Land Rover

Source: Teuchter Wagon's Facebook Page. Image posted by Jake Carpenter on January 10, 2018. https://www.facebook.com/TeuchterWagons/

This ironic disavowal is replicated in the ways Highlanders talk about where they live: often landscapes prized as scenic and sublimely wild. It's just like living next to shops, they'll say. Or, shit view. Someone will brag about never having been in the sea after 25 years of living in one of the most iconic locations on the West Coast. Others make a point of smoking on the tops of famous mountains. These are some of the ways that Highlanders make their own reality, unromantically: living, as opposed to representing.

Anthropologists might draw inspiration from Teuchter wagons. How can we un-represent ourselves? How can we, too, live as creatures of culture? I think we begin to do this when we celebrate our work as storytelling and fabulation,[54] and when we allow ourselves to be its flesh.[55] Something like what Stephen Tyler calls a "reality fantasy of a fantasy reality…the evocation of a possible world of reality already known to us in fantasy."[56] For me, seeking this animation meant being myself in the writing. I think this is different than what anthropologists call reflexivity and a bit more than first-person singular: it is a wish to bring a full self to the page, to do culture in a way that makes it

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[54] Stuart McLean, *Fictionalizing Anthropology: Encounters and Fabulations at the Edges of the Human* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Stuart McLean and Anand Pandian, *Crumpled Paper Boat: Experiments in Ethnographic Writing* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017); Fabrizio Terranova, *Donna Haraway: Story Telling for Earthly Survival*, 2016.

[55] Jean E. Jackson, "I Am a Fieldnote," in *Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology*, ed. Roger Sanjek (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 3–33; Laura Nader, "From Anguish to Exultation," in *Women in the Field: Anthropological Experiences*, ed. Peggy Golde (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 97–116.

[56] "Post-Modern Ethnography: From Document of the Occult to Occult Document," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 139.

come alive as a process of exposure and embodiment. What I'm describing is not exactly method; it's just what happened as I was writing this dissertation. In truth, there was no other way for me to do it. Maybe it's something about who I am, or what Glenmara was like, or the combustion between us. If I couldn't do immersion without merging,[57] I found a way, as I understand it, to be attached with awareness.

In a provocation about the impossibility of objectivity, anthropologist Roy Wagner has asked: "How do we verify a poem?"[58] The point, I think, is that we can't know something without being ourselves in the knowing. Being curious about people is an irreducible art because we are people too. We can't know exactly how other people touch the world, but we can try to describe how we do, in relation with others, and hope there is some humanity in that.

1.1 Chapter Summary

If you ask conservationists, Glenmara is blessed to have protections both as a National Scenic Area and a Wild Land Area: vehicular restrictions prohibit road development outside the six-mile track that runs through the village to the farms along the coast, and unsightly wind turbines are out of the question. But even with these controls in place, wild land doesn't take care of itself. It demands a great deal of effort

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[57] Hortense Powdermaker expresses the same idea in her term "detached involvement." Hortense Powdermaker, *Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist.* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966).
[58] Roy Wagner, "The Fractal Person," in *Big Men and Great Men: Personifications of Power in Melanesia*, ed. Maurice Godelier and Marilyn Strathern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 159–73. Quoted in Nigel Rapport and Joanna Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: The Key Concepts*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2014).

and attention from the human inhabitants of Glenmara and friendly volunteers, who work to plant native trees, cull voracious deer, empty compost toilets, and maintain paths that visitors use to access the glens.

Beyond these recognizable forms of land management, wild land also calls Glenmara locals to another kind of service: the work of mattering experiences of warmth and wildness that make visitors grateful and eager to return. If Glenmara is known for its remote location and wild land, this dissertation considers remoteness and wildness as lively and perishable qualities, which require active doing and tending in order to sustain. This unusual place invites more worldly questions about the environments we make and the attachments we form through care and neglect. What forms of intimacy are possible in a place that survives for others? Is it possible to be open to strangers while preserving a quality of remoteness? What kind of warmth is sustainable, what kind of wildness is livable?

There are different ways to keep a wild place alive. You can tend to its flora and fauna, cultivating the species that are desirable and culling the rest. You can beautify and order its landscapes, or you can let the trees do the work. You can selectively mobilize the connections – the lifelines – that bring you resources and remoteness in ideal proportion. You can do hospitality in a heavenly way, saving strangers when they can't save themselves. You can cook transcendent food, or just food that arrives in time. You can make beds and scrub toilets. You can do the shit work that no one else is willing

to do. You can open a bottle and let the good times flow. All of these are ways of doing wildness: that particular feeling or mood or atmosphere that seduces people who come to Glenmara, and makes them want to stay. There is discipline here, but there is also dissolution. Dignity and Dionysus.

Wildness is value, but it can't be produced or made or performed. It is done, it emerges. It happens. And so if this is a dissertation about anything, concretely speaking, it is about the ineffable, and how we all try to capture it in our own ways. It is about collective forms of exhilaration and the unromantic violence of living together. It is about being unsettled and enlivened and carried away, and what happens when we try to hold onto things we can't keep. These are heady feelings and palpable attractions that Scotland, particularly the West Coast, does well. Pressed to choose another word, you might call this love.

2. Labor and Love

People fall in love with Glenmara, this tiny village on the edge of the wild, because no moment is like the next. It's partly the weather: they say that on the West Coast of Scotland you get four seasons every hour. And of course it's thrilling to experience a landscape reputed to be one of the wildest in Britain: to climb the famous peaks, hunt majestic red deer, and take in the unspoiled views. But there's something else about Glenmara, something unspeakably magnetic that draws people here. It is a place not quite of this world. Time isn't constant here. It flows in flashes, sparking moments of collective reverie as it drifts luxuriantly toward a future that is not yet lost. Things are preserved in motion. You can't see it on a postcard, but you feel it when you're there, this irresistible energy that calls you out of yourself.[1] And so if visitors first come to Glenmara for its spectacular terrain, it is the mood of the place, a seductive atmosphere of warmth and wildness, which always brings them back.

Locals, too, have their reasons for being here: reasons why they came to Glenmara in the first place, and reasons why they feel they could never leave. Love is an ineffable thing, simultaneously transcendent and cliché, but it's the best word to describe how people become attached to Glenmara, because that is what they say themselves.

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[1] In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Emile Durkheim reminds us that the word "ecstatic" combines two Greek roots: "to stand" and "out of" Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995), 228.

There is a printed booklet available for purchase in the Glenmara community gift shop. It's called "Glenmara: Landscape, History, People"[2] and it sells for £5. In it, you can read about the geological history of the Glenmara peninsula, its primeval emergence under slowly shifting glaciers, massive sheets of ice that have done the haphazard and timeless work of making a landscape, giants that have left in their wake the roughened peaks and rippling glens, the finger-lace coastline and deep sea lochs that are so emblematic of the West Coast of Scotland. You can read about the creatures that animate this landscape: the otters and the oystercatchers, teddy-bear pine martens and noble red deer, herons and buzzards and golden eagles. You can read about landscape features that memorialize other inhabitants, hardy crofters now long gone. Furrowed lazybeds and old drovers' paths, weathered stone crosses and roofless blackhouses – all of these are monuments to human labor and life quietly persisting in pieces, abandoned to the hills.

In the booklet, you can also read about a history of Victorian landlordism, its continuation in the post-war period, and the ownership of the Glenmara Estate through the generations: how paternalism and cruelty and neglect traded hands over the course of a century. But it all culminates, perhaps unsurprisingly, today: in the spirit of a community that perceives itself to have won a historic struggle for humanity and

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[2] The booklet was published by the Glenmara Community Association in 2013. All quotes in the following section are excerpted from the booklet. Individual stories are glossed based on descriptions provided in the booklet, with some modification of personal details.

independence, and in the individual stories of families who have encountered Glenmara by accident, and fallen irretrievably in love.

The last section of the booklet is devoted to these love stories, stories of people and families who have made a home in Glenmara: locals who are the iconic species of a small and remote human community, as valuable as Glenmara's celebrated wildlife. These people give us a romance of Glenmara in a few pages, but their lives say much more. Pensioners and farmers, joiners and entrepreneurs: they are all incomers, all locals. And if they say they love this place called Glenmara, they also know something, privately, about the sacrifices people are willing to make to stay in love, and the work of hanging on.

Howard Nelson is pictured outside, standing at the back of his house. There is a cluster of white daffodils on the lawn. Loch Nèamh[3], behind him, is bleached out by a clouded sky. The booklet briefly describes how Howard came to Glenmara:

> A native of Wales, Howard had travelled all over the world, but something about Glenmara struck him as unique: he says it was the remoteness, the quietness and the quality of life. Howard decided he'd like to move to Glenmara as soon as he came here, and in 1987 he and his partner, Irene, came to look at some properties that were for sale.

Howard has been living in Glenmara full-time since 2000, when he retired. At the time the booklet was printed, Irene was still working as a paralegal the Midlands. In

[3] Meaning "bright" or "heaven" in Scottish Gaelic; pronounced "neeve"

2016, she retired and moved up to join Howard. There is much to envy about their location:

> From their windows, Howard and Irene enjoy a panoramic view of Loch Nèamh and the mountains of Kilmory. Their garden is a magnet for birdlife, and they occasionally see otters on the shore. Howard has three grown-up children, all of whom love coming up to see him and Irene in Glenmara.

But more than the daffodils and the birds and the otters, Howard enjoys the peace of feeling alone. Most of the time, he says, it's quiet. I love it.

The Postmaster, Murdo McLeod, is pictured next to the "Delivery Office," a small shed where parcels and mail are sorted and stored, one leg up on the stair, one hand resting on his thigh and the other in the pocket of his sweater. Beneath Murdo is an image of Glenmara's famous hill Cludin (3,346 feet), which Murdo and his wife Sandy came to climb in 1983. A single trip turned into a 35-year love affair. When Murdo is asked to "sum up his love of Glenmara," he speaks in verse:

> Then I was happy in my life,
> When the voices of the hills sung sweetly
> More sweet to me than any string
> It soothes my sorrow, and rejoices my heart.

Mac Morrison is ruddy and smiling, crouched in the heather with his arm around two of his working dogs, a shepherd's crook angled between them. Mac came to Glenmara in 1985 to work as a stalker on the former Glenmara Estate. The following

year, he met Aggie, a housekeeper at the Big House, which at that time was being operated as a B&B. In 1986, Mac and Aggie fell in love – with each other and with Glenmara – and bought a farm on the coast, where they still live and farm Scottish Blackface sheep. The booklet celebrates Mac as Glenmara's only sheep farmer and praises his efforts to restore native woodland on the property: planting over 300,000 native broadleaf trees on 500 acres since 1996. This is a huge accomplishment, a valuable investment in the wellbeing of generations to come: for the future people of Glenmara, and the diverse forms of wildlife that will thrive in a habitat of established native woodland. Between forestry grants and European CAP payments, the work of tending trees and sheep can also make for good business. We are very blessed, Mac says, that we have such a strong community spirit in Glenmara. You would never want for anything.

Wes and Vicky Reid are left to the imagination. Opposite their story, an image of the road from Arnatish to Glenmara at the golden hour, overlooking Loch Nèamh. The Reids, like Mac and Aggie, also came for work. Wes is a joiner and a painter, and was contracted to help build the Glenmara pier in 2005. The job required Wes to live in Glenmara full-time for 12 months due to the remote location. During this time, Vicky continued working as a counselor in Dundee and commuted to visit on weekends. When Wes was offered a permanent position with an independent repair and maintenance company in 2006, Vicky quit her job down south and moved up. The couple rented a house in Glenmara thinking they would give it six months. They never

left. Vicky speaks for the two of them when she says: We just loved the people, and we fell in love with the place. Vicky says she and Wes were never treated as "incomers" because everyone in Glenmara comes from somewhere else. Despite the lack of generational rootedness, there is a shared family feeling that binds people together. Everyone is genuinely here to help, Vicky says, and that's one of the reasons why we stayed.

Abe and Nella Hayes came to Glenmara for the forest, and they stayed for the garden. Abe was a long-haired Yorkshireman who was hired to work as the Head Forester on the former Glenmara Estate, in 1980. Abe and Nella moved up to Glenmara with their two infant children and settled in the house that was tied to the position,[4] just up the path from the sawmill that Abe operated for the Estate. Primrose was a lovely cottage, like something from a picture book: tidy and white with pale blue trim on the eaves and the windows, tucked in a small wood, an Easter egg nestled in a basket of birch and oak. Songbirds chirruping inside a luxuriant copse of mature rhododendron. Tiny yellow flowers – the namesake primroses – sprinkling the grass like stardust.

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[4] On sporting estates in Scotland, it is common for stalkers, housekeepers, foresters, and gardeners to live in what is called "tied" accommodation: houses that are provided by the employer as part of the job. While appearing to offer security and a form of additional compensation, tied houses are actually a way that landlords are able to maintain control over their staff/tenants. For example, tied houses are located on the premises of the estate (so staff can't physically or emotionally "leave" work), and when a staff person loses their job, they also lose their home. There are numerous examples, both historically and recently, of evictions that immediately follow termination.

Abe doesn’t say much in the booklet, but you get a sense for the nature of Nella’s attachment:

> Nella says that she and Abe loved their house and garden, and she adds that Glenmara was a lovely place to bring up their four young children.

The Hayeses have lived in Glenmara all this time: nearly 40 years. But perhaps the more enduring proof of love is the choice made by their younger daughter who, after completing a degree at the University of Edinburgh, returned to Glenmara to settle down. Kiera lives in Glenmara with her husband Callum, a house painter from Musselburgh. The couple met in Glenmara by accident, when Kiera was home on a visit and Callum was doing work completing renovations at the primary school. They married in Glenmara and found work there too, making it possible for them to stay in the place where they fell in love: Kiera teaches six pupils in the school and Callum does odd jobs in Glenmara and Kilmory. Kiera never imagined she would come back to Glenmara after university. But now, she says, I would never leave.

You couldn’t make this up, the consistency of these stories: work by necessity, love by accident. It almost doesn’t matter who any of these people are. Glenmara is the third body in each of their stories: a totemic matchmaker that sparks and enduringly

sustains a love between people and place.[5] Everyone falls in love with Glenmara, but stories of falling in love here – in Glenmara – are also legion. Mac and Aggie and Kiera and Callum are not the exception. Glenmara is how Andrew met Maggie, and Colin met Jenny, and Aisling met Robin, and Mandy met Greg. All of these couples stayed because they fell in love with each other, and simultaneously with the place that brought them together. Who would they be anywhere else?

Though the locals in these promotional pages speak in uniformly blushing tones, there is real substance to the idiomatic experience of love in Glenmara. Love, or something like it, is in the persistence of a relationship with a place that, however seductive, doesn't make living there easy. Love, here, is not always patient and kind. It can be stubborn and armored and jealous.[6] Love sounds wishy-washy, but that is precisely its strength. It is an emic term that, by virtue of its ubiquity, conceals the varied acts and affects through which it is expressed, a lexical gloss of feeling that suppresses meaning as much as it summarizes it. Because love can be both care and neglect. Warmth and wildness. Hospitality and harm. This disloyalty to itself is what makes love

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[5] These narratives are part of a broader cultural history of (English and aristocratic) romance with Scotland. See Womack, *Improvement and Romance*.

[6] Lauren Berlant calls this kind of attachment "cruel optimism." See Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011). Sigmund Freud was also interested in the ambivalence of desire, but he drew a distinction between life-affirming instincts (*Eros*) and self-destructive ones – the so-called "death drive" (*Thanatos*). See Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, ed. James Strachey (New York: Liverlight, 1961). In this chapter, I understand "love" to include both pleasure and harm.

deserving of attention. This capriciousness, this two-facedness, is what makes it all the more compelling to think with.

Labor[7] and love go hand in hand in Glenmara: together, they describe how people become attached to each other, and to the idea of a place, within a collective environment – a culture – that values demonstratively embodied commitments. Relationships with Glenmara are sacrificial and demanding: they are defined as much by what you give it, as by what it gives you. And so love is expressed both through contributions of skill – building things, volunteering, organizing events – and through the private pains endured and inflicted in the effort of persistence. In other words, it takes work to last in love, perhaps especially within a small community that survives by virtue of its perceived remoteness, a place that values its own warmth and, on some level, its own exclusivity. Romance may be confirmed by devotional efforts to give time to thankless tasks and to domesticating disorder, but it is tested in the uncomfortable work of living alongside each other, in efforts to habituate oneself to living remotely and to accommodate frictional differences with others. Love, in Glenmara, is ultimately about endurance.

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[7] I use the term "labor" here and in the title of the chapter mostly for alliterative purposes, rather than as an analytical device. "Work" commonly refers to waged labor, but I use it throughout this chapter to refer to labor that is waged and non-waged (e.g., "volunteer work"), because it is the more accessible term. For a discussion of the labor value of unpaid work, see Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

This chapter explores how love works in Glenmara: how love becomes a motivation for various kinds of work, and how work expresses love in return. Labor and love are archetypical ways through which people and things and environments relate. But these relations are always expressed through specific processes and practices. In Glenmara, a place that is organized and experienced through designated categories of remoteness and wildness, people relate to the outdoors – plants and mountains and peat and water – through acts of labor and love.

But labor and love are also ways that people relate to each other in a social community that is frictional and small. In this so-called wild place, different "domestic" values of labor and love rub up against each other, giving rise to varied and sometimes conflictual relationships between people and the natures they work with and on: one person's prize is another person's pest; one person's care is another's neglect. Some may show loving attachment through the work of cleaning and ordering, while others are inclined to leave things be. Such disagreements may be laughed off, or they may become chronically vexed. What to do with waste? Fallen trees? How to care for gardens? How to manage invasive species? And housing? And deer? What is interesting is not so much the disagreements themselves, but the processes through which they are lived with: how different ways of doing nature and value are accommodated, habituated, and domesticated – or not. Tensions run high when love is at stake. Glenmara can't be all things to all people, and this is precisely the problem. People may say they fell in love

with Glenmara for vaguely similar reasons – the community spirit, the wildlife, the quiet – but in reality they have very different notions of how to keep love alive. Living with nature and living with people in Glenmara requires continual effort to accommodate, habituate, and domesticate uncomfortable differences. In a remote community with 115 residents, there are at least 115 different ways of doing love. Care looks different to different people, and not everyone can have their way.

2.1 Highland Chainsaw Massacre

It was early March in Glenmara, and there was a fringe of snow on the hilltops surrounding the village. Everything else was brandied brown and rust, a patchwork of bracken fern and moor grass that had died back over the winter. The mornings were clear and dewy: spring foretold. But Loch Nèamh was still as ice. During this quiet first week of the month, the Glenmara Community Association was hosting a five-day "work party" with conservation volunteers from Wilder Scotland,[8] and I had signed up to help.

From March to October, Wilder Scotland organized weekend or weeklong excursions for volunteers to do landscape works on its properties across Scotland:[9] physically rewarding tasks like maintaining footpaths, planting native trees, and pulling up non-native plants, and other caretaking projects that needed doing and were best tackled in a team. Work parties were beneficial both for Wilder Scotland and for its

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[8] Wilder Scotland (pseudonym) is an established conservation organization and Registered Charity in Scotland with an annual income of £2.8 million.
[9] Wilder Scotland work parties are free for volunteers, unlike work parties hosted by the National Trust for Scotland and other conservation groups, which charge a registration fee.

supporters, many of whom were retired and, earnestly professing their altruism, needed an outlet to express it. But they were also productive on an organizational level, smoothing out differences in a tense field of differently minded conservation groups. The hosting relationship with the Glenmara Community Association was a prime example of this. In Glenmara, work parties were as much about diplomacy as they were about nature.

In truth, the Glenmara Community Association and Wilder Scotland shared a somewhat awkward relationship. Wilder Scotland was one of the donors and signatories to the Glenmara community buyout, contributing £250,000 to the cause,[10] and the organization had a permanent seat on Glenmara's Board of Directors. It was also a neighbor: in 1987, Wilder Scotland bought a couple thousand acres of uninhabited land around the coast from Glenmara.[11] In the spirit of its mission to promote and protect wild places, Wilder Scotland manages this land according to stringent criteria, with a generally uncompromising approach to eliminating invasive species in order to promote native woodland regeneration. Next door, the Glenmara Community Association is an independent entity following its own conservation agenda, which attempts to balance land management and community sustainability in an area where people have lived for

[10] The total cost of the buyout was £750,000.
[11] Like the land owned by the Glenmara Community Association (16,000 acres), the Wilder Scotland property (3,100 acres) also has National Scenic Area status, and is classified by Scottish Natural Heritage as a Core Wild Land Area.

hundreds of years.[12] Although the Glenmara Community Association and Wilder Scotland are both invested in the value of wild land, tensions can arise within the Association due to different expectations of what this stewardship should look like in practice. But everyone around the table cares as much about cooperation as they do conservation. Wilder Scotland and the Glenmara Community Association are proximate in both governance and geography, and it makes sense to play nice.

The work parties that the Glenmara Community Association hosted on behalf of Wilder Scotland were a form of low-stakes collaboration that kept the machine running smoothly: the kind of noncontroversial exchange that partners in a delicate relationship keep up in the interest of conflict prevention. Both parties benefitted from the arrangement, although perhaps not quite equally: Wilder Scotland got to advertise a volunteer week at one of the destinations preferred by its members, and the Glenmara Community Association got a week of free labor.

During the work party in Glenmara, volunteers were to stay in the community-run hostel (at their own expense) or, if they preferred, camp on the beach. There would be five days of work from Monday to Friday, starting around nine in the morning and

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[12] The Glenmara Community Association mission statement includes commitments to: "conserve and preserve the character and natural beauty of Glenmara for the benefit of the public to enjoy and study in keeping with the views of the local population" and "promote the benefit of the inhabitants of the peninsula without distinction of political, religious or other opinions in a common effort with the inhabitants and other organizations with a view to improving living conditions."

finishing around five, or as long as the weather allowed. Volunteers would take on basic landscape works like clearing footpaths, digging ditches, and collecting litter on the beach: the kinds of tasks that were important to maintaining the accessibility of an area beloved as wild, but which local Glenmara Forestry and Association staff didn't have time to do.

There are three visiting volunteers this week in Glenmara. Fran and Lisa are retired social workers – former colleagues – who live in Aberdeenshire, and Bethany is a young woman who works at a hostel on the Isle of Skye. The four of us meet in the village on Monday at 9 a.m., all suited up: voluminous waterproofs and steel-toed Wellington boots, red rubber work gloves and packed lunches with tea. Our friendly hosts are there to greet us: Brody and Colin, two Glenmara locals and employees of the Glenmara Forestry. Today, they tell us, we will be pulling rhodies. This sounds quaint, like gardening, like pulling weeds. Then they hand us the pickaxes. In six months of living in Glenmara, I have learned to fear the rhodie as an idea. But this is the first time getting my hands on one.

"Rhodie" is the common shorthand for the Latin name *Rhododendron ponticum.* It is a cute word that belies the severity of the ecological problem, and the real and lasting social rifts caused by attempts to control it. Despite any cuddly associations, rhodies are an icon of controversy and falling outs in Glenmara. They are the one thing everyone can agree to disagree about: a fitting mascot for a small community where not all

differences can be accommodated, and where love can sometimes look a lot like bullying.

Rhododendron ponticum are, like all so-called alien invasive species, an accidental ecological success in a landscape where they did not originate. In its native habitat – dry, warm climes of southwestern China and southern Europe – *R. ponticum* is a fairly modest plant. A small evergreen that flowers in a demure blush of white, pink, and lavender, it is not invasive and not particularly robust. In Scotland, it becomes a different beast altogether. *R. ponticum* was introduced to Britain in the 18th century, intended for use as an ornamental shrub.[13] Like many non-native plants, *R. ponticum* was too delicate to survive outdoors in a cold, wet climate. Cross breeding improved its viability and it became a favored addition to Victorian "policy woods" – planned areas of mixed woodland surrounding an estate house, which were valued both aesthetically and functionally, providing shade, privacy, and a domestic space for thoughtful walks in nature. But hybridization didn't just make *R. ponticum* suitable for outdoor planting. It made it super-adapted[14] to climatic conditions on the British mainland, particularly on the West Coast of Scotland where its growth was favored by mild temperatures and

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[13] Parrot and MacKenzie find that the first recorded rhododendron in Scotland was planted at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh in 1814. John Parrott and Neil MacKenzie, "A Critical Review of Work Undertaken to Control Invasive Rhododendron in Scotland: A Report Commissioned by Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage" (Coille Alba, 2013), 5.
[14] *R. ponticum* is unique to the UK. As a "stable hybrid," it can reproduce on its own. *R. ponticum* is so voracious that some ecologists have proposed modifying the species name to *x superponticum*. Parrott and MacKenzie, "Rhododendron Control," 5.

damp, acidic soil.[15] And so, as a result of aesthetic tinkering gone wild, the sweetly unassuming *R. ponticum* of the Iberian peninsula becomes the monstrous arboreal "rhodie" on the West Coast of Scotland.[16]

Foresters agree that the rhodies are a problem. Not just an annoyance, but a real scourge that poses a threat to species diversity across Scotland.[17] Of the thousands of species of *Rhododendron* that exist, *R. ponticum* is the only one known to be invasive. Conservationists aren't kidding when they call rhododendrons the "thugs of the plant world." An accident of nature and design, *R. ponticum* is the perfect enemy on Scottish soil: it germinates in mossy substrate, favors shade and moist conditions, grows quickly, and produces prodigious quantities of seed.[18] These attributes give rhodies, according to one forestry report, "a competitive and toxic nature"[19]: a propensity to bulk up and spread rapidly, reaching heights of up to eight meters and congealing into a dense tangle that chokes out ground cover and native trees. In fact, rhodies will overtake any type of vegetation that requires light and breathing room in order to grow. Even more

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[15] The West Coast of Scotland is warmer and wetter than the East Coast because of the Gulf Stream effect.
[16] The National Forestry Inventory (Scotland) estimates that *R. ponticum* occupies 27,000 hectares, or 7.2% of woodland area on the West Coast of Scotland. This is well over the national average for Scotland (3.8%) and England (2.9%) overall. See National Forestry Inventory, "NFI Preliminary Estimates of the Presence and Extent of Rhododendron in British Woodlands" (Forestry Commission Scotland, August 2016).
[17] Newspaper headlines suggest a widespread vilification of *R. ponticum*. For example in *The Guardian*, a declaration that "A Spectacular Thug is Out of Control." And in the *Herald Scotland*, a fairly direct call to "Destroy All Rhododendrons in Scotland."
[18] *R. ponticum* begins flowering between 3-4 years old. Mature plants are incredibly prolific: they can produce a million seeds in a year. Colin Edwards, "Practice Guide: Managing and Controlling Invasive Rhododendron" (Forestry Commission Scotland, 2006).
[19] Parrott and MacKenzie, "Rhododendron Control," 8.

concerning, it has been found that *R. ponticum* is a host for the Phytophthora fungus, which causes sudden oak disease.[20] This is a particularly upsetting profile in a country where existing woodland is scarce and vulnerable to begin with.[21] In Scotland, any large-scale woodland regeneration project requires an equally serious investment in *R. ponticum* eradication. If you want to grow more trees, you first have to care about killing the rhodies.

Leading eradication efforts at a national level, the Scottish Forestry Commission pledged £15 million in 2011[22] toward the complete removal of *R. ponticum* within the forests it owns and manages – a significant move, since the National Forest Estate accounts for 9% of Scotland's land area.[23] But earlier and perhaps with greater effect, it committed resources to help private landowners carry out this work locally.[24] Rhododendron Control Grants became open for applications in the early 1990s, at a time

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[20] Forestry Commission, "Controlling Rhododendron through the Use of Herbicides," accessed February 16, 2018, http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/beeh-9zygaq.
[21] Scotland has a long history of deforestation caused both by climatic changes and patterns of human use. According to the Forestry Commission Scotland, woodland cover exceeded 80% during the Bronze Age (~3000 BC) and was at a historic low of 4% in the 18th century. Gordon Patterson et al., "Native Woodlands: Results from the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland" (Forestry Commission Scotland, January 2014). The Scottish Government has committed to an ambitious reforestation program to mitigate climate change, with a target of 21% woodland cover by 2032. In 2016, woodland cover in Scotland was at 18% – still far lower than the UK national average of 40%. Morgan Tatchell-Evans, "Scottish Forestry," Briefing (Scottish Parliament Information Centre, 2016).
[22] Parrott and MacKenzie, "Rhododendron Control," 11.
[23] The National Forest Estate refers to land owned and managed by the Forestry Commission in Scotland.
[24] The Forestry Commission in Scotland estimates that over £10 million was spent on rhododendron control in Scotland between 2003-2013. "An Approach to Prioritizing Control of Rhododendron in Scotland" (Forestry Commission Scotland, March 2017).

when the Scottish Forestry Commission was coming to terms with the scale of the problem and its devastating long-term impacts for Scottish woodland regeneration.

The control grants met ambitious proposals with high expectations: applicants had to draft an official Rhododendron Control Plan that outlined an approach to what the Scottish Forestry Commission termed “complete eradication” over 15 years and, since rhododendron seed spreads indiscriminately, strategies to collaborate with neighbors adjacent to the property. Grant funds could only be claimed after the initial clearance had been completed, which could take three to four years depending on the size and density of the proposed clearance area. A follow-up survey would be conducted in year four to determine whether complete eradication had been achieved, and grant funds could be revoked if it were not.[25]

Control grants were high value for high commitment, and the Glenmara Forestry was intrigued. Since 1999, it had been working in a more limited way to contain the spread of rhodies. But a control grant presented a valuable opportunity. It could be a real win-win for Glenmara: the Forestry needed to eliminate rhodies in order to make progress developing the community woodlands, but it also needed money to pay forestry wages, and wanted to support local part-time employment in a project that it

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[25] Rhododendron Control Grants are made available through the Scottish Rural Development Program (SRDP) 2014-2020. For award conditions, see Scottish Government, “Rhododendron Eradication - Manual - Medium,” Rural Payments and Services, accessed February 16, 2018, https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/forestry-grant-scheme-capital-items/rhododendron-eradication--manual---medium.

believed had meaning for Glenmara's future. As long as the Glenmara Community Association could make a case for complete eradication, the Scottish Forestry Commission was willing to foot the bill.

Table 1: Rhododendron Control Grant Rates of Support

Method	*Infestation rating*	*Accessibility*	*Payment Rate (per infested hectare)*
Manual eradication	Light Medium Heavy	Easy Moderate Heavy	£4,500 £6,100 £9,500
Mechanized and/or chemical eradication	Light Medium Heavy	Easy Moderate Difficult	£1,800 £2,400 £2,900
Chemical eradication (foliar or stem injection)			£1,500

Source: Scottish Rural Development Program (SRDP) Payment Scheme 2014-2020

Rhododendron ponticum had become a problem in Glenmara because it was planted there in the first place: there were three large estate houses in Glenmara, and each of these had its own gardens and policy woods, where rhodies would have been a

fan favorite in the late-19th century.[26] But Glenmara was also uniquely poised to eliminate invasive rhodies because of its remote location. Other parts of the West Coast, like the peninsulas of Ardnamurchan and Argyll, were historically more desirable by lairds, and therefore more hospitable to horticulturalists and their rhodies. In other words, it was an advantage that there were only three estate houses in Glenmara: this meant fewer seed sources and a smaller range of dispersal.[27] This coincidence was a source of hope for Scottish foresters. In Glenmara, a rhodie-free landscape was a distinctly visible horizon, even if it were still a long way off.

There are a number of ways to kill a rhodie, but whatever method you choose, it will always come back – and with renewed enthusiasm. So "eradicating" rhodies is about being merciless to begin with, while recognizing that ongoing work will be required to maintain a state of "complete eradication" in the long term. The most widely accepted method for clearing a dense area of rhododendron infestation is cutting and burning. Handsaws are used to cut off branches and greenery, and chainsaws are brought out to level the trunks of mature trees down to a stump. Branches and green

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[26] Political scientist Allaine Cerwonka shows how home gardening in Australia becomes a political act, domesticating claims on different political bodies. White Anglo settlers expressed racial anxieties by cultivating English cottage gardens, and their descendants naturalized claims to Australian independence from Britain by incorporating "native" plants in landscape design. See Allaine Cerwonka, *Native to the Nation: Disciplining Landscapes and Bodies in Australia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004). For a discussion of the colonial gaze in 19th-century botanical cataloguing, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[27] Official forestry guidance indicates that seed dispersal typically does not exceed 100 meters. See P.M. Tabbush and D.R. Williamson, "Rhododendron Ponticum as a Forest Weed" (Forestry Commission Scotland, 1987), https://www.forestry.gov.uk/PDF/FCBU073.pdf/$FILE/FCBU073.pdf.

matter are thrown into a central pile and burned. Although cutting takes brawn, burning is actually the more challenging part of this work: it's hard to get a good fire going in wet West Coast conditions.[28]

All of these techniques notwithstanding, "rhodie bashing" – as volunteers call this coordinated effort – is only successful to the extent it is social. Cutting and burning requires a lot of bodypower, and in assembling bodies of workers and volunteers, it also fuels a certain collective spirit. A report by the Scottish Forestry Commission notes that cutting and burning is a preferred method of rhododendron control precisely because of its social nature:

> This method [cutting and burning] also appeals to practitioners for reasons more related to the process than the intended outcome (i.e., effective control of rhododendron). Cut-and-burn is an energetic team activity which makes an immediate visual impact and leaves sites clear of debris. This provides job satisfaction to practitioners, and re-assurance to owners/clients that the job has been done (albeit no plants have been killed, and that it is often not necessary to clear a site, and not always desirable). Without doubt, the fire is central to the popularity of this technique with both contractors and volunteers, especially in wet or midgey weather.[29]

Although it is intensive, cutting and burning is only the first part of the process. Rhododendrons don't give up so easily. They are quick to regenerate, and stumps have to be aggressively treated to prevent new growth. There are several ways to do this. The

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[28] Scottish Environmental Protection Agency waste management regulations limit burning to 10 tons in a given 24-hour period. See Scottish Government, "Rhododendron Eradication."
[29] Parrott and MacKenzie, "Rhododendron Control," 19.

most effective and widely used involves spraying or injecting stumps with the systemic herbicide glyphosate (Roundup),[30] which seeps into the stump and kills off the root.[31] Spraying, however toxic, is not one-shot: it needs to be repeated on stumps that produce regrowth within the first two years of the initial clearance. This means that while the most visually gratifying destruction takes place during the initial clearance by manual efforts to cut and burn, the real massacre of the rhodie is antisocial, chemical, and underground. The Forestry Commission report doesn't comment on spraying and injecting because these methods, though necessary and effective for complete eradication, need to be treated with caution. Spraying is not an "energetic team activity" and certainly not volunteer-friendly. It is a dangerous job for a single person – someone who is paid, in most cases not very well, to carry gallons of toxic herbicide on his back. Someone who can move adeptly through damp and mossy woodland and hazardous windfall without tripping and spilling. Someone who is willing to risk exposure for the sake of a wage, or an ideal. Someone who cares about something distant but final, like a future free of rhodies.

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[30] Glyphosate was invented and patented by Monsanto in 1974. It is the most widely used herbicide in history, and is believed by some to be carcinogenic and mutagenic, though some scientific studies do not find evidence of this in humans. European lawmakers were close to banning the commercial use of glyphosate use in 2016-2017. This would have been a huge victory for environmentalists and would have massively transformed industrial agriculture. In December 2017, the European Chemicals Agency concluded that glyphosate is not linked to cancer in humans, and the European Commission voted to renew approval for the use glyphosate for another 5 years. See "Glyphosate," European Commission, accessed February 16, 2018, /food/plant/pesticides/glyphosate_en.

[31] On the efficacy of synthetic herbicides, see Forestry Commission, "Controlling Rhododendron through the Use of Herbicides."

In 2005, the Glenmara Forestry applied to the Forestry Commission for a control grant. In its Rhododendron Control Plan, it committed to completing the initial clearance of *R. ponticum* within five years, and to conducting an additional ten years of follow up, a contract that would be finished in 2019. That's a big job: 16,000 hectares of land, cleared of a plant that was hungry for all of it. Within the larger landscape area it managed, the Glenmara Forestry would focus its efforts on 240 hectares[32] of old plantation forest, of which an estimated 60 hectares were qualified as "dense infestation." The scale of the proposal was ambitious for such a small community, but the case for the feasibility of complete eradication was strong because of Glenmara's remoteness: seed dispersal was concentrated in and around the village, and rough, mountainous terrain created a natural barrier that shielded Glenmara from potential re-infestation by flowering rhodies producing seed in surrounding areas. The Glenmara rhodie bash would be epic: one of the largest and most intensive in Scotland, with the best prognosis for complete eradication for any mainland target area. The Forestry Commission was invested in this vision. If the rhodie campaign in Glenmara were

[32] One hectare is roughly equivalent to 2.5 acres.

successful, it would be a model for hundreds of other private landowners up and down the West Coast. For £250,000, this was a dream they were willing to buy.[33]

The Glenmara Forestry was awarded the control grant in 2006. In July 2009, it announced the completion of the initial clearance phase to the applause of conservationists and community activists all over Scotland. The achievement was considered a "victory." One headline declared "Glenmara Wins Battle of the Rhodie." A blogger called it – approvingly – the "Highland Chainsaw Massacre." Perhaps the language was appropriate. Rhodie bashing in Glenmara was ruthlessly thorough, and consumed a staggering amount of resources. Ten years' sweat, fire, and smoke cleared 55 hectares of land using a quarter of a million pounds in public money. Thousands of avid volunteers contributed their time at 700 organized volunteer days, and dozens of contract forestry workers were hired. All of these efforts benefitted Glenmara on some level. Locals earned wages doing clearance work part-time to supplement income from jobs in hospitality. Volunteers brought money into the local economy. And the scale of the project boosted Glenmara's image as a principled underdog in command of its future, a small community doing huge things for conservation in Scotland.

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[33] By comparison, the cost of eradicating *R. ponticum* in Argyll and Bute – an area of 12,000 acres – has been estimated at more than £9.3 million. Colin Edwards and Sarah L. Taylor, "A Survey and Appraisal of Rhododendron Invasion in Argyll and Bute" (Forest Research, 2008), https://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Argyll_Bute_rhododendron_report_2008_exec.pdf.pdf/$FILE/Argyll_Bute_rhododendron_report_2008_exec.pdf.pdf.

But Scottish Forestry Commission grants, like any award, come at a cost: they have conditions attached, expectations that must be fulfilled in order to justify expenditures of public money. To be eligible for a rhododendron control grant, you have to be all in: it's complete eradication or nothing. This is a job that has to be ruthless if it is to be total, and the only way to get it done is by accepting a certain level of toxicity. To complete the work of eradication, the Glenmara Forestry had to commit to a full two years of spraying rhododendron stumps with glyphosate, a method that some locals could not accept. Many agreed that the rhododendrons were a problem that needed to be controlled, but not everyone supported the all-or-nothing target of eradication, or to the toxic measures required to achieve it. And so the value of the rhododendron control grant was not £250,000. It was also the cost of glyphosate, and the poison that it sowed amongst neighbors and friends. Rhodie freedom, if it could be maintained long term, would be a victory hard won: a battle of loves fought on multiple fronts.

Abe and Nella Hayes were among those opposed to the Glenmara Forestry's eradication program. Partly, they objected to the hazardous use of glyphosate. But they were also concerned about the impact of eradication on their own property, which was surrounded by a lush grove of magnificent rhododendrons. They valued the privacy the rhododendrons provided, the cover of green in winter, and the blush of pink flowers in bloom. Abe had been a board member of the Glenmara Forestry and was involved in the early years of rhododendron containment. But he left his position when the Forestry

moved to a program of complete eradication, just as glyphosate was coming into the picture. Glyphosate was part of the problem, but there was also the risk posed to the Hayeses' garden. Complete eradication, according to the conditions of the Rhododendron Control Grant, meant precisely that: complete. Legislation made this point clear. Under the Wildlife and Conservation Act (2011), it was not only an offense to plant non-native species in the wild, it was also forbidden to allow them to spread.[34] The Glenmara Forestry considered the keeping of invasive rhododendron to be a willful violation of the terms of its contract. All households in Glenmara needed to comply with the Forestry's mandate to achieve complete eradication.

There were other principles at stake in this battle against plants. Abe and Nella believed, as everyone did, that the ouster of Glenmara's absentee landlord in 1999 marked a definitive democratic transition: that the community buyout birthed a new society that valued, above anything, the voice of the people. If people cared about community, the Hayses argued, they should want everyone's voice to be heard. Signing up for a contract that required unanimity – one that trampled the beloved gardens of some in the name of total rhodie freedom for all – was not democratic. Unfortunately, principles and emotional pleas weren't very effective against the injunction for complete eradication. So the Hayses looked for official grounds on which to make their case. In

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[34] For an explanation of individual responsibilities regarding the containment of non-native species, see The Scottish Government, "Code of Practice on Non-Native Species," July 2012, http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0039/00398608.pdf.

2012, the Scottish Forestry Commission made provisions for landowners who take responsible action to prevent the spread of non-native species. Using this clause, the Hayses petitioned the Glenmara Forestry to have their property exempted. They were entitled, as private homeowners, to make decisions about plants growing on their own property. As a trained forester, Abe asserted that he knew how to care for the rhododendrons to ensure that they didn't seed and spread, and there had never been a problem with their overtaking the Hayeses' own garden. The Forestry objected: the rhododendrons in question were growing on the perimeter of the Hayeses' house – not technically on their property, but on land owned by the Glenmara Community Association. But Abe believed rhododendrons could be effectively managed in smaller areas, without imperiling the work that had been accomplished during the big bash. It went back and forth like this for two years, until the Forestry reached an informal agreement with Abe and Nella. If the Hayses cared most about the feeling of privacy the rhododendrons gave, the Forestry would allow them the time to grow a screen of trees to replace the rhodies before they would have to be removed, for good.

In 2015, the board members of the Glenmara Forestry were starting to get nervous. The Hayses still had not grown their privacy screen as agreed. Meanwhile, the contract for the Rhododendron Control Grant would expire in four years, and a surprise inspection by the Scottish Forestry Commission was imminent. They could come next week, or not at all. It was critical for the Forestry to be prepared for the possibility of an

inspection. It had to be able to demonstrate that it had fulfilled its obligations under the terms of the grant. In other words, it had to show that it had accomplished complete eradication. If it didn't, a huge sum of money – money that was already spent – could be revoked.

In October, I am sitting in a meeting with members of the Glenmara Forestry Board when the issue with the Hayeses' rhododendrons is discussed. It is not the only subject on the table, not even the first order of business, but it is the emotional core of the meeting. Rhodies appear first as a white piece of paper, which Don, the Head Forester, hands out to board members seated in a cluster around his desk. There are five or six of us in the Forestry Office for this board meeting on a Thursday evening at 5 p.m. Looking around, there are papers piled everywhere – glossy reports and practice guides, folded maps, assorted print-outs – including on an altar at the back of the room, apparently repurposed from one of several deconsecrated churches in Glenmara. The space is warmed somewhat by the amber glow of dated overhead lights. Everyone is still wearing their jackets.

Don turns in his chair and waves the sheet of paper, looking at me. This is a highly sensitive subject, he says, and will possibly be hurtful for several people. Your utmost discretion would be appreciated. I am not handed a copy but I am allowed to stay for the discussion. It becomes clear that this is a letter addressed to Abe and Nella Hayes, and that it is printed on Glenmara Forestry letterhead.

I gather the basics. The letter has something to do with rhododendrons on Abe and Nella's property. It presents a choice of "methods" for "dealing" with them: "they" need to choose a contractor to do "it." Don suggests that Kellan, the Hayeses' oldest son, might be able to help with the "job." Someone expresses concern that Kellan might not want to get involved. Another suggests changing the language in the letter about completing removal within one year from "want" to "need." We are, the board member says, under contract to get rid of it. Don emphasizes that great care must be taken in constructing a final draft letter to "minimize upset." This is obviously not the first draft the board members have read.

The room is knifed with tension. I imagine that everyone feels bad about having to write formal letters to their neighbors, having to act in the official capacity of a Board, having to insist that things be done according to rules that are not universally accepted. You can tell they are searching for a way to communicate that is matter of fact – firm but not adversarial – knowing that whatever they say will be read the wrong way. Most of this is over my head. I don't yet know what rhododendrons are and why they matter. I don't yet know why a letter about them is so dangerous. And in this battle of regulations and emotions, I don't know who the enemy is. Later, in my notes, I recall this confusion: I can't figure out why this issue is so sensitive, why so many feelings are bound up with it. I just can't imagine caring about plants or trees that much.

Perhaps I don't really know what it feels like to live with people who give you trouble, as Rowan described, although by the end of my time in Glenmara I certainly came close. But I think I know what it looks like. It looks like a guy who is scared to do his job spraying glyphosate – not because of the chemicals, but because of the social exclusion. It looks like people who stop going places in the village because they don't want to run into each other. It looks like 10 years of not speaking to someone you used to like because you love different plants, and different freedoms. Because, in sum, you love different loves.

2.2 Thankless Tasks

In practice, pulling rhodies was actually kind of fun. It was like a game of "Where's Waldo" where the satisfaction of finding them is multiplied by the challenge of rooting them out. I remember, in the fall just after I arrived, not knowing what a rhododendron looked like. On a forestry volunteer day in October, I was working near Colin clearing dead leaves from the side of the road to improve drainage. At one point, noticing something, he threw down his shovel and shouted, there's one: bastard! He clambered up the mossy face on the side of the road. Deftly, he uprooted it: a small green plant with bright, rubbery leaves and a pink stem. In a world of muted moss, it was colorful and quirky, like something out of Dr. Seuss. Curious to understand how a forester learns to notice things around him, I asked Colin how to spot them. He

responded flatly with a wry smile, in a way that spoke contempt for the plant while being amused by me. Because, he said, they don't look like anything else around here.

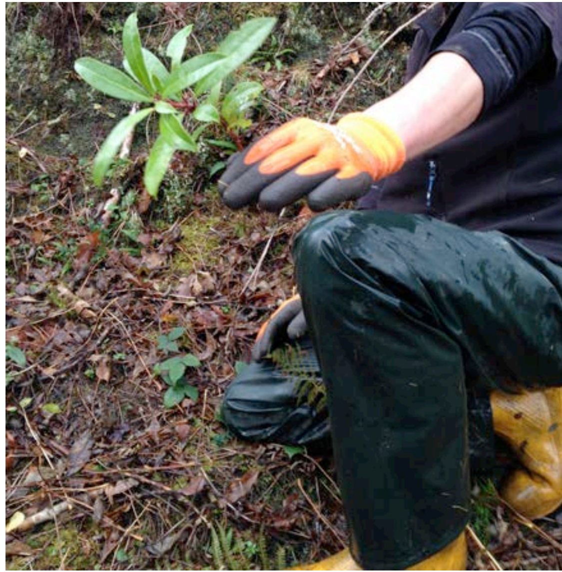

Figure 14: The First Rhodie

Photo by the author.

Mechanical rhodie pulling is the kind of work that the Glenmara Board loves to pass on to volunteers: it is time consuming, thankless, and – because it is considered maintenance rather than eradication – not covered by forestry grants. Colin is an enthusiastic accomplice, but continuing to hand-pull rhodies is really Brody's personal mission as a young Glenmara forester: make good on the work that has already been done, continue looking toward a rhodie-free future where native trees and diverse woodland species have room to thrive. When Brody talks about the rhodies it's always

with a tone of ironic discouragement, as if he might be mocking himself for caring too much about an impossible world. We will never be finished, he says. Or, rhodies are a lifetime of work. Or, we're fighting a losing battle. But still he carried on, with Colin and with volunteers, armed by the satisfaction of finding the bastards and cutting them down. Hand-pulling rhodies is not quaint, although it is finicky, and it is not a joke. It is the only way to maintain a serious state of eradication long term.

In a Rhododendron Control Plan, land managers have to submit maps of the area of woodland to be cleared, and these have to be divided into discrete numbered compartments. This is to help make the initial clearance work more manageable piece by piece, and it also facilitates the long-term work of maintenance. The clearance area in Glenmara is divided into 16 compartments, and these are monitored according to the life cycle of the rhododendron. It takes three to four years for rhodies to mature and flower, at which point they begin spreading seed. To stay on top of what Brody calls "rhodie activity," you have to check the compartments every three to four years. This is work that needs to be done at a specific time of year, when you are likely to catch rhodies unawares. Winter is rhodie pulling season because the bracken and grasses have died off and changed color. It's easier to spot rhodies' smooth leaves peeking out of the texture, particularly when everything else around has turned brown. Mature rhodies flower in April or May, so it's important to finish the year's pulling before then. Weather

is not a factor anyone considers in this calendar. Ideally, Brody says, you want a cool clear day for rhodie pulling. It was a nice thought.

My first day pulling rhodies with Brody and Colin is in early February. The days were short, but the light could be spectacular. It glowed dimly and with no apparent source, bathing watercolor skies and pouring over the surface of the loch like cream. This day, however, was not the finest. One of the Sea Link skippers warned me that the winds were going to pick up and would be at 50 knots by lunchtime. He thought I was crazy for going after rhodies in this weather. Maybe Brody and Colin were.

We start in a compartment that urgently needs checking: it has not been done since Brody was hired and moved to Glenmara four years ago. The compartment is up the hill from the Forestry woodshed, in an old plantation forest that has been hard hit by a recent storm. We walk up a steep path into the wood and reach a clearing. What a mess, Brody says. There are a dozen fallen lodgepole pines, tossed like matches. And everywhere you look, trees that are still undecided, tipping back and forth with a remarkably elastic wooziness, like giant sheaths of wheat being breathed by the wind. Brody says, we'll go home if trees start falling down around us. In the end it wasn't so much the wind that was the problem, but the rain. Rain was always a possibility, but nothing could keep you dry in this weather: a persistent shower that started almost the moment we got on the ground and never let up. Within twenty minutes, our waterproofs and rubber work gloves were soaked through. My fingers were numb

before the morning tea break. It's an uncomfortable impairment: I can't grip the hammer I'm using to bash rhodie roots. I mention this to Colin who says, with cheerful authority on the subject, that numb fingers are a fact of work in Glenmara.

Rhodies grow wherever they want, and that is precisely the problem. If it is easy to identify them because they don't look like anything else, it can be challenging to spot them in the first place. They are exasperatingly cunning and adaptive. In wet, boggy areas, they grow low and compact, like ground cover. In areas where they get more light, like on the edges of a woodland compartment, they can be tall and spindly like clowns on stilts. They grow on the slick face of wet rocks in a deep gorge, or couched in dry thickets of moorgrass. For every rhodie you find, you know you've missed three. To confront this prolific chaos, to keep rhodie activity in check, you need a method with straight edges. This is the utility of the compartment, and it is why, working within the compartment, we adopt a specific formation, a strategy for moving through the forest as a team. We start at the edge of the compartment, which is identifiable by a natural landmark: a burn[35], or a standing larch tree, or the edge of a dense spruce forest. We line up and start moving together, keeping about 10 meters between us. As we walk, we are each responsible for looking five meters up and five meters down on either side of us, so that we are scanning for rhodies within parallel 10-meter bands. In this way, we zigzag down the compartment, shuttling between its two designated end points. It is an elegant

[35] Term for a small stream of water flowing from the hill

strategy in theory, like figure skating in pairs. But in practice, at least for me, it becomes very disorienting.

Rhodies appear out of nowhere, everywhere, and disappear just as quickly. Your eyes will land on one, and you go for it, and then you realize it's only young holly, or laurel. Shiny green leaves that look like nothing around them can be deceiving. Then you'll see a real rhodie, flagrantly thriving in the middle of a boggy spot, or growing out of a patch of bracken fern, or taunting you from the middle of a pile of windblown trees. Rhodies like to test your patience and your risk tolerance. Are you going to clamber over those slick windblown trees carrying an open handsaw? Are you going to climb down into that steep gorge to get to the woody ones growing on face of it? Of course you are. Even if you didn't hate rhodies before you started pulling them, you come to relate to them as an opponent because they are always one step ahead of you. It's maddening. You become so fixated on finding rhodies that you miss the ones right under your nose, while you're distracted by all of the ones you see five meters away, or inside your partner's band. These aren't your responsibility but somehow you feel they are since you've spotted them. When you see one, you go over immediately and instinctively to grab it, as if it's going to disappear. And maybe it will. While you would like to flag all of the rhodies that you see but can't get to, it's impossible to keep track of them when they are so numerous, and so cleverly disguised. What you see going one way may not be visible again on your way back, sweeping ten meters down in the opposite direction.

Because you've internalized the long-game urgency of rhodie eradication, every missed rhodie is a point against you, and every one that you do find is a small step towards victory.

Sometimes you can't tackle a rhodie by yourself. It may be big and woody and you need someone to help you lever it up and out of the ground. You call over to your partner to come down from their band and help – they will have to remember where they were so they can find their way back to the same spot. You may have to saw off the branches and put them to the side, and then dig around the roots with your pickaxe, and bash the stalk some more with your hammer out of simple aggression, before you're able to tip the whole stubborn thing on its side, roots up. Then you take your hammer to smash the roots, bashing hundreds of tiny pink nodules that grow on the surface of them: each of these is a new rhodie in waiting, and you want to make sure none of them has a chance to grow, even when the roots are weakened by exposure to air. You will certainly hammer your hands in the process but this, like numb fingers, is a fact of the job. When you get bogged down with a rhodie of this size, it takes a moment to reorient yourself when you raise your head again. You stumble around a bit dizzy from the crouched and concentrated work of pulling and bashing, look around you in all directions, and adjust your sight from tree back to forest. There will always be more.

The rain is still coming down when we take our morning tea break back at the edge of the compartment, alongside the burn. We had stashed our rucksacks under the

canopy of a large Scots pine earlier in the morning, but by now everything is sodden. We sit on the ground under the tree to rest but it doesn't feel like much of a break because we're still getting rained on. The constant rain is a reminder of something else that won't end, and it brings this frustration to the surface. Rhodies are a thankless task, Brody says. It's one of his favorite sayings and usually it's said with a kind of light irony. But today he sounds genuinely discouraged. I'm a bit surprised to hear this coming from the person who is most energetically invested in a rhodie-free future. It's not like him.

We are sitting on the wet ground, covered in pine needles, when Brody wonders aloud whether the Glenmara Forestry should have ever taken on rhodie control on. Is it even worth it, all this work? From an ecological perspective, like on a 1,000-year time scale, the invasive rhodies will be succeeded by something else. But it's the human lifetime that dictates the work that is considered meaningful and important. He explains all of this instructively. There's no more funding for ongoing management after the big rhodie bash, and so the work of mechanical pulling comes at a cost to the Glenmara Forestry, subsidized by firewood sales.

It gets me wondering about the nature of this cost to the Glenmara Forestry – the value of a thankless task, the long-term price of rhodie freedom. Because the reality is that Glenmara's epic rhodie bash – the battle that was declared won in 2009 – was accomplished with the help of many agents, near and far, most of them not the Glenmara Forestry. Thousands of volunteers from across Scotland committed their time.

Local contract workers also contributed their efforts, but this wasn't volunteered. This was time paid for by anonymous taxpayers who funded a 15-year rhododendron control grant from the Scottish Forestry Commission: their work also counts. This is what I didn't understand. Wasn't it clear to the Glenmara Forestry that this money would eventually run out? That they couldn't float the value of rhodie freedom on the backs of volunteers forever? What, then, is the cost of this work to the Glenmara Forestry? In part, it is paying two employees £10 an hour to stay on top of rhodie activity during the winter. But it is also the cost of maintaining a vision that not everyone believes in, in a place where differences are not readily tamed. If rhodie pulling is thankless work, what kind of appreciation do embattled foresters want? And who really should be thanking whom?

A wet day gets wetter. We linger over the tea break because it's just as miserable here, getting rained on by a tree, as it is out there in the open. Brody and Colin take out their tobacco and rolling papers to smoke, but even what was packed inside dry bags in their rucksacks is soaked through. The towel Brody packed to dry his hands off has to be wrung out. He sticks a limp fag in his mouth and tries to light it with two lighters – Colin's still has lighter fluid but doesn't light, and Brody's is dry but sparks. We all laugh at the slapstick disappointment. Slumping over, when the one pleasure of this thankless work has been extinguished, Brody decides we should call it a day. We've

done a good job in spite of the weather, he says. Colin says, sometimes you have to know when to stop.

2.3 Raking the Forest

The volunteer week with Fran and Lisa and Bethany during the first week of March is delightful. I hadn't realized how much I missed the company of women, and how much I needed the fresh energy of other outsiders. The conversation is lively between the five of us, with Brody and Colin. Partly this is because Fran is so talkative, so in her element. Fran, in fact, is no ordinary volunteer. She has been visiting Glenmara for twenty years, first as a hillwalker to climb Cludin and then, because she liked it so much, to celebrate her 50th birthday at one of the guest houses on Malvern Estate. Now she comes at least once a year to do work parties with Wilder Scotland volunteers. Over the years, she has gotten to know people and loves coming back. The way locals greet her, warmly and by name, you can tell she's beloved too. Still, she is emphatic that she would never want to live here. Small town politics! She likes the small community in Aberdeenshire where she lives because, she says, you can get out.

Fran is a spitfire in her early seventies, a passionate walker and wildernista. Born into a posh English family that loved science and sailing and going to the symphony, she trained as a social worker in London and moved to Scotland later in life. Now pensioned, she lives in a converted lighthouse in a village outside Aberdeen. She has climbed all of her Munros (282 in Scotland) and Corbetts (222) – some of them more than

once – and has recently become passionate about collecting "trigpoints," the final frontier in British outdoor recreation.[36] After the work party in Glenmara, she would be walking 16 kilometers overland to Mam Mighe, the Wilder Scotland property, where there was another work party taking place over the weekend, planting native trees. This one would be a bit more rugged: the same intensity and weatherworn exhaustion but with no hot showers at the end of the day. There is nothing in the way of infrastructure on the Wilder Scotland property since it is scrupulously maintained as "wild," and work parties hosted there are for wild camping only. Fran was already camping on the beach in Glenmara, and said she looked forward to the following work party even more.

Fran is generous and opinionated and infectiously energetic – the kind of person who makes you feel you are doing something noble when you're tearing at a rhodie with a pickaxe. She brought a certain sparkle to the work party. On one of our workdays, pulling rhodies within a lush fenced woodland, Fran finds a stag head. The skull is picked clean and the antlers are covered by a thick algal patina. She holds it up with childlike pride: look! Lisa says laughing, leave it to Fran. There were moments, too, where Fran surprised me, becoming suddenly more subdued, wistful. This happened when I asked her why she liked to volunteer. I don't know what I expected her to say,

[36] "Trigpoint" is an abbreviation for triangulation point, which refers to a set of over 300 squat concrete posts and pillars erected by the Ordnance Survey during a nationwide mapping project called the Retriangulation of Great Britain, conducted between 1936-1962. Trigpoints are located at the tops of mountains and hills, and "bagging" them has become popular amongst avid hillwalkers who similarly collect the summits of famous Munros and Corbetts. For more information about recreational trigpointing, see "T:UK - Trigpoint Types," accessed February 16, 2018, http://trigpointing.uk/info/types.php.

but her sincerity caught me off guard. She said the hills had given her so much healing – that she felt moved, as American conservationist John Muir once said, to do something to make the mountains glad. Mountains were, I think, a kind of family to Fran. Or rather – family was in them. Fran's father was distantly Scottish and passionate about hillwalking, though Type-1 diabetes hampered somewhat his own enjoyment of walking. Near the end of his life, he told Fran to hurry up and finish her Munros. He died three days after she climbed her last one. Fran jokes – with tenderness – that she killed him.

Not unlike other Wilder Scotland volunteers who earnestly style themselves as "altruists" – a word one Glenmara local translates as "desperately middle class" – Fran is principled and a bit picky. At our last break during the workday with Brody and Colin, I eat a small orange and drop the peel at my feet absentmindedly. We are lounging in the grass drinking the last cup of tea from our thermoses, drawing things out in anticipation of the end of work. Fran pulls a plastic bakery box out of her rucksack and offers to share. Millionaire's shortbread, and there are only two left. She holds up the box to inspect the label and announces with amused disgust that these aren't "home baking" – there's palm oil in them! We spend the next twenty minutes talking about palm oil plantations in southeast Asia, and no one can agree whether the problem's in Singapore or Indonesia. Something about this moment – the impurity of manufactured sweets, the falsification of home – makes me look down at the orange peel

between my feet. I realize how much it stands out against the faded grass, how what I had mindlessly discarded as organic waste looks, because of its color, a lot like litter. As we pack up our rucksacks and get up to leave the site, Fran turns to me, excuses herself, and says with put-on politeness that she's just going to pick up the peel I've left and put it in her rucksack. Taking the hint, I reach down to grab it before she can. I hold it between fingers that are oily and fragrant, undecided. I look back at Colin, who wrinkles his nose and mouths, just chuck it. When Fran has her back turned, I bury the orange peel under a handful of grass with a cheeky smile to Colin. In this moment of disenchantment, maybe I am becoming local.

The vibrancy of an orange peel has sparked something, a conversation about what doesn't belong in Scottish nature and the unsightly humanness of waste.[37] As we begin making our way down the hill towards the Land Rover, everyone is talking about how disorderly fruit peels make their way to the hills. Fran, who has done her share of hillwalking, finds them offensive. She makes a point to carry a bag for rubbish in her rucksack, and picks up anything she finds that doesn't belong – often fruit peels, because people think they are organic matter and therefore harmless. Fran concludes with simple conviction that it's not natural – by which she means the fruit peels, and the act of chucking them carelessly. Colin says tangerines aren't natural in Scotland anyway.

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[37] Jane Bennett discusses the potency of discarded objects, particularly their ability to spark reflection, in Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

If they can grow tangerines in the Alps then surely nature doesn't have anything to do with it. Bethany describes being at the summit of Ben Nevis,[38] Scotland's most well trodden Munro,[39] and stumbling across a pile of tangerine skins crowned by a single, drooping banana peel. She laughs with amused disgust. A pile of fruit peels becomes an irreverent cairn, a degradable monument in a setting where rocks are more natural, a garish and intrusive portrait of the human hands that composed it.[40] This reminds Brody of a photography exhibition he saw once, which documented more than 50 tangerine skins found along the ridgeline of Ben Nevis. Bethany says the worst is when the banana peels are frozen into the ground! In response to this everyone, even Colin, cringes.

Later in the week, we are working with a different crew from the Glenmara Community Association: Andrew the stalker and Martin the ghillie, who are off duty until the stag season starts up again in late July. Our job is politely termed "path maintenance" and what it actually involves is ditch digging. We gather gloves and spades and take a Land Rover on the bumpy track out to the glen in the direction of Cludin. Andrew walks us to a path that is, like all paths, multi-purpose: it is used by the stalkers and their ponies to access the hill called Sgurr Dubh where they commonly

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[38] Ben Nevis, located outside of Fort William in the Scottish Highlands, is the highest mountain in the British Isles, at 4,411 feet.
[39] The Munro list, which includes 282 peaks in Scotland, was developed in the late-19th century by Scottish mountaineer Sir Hugo Munro. It classifies hills as "Munros" when they have a height above 3,000 feet.
[40] A *cairn* is a pile of stones that marks the summit of a hill or another important landmark. It serves as a kind of monument to an anonymous collective of walkers, each of whom adds their own stone to the pile upon reaching the summit.

shoot stags during the summer, and also by hillwalkers who are making their way to the foot of Cludin. It is a narrow path, tamped earth and grass, extremely wet and muddy in places. This is our job: to engineer better water flow across the path so that it dries out, maintaining its structural integrity. Path maintenance feels more like drudgery to me than rhodie pulling, but it is equally motivated by aesthetics, so maybe there is some grace in it. I try to remember this when Andrew tells us that ditch digging is all about technique. Andrew, who is originally from the Lake District, is a bit of a heartthrob and knows it. He demonstrates with ease: dropping the spade effortlessly into the damp grass, cutting four sides of a rectangle, slicing and lifting out the turf like a piece of cake. You can do whatever you like with the turfs, Andrew says. Personally, I just chuck them. He deftly scoops the turf up onto his spade and with a quick motion sends it flying over the downhill side of the path, where it lands with a solid thud. There is only one rule, which is that you don't want to chuck the turfs onto the uphill side of the path because they will get washed into the new ditches at the first rain.

Fran can't help herself intervening: Andrew's take on ditch digging is much different than Rodney Armstrong's – he is the Wilder Scotland officer in charge of path works. From personal experience as a volunteer at work parties hosted by Wilder Scotland staff, Fran says that Rodney is very particular about wanting the path to look like no work has been done. Rodney prefers one of two methods for tidying up path works: digging a big hole to bury the turfs, or chucking all of the turfs into a single pile

on the side of the path. Path maintenance with Wilder Scotland is exacting: work that requires more work to make itself not look like work. It sounds miserable.

Digging itself is not as tidy as Andrew made it look. The grass is tough and resistant. The turf is dripping and dense, and my spade wobbles under its weight. My back is hurting because my legs haven't figured out how to engage to share the load. I make a pathetic effort to chuck the turfs to the downhill side of the path following Andrew's example. Sometimes, they don't even launch because my arms are too tired to thrust the spade. I can barely move after the morning tea break, and by lunch it begins to feel less like making the mountains glad and more like hard labor. Fran diligently employs Rodney's method, which requires the additional step of carrying turfs on the spade to chuck them into a designated location. Lisa follows along but the rest of us, out of exhaustion or efficiency, take Andrew's shortcut.

When we are finished, the path is a mess. We have been working for six hours to clear up the "boggy" areas, but this means that our feet have been trampling all over them, widening the path and emulsifying a thick sludge of peat, black as oil. There are turfs chucked all along the edges of the path and in the large pile, which Fran has scrupulously maintained. It's not pretty. Fran's pile of turfs is particularly conspicuous, like a plowed heap of dirty snow. She says cheerfully that the grass will grow tall around it and you'll never know it's there. One wonders how long that will take.

There is an aesthetics to path maintenance, just as there is an aesthetics to pulling rhodies. And what is natural is always a matter of preference, of what becomes habituated as right and good. Things only belong somewhere, in such a way, because we make a habit of putting them there. Of course there are laws designating purity and taboo, but these are different in nature and effect than the norms of practice that habituate us to specific orderings of things.[41] Norms are habits, which is to say a matter of accommodation: what we choose or learn to make room for, what we choose or learn to accept, what we choose or learn to value. When you are a long-standing Wilder Scotland volunteer, a former board member, and an accomplished hillwalker, you habituate yourself to a certain kind of nature and a certain kind of care. You clean up after yourself in particular ways. When you are a stalker who feels overworked and underpaid, you care about what is functionally good enough. You care about getting things done. What is at stake in these distinctions is not different natures, but different styles and habits of doing care. Sometimes, differences in style can be easily accommodated, like chucking turfs two ways. Other times, these differences are more irritating.

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[41] Mary Douglas theorizes "dirt" as a cultural category in Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 2003). For Douglas, following Henry James, dirt is any "matter out of place." In other words, every culture has its own normative orderings that distinguish between the clean/proper and the unclean/improper. I want to suggest that these orderings are part of a dynamic learning process. We habituate ourselves to a certain image of the "good" that corresponds to our personal values and aspirations, and to those of the social groups with whom we associate. In other words, we become tidies or messies in situationally distinct and socially mediated ways.

In Glenmara, locals have a theory about two types of people: there are those who belong to the "tidy brigade," and those who belong to the "messy brigade." Membership in these groups is exclusive and oppositional: you're either one or the other. Tidies and messies butt heads regularly, mostly on issues related to the care of the village: matters of appearance and presentation. As with the battle of the rhodies, there are always several people who become the iconic species of specific turf wars in Glenmara, and Norman and Harriet Eakins are the face of the tidy brigade.

The Eakinses are an older pensioned couple from Hertfordshire who have brought the English countryside to the rugged West Coast: polished wellies, quilted jackets, tartan skirts, pressed slacks. You wouldn't have thought there were so many shades of moss green. This impeccable consistency sets them apart in Glenmara. They are not the kind of people who would appear in a printed booklet in the gift shop.

The Eakinses live in a beautifully converted church on the edge of the road overlooking Loch Nèamh, the former place of worship for the congregation of the Church of Scotland in Glenmara.[42] The preservation of the exterior is immaculate: all of the masonry is intact, the roof slates are square and snug, and the peaked doors and windows have been retained. Norman and Harriet love to garden, and have added an attractive glasshouse extension on the back facing Loch Nèamh. There is a narrow stone

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[42] Built c. 1859, the Auld Kirk was decommissioned in the 1980s and converted to private residence in the 1990s. It is classified as a "listed" property by Historic Environment Scotland – a building of special architectural or historical interest. Proposed structural alterations listed buildings require an application of consent from Historic Environment Scotland.

balcony around the perimeter where two wooden benches face the loch. It is the best view in Glenmara, but you never see anyone enjoying it. Nor can you see inside the house, or get any sense of its liveliness from the outside. The funny thing about a church is that it's a lot like a fortress: thick stone walls, high windows, a heavy wooden door with wrought iron fixtures. There are only two indications that someone is home: if the Land Rover is parked outside or if lights are on in the main part of the house. A glow from the upper windows is a muted invitation: warmth held at a distance.

The Eakinses are fairly active in community affairs. They attend meetings of the Glenmara Community Association and give opinions on important topics that are reasoned and fair. Something about their meticulousness was appealing to me, in a place where decision-making is often stymied by personal conflicts and avoidance of confrontation. I often wondered why the Eakinses seemed so secure, so above the common fray. They seemed a bit snobbish, but I also admired their stability. What is it that protected them from the personality clashes and the petty rivalries? What spared them from the emotional morass of community politics? I think the clarity and satisfaction of running the tidy brigade had something to do with it.

Norman and Harriet are the neat and highly productive sovereigns of the community garden. Each year, they raise hundreds of plants from seed in their glasshouse, and plant the seedlings in ten plots inside the two community polytunnels: strawberries, lettuces, courgettes, tomatoes, dahlias, and carrots straight as pins.

Outside, they have a large plot of berry bushes: gooseberries, lingonberries, and currents of three colors protected from birds and midges by a large net crop cage. Harriet is the president of the Garden Club, and is responsible for keeping things in order: making sure the men stay on top of the grass strimming and the garden members pay their annual dues, organizing the fall Garden Fair, pruning the rosemary and topiaries in the community herb garden, and generally minding everyone else's business. Harriet "owns" the community garden, someone said.

Harriet's domain also extends to areas that are ambiguously common. Property boundaries are not always evident, and garden space can creep quietly into forest. Jimmy, a young Glenmara local from Glasgow, was unaware of these distinctions in the early days of his time looking after the Big House. Seeing several clusters of pert yellow daffodils in the wood on the side of the road, he tramped through the trees to clip a few for the house. What he did not realize was that he was walking behind Norman and Harriet's shed, and that they owned this bit of wood across the road from the church. As Jimmy remembered, Harriet caught him in the act and made this fact very clear: those are my daffodils! Indeed, these daffodils are owned and intentional. They were put there for a reason: to beautify and tidy up a patch of the road that the Eakinses perceived to be neglectfully bare. This is a particular style of care. Care that needs to order and arrange. Care that is both dutiful and affectionate, and a wee bit neurotic. It is a practice of domestication that reflects discomfort with the unruly and unpredictable. And it is

never finished. Some days, Jimmy says, you can see Harriet in the woods up behind the shed wearing her long tartan skirt. She is not clipping daffodils. She is intently and vigorously raking the forest.

On a sunny day in April, I am in the community garden turning soil over in the plot I will be sharing with Hope Weston, who works in the Glenmara Community Association office. Construction work at Perry and Carol Smith's house is progressing, and Don the forester is in his digger excavating in the back for their planned extension. The garden plot isn't very large – maybe 6 feet by 20 – but Hope is intent on taking care of it. She couldn't keep up last summer because she got too busy with work during the tourist season, and she wants this year to be more successful. Which is why she is happy to share the plot with me this summer. Actually, the arrangement was made on the suggestion of Harriet Eakins, who must have been disappointed to see a good plot go to waste last year. Putting two unreliable people on the same bit of land seemed like a better use of space.

This year, Hope wanted to improve the soil quality of the plot and had asked Don the forester to bring a dumper truck of topsoil from the Smiths' house to help leaven and enrich the dense turf we have been struggling to break up with our spades. Hope says it's a shame the dumper can't get between the other garden plots to dump the soil closer to ours. We will have to use a wheelbarrow to move it around. This isn't a big

deal, but there is something that is, which makes Hope laugh mischievously. Norman and Harriet will have a heart attack when they see the state of the grass.

Don comes lumbering along in his dumper from the direction of the Smiths' house, just 200 meters up the road. Hope and I are giggling watching him because he looks both proud and fearfully concentrated. He is able to get as far as the first row of plots before tipping the skip. It is a prodigious amount of dirt. Don hops down from the cabin and we have a quick word. Hope is wondering whether she will need more. I am wondering if we will have any room to plant the seeds. Hope tells Don about Norman and Harriet, and Don is tickled by the thought of their reaction. He says why don't you just send them a friendly email offering free topsoil? Hope says maybe we could plant some wildflower seeds in the dumper tracks as a surprise!

Tidies and messies hardly ever see eye to eye, but their differences can sometimes be accommodated playfully and imaginatively, like throwing wildflowers into the middle of an argument. During the winter, five lodgepole pines in the woods on the side of the road were toppled in a bad storm. The tree fall was up the way from the church, but Norman and Harriet were quick to seize on the damage. They wrote a letter urging the Glenmara Forestry to "tidy up" the windblown trees – meaning, more precisely, that the trees should be extracted and milled. This kind of ordering care was not in the repertoire of the Glenmara Forestry. Don and Brody were committed to an ecological model of forestry, where the life cycle of trees is truly continuous: fallen trees

are understood to be just as alive as upright trees, because they are contributing to the messy and layered growth of a species-rich forest. Don likes to say that windblown trees are just “horizontal trees.” In other words, they should be left alone.

Over email, Don patiently explained to Norman and Harriet the importance of non-intervention for woodland health and growth, but the Eakinses were unmoving on the issue. Facing this impasse, Don took another tack. Late one evening as he reflected on how to get through to the Eakinses, Don decided to look up the word “tidy” in the dictionary, where one of the first definitions he found was “to be in order.” He had an idea. Instead of moving the trees, why don’t we just put numbered signs on them, mixing up the numbers 1 through 5, with a sign that says “out of order”?

This was only a conceptual joke – it didn’t make it as far at the Eakinses’ inbox. But it was valuable as a tool to deflect tidy brigade hassling, or at least to minimize the stress caused by it. It was a harmless way to accommodate scratchy differences in care style while minimizing upset. Ultimately though, decisions about disagreeable subjects have to be made to keep a forest and a village alive, and someone is going to be unhappy. In the case of the disordered trees, the Eakinses were persistent and finally had their way. Several weeks after the storm, the Forestry sent Brody and Colin in with their chainsaws to make firewood of horizontal trees.

Some differences remain spiky, even when they are habituated and predictable. Tidying up trees is the kind of tiff that warrants an eye roll, but the battle of the rhodies

remains an open wound. There can be uncomfortable reminders of this when we play the serious game of rhodie pulling. On another work party with Wilder Scotland volunteers in Glenmara, there is a moment of transgression that brings the upset caused by the rhodies sharply into focus. Sometimes things aren't just out of order. Sometimes they are dangerously misplaced.

It is late April and it has snowed on the hills overnight. Glenmara is too close to the sea for the snow to stick, but it is a mood changer, brightening and dampening the world at the same time. Today is a different experience with a new group of volunteers. We are a bit of an odd bunch. Tea break conversations revolve around drug trials for the use of psilocybin in the treatment of social anxiety, the upcoming Brexit vote and its impact on funding for Scottish conservation groups,[43] personality differences amongst volunteers with different conservation groups, and later in the day, Irritable Bowel Syndrome. We are being led by Brody from the Glenmara Forestry, and Rodney Armstrong – the volunteer coordinator from Wilder Scotland – is here with us as an ambassador. There are four other longstanding volunteers, three of whom are retired and all of whom are English. One woman, Karen, works for the Scottish Forestry

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[43] Rural Scotland receives significant investment in the form of grants funded by the European Commission. For example, the Scottish Rural Development Program (SRDP) received €844 million for the period 2014-2020. This included €355 million in Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments to subsidize to support rural agriculture, including sheep farming. See "Factsheet on 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme for Scotland (UK)" (European Commission, October 11, 2017), https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/uk/factsheet-scotland_en.pdf. In the lead-up to the Brexit vote, conservation groups, foresters, and farmers were concerned that they would lose access to this funding if Britain voted to leave the EU.

Commission. She has brought her German shepherd named Patrick with her to the work party. Patrick wears a muzzle. Karen says casually this is because he has PTSD. It is funny in a sad way to watch Patrick trying to play with stones and drink water with a cage on his face, and at one point he throws up, a string of frothy yellow vomit dripping through the holes. Actually, this happens twice, and each time Brody is the first to notice, pointing at Patrick and laughing. You're dog's just been sick! Look, you're dog's been sick again! Every work party brings together a unique group of strangers with a loosely held common value system around protecting nature, but with completely different personalities, politics, and senses of humor. Something about the group dynamic that day was offbeat, even a bit unhinged, and poor Patrick played his part.

We are pulling rhodies in a different compartment today, in a clear-fell area called "Sawmill Wood" that is up the hill from Primrose Cottage. This is a much more accessible location for rhodie pulling because there are no trees obstructing the view. You can easily see rhodies peeking out from behind tree stumps or growing brazenly in the middle of a patch of grass. Perhaps because of this openness, or because I am tired and have lost focus, I am finding it challenging to stick to my own band today and maintain formation in relation to the others. At one point, I realize that I have fallen behind. The others have already reached the designated stopping place at the bottom of the hill – the standing larch tree – and I am picking my way in their direction. I see a couple more rhodies on my way down and bend over compulsively to pull them. When

you have spent hours in a fixed mindset, looking for the one thing that doesn't belong, it becomes difficult to stop. Brody shouts at me from the bottom of the hill. Don't pick those! I assume he's telling me that it's okay to stop for now so I ignore him. I feel accomplished having spotted these last two rhodies on my way down to meet the group, and I uproot them greedily. I can hear stifled laughter from the other volunteers. Brody shouts again. No, seriously! It took us two years to come to that agreement!

In dutiful and heedless focus, I have unknowingly strayed across an invisible line onto Abe and Nella's property, where rhodies are protected – for now – by a tenuous informal agreement with the Glenmara Forestry. This is what the letter was about: the very thing that I am gripping in my hands – this tender and clown-like plant that doesn't belong, which I have just ripped up from the middle of a battlefield. When I reach the others and sense their nervous amusement, I try to laugh it off. Should I put them back where I found them? Karen, who works at the Scottish Forestry Commission, is entertained and teases me. Technically, she laughs, that would be illegal planting of an invasive species!

2.4 Nightmare Neighbors

It takes a special kind of person to want to live here, Cass Robinson says. What she means is, away from shops. I'm sitting with Cass at her dining room table in the house called St. Cuthbert's, so named for the Roman Catholic parish manse and chapel

that formerly occupied the Robinsons' property.[44] This is not exactly true. While the parishioners are long gone,[45] the church is still here, in structure if not in spirit: thick hewn masonry, a pert little steeple, and broad peaked windows suggesting the need for natural light in a spare and unelectrified sanctuary. These architectural features have become secularized as desirable attributes – selling points – in a modern residential property: good insulation, historical character, and beautiful vistas. The property is charming and well sited, with a good view to Loch Nèamh below, though this is screened somewhat by a stand of trees. One can see the appeal. Richard and Evelyn Lawrence could, too, which is why Evelyn phoned her daughter Cass as soon as the property was listed.

At the time, Cass was living in London with her husband Harry and their two children. Harry worked in finance in the City of London, and Cass was a registered nurse. The Robinsons had a longstanding attachment to Glenmara, and to Scotland more generally. Cass's parents bought a house named Sidhein[46] and moved permanently to Glenmara from London in 1985. Both of Cass's brothers also lived in Scotland: one working as a mountain guide in the Cairngorms, and Simon, the youngest, at the Highland Council in Fort William. Many happy holidays were spent up here over the

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[44] St. Cuthbert's is a former Roman Catholic Church built c. 1886. The Places of Worship in Scotland (POWIS) directory confirms that it was converted to private residence in 2002-2003.
[45] Historically, the area around Glenmara was home to a thriving Catholic population. The Catholic parish of St. Cuthbert's was active in the immediate post-war period, but likely fell into disuse by the 1970s.
[46] In Scottish Gaelic, referring to a hill or knoll where fairies live, pronounced "sheen."

years. Cass describes the feeling of displacement her family felt when they had to leave Glenmara to go home. We always felt like we were going in the wrong direction when we went back down south. It was like a magnet, she says, pulling you back. And to be clear, she wasn't talking about the attraction of family, or holidays. She was talking about Glenmara itself.

For years, Evelyn had been watching the property listings with Cass and Harry in mind, but the market was tight in the years leading up to the Glenmara community buyout in 1999. When St. Cuthbert's came up for sale following the buyout, everyone was thrilled. It was a good property at the right time. The Robinsons were ready for a change. They wanted more freedom for their children, more silence, more trees. And so they bought the St. Cuthbert's property, which included a manse and a chapel, for £190,333 in 2002, just as the property market in Glenmara was beginning to pick up. Harry continued to work in banking in London for four or five years, commuting between London and Glenmara on weekends. It is an exhausting trip on top of an exhausting job: over 12 hours in the overnight train from London to the Highlands, followed by a train to Kilmory, and finally the ferry across Loch Nèamh to Glenmara. It wouldn't make sense to undertake such a hellish journey – every week – anywhere else. But Glenmara is different: a special place for the special people who want to live here, people who are willing to forsake more than just shops. A place so extraordinary, so

seductive, it makes sensible people go the distance in order to stay. Cass didn't have to tell me that Glenmara was a magnet pulling them back. Harry's commute said it all.

After a few years of this back and forth, Harry decided to quit his job. For a while, he apprenticed for a local joiner building houses and doing other odd joinery work in Glenmara and Kilmory, learning plumbing and electrical wiring. Eventually, he went back to his banking job. Cass says he missed the buzz. But this couldn't last forever. Now, Harry is back in Glenmara full time, energized by the work of caring for chickens, serving on community advisory boards, and breaking ground on an exciting and unconventional project at St. Cuthbert's chapel. With years of experience traveling to surrounding islands and mainland towns up and down the West Coast, always with an eye for business opportunities, and after several years boycotting Mr. P's poorly run pub, Harry has decided that what Glenmara really needs is a microbrewery.

Cass and Harry hatched the idea for the brewery 15 years ago and have been sitting on it all this time. Even now that they have decided to go ahead with the project, it takes time to get something of this scale off the ground. This is particularly the case in a remote area like Glenmara, which is subject to numerous development regulations due to its scenic landscape status, and also to the politics of community boards. In January, the Robinsons are still researching equipment and refining their business plan as they seek approval for the project from the Glenmara Community Association and the

Glenmara Energy Company. By November, they are stuck in the midst of a lengthy planning process with the local government.

The brewery will be housed inside the unused chapel, opposite the manse where the Robinsons live, and this presents several complications. The first was that the chapel has no existing electricity hookup. Taking care of this was a priority in assessing the feasibility of the project. On a Tuesday evening in January, Harry approached the Board of the Glenmara Energy Company at their monthly directors' meeting to present his plans and request installation of a new connection to the community-operated hydroelectric system. The directors were interested in the business proposal, but Harry's brewery would be the first properly commercial[47] connection to the hydroelectric system, and they were understandably anxious to get it right. The connection itself would be a straightforward job since the manse on the property was already connected, and the directors agreed to assign a standard installation fee of £250. Rates could also be agreed upon, since the Glenmara Energy Company charged users 14p/kWh during peak times, and half that at white meter rates.[48] The bigger issue was how to balance such a heavy load on the system. Operating a brewery involves heating massive amounts of water, which draws a significant amount of electricity over sustained periods of time. The good news was that the Glenmara Energy Company had recently completed a

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[47] B&Bs are also businesses, but they operate as residential units to the company. The Red Stag pub ran on its own hydroelectric system generating electricity from a burn flowing behind the property.
[48] An installed white meter allows consumers to use electricity at reduced rates during off-peak times.

costly refurbishment project that improved the system's maximum output to 280kW.[49] But there were concerns that a consistently high load from the brewery, coupled with lumpy and seasonally fluctuating residential demand,[50] would burden this improved capacity. Perry Smith says this is a business opportunity for Glenmara Energy Company: it is critical for the Board to figure out how to sell electricity under these constraints. Don, ever the forester, says maybe Harry should heat the water with wood.

And so while the brewery presented an opportunity to test the robustness of the hydroelectric system, the possibility of this high-value experiment was met with some hesitation. Vivid memories of embarrassing blackouts on Hogmanay – the busiest night of the year for visitors – and perhaps also a feeling of indebtedness to grant agencies and private individuals who contributed thousands of pounds to fund the refurbishment project, colored the directors' perceptions of the hydroelectric system's viability. No one wanted to approach capacity too quickly. It was at this point that Harry's conversation with the directors stalled. Both parties needed more information. Harry was still learning how to brew beer – what kind of equipment he would need to install, for how long and at what temperatures the vats would need to be heated – and the directors

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[49] A previous landlord constructed the hydroelectric system in the 1970s, at a cost of £350,000. In 2001, the Glenmara Community Association completed an initial refurbishment project totaling over £500,000. The bulk of the funding for this project was contributed by public bodies, including European Regional Development Program (ERDP) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), but the Glenmara Community Association also received £60,000 in private donations. The 2015 refurbishment project cost over £400,000.

[50] Electricity demand is higher during peak tourist times – particularly in summer, and over Hogmanay (the New Year's holiday).

needed to confer amongst themselves: how to implement load management technology,[51] and whether to subsidize the switches at St. Cuthbert's as a pilot. Yet, while these feasibility discussions continue during the meeting – speculations about whether the Glenmara hydroelectric system can successfully balance supply and demand of electricity – there seems to be no question that Glenmara thirsted for this kind of local enterprise. Someone jokes that the locals are ready and waiting for 360 gallons of beer a week. Harry says they could build a pipeline straight to their mouths.

In November, at Cass's dining room table in the manse, we are sipping mugs of milky tea and watching the birds at the feeder outside the big picture window overlooking Loch Nèamh. There is a screen of trees that partially obstruct the view to the water. When I comment on the beautiful view, Cass sees the trees first. She says there were even more when they moved here – lush, established native trees: birch, alder, larch, mountain ash. It's too bad, she says, but they had to be thinned fairly ruthlessly because you couldn't see a thing.

I've come over to St. Cuthbert's with a specific intention: to pick up a book that Evelyn Lawrence recommended to me – a small booklet with a brief history of Glenmara – but I end up staying to talk with Cass when she offers tea. The house is happy, made comfortable by a kind of effortless warmth. The butcher-blocked kitchen is open to the

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[51] Load management balances electrical supply on the demand side, adjusting how much "load" is drawn from a given supply of electricity, rather than increasing the output of electricity at the power station.

dining room, and there is a bold Turkish rug under an oversized, rough-hewn dining room table. There are things piled everywhere, casually, lovingly: the children's art supplies and homework, cookbooks, beautiful earthenware, carved wooden bowls. It feels very bohemian, lived in. Harry comes in from outside wearing green coveralls, pours himself a cup of tea, and stops to chat for a moment before heading back out to work on the shed he is building. With amused annoyance, Cass and Harry launch into a discussion of the bat survey[52] that has stalled their building plans for the brewery.

The bat survey has come up because of the structural modifications to the chapel roof that will be necessary in order to install the brewery equipment. In order to get the vats into the chapel while preserving the historical integrity of the building,[53] the Robinsons will have to remove the roof structure, carefully lifting and lowering the vats into place with a crane,[54] like placing furniture inside a dollhouse. Planning permission from the local council is required for any permanent alterations to existing structures, and once this evaluation process is underway, additional licensing requirements may be

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[52] Licenses are required for any planned development that may put bats and bat roosts at risk. Scottish Natural Heritage grants bat licenses according to specifications in European Protected Species legislation. For more information on bat licensing, see Scottish Natural Heritage, "Bats: Licenses for Development," accessed February 16, 2018, https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/safeguarding-protected-areas-and-species/licensing/species-licensing-z-guide/bats-and-licensing/bats-licences-development.https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/safeguarding-protected-areas-and-species/licensing/species-licensing-z-guide/bats-and-licensing/bats-licences-development.

[53] St. Cuthbert's is not a listed building by Historic Environment Scotland. Listed buildings require additional permits and licensing for structural modifications. For more information on homeowner responsibilities for listed buildings, see Historic Environment Scotland, "Effects of Listing on Owners," accessed February 16, 2018, https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/effects-of-listing-on-owners/.

[54] All of the equipment and machinery must be brought over to Glenmara on a landing craft.

flagged based on the characteristics of the existing structure and the surrounding area. There is a strange confusion of aesthetic and ecological considerations in the planning process. Cass explains Glenmara brings up a bat survey requirement in the planning process because Scottish Natural Heritage recognizes there are so many bats in the area. There are costs associated with each step of the bat survey, including completing the paperwork and paying for licensed officials from Scottish Natural Heritage to come over to count the bats. For the Robinsons, it feels like a bureaucratic headache: with all of the woodland in Glenmara, bats aren't really endangered here anyway.

But bats are on the list of European Protected Species, and all ten bat species found in Scotland receive the highest level of ecological protections. In keeping with UK Habitats Regulations (Conservation Regulations 1994), property owners are required to obtain licenses to undertake activities that would otherwise constitute an offense against protected species. In the case of bats, offenses include actions that "deliberately or recklessly: disturb a bat in a roost; disturb a bat while it is rearing or otherwise caring for its young; obstruct access to a bat roost or otherwise deny an animal use of a roost," in addition to more blatant acts like capturing or killing bats.[55] Despite these clear interdictions, loopholes in the planning process exist. Cass is aware of the finer points of the ecological protections in the planning codes. For example, she explains, Glenmara

[55] Scottish Natural Heritage, "Protected Species: Bats," accessed February 16, 2018, https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/safeguarding-protected-areas-and-species/protected-species/protected-species-z-guide/protected-species-bats.

residents who are undertaking significant roof-related projects are not required to complete bat surveys even though roof repair projects also pose a threat to bat roosts. This is because repairs are not classed as "permanent alterations to existing structures" in the planning codes. And so the best intentions of ecologists and sympathetic legislators are interrupted by the aesthetic criteria that define "permanent alterations." Roof repairs aren't considered in the same way as extensions and modifications to the roofline of existing structures for a specific reason: repairs don't impact anyone's view.

In light of these procedural hoops, Cass and Harry joked about the possibility of "quietly" getting on with the equipment installation at the chapel. But they figured the local planning administrator would eventually notice, on some future visit to assess a planning application in Glenmara, that the vats sitting outside the chapel had mysteriously disappeared. It was an amusing thought, but procedure prevailed. Perhaps a couple of bats would be spared in the process. Now, at this juncture, the only thing left for the Robinsons to do was to submit the paperwork, pay the fees,[56] and wait.

In a remote area like Glenmara, different loves and values have to live alongside each other, often uncomfortably and sometimes vexingly. Some differences are merely scratchy. Bats and vats may rival to domesticate an empty church. Tidies and messies may have to put up with each other, begrudgingly. But there isn't always room to

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[56] Preliminary bat surveys (desk study) typically cost about £300, and full bat surveys can cost upwards of £1000. See Jason Orme, "Guide to Bat Surveys and Solutions," Homebuilding & Renovating, November 1, 2017, https://www.homebuilding.co.uk/how-to-check-for-bats/.

separate and accommodate these differences, or to come to an agreement about how to tame them. This is why the rhodie battle is so protracted and painful. Living and loving differently on top of each other presents a number of challenges. What do you do with neighbors who become more than a nuisance, who can't be politely pacified or accommodated? How do you live with people who give you trouble? How, in this conflict zone, do you keep love alive?

In the midst of an anxious rhodie détente, another full-scale battle broke out. A second massacre was declared. This time, blood was shed on the hills near Glenmara, and the sacrificial species were not rhododendron, but red deer. A week before Christmas, Twitter lit up with pictures taken by a couple of hillwalkers in Glenmara. These were not landscape photos, or selfies. They were images of deer carcasses lying in various stages of decay: exposed ribs, pulpy flesh, dismembered legs, white matter oozing from gouged eye sockets – everything made more soggy and lifeless from the rain. Perhaps most shocking of all, the dishonor of leaving intact racks of antlers behind.

By the looks of them, the carcasses had been on the hill for quite some time. Traumatized walkers reported the finding to Scottish Natural Heritage, which passed the information along to the members of the Glenmara Deer Management Group.[57] A

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[57] Deer Management Groups are voluntary associations of neighboring landowners who agree to manage deer as a common resource. There are currently 44 Deer Management Groups across Scotland.

count was conducted, and a specific number of stags[58] became a flashpoint of disgust in a conflict about the value of red deer to Highland landscapes and livelihoods. A total of 86 carcasses were found on the side of Cludin – not on Glenmara Community Association turf, but on land owned by Wilder Scotland.

Mam Mighe, the Wilder Scotland property, was on the northeastern face of Cludin, facing Loch Ifrinn. It was a small slice of the Glenmara peninsula – just 3,100 acres – but it was a prized piece of ancient Caledonian woodland in the Wilder Scotland's portfolio of wild places. Wilder Scotland hosted work parties at Mam Mighe where volunteers would camp in the wild, spending a weekend building a tree nursery, planting trees (over 2,500 in 2015), weeding around new seedlings (6,500 birch and hazel), or checking and maintaining deer fences. Deer fences were an important technology in the tree regeneration scheme: new seedlings need time to "get away," growing to a reasonable size within 10-15 years so that they can stand up to voracious herbivores. Fences – at least in theory – provide this protection. On Mam Mighe, about 300 hectares or a quarter of the total property are fenced,[59] partitioning the land into five planting compartments ranging from 14 hectares to 143. This sounds like an unfortunate use of a beloved scenic area: carving it up into inaccessible pieces, a patchwork fortified

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[58] It matters that the deer carcasses found on Mam Mighe were stags, not hinds. Stags are not only a potent symbol in the hypermasculine stalking world, they are also a direct measure of the value of sporting estates: each stag counted and recorded adds between £12,000-£15,000 to the total property value.
[59] Deer fences are funded by the Forestry Commission Scotland through its Woodland Grant Scheme because they are understood to be a necessary component of any tree-planting program.

by 13 km[60] of 10-foot wire fencing. But forestry compartments are mere postage stamps on the face of a landscape, and fences are not forever: they are installed as temporary fixtures, with planned removal in stages according to the maturity of the trees in each compartment. Within the lifetime of a forest, the patience it takes to wait out an unflattering growth phase is nothing. Still, fences are not a perfect obstruction.[61] Additional measures need to be taken to promote woodland regeneration. Hungry deer pose a direct threat to the growth of young trees, and they need to be shot.

Shooting deer would be a straightforward job if they kept to one place. But red deer (*Cervus elaphus scoticus*),[62] like rhodies, can go wherever they please. This mobility becomes a sticking point for landowning neighbors who want to claim and use deer for competing purposes. Deer migrate according to their own behavioral patterns, and in a wider landscape area, they behave as a common resource. But they become something else altogether once they are shot. Under traditional Scots law, deer are the property of

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[60] This is an estimate based on a map provided in the Wilder Scotland Deer Management Plan 2015-2025.

[61] Deer are very adept at circumventing obstacles in order to access forage or, in the case of stags, mating partners. They can jump as high as 10 feet, and are able to swim for several miles. Damage to deer fencing – whether accidental (by unscrupulous hillwalkers) or intentional (by politically motivated ones) – can also facilitate deer movement in and out of enclosures.

[62] The Scottish red deer is one of the largest deer species, closer in size to the North American elk than to other deer species found in the British Isles. Stags weigh between 200-400 pounds, and hinds typically weigh between 150-250 pounds. For more species information, see "Red Deer," The British Deer Society, accessed February 17, 2018, https://www.bds.org.uk/index.php/advice-education/species/red-deer.

the landowner on whose land they are killed.[63] This is what makes poaching illegal. The 86 deer carcasses found on Mam Mighe exposed this contradiction – the shared yet privatized nature of deer. While the 86 deer were shot – in season, fair and square – on land belonging to Wilder Scotland,[64] not everyone saw it this way. By law, deer shot on your own land may be free for the taking. But that cull comes at a price when jealous neighbors get involved.

In the wider peninsular landscape on the western side of Glenmara, an area of about 60,000 acres, five landowning bodies sit uncomfortably side-by-side: these include two registered charities – Wilder Scotland and the Glenmara Community Association – and three neighboring private sporting estates. Together, they form an awkward partnership called the Glenmara Deer Management Group (DMG). The Glenmara Deer Management Group was borne out of competitive necessity, rather than an earnest desire for mutually beneficial collaboration. While each of the members is a practitioner of "deer management," as calculated deer culling (killing) is commonly euphemized, the nature of deer movement and population growth makes everyone vulnerable to the aims and agendas of their neighbors. Everyone wants a different target density of deer

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[63] Red deer are considered "wild" according to Scottish law. As long as they are alive and moving, they belong to no one. Ownership in relation to deer is established by shooting rights. Landowners have the right to shoot deer with a license on their own property, and to grant permission to shoot to other parties (such as stalking guests). For more information on the Deer Act (Scotland) 1996, see "Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach – Including 2015-2020 Priorities" (Scottish Natural Heritage, Review 2014), https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2017-06/A1594721.pdf.
[64] Shooting rights were acquired when Wilder Scotland bought the land in 2007.

on their land to facilitate their own goals: Wilder Scotland, which cares about growing trees, wants as few deer per hectare as possible. Malvern and its neighboring private estates, which shoot deer for sport income, would like many more than that. It is hard to maintain a regionalized patchwork with more deer here and fewer there, simply because deer like to move around. Working together – however distrustfully – is the only way for these different groups to claim the value of a mobile and partible herd.

The problem is not simply that deer move across a landscape, or that their migrations are erratic. On the contrary, deer move in ways that are ecologically predictable across a shared but partitioned landscape: they go for trees (for forage and shelter) and they tend to cluster in gendered groups that habituate themselves in certain spots. Deer don't respect boundaries, but they do have preferences for certain properties. Ecologists tell us that deer distribute themselves seasonally and by gender within the same landscape. In Glenmara, stags (male deer) tend to gravitate to the hills on the land owned by the Glenmara Community Association, while hinds (female deer) and their calves predominate on the side of Malvern Estate. The three neighboring private estates are known to be poor in deer overall.

It matters how many deer are where, but gender is also a critical determinant of value. Stags are coveted by sporting estates because they're what every high-paying guest wants to shoot and put on their wall. Hinds are only the hangover of a rousing stalking season that, by law, ends in October. An organization like Wilder Scotland

might also prefer to shoot stags because they browse more vegetation than hinds do, in order to support a larger body weight. These preferences are overlapping, but to different ends. Habitually gendered groupings of red deer into “stag forests” and “hind forests” play a crucial role in the apportionment of value on the peninsula, and the types of accusations that neighbors can make against each other when something goes wrong. Not everyone can have stags on their side.

Because gender determines how deer domesticate land in the formation of stag and hind forests, it also affects the intensity of deer impacts on a given piece of ground. Indeed, female and male deer occupy their turf very differently. Together with their calves, hinds group themselves into matriarchal domestic units called “hefts,” where they stick together on common ground to raise their calves. At the age of maturity (2-3 years old), male calves leave the heft to join the stags, which live together in a looser formation and range much more widely than the hinds. During the “rut” – the mating season, roughly August to October – stags travel great distances to locate and dominate hinds, collecting them into patriarchal units known as “harems.” Following the rut, exhausted stags and hinds return to their separate camps. These territorial patterns noticeably affect the quality of the ground. When hinds stick together in hefts, damage from browsing and tramping is concentrated in smaller areas. Stags, on the other hand, roam more freely with lighter average impact on the land. If you care about growing trees, you want to keep the deer moving – preferably far away.

Red deer behavioral patterns matter for strategic relationships between differently interested neighbors. In this equation, red deer are the least common denominator: they are the iconic species of disagreement because they impact, in some way, every landowner's bottom line. Indeed, each of the members of the Glenmara Deer Management Group need deer to do different things. The private estates care about putting stags on their balance sheets. Wilder Scotland cares about keeping deer away from vulnerable woodland. The Glenmara Community Association, on the other hand, is invested both in woodland regeneration (through the Glenmara Forestry) and deer stalking as a source of income. In this sense, Glenmara is a bit of a maverick. But it also may be the perfect mediator too, if also a strong-armed middleman, because it needs to have things both ways.[65]

If you want to survive as a mediator, you have to establish some ground rules on which reasonable communication can take place. The Glenmara Deer Management Group meetings were notoriously confrontational. Representatives of private estates were quick to anger. Any suggestion of increasing deer culls would set them off. They were known to raise their voices at other members, point fingers, use strong language, storm out of the room. When things really weren't going their way, they avoided

[65] While sporting estates and conservationists are often in opposition, both have incentives to grow more trees. Sporting estates are also cashing in on European and Scottish grant funding for woodland creation, although to a lesser extent than conservation-focused landowners. Sporting estates remain heavily invested in the cultural form of open-hill stalking in Scotland, which took shape during the Victorian era. And stalkers often view trees as a threat to this "tradition."

meetings altogether: willfully stalling the group process on important decisions. Generally, they were not sociable partners. In light of past discord, the Glenmara Community Association drafted a "code of conduct" for the Glenmara Deer Management Group.[66] The code of conduct outlined expectations for attendance, behavior, and respect for other members. From now on, membership would require a minimal effort to play nice, and show up.

> Members are asked to be open and to share any information they may have with respect to deer management (or other grazing pressure) in the area.
> Discussions, where possible, will be evidence-based and will focus on facts presented.
> Disagreements will focus on information presented rather than personalities.
> Members will treat fellow attendees with respect and courtesy and will not discriminate against any person.
> Members will be sensitive to different aims and will not attempt to bully or intimidate other members into agreeing with their view.
> Members will agree to abide by decisions of the chair in respect to conduct at our meetings.
> Members will aim to make sure they are represented at meetings. If it is not possible to attend they will be asked to comment on agenda items prior to the meeting.
> Members will aim to take part in group activities e.g., deer counts.
> Members will keep in touch by appropriate means to ensure they can contribute to such activities.
> Members will specifically share information with regard to poaching or other activities which impact land management or could be a danger to the public.[67]

[66] The Code of Conduct was formally submitted in the most recent Deer Management Plan (2017), but the need for such a document was discussed at length for years.
[67] Glenmara Deer Management Group Code of Conduct

With the background of this less-than-collegial history of collaboration within the Deer Management Group, the Glenmara Community Association found itself caught between two factions of uncompromising neighbors in the middle of a battle over the value – both meaning and cost – of 86 dead stags. There would most certainly be raised voices.

This conflict between representatives of larger bodies also filtered down, upsetting ordinary locals who were attached to a particular vision of Glenmara, and a particular value of wildness. Eighty-six stag carcasses became the icon of a certain romance with Glenmara, a blindly mythologized attachment to a landscape that, however unnatural, was deeply loved. Murdo McLeod, the Postmaster, was the most vocal of the locals who took offense at the Wilder Scotland cull on Mam Mighe. On December 23, he took the liberty of affixing a public letter in the window of the Post Office, addressed to members of the Glenmara Community Association Board:

> I am writing to you in connection with the recent cull of red deer by Wild Scotland, this presumably includes stags and hinds in calf, the carcasses left to rot on the hill contrary to the ethics and good practice of Highland deer management.
>
> I am to say the least enraged, as are many others here in Glenmara at the arrogant and cavalier attitude that the they have employed in this savage act, I am sure that my good friend Oliver Jones would have been appalled.
>
> Wilder Scotland has its roots in the USA, let us hope this is not to become another unpleasant import from that place. I refer of course to the slaughter of the North American Bison.
>
> Wilder Scotland is a founding member of the Glenmara Community Association, it is a partnership with common aims and objectives, implicit in this is that any contentious issues should in the first instance be shared with the other

partners in the Association and thus the people of Glenmara, as in the case of the Glenmara goat cull.

In this case the people of Glenmara have been completely ignored and treated in the same manner as the Plains Indians, as have the Deer Management Group which may impact upon their operations.

Under the circumstances I urge the Glenmara Community Association Board to seek an apology from Wilder Scotland regarding the lack of consultation and together with assurances that this atrocity will not occur again, otherwise, they should consider their position as a partner with the Glenmara Community Association and the people of Glenmara [at risk].

As for me I did consider felling all the trees on my croft, they do after all spoil the view.

Locals who were familiar with Murdo's brand of self-righteous populism received his letter with amusement. But the Glenmara Community Association, represented by the Board, had a rather serious problem on its hands. Wilder Scotland, which Murdo McLeod impulsively called Glenmara's "nightmare neighbor," was actually one of its closest collaborators: not only a voluntary member of the Glenmara peninsula Deer Management Group, but more importantly a cosigner to the Glenmara community buyout, with a permanent seat on the Board of Directors. The deer cull was a battle of egos and a potential public relations crisis, and the Glenmara Community Association had to tread carefully, affirming its own agenda as a middle-of-the road landowner while attempting to pacify groups on both sides. This was all the more necessary as Glenmara was dragged into the ring by virtue of its governance relationship with Wilder Scotland. A stalking magazine provocatively accused the Glenmara Community Association of a mortal betrayal by association. The deer cull, the

author wrote, "is truly an affront to decency and responsible land ownership, and a poor reflection on the ethical standards of those who took the 30 pieces of silver from Wilder Scotland."

Despite the enflamed rhetoric, the chosen weapons in this fight were not words – or rifles – but numbers.[68] Most famously, the 86 stag carcasses discovered on Mam Mighe. This was a significant figure taken on its own, but it was both inflated and minimized with the help of strategic contextualization: the addition of other figures to set up proportionate relationships, and the suppression of ecological information that might help laypeople understand what those numbers actually meant.

Ultimately, deer management is a numbers game, and figures are the technology through which reluctant and uncomfortable neighbors are made to stick together. Every year, members of the Glenmara Deer Management Group are required to submit numbers from an annual count of red deer sighted on their land (including stags, hinds, and calves). These numbers are entered into a rather dizzying spreadsheet and summed to give the total population of red deer on the peninsula. Different members have different ways of tallying deer on their land. The Glenmara Community Association and Malvern Estate are serious about their deer counts – these are done jointly and "by

[68] Diane Nelson tells affecting stories about how numbers matter in Guatemala: as both agents of colonial violence, and touchstones of Mayan rebirth and self-determination. See Diane M. Nelson, *Who Counts?: The Mathematics of Death and Life after Genocide* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

hand"[69] in a five-day streak after the close of the hind season, usually mid-February, when stalkers from both groups can go up the hill without guests in tow. Wilder Scotland also perform a hand count, but on their own time. And though deer roam freely across the whole peninsula, covering all of the properties in question, no one seems to be concerned with the possibility of double counting across members' properties. It doesn't really matter how you come to these figures – through imperfect methods or without counting at all – because deer numbers are never estimates. You count the numbers you want to count: the ones that fit in your population model, the ones that make last year's numbers make sense. Whatever you do, you show no hesitation. In the Glenmara Deer Management Group, players risk losing power and position if they are perceived to be even remotely unsure of themselves. In this world, spreadsheets are a battlefield. And ego is all.

Confident numbers become the basis of confident projections, and this measured certainty is part of what makes agreement possible between players who have a frictional relationship with each other. In Glenmara, each member of the Deer

[69] "Hand counts" are actually done on foot. In Glenmara, Malvern Estate and Glenmara Community Association stalkers jointly coordinate their annual deer counts over a period of about 1-2 weeks. This level of collaboration is unusual in deer management. Stalkers divide the ground into compartments that are counted separately over successive days (as many as it takes to do each compartment once). Stalkers share the task of counting the compartments, with each stalker covering different ground. Binoculars are used to identify groups of deer – stags, hinds, and calves – as they pass through a given compartment. Efforts are made to coordinate by radio with stalkers counting in other compartments to prevent double counting. The deer counted by each stalker are summed to give the "total" number of deer on the property. These numbers are used in conjunction with the previous year's to calculate the "calving rate" (number of calves divided by the number of hinds counted in the previous year). Deer population counts are performed without an assumed margin of error.

Management Group is assigned target numbers to shoot in the following year based on this year's projection of population growth. Members are required to cull a minimum of 10 percent of the previous year's count, just to keep the population stable. There is no designated ceiling. This implicit omission is based on a presumed common interest to shoot just enough stags to fulfill the group minimum mandate, while keeping enough stags on the ground for next year's shooting season. The Wilder Scotland cull laid bare the tacit expectations baked into the deer management agreement: members should cull deer in reasonable proportion to the size of their property, and to the previous year's deer count numbers. In this game, numbers are always relational.

Table 2: Glenmara Deer Management Group Densities

Property	*Stags*	*Hinds*	*Calves*	*Total*	*Land Area (ha)*	*Fenced (ha)*	*Open Range (ha)*	*Open Range Density (deer per 100 ha)*
Glenmara A	224	34	23	281	3,240	615	2,625	10.7
Glenmara B	234	205	116	555	3,320	521	2,799	19.8
Glenmara C	23	145	59	227	1,190	0	1,190	19.1
Glenmara D	46	79	38	163	1,185	144	1,041	15.7
Mam Mighe	28	4	1	33	1,180	351	829	4.0
Subtotal	**555**	**467**	**237**	**1,259**	**10,115**	**1,631**	**8,484**	**14.8**
Malvern A	68	220	128	416	1,180	0	1,180	35.3
Malvern B	73	181	96	350	2,420	87	2,333	15.0
Malvern C	197	322	175	694	1,935	73	1,862	37.3
All Total	**893**	**1,190**	**636**	**2,719**	**15,650**	**1791**	**13,859**	**19.6**

Source: Glenmara Deer Management Group Plan 2017

Table 3: Wilder Scotland Cull Numbers at Mam Mighe

Year	*Count*				*Cull*			
	Stags	*Hinds*	*Calves*	*Total*	*Stags*	*Hinds*	*Calves*	*Total*
2010-2011	2	77	14	93	42	53	17	112
2011-2012	37	48	19	114	10	8	4	22
2012-2013	44	46	21	111	35	45	10	80
2013-2014	23	48	27	98	75	31	9	115
2014-2015†	13	28	9	50				
2014-2015	31	53	19	103	54	40	15	109

Source: Wilder Scotland Deer Management Plan 2015-2025
* Seasonal year from April 1-March 31
† Cull conducted by Scottish Natural Heritage in November 2014, by helicopter

The 86 deer carcasses found on Mam Mighe were the rotting evidence of a technically lawful seasonal cull, which some considered a violation of a working agreement and others called "gratuitous slaughter." The discovery of the deer on Mam Mighe upset the Scottish sporting establishment, prompting a lengthy response from the Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA). The SGA letter was submitted as an official complaint to the Scottish Government, and was reprinted in rural interest publications like *The Scottish Farmer*. It claimed that Wilder Scotland's cull was a willful retaliatory move against Scottish Natural Heritage, in response to being denied an out-of-season license[71] to cull deer on Mam Mighe, and it used numbers strategically to argue that the cull was excessive and unethical.

[71] An out-of-season license would allow a landowner like Wilder Scotland to continue to cull stags after the end of the stag season in October. If the same number of stags had been culled over the course of the year, 86 might have looked a lot smaller.

> Wilder Scotland has defended its 2015 cull in Glenmara, claiming it represented a tiny fraction of all deer in Glenmara. In part, this is true. It also obscures reality. Wilder Scotland owns around 2.5% of private land area in Glenmara (1240 hectares) but culled over a quarter of all the deer in the combined Glenmara Deer Management area in 2015 (55,257 hectares). A helicopter count in November 2014 counted 13 Stags on Mam Mighe. This count was conducted at taxpayers' expense and was carried out to determine population and cull targets. Wilder Scotland culled 86 without informing neighbours, over 6 times the number seen during the count and 26 per cent of all stags in Glenmara (334 in 2015), on a comparatively minuscule piece of ground.

Glenmara's neighboring estates were quick to join the fray, strengthening the stalkers' claims against Wilder Scotland. Sir Gregory Taylor, the laird of a neighboring private sporting estate, presented two different pieces of corroborating evidence, each as powerful as the other. The first was a stomach-turning image of a decaying stag. The second was an equally unforgettable figure: £100,000.

Figure 15: Stag Carcass on Mam Mighe

Photo unattributed.

One-hundred-thousand pounds was the figure Sir Gregory Taylor gave for the value of the 86 stags in terms of income lost to neighboring estates. This was not a purely monetary exercise. This was a strategically moralizing statement about the economic cost of wasted stags to local livelihoods.[72] No one knows or cares where it came from, and it doesn't matter, because £100,000 immediately does its job. It's a big number that makes 86 look even bigger.

Sir Taylor repeated the argument that Wilder Scotland had shot the stags out of proportion with its land area and the previous year's cull numbers, but he also claimed that it had done so deviously, without informing the group of its plans, and with the intention of causing upset that would get the attention of Scottish Natural Heritage.[73] In Sir Taylor's view, Wilder Scotland was willfully bucking the gentlemen's agreement that held the Glenmara Deer Management Group together, however loosely. Its actions were viewed to be unacceptable on at least two grounds: the cull sacrificed stags that could

[72] This statement was perceived by anti-stalkers to be disingenuous because large sporting estates are typically run by moneyed landowners. Sporting estates also employ very few people in proportion to their size. For example, Malvern Estate (13,500 acres) employs four staff, including one stalker and one ghillie.

[73] Scottish Natural Heritage only gets involved in deer management if landowners in a Deer Management Group are unable to meet the requirements of managing land in the public interest. In that case, according to Section 7 of the Deer (Scotland) Act (1996), landowners can enter into a "Voluntary Control Agreement" with SNH, in which landowners agree for SNH to oversee deer management practices, including deer counts, at their own expense. In the Glenmara Deer Management Group, there was concern that the Wilder Scotland cull would "trigger" a Section 7 agreement. No one in the Glenmara Deer Management Group wanted the government to get involved in deer counts. For more information on Scottish Natural Heritage deer guidance, see "Deer Management in Scotland: Report to the Scottish Government from Scottish Natural Heritage 2016" (Scottish Natural Heritage, October 2016), http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/corporate/DeerManReview2016.pdf. And for information about Scotland's national strategy for managing deer (in upland and lowland areas), see Scottish Natural Heritage, "Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach – Including 2015-2020 Priorities."

have been more productively shot by estates for income, and the carcasses left to rot on the hill were a waste of good venison. Wilder Scotland explained publicly, as it had done in its approved Deer Management Plan, that its policy was to leave deer on the hill as food for eagles, and moreover that the steep terrain of Mam Mighe made it impossible to extract carcasses. Sir Taylor maintained that this approach was wasteful on multiple levels. Wilder Scotland had violated a cherished convention of Scottish deerstalking: that "if you kill an animal, you try to make use of it." There was the added insult of the unsightly state of the carcasses themselves, with haunches carved out here and there, presumably for private consumption. All of this was also an affront to the symbolic stature and economic value of red deer in Scotland. But there was a secondary and perhaps more serious offense. In Sir Taylor's estimation, the cull was "effectively a major wildlife crime in everything but name" because Wilder Scotland carried it out without notifying the other members of the Glenmara Deer Management Group. Wilder Scotland did what it wanted on its own land, without regard for the other estates. In Murdo McLeod's words, Wilder Scotland was behaving like a "nightmare neighbor."

In the events that came to be known as the "Glenmara Deer Massacre," proportional relations were everything: a weapon marshaled on all sides. The moral case for killing deer hinged on players' ability to make numbers look greater or smaller in relation to each other. If the sporting establishment's job was to make 86 look as big as possible, Wilder Scotland needed to make it look reasonable. This is exactly what Wilder

Scotland's Chief Nature Officer set out to do in an article published in the *Highland Press & Journal*.

> Across the 60,000 acres managed by Wilder Scotland across the country, we culled approximately 400 red deer last year using a combination of staff, stalkers from neighboring estates, contractors and local people. In contrast, private sporting estates culled more than 50,000. A further 5,000 were reported to have died of "natural mortality," a euphemism for starvation on the hills as a consequence of unsustainably high deer numbers in many areas.

Scottish National Heritage used aggregate numbers to argue that the Wilder Scotland cull was justified, and that it was, as the article quipped, "not so deer price." He emphasized that the red deer population of Scotland has multiplied since the 1950s, from 150,000 heads to an estimated 400,000 today. All of these figures make 86 look rather small. But they also make an argument for government intervention in voluntary Deer Management Groups. Why has the red deer population grown out of control over the past 60 years? Why was a cull of this magnitude necessary? (Even though, remember, 86 is not that many.) Because, according to this view, the sporting establishment has deliberately obstructed a statutory approach to deer management: this would be a fairer and more transparent system for everyone, outsourcing the unenviable task of enforcing target numbers to a knowledgeable but mostly indifferent representative of Scottish Natural Heritage. Too bad.

In all of this, the only figure that no one was willing to discuss was the least common denominator: the fact, simply put, that everyone wanted to kill deer. By

pointing fingers at Wilder Scotland, stalkers elevated themselves as the moral defenders of the sacred Monarch of the Glen, a strategically ennobling image. Stalkers would love for you to forget that they also have blood on their hands. At the same time, Wilder Scotland presented itself as the caretaker of a dying ancient woodland and majestic golden eagles – and the innocent target of an elitist and manufactured outrage. Though highly antagonized, the positions of stalkers and conservationists are not in fact as opposed as these groups would like them to be. Any meaningful difference between these objectives becomes vanishingly small when you consider the nature of the uses to which deer carcasses are put. In other words, what ends does deer culling serve? Everyone would like you to understand that killing deer is vitally necessary – and that it serves a higher good. The difference is which good: income and jobs, or trees and eagles? In either case, deer are not the object. They are a stand-in for moral uprightness. They are a proxy for power.

Figure 16: The Monarch of the Glen

Sir Edwin Landseer, *The Monarch of the Glen*, 1851. Courtesy of the National Galleries of Scotland. https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/159116/0/monarch-glen?overlay=download.

Counting deer is not ultimately an accounting exercise. It is not a means to hold members of a fractured group accountable to each other. It is a means to control, a measured method of what amounts to socially-sanctioned bullying. Stalkers and conservationists seize on 86 dead stags to stir the flames of moral outrage, using the same iconic species to make different claims about the value of their own projects. Deer, in fact, are only collateral. They are partible pieces in a winner-take-all battle, where victory is secured in the work of making convincing gestures to share. But not

everything that is common can be distributed fairly. Proximate values – figures, profits, and egos – conflict with each other, and it takes work to wrangle them into a commonly agreed framework. Such taming is always tenuous, because of the natural tendency for players to revert to their own values. It turns out that converting your neighbors takes a lot of energy. It is much easier to be the nightmare.

In the wake of the Glenmara Deer Massacre, there have been some subtle but effective changes in messaging, camouflaged updates to websites and promotional materials that are quietly changing the game. Wilder Scotland retains its motto "Protecting and Preserving Wild Land," but the Scottish Gamekeepers Association is operating under a new standard, "Managing Scotland's Wild Places." In a world where no one gets to have it all, it seems the only way to tame uncomfortable differences is for everyone to become wild.

2.5 Conclusion

In Glenmara, a remote place for special people with different loves, things that don't sit comfortably with each other have to find ways to get along. There isn't room here for the kind of distributive work that keeps unlike things separate from each other. Compromises are exceedingly hard to arrange because locals don't treat Glenmara as a both-and world, where all forms of love and care can be accommodated. Mixtures are everywhere here, but love often becomes an either-or proposition. Rhodies or no rhodies. Tidy or messy. Bats or vats. Stags or trees. Everyone is an idealist, and what

comes naturally to anyone is only what has been habituated by the routines of love and labor. But love doesn't always work, or not enough. When numbers fail, when waiting becomes impossible, when neighbors make your life a nightmare, the best way to deal with the problems you're left with may not be to fight, but to run away.

Taking distance is a survival method in a remote place. But remoteness – geographically, topologically, socially – isn't a given. It's a quality of place that emerges through the work of managing particular relations. Remoteness, like wildness, isn't a quality that you get to keep for good. It's something you have to keep doing.

3. Positioning Remoteness

Several years ago, before I came to Glenmara, there was a community-wide meeting held to discuss the subject of mobile coverage on the peninsula. I wasn't present for this meeting, but I can imagine what it may have been like: metal folding chairs scraping on the old parquet floor in the Village Hall, people huddled in their jackets and fleeces, greeting each other with a nod or whispered remarks under the glare of fluorescent lights. A group of several Glenmara Community Association Board members sitting at the front of the hall at a white folding table, the evident hesitancy on the face of the convener, perhaps a cough or a curt "right" uttered to call attention.

There would be more people in attendance tonight, to discuss this matter of perceived widespread interest, than there are at other public meetings: routine operational and budgetary meetings held in a streak of weeknights during the first part of month. Locals normally absent themselves from those admittedly drier and more managerial gatherings, often lasting close to three hours, and eating into dinnertime. But tonight presents an exceptional opportunity to weigh in on a crucial matter, one that carries both promise and threat. A matter, in sum, that would have clear and irrevocable effects on the Glenmara community, increasing both the viability of its connections to the rest of the mainland and the fragility of its carefully managed remoteness.

The topic motivating the meeting was simple enough: should Glenmara petition British Telecom (BT) to install a cell tower on the peninsula to receive a 3G-network

signal? But it was a loaded question, carrying the weight of numerous logistical and aesthetic evaluations regarding the nature and future of Glenmara's remoteness. And everyone, from B&B operators and reclusive pensioners to tech-savvy young adults, had a stake in it. How much remoteness was good for business? How much was livable?

While the cellular debate had significant social consequences, splitting passionately opinionated locals on both sides of the question, it emerged from a relatively minor technical problem, an accidental disjuncture between nature and design. There is a reason that Glenmara doesn't have phone signal in the first place, and it isn't due to a lack of cell towers in the area. In fact there are plenty of masts, including one beaming out 3G in Kilmory, the nearest town, located just six miles across the water. The signal from Kilmory is strong enough to reach Glenmara; in fact, it does hit certain patches along the coast. But it doesn't make it to the village of Glenmara itself, a significant problem considering that the village is the social nucleus of the peninsula: the place where most locals live and work, and where the majority of tourists come to stay. People need connections to broadcast their businesses and maintain social ties across distance, but "mobile" is not one of them. And the problem isn't owing to weak or inadequate signal. It's to do with the hills – more specifically, the location of the hills. Because the rough hills for which the West Coast is famous happen to be in the way.

Signal doesn't reach the village of Glenmara because the hills absorb it.[1] So if Glenmara doesn't have cellular signal it's not strictly a problem of proximity – it's a question of positioning.[2]

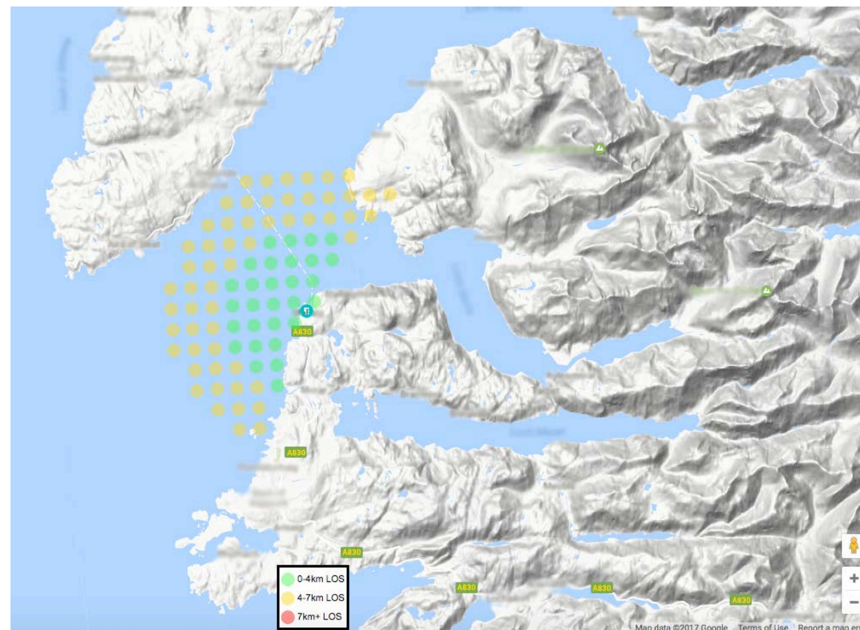

Figure 17: Broadband Line-of-Sight from Kilmory

Map data © 2017 Mast Data (Estate Systems Ltd). https://www.mastdata.com/
Screenshot by the author.

[1] Signal is available in some spots on the southwestern side of the peninsula, which are within the line-of-site of the BT mast in Kilmory, and a second mast beaming signal from a neighboring island.

[2] One could argue it's also a problem of "profit" since BT determined it was unprofitable to build a mast in Glenmara due to the size of the local population. But positioning is the fundamental limitation, because the mast in Kilmory would be sufficient to bring signal to Glenmara if the beam were not interrupted.

This chapter explores remoteness as a matter of positioning. To understand remoteness in this way is to call attention to the relations it implies.[3] A Togolese village only appears remote from a certain angle; in a wider lens, we see its essential connectedness and cosmopolitanism.[4] Likewise, the places experienced as "edges" in a rapidly expanding Vietnamese metropolis are themselves constantly shape-shifting.[5] But if distance and proximity are relative, depending on the position of objects in relation to each other, the task of describing those relations – judging "near" and "far" – is not straightforward. Remoteness implies a gap that cannot be reduced to measurable distances in Euclidean space. It is multiple and distributed,[6] operating in geographic, topological, and affective dimensions simultaneously. But it is also always patchy and

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[3] This approach differs from Raymond Williams' dialectical analysis of the relationship between rural and urban spaces. Specifically, remoteness does not require the assumption of stable entities before exploring their relations: for example, it is not necessary to define *a priori* "rural" and "urban" poles in order to talk about the sensations of being near and far. See Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). Taking remoteness as a relation shifts attention from the problem of identifying and stabilizing poles, to sensing the tension between them. This creates space to explore how relations are constantly being worked upon. Similarly, Marilyn Strathern has critiqued the replication of Western categories of personhood and gender within kinship studies in order to draw attention to the practices that make persons. See Marilyn Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

[4] Charles Piot discusses the cosmopolitanism of a "remote" village in Togo, which is to say, its connectedness to the world through forces and relations we call "global" – principle among these, the Atlantic slave trade and French colonialism. Charles Piot, *Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). J. Lorand Matory also shows how the Gullah Islands off South Carolina are incorporated within a trans-Atlantic African diaspora. J. L. Matory, "Islands Are Not Isolated: Reconsidering the Roots of Gullah Distinctiveness," in *Grass Roots: African Origins of an American Art*, ed. Dale Rosengarten, Theodore Rosengarten, and Enid Schildkrout (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 232–44.

[5] Erik Harms, *Saigon's Edge: On the Margins of Ho Chi Minh City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

[6] Annemarie Mol, *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Harris Solomon, *Metabolic Living: Food, Fat, and the Absorption of Illness in India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

unstable: no place is uniformly or permanently remote. Understanding remoteness as a matter of positioning requires bringing its various textures, temperaments, and temporalities into view. Feeling, more than measurement, is required for this approach. Because some objects are closer than they appear.

In Glenmara, remoteness[7] is neither a stable inheritance nor a hard geographical fact[8]; neither is it simply a gimmicky selling point, or an obstacle to be overcome. Remoteness is a relation that is constantly teased and worked upon, which itself performs work: it is a lever. And it is a condition of survival. Remoteness describes a delicate and transitional relation that exists in the middle space between accessibility and isolation. It is a quality of experience – a positional value – that is generated and maintained through the work of mobilizing vital connections and resources. This chapter focuses on tools and techniques for leveraging a remote location on the West Coast of Scotland in order to produce the value of remoteness. Managing remoteness as a value means locating and tethering the lifelines that allow this precarious positioning to be sustained.

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[7] In a forum published in the *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* (*HAU*), Erik Harms and co-authors others rethink Edwin Ardener's concept of "remote areas" from multiple perspectives. This leads authors to consider remoteness as a "relational category." See Erik Harms et al., "Remote and Edgy: New Takes on Old Anthropological Themes," *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 4, no. 1 (May 31, 2014): 361–81.

[8] Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987). Latour shows that scientists employ rhetorical techniques and relational strategies to earn credibility. For Latour, all facts are made in practice. "Weak facts" are facts that remain contested, while "strong facts" are convincing facts, which may eventually be taken for granted.

3.1 Rough Bounds

Glenmara has not always been remote, strictly speaking. If remoteness is a relation, its geography comes to matter differently depending on one's position in space and time. And changing positions changes everything.[9] Viewed from the sea, or from a historical perspective, Glenmara's remoteness no longer appears solid or stable. Rather, it wavers. But to suggest that this remoteness is shifting is not to undermine its reality as matter. On the contrary, insisting on the fluidity of remoteness highlights the tangibility of its making. There is substance to remoteness, a substance which is not given but constantly being made, through fleshy tethers that are at once material and semiotic.[10] The quality of remoteness that makes Glenmara a place worth going – that is, a destination – is itself an accomplishment,[11] one that results from the convergence of geographical affordances, historical accident, and changing regimes of value.

If remoteness on the West Coast of Scotland is an essentially relational quality, it has stretched and contracted throughout history. In the 8th and 9th centuries, seafaring Vikings made contact with the North Atlantic archipelagos of Shetland, Orkney, and the

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[9] Engseng Ho, "Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat," *Comparative Studies of Society and History* 46, no. 2 (2004): 210–46.

[10] Donna Jeanne Haraway, *ModestWitness@Second Millennium.FemaleMan© Meets OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience* (New York: Routledge, 1997). "Material-semiotic" and "fleshy" are Donna Haraway's concepts. Both put meat on Foucauldian discourse through the reminder that the real is always both metaphor and matter.

[11] The notion of "accomplishment" comes from the STS literature, and indicates that objects/ideas that we take to be real are always made in practice. Bruno Latour has argued that scientific "facts" are made in practice. See in particular Latour, *Science in Action*. Charis Thompson uses the word "choreography" to describe this process. Charis Thompson, *Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005).

Outer Hebrides,[12] bringing these far-flung islands into a wider network of Norse power and patronage. Scandinavian kings and culture dominated the Western Isles and West Coast of Scotland until the Treaty of Perth in 1266 ended this occupation, deciding the sovereignty question in favor of Scottish King Alexander III. Archaeological and genealogical evidence, in addition to etymological analysis of present-day place names, suggest that the Norse influence on the West Coast of Scotland was significant and lasting, even as this region was later transformed by the arrival of Celts and Christianity from Ireland. From the perspective of a society that conquers territories by way of the sea,[13] the "rough bounds" of the West Coast of Scotland – difficult territories to access overland – are not impossibly remote. In fact, they are approachable by virtue of a fortuitous correspondence between the technology and skills of seafaring, and a coastal topography that facilitates the application of this embodied knowledge.

Remoteness came to be reshaped and resignified during the medieval and early modern periods, as seafaring geographies of access and power gave way to territorial ones. From the 13th to 18th centuries, the Gaelic clan system provided a logic of feudal kinship that structured the social and economic worlds of the Highlands and Islands of

[12] Of these islands incorporated in present-day Scotland, Shetland lies furthest from mainland Britain, about 60 miles northeast of Scotland. Orkney is comparatively more accessible at a distance of 10 miles from John O'Groats, in the far northeastern corner of mainland Scotland. The Outer Hebrides form a 130-mile long chain bordering the West Coast. Today, the Scottish Government considers all of these areas to be "fragile" by virtue of their remoteness, requiring special "lifeline" transport services including subsidized ferry crossings and emergency airlifts to mainland hospitals.

[13] Seafaring conquest is based on a different set of geographical relations and assumptions than a territorial logic of expansion. Cf. Stuart Elden, *The Birth of Territory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

present-day Scotland. Under the clan system, groups of families were the dependent "children" (*clanna*) of a dominant clan chief, recognizing his authority, taking his name, and responding to his calls for martial service. The region surrounding present-day Glenmara, including neighboring peninsular territories and islands, was governed by a single Macquarie clan chief, whose power emanated from Castle Dubh located on the next peninsula to the north of Glenmara. Connected by sea to the seat of Macquarie power in Glendubh, Glenmara was not indeed so very far away. In fact, it served as an important resource base for the Macquaries, who regularly extracted dues in the form of grain, cattle, and men, who were conscripted into battle against rival clans.

But this coastal geography was fundamentally reorganized over the course of the 18th century, as Catholic Jacobites and Protestant Hanoverians jostled for the British throne. Following the first Jacobite uprising of 1715, troops under British General George Wade constructed a network of roads that connected military outposts in the northwest Highlands, from Inverness to Fort William and Fort Augustus.[14] These roads facilitated British military penetration into the Highlands, domesticating a landscape long perceived to be treacherous and impassable, full of dangerously armed

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[14] General Wade constructed about 250 miles of road in the Highlands. Wade's Inspector of Roads carried on this work, constructing an additional 800-900 miles between 1740-1767. William Taylor, *The Military Roads in Scotland* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1976), 24–31. For further historical information about military roads and links to map images, see "Military Maps of Scotland (18th Century)," National Library of Scotland, accessed February 18, 2018, https://maps.nls.uk/military/info.html.

Highlanders and wayward brigands.[15] The second Jacobite uprising in 1745 culminated in the Battle of Culloden in 1746, in which British government troops roundly defeated Jacobite forces – a motley assortment of Catholics, Episcopalians, and Highlanders led by Charles Edward Stuart, claimant to the British throne. Roads and battle wounds made lasting cuts through Highland clan territory, interrupting the Gaelic system of feudal kinship and extending the rational, territorial governmentality of the British state. This territorial logic, which conceives power through land's material attributes – its durability and concreteness, its ability to be fortified – came to resignify Highland space, overwriting a history of power exerted through fluid means: by way of sea and ship under the Norse conquerors, and through ties of blood and milk within the Gaelic clan system.

[15] Taylor, *The Military Roads in Scotland*.

Figure 18: 18th c. Military Roads and Barracks in Scotland

Map © 2017 National Library of Scotland. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland. http://maps.nls.uk/geo/find/#zoom=6&lat=56.7114&lon=-4.9000&layers=26&b=1&point=0,0. Screenshot by the author.

Of course, there are limits to the effectiveness of roads as extensive technologies of navigation and power. Some landscapes resist the incision of roads in the first place: it takes enormous effort to dig or blast through rock, particularly the stubborn Lewisian gneiss and Torridonian sandstone that make up the geology of the northwest Highlands. But even roads that are successfully carved out under such harsh conditions require work to maintain. Roads aren't made once and for all. Without continual effort, they cease to fulfill their basic function as a means of conveyance. The Highland military

roads rapidly degraded due to the absence of regular maintenance. An engineering survey conducted in 1785 found that the majority of Highland military roads – 682 miles in total – had become impassible.[16] Of course, military roads were not the only way of passage through this landscape: sheep and cattle drovers beat their own tracks as they moved livestock between different grazing areas, and people used habitual routes to move seasonally between permanent stone blackhouses and temporary *shielings* where cattle were grazed and milked during the summer months. But military roads created a formalized network of passageways through a landscape that had previously been known by the British government as impenetrable, dangerous, and wild.

However ambitious, the 18th-century military road campaigns were incomplete. Bypassing the Glenmara peninsula and surrounding coastal areas commonly known as the "rough bounds" in Gaelic (*na Garbh-Chrìochan*), the campaigns instead prioritized the construction of reliable arteries through the geographic heart of the Highlands. It is unclear why Glenmara escaped this intensive road development,[17] but it is tempting to speculate. Perhaps Glenmara was averted because of its notoriously rugged terrain, being surrounded by an intimidating ring of mountains between 700 and 900 meters in elevation, or because of its numerically insignificant population, or because it was believed to harbor dangerous outlaws and thieves, who were best left to their own

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[16] Taylor, 113–14.
[17] Several tracks from Glenmara to outlying areas were created in the 1950s under a previous landowner.

devices. Whatever the reason, this historical oversight had significant material consequences down the line. Military roads in the Highlands became the backbone of the modern, national road system, including the A82 highway from Glasgow to Inverness. However, many coastal areas like Glenmara that were not initially cut through by 18th-century roads would remain closed to motorized vehicles.

This vehicular inaccessibility proved to be influential, bolstering the case made by the Countryside Commission for Scotland in 1978, when it pushed the British government to recognize the conservation value of 40 identified National Scenic Areas (NSA).[18] Once the NSA designation was applied to Glenmara, large-scale road development became strictly regulated by planning policies.[19] When Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)[20] came along thirty years later, roadless areas were prime targets for classification in the Core Wild Land Areas advisory map released in 2013. These areas tended to fulfill the four criteria that SNH identified as being crucial to wild land status, including: (1) perceived naturalness; (2); distance from roads and ferry terminals; (3)

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[18] "Scotland's Scenic Heritage" (Countryside Commission for Scotland, 1978), http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/scotlandsscenicareas/Book_ScotlandsScenicHeritage.pdf.

[19] Development in National Scenic Areas (NSA) that may impact the character of the landscape must be approved through a planning consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage. This applies in particular to extension of existing road networks. See "Development Management and National Scenic Areas," Scottish Natural Heritage, accessed February 18, 2018, https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/safeguarding-protected-areas-and-species/protected-areas/national-designations/national-scenic-areas/development-management-and.

[20] Scottish Natural Heritage succeeded the Countryside Commission for Scotland in 1999, under the newly created Scottish Government.

rugged terrain; and (4) visible lack of modern infrastructure.[21] If Glenmara was historically roadless, it would remain so within a postindustrial governmentality operating under the sign of conservation. Glenmara's place value in this new regime was cemented by a lack of roads. Indeed, Glenmara has become a beloved destination of hillwalkers and holidaymakers precisely because one can't drive there. But while roadlessness may favorably limit accessibility, the feeling of remoteness is never guaranteed.

Things look rather different from the sea. If you have a boat, getting to Glenmara isn't so difficult. From Kilmory, the nearest mainland town, it's an easy six-mile trip across Loch Nèamh to the Glenmara pier. Drive to Kilmory, ferry across to Glenmara. A two-step journey, but one that appears fairly straightforward from a seafaring perspective, which views the sea as a means of passage, rather than a barrier. But just as remoteness is an achievement on land, it also requires coordination by water. Remoteness is not a given on either side. Nonetheless, it is from the sea that the fluid nature of remoteness – its mutability, flux, and tension – comes into view. If remoteness is essentially fluid, it is constantly being worked upon, and itself performs work: teasing multiple bodies into relation. In the same way, Glenmara's remoteness is the subject of a perpetual tug-of-war between isolation and accessibility, a contest that concerns locals

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[21] This perceptual tautology points to the essential ineffability of the "wild." For a historical critique of ideas of "wildness" see White, "The Forms of Wildness: Archaeology of an Idea."

and visitors alike. Too remote and no one will be able to come, too accessible and no one will bother. Like the feeling that something is "just right," Glenmara's remoteness is a delicate quality, a precarious balance point between openness and insularity. The feeling of geographical remoteness is a wavering value that hinges, in part, on the challenges and limitations of getting somewhere. And because road access to Glenmara has already been restricted by its overlapping landscape designations, the essential instability of Glenmara's remoteness becomes most apparent in local attempts to manage accessibility by boat.

3.2 Boat Wars

Glenmara locals refer to those tensions collectively (and unironically) as the "boat wars." The boat wars describe a series of events, but also a period of time, in which Glenmara's remoteness was hanging in the balance. At the height of the boat wars, about five years ago, multiple local boat operators were jostling for a share of the market ferrying passengers between Kilmory and Glenmara. Glenmara had already established itself as a tourist destination on the basis of its distinctive remoteness,[22] and there was money to be made bringing visitors across Loch Nèamh. Moreover, the tender to provide the "lifeline service"[23] to Glenmara – a five-year government contract worth

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[22] There are many hard-to-reach communities on the West Coast of Scotland that are valued similarly, but perhaps not superlatively, for their remoteness.

[23] The Scottish Government defines "lifeline" services as transport links that are essential to sustaining remote areas, particularly island and coastal communities. Implicitly, lifeline services would not be commercially viable in the absence of government transport subsidies.

more than £150,000 per annum[24] – was up for grabs. But the boat wars were never simply a contest over money or market share: they were also a battle to control remoteness itself, and the value that could be harnessed from it. In a place that is accessible only by sea, boats are key players in the management of openness and insularity. And the ferry operator who holds the government contract gets to control this aperture. In scenic Glenmara, a place that bills itself as being superlatively remote, it is possible to claim a double monopoly, managing the symbolic means and the concrete ends of value production. Remoteness and money are two kinds of value, and the boat wars were a contest for both.

In the days before the boat wars, ferry routes to Glenmara were limited but undisputed. For 63 years, the Glenmara ferry service was operated by a company called Bonny Shores, which sailed a traditional wooden ferryboat with a jaunty exterior painted in nautical red, white, and blue. The MV Bonny Shores was slow but sturdy, boasting an 81-person capacity and making the journey from Kilmory to Glenmara in a leisurely three-quarters of an hour. But it operated on a fairly limited timetable, with only two daily sailings Monday through Friday during the summer, and no sailings over the weekend. The Bonny Shores would arrive at Glenmara pier at 11:00 a.m., dropping passengers off in Kilmory at a quarter to noon, and making a return sailing to

[24] Council contracts supplement projected income from ticket sales, incentivizing ferry operators to provide a service that would not otherwise be commercially viable.

Glenmara at 2:15 p.m. This meant that locals could only get across to do shopping or keep appointments in Kilmory within a three-hour window during the day. Meanwhile, trains from Kilmory to the nearest mid-sized town – about 40 miles away – left the station at 9:00 a.m. and returned at quarter to six in the evening, several hours after the Bonny Shores made its return sailing to Glenmara. Given the disjuncture between the ferry and train timetables, Glenmara locals had to plan overnight stays if they wanted to buy groceries or see the GP. Travel was even more challenging over the winter when the tourists were gone. The Bonny Shores only sailed on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and trains also operated on reduced timetables. Sailings would be canceled due to the incidence of gale-force winds, a regular occurrence on the West Coast.[25] For Glenmara locals, managing life's ordinary tasks could be a hassle, and expensive.

To compensate for these inconveniences, several locals owned small motorboats or rigid inflatable boats (RIBs)[26] that they used to make personal trips to Kilmory, but which they also operated as informal charters for locals and small groups of visitors. Due to the limited sailings offered by the Bonny Shores, informal operators could charge as much as £60 for a one-way trip across Loch Nèamh: a steep price, but one that most visitors were willing to pay, and even thrifty locals in a pinch. At the time, it was known among locals that you could call on Gordon MacDonald, Cliff Carter, or Wallace

[25] British Maritime Law discourages boats from sailing in winds greater than 25 mph, or gale force 5. Winters on the West Coast – from September to April – often see much stronger winds, from gale force 7 (32-28 mph) to full gale force 10 (55-63 mph).
[26] Pronounced "rib."

Ferguson to take you to Kilmory in a private boat at times outside the normal Bonny Shores sailings. If you were lucky, you might be able to coordinate your trip with other locals and split the cost of the fare. Private charters were also a valuable service to recommend to visitors arriving for a stay at Malvern Estate, or one of a dozen independent guesthouses and B&Bs in Glenmara at the time. Informal operators could accommodate visitors' varied arrival and departure times, providing a level of convenience and personalized hospitality that Bonny Shores could not. This split market arrangement seemed to suit both Bonny Shores and the informal local operators. While Bonny Shores held the subsidized contracts from the local government and the Royal Mail to run the lifeline service and deliver post to Glenmara, informal local operators were able to fill in the gaps. And neither party was a credible competitor to the others: informal operators using small personal boats lacked the capacity to challenge Bonny Shores' service, and Bonny Shores' cost equation did not justify making more frequent trips to Glenmara. Meanwhile, Gordon, Cliff, and Wallace made efforts to be neighborly, splitting the demand for special sailings among themselves.

This situation changed in 2012, when the five-year government contract to provide lifeline ferry services to Glenmara came up for renewal.[27] A new player had quietly entered the scene, offering a competitive tender for the council contract under

[27] The subsidy contract covers the cost of providing reduced fare tickets to locals and free fares for schoolchildren commuting to the high school in Kilmory.

the nose of Bonny Shores. The dark horse was called Sea Link, a company started by an entrepreneurial English couple from Herefordshire who had retired to Glenmara several years back. Pete and Orla Granger, hardly ones to put their feet up even in retirement, immediately saw the opportunity to run a more frequent ferry service for the Glenmara community. They invested in two 12-person, 13-meter Interceptor boats at a cost of £500,000[28] and began running informal services for locals in 2009. In late 2012, Sea Link submitted a tender for the government contract that undercut Bonny Shores' price by more than half. In the absence of competition, the local council had been paying Bonny Shores over £150,000 annually to provide the lifeline service to Glenmara. Sea Link committed to providing that service for just £75,000 annually. More significantly, Sea Link proposed a radically revised ferry timetable, offering six daily sailings between Glenmara and Kilmory from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. during the summer months, and a minimum of four daily sailings over the winter. It was an offer the local council couldn't refuse, and Sea Link was awarded the contract in early 2013. In a local newspaper article announcing the decision in March 2013, the council chairman of Transport, Environmental and Community Services praised Sea Link's bid: "I am absolutely delighted to announce a much-extended service to support the Glenmara community. It provides more trips daily, every day of the week. It is good for businesses to access the remote community daily and easily and it is good for the community. Importantly, in

[28] This is an estimate based on the cost of buying a pre-owned boat of the same make and model.

these challenging times, the contract represents extremely good value for money for the council." The local council was overjoyed. Bonny Shores, along with a contingent of loyal Glenmara patrons, was not.

In local press coverage following the announcement of Sea Link's successful bid, Bonny Shores was portrayed as the victim of an underhanded play. Newspaper articles depicted the lost contract as a tragic severance of longstanding local roots and familial ties. The story was compelling. Bonny Shores was owned and operated for 40 years by coxswain Curtis Clark, a ruddy West Coaster whom locals affectionately called "Cuddy." In the early 1970s, Cuddy inherited Bonny Shores from his father, who had been a sailor in Kilmory since World War II. Loyalty to Bonny Shores reflected locals' emotional investment in a company that embodied the values of family and tradition, attachments that were evoked in the affecting language the *Highland Press and Journal* used to describe the ferry service's change of hands:

> The remote Glenmara community said goodbye to their longstanding ferrymen with a rousing sendoff and a pile of presents at the pier yesterday. Curtis Clark and the crew of the MV Bonny Shores sailed their final crossing of the council-run service yesterday afternoon […] Mr. Clark said that he had made many friends and enjoyed many scenic sailings in his time as the Glenmara ferryman but was leaving the service with a sour taste in his mouth […] The contract has been awarded to Glenmara-based firm Sea Link, which will take over the daily crossings on Monday […] The end-of-an-era decision means that five full-time jobs and two reserve roles will be lost at Kilmory. Mr. Clark said: 'It's been an emotional day today, quite sad really. It was a nice send-off from the people in Glenmara, though. We'd like to thank all the [villagers] who have supported us over the years.' He added that the future was uncertain for the MV Bonny Shores. Mr. Clark said: 'We're going to try and keep going through the summer

> but I think we'll call it a day come winter. It was the ferry subsidy that got us through the low season so, without that, I just don't know what will happen.'

It is a common story on the West Coast, but no less unfortunate. Locals' loyalty just isn't enough to sustain a business operating in a fragile area. Bonny Shores couldn't stay afloat in the absence of government subsidies, and when it lost those subsidies to Sea Link, a piece of local history died too. Those who knew him remember Cuddy fondly as an unimpeachable character who, locals emphasize, "ran a reliable service for 40 years" – a service whose value was its longevity, rather than its expedience. For most Glenmara locals, Bonny Shores' loss of the council contract was felt collectively as an injury to family and tradition: not only the end of an era, but the end of a generation.

While Bonny Shores had a dependable, even familial, image, Sea Link was an unknown quantity, a stranger that appeared out of nowhere and completely altered the rules of the game. Sea Link introduced real competition in a space that had always been the undisputed domain of a single boat, officially speaking. Bonny Shores' hold on the Glenmara ferry service was so accepted, so naturalized, that no one perceived the company to be a monopolist on a route that had in fact always been open to tender. And so Sea Link's entrée caught everyone off guard. Even more surprising was its radical proposal to offer multiple daily sailings to one of Scotland's most remote coastal areas. But these weren't the only changes that Sea Link introduced. Beneath the surface,

something else had already shifted: remoteness, and the potential value it could generate, was now in play.

When it was awarded the council contract in 2013, Sea Link gained access to an existing market for transport between Kilmory and Glenmara, but it also carved out an alternate field of value, one that Bonny Shores and local informal operators had failed to notice or exploit. Sea Link not only capitalized on Glenmara's remote location, which already attracted visitors from all over Europe. More importantly, the company positioned itself to administer and adjust this quality of remoteness with its radically revised timetables and rip-roaring boats. The Venturer and the Vanguard were small but speedy, making the journey from Kilmory to Glenmara in 25 minutes flat. Sea Link compensated for the small capacity of its boats (12 passengers each) by running boats more frequently: six sailings a day, from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., seven days a week. With Sea Link, locals could now get to Kilmory for a "quick shop" at the convenience store and within 30 minutes be on the next return boat to Glenmara. Teens who boarded at the high school in Kilmory could come home for an overnight visit during the week. Joiners, painters, and housekeepers who lived in Glenmara could hold full-time jobs in Kilmory, taking the boat out first thing in the morning and returning home in time for tea. Not only were sailings more frequent, they were also more affordable. Same-day return tickets for locals were subsidized at less than half the rate that visitors paid, so you could make a trip to Kilmory for £8. There were more opportunities for visitors as

well: £20 would buy you a ticket to have lunch in the Red Stag, go for a nice walk, and return to Kilmory in the evening. And the five full-time jobs that disappeared from Kilmory when Cuddy lost the contract? These were brought over to Glenmara, a place with even fewer employment opportunities than Kilmory due to its remote location.

Glenmara locals gained something else when the ferry service started operating on their home turf. It was as if the balance of power between Kilmory and Glenmara had shifted. Pete and Orla were Glenmara locals themselves; they understood the challenges of living remotely and the frustrations of being stranded in Kilmory due to bad weather or poorly timed sailings. While they scrupulously respected each boat's mandated capacity of 12 passengers, they would notify locals of impending bad weather, rebooking those whom they could accommodate on earlier scheduled boats. And they were humble. The Grangers ran Sea Link out of their home in Glenmara, a large restored blackhouse around the coast from the main village. Orla took bookings by phone and email, noting names and numbers of passengers in a large folio diary. They also had a small one-room office on the pier in Kilmory, where parcels were stashed before being loaded onto the boats and skippers could dry out with a cup of tea between sailings. Sea Link improved the frequency and speed of sailings to Glenmara, but it also offered something else that Bonny Shores could not: it repositioned the ferry service on Glenmara's shores, altering the geography of remoteness by prioritizing local needs. It was, in short, a game changer.

Given all of these advantages, one would expect the Glenmara community to have embraced Sea Link's new service. But a vocal contingent – locals who felt loyal to Cuddy and the informal operators – were upset by the decision. They made official complaints to the Glenmara Community Association, arguing it wasn't fair for a single boat operator to claim all of the business. They called Pete and Orla "dirty capitalists" and boycotted the Sea Link ferries. Cliff and his wife sold their house and moved off the peninsula when it became clear that Cliff couldn't make money running his informal charters anymore. Pete took the backlash in stride but Orla was deeply hurt. The Sea Link skippers, who were themselves Glenmara locals, also felt attacked. One day, a Sea Link skipper reputedly steered the Venturer dangerously close to one of the Bonny Shores' lunchtime cruise boats, antagonizing his rival in retaliation against the rumors and the ill treatment. This was the first volley: the boat wars had begun.

Pete acknowledges that locals were "grumpy" when Sea Link started running a regular service. But "grumpy" would be a typical British understatement. Several years hence, some Glenmara locals still feel affronted by Sea Link's success, describing its bid for the council contract as "undemocratic" – even a "hostile takeover." Wallace and his wife Mairi still refuse to set foot on a Sea Link boat. Some remain suspicious of Sea Link's intentions because the terms of its council contract were never shared with the community: Are they contracted to provide a service for 12 locals, or for 12 people? Others have softened, acknowledging the convenience of the more frequent daily

sailings. A few are even willing to admit that they like Pete and Orla, and that everyone has benefitted from improvements to the ferry service.[29]

Today, when locals talk about the boat wars, what they are pointing to is a period in which the location of Glenmara, and the value it could generate, was fundamentally reconfigured. Locals who objected to Sea Link were not so much concerned with the change in the frequency of sailings, as if Glenmara would be spoilt by the increased traffic at the pier. Rather, they resented the reshuffling that gave Sea Link control over how access to Glenmara would become valued. In other words, it's not that Sea Link threatened to rupture Glenmara's remoteness by making it easier to get on and off the peninsula. It's that it called attention to remoteness as a quality that could be adjusted and put to work. Sea Link discovered a field of potential value that others hadn't thought existed. Before Sea Link, Glenmara's remote location was taken for granted. Bonny Shores puttered along at its leisurely pace, and locals made do with a ferry schedule that was reliable, if less than convenient. After Sea Link, nothing would

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[29] For personal reasons, the Grangers ultimately terminated Sea Link's council contract before its set expiration date in 2018, making arrangements to sell their boats to a new operator, which as it happens was also a familiar face. On April 1, 2016, a revamped Bonny Shores, under new ownership, took over the Glenmara ferry service, using Sea Link's Venturer and Vanguard boats for morning and evening sailings, and putting the MV Bonny Shores on the water during the day. During discussions with the Glenmara community at the time of the handover, Bonny Shores was compelled to retain parts of Sea Link's revised timetable, particularly sailings seven days a week. Bonny Shores subsequently reduced the number of daily sailings from six to four.

be the same. Remoteness became valuable precisely because it could be teased and stretched. In other words, remoteness was no longer a barrier; it was a lever.[30]

Glenmara survives by exploiting this lever, which is the business of managing remoteness. The distinctive quality that remoteness affords – an ineffable feeling of being "away" – is what establishes Glenmara's place value, its status as a destination. But if remoteness is a positioning, or a relation, it is an essentially ambivalent one, always at risk of tipping into complete openness or insularity. Remoteness is a delicate aesthetic, a condition that comes to be valued through a constant negotiation of accessibility and isolation. Boats are one player in this balancing act. Signal is another.

3.3 Mobilizing Connections

It is mid-January 2016, and I am learning about Glenmara's mobile signal controversy second-hand, during a typical evening hanging out in the drawing room of the 18th-century Big House.[31] I am sitting cross-legged on the carpet with my back to the fireplace, in a loose circle with five or six locals who are lounging next to me between

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[30] Years before Sea Link, visitors came because they treasured Glenmara's quiet glens and dramatic hills. And locals treated Glenmara as a retreat away from a troubled world. Being "remote" was always part of what people loved about Glenmara, but "remoteness" had not yet been discovered as a quality that could be adjusted topologically.

[31] This is a ubiquitous term for the laird's house on a landed estate in Scotland. Today, many Big Houses have fallen into ruin, due to the enormous costs of their refurbishment and upkeep. Some Big Houses are still inhabited part of the year by their owners and extended family members. Others may be operated as luxury guesthouses or wedding venues. For an evocative portrayal of a neglected Big House on North Uist, see Fraser MacDonald, "The Ruins of Erskine Beveridge," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 39, no. 4 (October 1, 2014): 477–89.

the floor, the leather club sofa, and a pair of Louis XVI chairs. Jimmy, a Glaswegian who works as the live-in housekeeper, has invited us for drinks.

The Big House was once the lavish residence of the Macquarie clan chief who possessed the whole of the Glenmara peninsula. Ownership of the house changed hands at numerous points throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, ultimately sitting with the Glenmara Estate, a private commercial entity that was liquidated in 1998. For several years, the house sat empty while locals collected things that were left behind: carpets, estate papers, bits and bobs. In the early 2000s, it was sold off to raise money for the Glenmara Community Association. The new owners of the Big House are a wealthy couple from the States, hippies at heart who defy expectations for people of their means. It is lucky for locals that the Millers are so permissive, such countercultural lairds – things could have turned out very differently. And so as incongruous as it may have seemed to the house's original inhabitants, the Big House now functions as the carnivalesque heart of Glenmara, a place where people can drop in at any time: certainly when the Millers are home, but especially when they are away. The space is seductively idiosyncratic. There is something dizzyingly uncanny about it, something eerily anachronistic, the dissolution of the parties always at odds with the faded but decorous elegance of the house. It is a world unto itself: decaying, enchanted, debauched.

Jimmy has been playing the entertainer as usual, getting up from his seat and gesticulating wildly as he captivates the room with an outlandish story from his days as

a ghillie with the Glenmara Community Association. Somehow the subject transitions from stags to signal. The tone of the room shifts as Jimmy turns to Kevin, shouting. It's like that thing with the mobile signal! Kevin is impassive, sitting on the couch, methodically rolling a fag. He looks sideways at Jimmy, declining to match his intensity, and explains the context of the discussion for my benefit: Kevin thought it would be a good idea to run a consultation[32] to see what the community thinks about bringing a 3G network to the peninsula. Mobile signal would benefit accommodation providers and small business owners, allowing them to coordinate better with their guests. Plus, he reasoned, it would make Glenmara an easier and more attractive place to live for "younger folk" – those collectively imagined bodies, preferably packaged as a "family," that always stand in for the promise of a lively and viable community yet to come.

The community-wide discussion on mobile signal had been tabled when it became clear that BT itself didn't see the commercial value in erecting a tower for such a small population. But Jimmy remained strongly opposed to the idea anyway. We all fell in love with this place for some reason, he argued, so why would we want to change it? He was passionately reenacting a debate that had long since been put to rest. I wondered what difference 3G would make, since everyone here was already connected through wireless Internet. Glenmara locals were no Luddites. Even Jimmy

[32] In British planning parlance, a "consultation" is a survey or poll that uses short-answer questions to allow community members to give opinions on a proposed development.

acknowledged Glenmara's dependence on social media. Of course, he says, we're the biggest users of Facebook Messenger in the world! Next to me, Aisling laughs in agreement. Single and in her mid-forties, with a halo of gorgeous curls, Aisling is someone who strikes you as more of an ethereal than an earthly being: a free spirit who belongs nowhere near the Internet. She didn't have a Facebook account when she first moved to Glenmara two years ago, and she never knew what was going on in the village. Aye, and now I see you're on it all the time! Jimmy is taking the piss, gesturing as if tapping out a text message on a smartphone. Aisling flushes, laughing again with embarrassment, but she can't argue.

Keeping in touch in Glenmara isn't all that different from communicating elsewhere. Technology is indispensable: we care and connect at a distance.[33] It is clear that for Jimmy, Aisling, and others, the Internet was a kind of necessary evil: a lifeline in a hyper-networked world, a form of connection that a remote place like Glenmara couldn't survive without. But something happens when the localized links enabled by Wifi become pervasive in the form of 3G-coverage. Jimmy painted the picture with typical slapstick enactments, ridiculing Kevin's proposal: people wandering around the village playing PokémonGo and checking their email, faces glued to their screens,

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[33] Jeanette Pols shows how the use of remote care technologies facilitates health outcomes through accessible but non-interfering relationships between caregivers and patients living with chronic illness. Jeannette Pols, *Care at a Distance: On the Closeness of Technology* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012). Danny Miller also studies how people use social media to modulate exposure and intimacy in peri-urban English communities. Daniel Miller, *Social Media in an English Village: Or How to Keep People at Just the Right Distance* (London: UCL Press, 2016).

crashing into trees and passing Land Rovers. Glenmara would be no different than Glasgow. Behind the comedy though, what Jimmy was suggesting was actually rather serious. Phone signal would disrupt something about life in Glenmara – something ineffable, perhaps, but vital. In a place that survives by virtue of its remoteness, not all technologies are desirable. Not all signals create connections worth having.

Managing remoteness means being selective about signals. If signals are modes of connection that bridge distances by carrying information, they also signify:[34] they have something to say about the value of a given connection and the exchanges it facilitates. But to say that signals bridge distance does not mean that distance becomes irrelevant once a connection is established. On the contrary, distance always matters in the sense that it determines the signals that can be transmitted, their effectiveness and stability, and the kinds of attachments they make possible. Living remotely does not require distances to be overcome so much as traced, through connections that make distances both viable and meaningful. In Glenmara, remoteness is managed by mobilizing connections selectively, tethering lifelines that are capable of making distance matter in multiple ways: as a field that affords the possibilities – and affirms the value – of both attachment and retreat. Distance facilitates relations of proximity and detachment, and remoteness is the quality that emerges through the work of holding

[34] Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999).

these extremes in tension. Though they are themselves intangible, signals materialize the work of tethering lifelines and managing remoteness in Glenmara.

While Glenmara (still) lacks mobile coverage, local businesses and residents have sought connection through other means. Landlines, for example, are hooked up by means of a submarine cable running under Loch Nèamh, which connects to British Telecom's copper cable in Kilmory. In the 1960s and 1970s, when the population of Glenmara was at a historical low, landlines and letters were the only means of long-distance communication. Landlines were crucial for local residents to communicate with each other, with friends and relatives living elsewhere, and with prospective visitors. Technological advances were made slowly. For years, Richard and Evelyn Lawrence, who retired to Glenmara in 1985, had the only fax machine on the peninsula. Dial-up became available in the 1990s, to be followed by satellite broadband,[35] but connections were slow and unreliable.

While in theory satellite broadband appeared to offer significant advances over dial-up speeds, in practice it wasn't a huge improvement. Signals emitted by satellite are fickle to begin with. They have to travel a long way through the atmosphere to the dish. And at higher radio frequencies, they tend to be even more vulnerable to interference

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[35] Broadband (ADSL) signal is transmitted through existing landline infrastructure, including underground copper cables and telephone exchanges. Satellite broadband beams broadband signal from a satellite orbiting the Earth – about 22,000 miles away in space.

from precipitation, strong winds, and line-of-sight obstructions like trees: not particularly suited to conditions on the West Coast of Scotland.[36]

Satellite broadband allowed locals and accommodation providers in Glenmara to communicate by email, but there were numerous drawbacks. For one thing, it was prohibitively expensive for most households, even at the subsidized rates offered by the local council. And it wasn't terribly effective either. Slow upload and download speeds prevented users from keeping pace with the Internet's rapidly proliferating communication possibilities, like video streaming, video conferencing, and photo sharing. Connection issues were not only a problem for local residents; they affected visitors' experiences of Glenmara as well.[37] At Malvern Estate, satellite broadband was available in the main office, but guests who wanted to connect had to come to the premises. And still there were major problems with latency and interference due to weather conditions.[38] The situation was "inconvenient for visitors and for ourselves," one staff person said, politely acknowledging that connectivity issues could be an issue for accommodation providers catering to a wealthy clientele. Given these constraints,

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[36] Glenmara signal is transmitted at 5.8 GHz, above the threshold of 2 GHz at which interference and obstruction become more pronounced.

[37] It turns out that visitors who come to Glenmara to get away aren't interested in disconnecting entirely. Because getting away is about enjoying remoteness, not isolation.

[38] Latency refers to time lag in transmission, due to the fact that satellite signal has to travel a long way through the atmosphere to the dish. Latency creates delays, inhibiting user engagement with video streaming, Voice-over-Internet Protocols (VoIP), or online gaming technologies. Interference refers to the vulnerability of signals to weather elements like wind and rain – common conditions on the West Coast of Scotland. Cf. Robert Kleymore, "What Are The Limitations Of Satellite Internet Technology?," Business Computing World, March 27, 2014, https://www.businesscomputingworld.co.uk/what-are-the-limitations-of-satellite-internet-technology/.

Glenmara faced a peculiar problem: how to overcome the limitations of a remote location in order to leverage the value of remoteness, in order to remain connected to a desirable degree. This is the story of how Wifi came to Glenmara.

Ironically, the value potential of remoteness was exactly what would allow Glenmara to transcend its remote location, with the help of some interested outsiders[39] – one of whom was practically speaking a neighbor. It just so happens that across Loch Ifrinn on the northwest side of the peninsula, about 30 miles from the village of Glenmara, there lived a well-regarded Informatics professor at the University of Edinburgh.[40] Morrie Thompson had a small second home in Triskaig, a coastal community that in some respects was even more fragile than Glenmara even though it was accessible by road. In 2005, Triskaig had a population of only 40 people and nine school children, and it was nearly two hours by car to the nearest mid-sized town. There were no shops or pubs, and no tourists to bring in revenue. Although Thompson was based in Edinburgh, his loyalties lay with little Triskaig. He was a passionate advocate for improved connectivity in the Highlands and Islands, an area that had been skipped over in the rush to bring next-generation broadband to the UK.

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[39] Michel Callon theorizes the process of "enrolment" by which different parties collaborate by coordinating their individual agendas. See Michel Callon, "Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay," in *Power, Action, and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge?*, ed. John Law, Sociological Review Monograph 32 (London: Routledge, 1986), 196–233. Similarly, Bruno Latour shows that pasteurization became a credible and widely used technique because Louis Pasteur was able to convince French farmers of its utility – in other words, to get them interested in his science. Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

[40] The following narrative description draws on information presented on Morrie Thompson's personal website and the Umbrella project website, with some modifications for clarity.

The truth is that the Highlands and Islands weren't attractive to telecommunications providers. There was no commercial case for making infrastructural investments in such sparsely populated areas, given the small number of end users and significant distances to travel between them.[41] Distance was not only a problem when it came to motivating future investments; it also influenced the speed of existing connections. This is because broadband signals lose strength as they travel along a copper cable from an exchange to user premises. The greater the distance a signal has to travel, the more speed is lost on the way to the end user. Connection speeds fall off at distances greater than 1 km from an exchange.[42] And in Triskaig, users lived an average of 15.5 km from the nearest exchange. So while an estimated 95% of households and businesses in the Highlands and Islands may technically have had access to broadband on their phone lines, the quality of those signals often did not facilitate viable connections. In a 2012 report, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)[43] estimated that average Internet speeds in Inverness, the largest town in the region, were less than half as fast as speeds in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and only one-third of the UK-wide average of 7.6Mbps. This skew is even more pronounced in remote areas on the West Coast, where speeds average just 0.5Mbps, or 500Kbps – hardly robust enough to make use of

[41] In 2013, the average population density of the local Council area was 4.3 people per square kilometer.
[42] Giacomo Bernardi, Peter Buneman, and Mahesh Marina, "Broadband for Rural Scotland: A White Paper" (University of Edinburgh, April 2009).
[43] Highlands and Islands Enterprise is a publicly funded organization that promotes the economic and social development of the region.

new communication platforms like Voice-over-Internet Protocols (VoIP) and Remote Access Services (RSA). In the world of telecommunications, access doesn't always guarantee reliable connections.

Morrie Thompson understood this problem, and saw that the West Coast was being left behind in spite of the Scottish Government's stated commitment to investing in high-speed broadband.[44] In 2006, he created a website to bring attention to this issue, with a focus on Triskaig. Thompson argued that faster connections were critical to remote communities, perhaps even more so than urban areas:

> [1] Some of us need a decent internet [*sic*] connection for our business. Others, such as the author, would spend more time working from Triskaig if broadband were available. [2] Villages such as Triskaig rely on mail-order [*sic*] for their supplies. An increasing number of mail-order companies will only take orders on the internet [*sic*]; and a large number of retailers give a discount for ordering on the web. Imagine trying to work on a connection that is so slow that it often times out before you have completed the transaction. [3] Our children have poor access to libraries, cinemas, bookstores etc. Good internet [*sic*] connections are especially important for them."[45]

In a 2009 white paper exploring the feasibility of rural broadband, Thompson included a picture of an elderly Triskaig resident sitting in front of a laptop. The caption

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[44] The case for high-speed broadband was made by the Scottish Government in 2002. "Connecting Scotland: Our Broadband Future" (The Scottish Government, December 2002), http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2002/12/15863/14247. As Internet-based technology changed rapidly during the aughts, the Scottish Government made a new commitment to investing in Next Generation Broadband (NGB) across the country. "Scotland's Digital Future: Infrastructure Action Plan" (The Scottish Government, March 2011), https://beta.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-digital-future-strategy-scotland/.

[45] Thompson observes that while an image of picturesque Triskaig figured on the cover of the government-issued action plan on community broadband, the village still did not have broadband access by 2008. Bernardi, Buneman, and Marina, "Broadband for Rural Scotland: A White Paper."

reads: “Willy Sandaig ‘teleconferences’ with his grandchildren in New Zealand. Teleconferencing needs both speed and quality of service.” Quality signals are essential technologies for tethering lifelines, the kinds of connections that sustain remote communities. But in enumerating the reasons why remote communities need viable Internet connections, Thompson makes another point, perhaps one he didn’t notice himself. In arguing the necessity of better connectivity in remote areas, Thompson isn’t suggesting that remote communities need to overcome their location, or that telecommunications will provide the means by which to do so. Rather, he is saying that connectivity is what will allow remote communities to continue to exist. Good connections would allow Thompson to spend more time away from the University of Edinburgh, working remotely in Triskaig. They would allow residents to consume at a distance by ordering shopping online. They would allow Willy Sandaig to stay on the West Coast of Scotland instead of moving to New Zealand to be near his grandchildren. Broadband signal is not just a technology that improves quality of life, though it does do that. It is also a lifeline that allows remote communities to survive in the first place – to, in some sense, stay remote.

But mobilizing signals as vital connections accomplishes something else, beyond assuring mere survival: it allows remoteness itself to become a value. If remoteness is a matter of positioning, a quality that brings multiple bodies into relation, then it requires connections in order to become valued. A remote location can’t leverage remoteness as a

value unless it can make the connections that allow it to be seen and recognized at a distance.[46] And connections have to be made selectively in order to manage remoteness. Vital connections are ones that sustain life remotely, tethers that preserve a desirable feeling of remoteness precisely because they overcome isolation.

Thompson was determined to make Triskaig seen at a distance. He continued to update his website until 2007, explaining the effects of recent policy changes and embedding links to emails he had exchanged with representatives of the Scottish Government. Thompson was critical of the Scottish Government's broadband investment strategy,[47] which awarded millions of pounds to British Telecom[48] to undertake the service provision, while leaving it up to BT to decide which

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[46] St. Kilda is the most dramatic case of lifeline intervention in Scotland. The island, which lies about 40 miles northwest of the Outer Hebrides, was self-sufficient for centuries. Islanders used native gannet birds and puffins as a principle source of food and fuel. Throughout the 19th century, the British government made attempts to incorporate the small population of islanders through shipments of petrol, sugar, and mail. The Church of Scotland sent a missionary to live amongst them. Due to famine, islanders began leaving for the mainland or Australia in the mid-19th century. The small population of islanders who remained were evacuated by the government in 1930. Today the island is owned by the National Trust for Scotland and functions as a sanctuary for seabirds. See Charles Maclean, *Island on the Edge of the World: Utopian St Kilda and Its Passing* (London: Tom Stacey, 1972). For a critique of travellers' accounts and "tragic" narratives of St. Kilda, see Fraser MacDonald, "St Kilda and the Sublime," *Ecumene* 8, no. 2 (2001): 151–74.

[47] Telecommunications and Internet access are "reserved matters," meaning that they are legislated by the UK Parliament. The Scottish Government receives a budget from Her Majesty's Government (HMG), but it can make choices about how to prioritize spending. See Ewan Sutherland, "Broadband in Scotland: Broader, Faster, Poorer, Remoter" (Fraser of Allander Institute of Economic Commentary, March 2017).

[48] British Telecom was denationalized in 1984 under Margaret Thatcher. In the context of UK-wide superfast broadband provision, it has been criticized on two counts: first, for exploiting a "quasi monopoly" position (it won the contracts in each of the 44 identified areas) and second, for spending only part of the £1.2 billion taxpayer subsidy on investments in prioritized rural areas. See Jane Wakefield Cellan-Jones Rory, "Rural Broadband Rollout: Taxpayers Being 'Ripped off', Say MPs," *BBC News*, September 26, 2013, sec. Technology, http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-24227096; Christopher Williams, "Government Claims Economic Boost from £1.2bn BT Rural Broadband Subsidy," November 14, 2013, sec. Finance, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/mediatechnologyandtelecoms/telecoms/10448014/Government-claims-economic-boost-from-1.2bn-BT-rural-broadband-subsidy.html.

improvements it would make, and where. Naturally, this meant that BT would continue to prioritize investments in population-dense areas with greater commercial value – again pushing the most remote and disadvantaged rural areas to the bottom of the list. Thompson saw this as a failed opportunity for the Scottish Government to intervene in a way that would make a meaningful difference to rural communities. But he didn't wait around for the government to change its act. In the meantime, Thompson set about multiplying the connections at his disposal to bring broadband to Triskaig and neighboring areas that were equally underserved. Corralling several colleagues in the School of Informatics at the University of Edinburgh, Thompson founded a research partnership between the University of Edinburgh and the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)[49] in 2008 to explore the feasibility of delivering "low-cost, reliable and high speed broadband in rural areas." Triskaig was selected as the "testbed" for the research program. And so the Umbrella Project was born.[50]

Umbrella was premised on a big idea: that basic home wireless equipment could transmit high-speed broadband signal in remote areas, destinations that were located too far from BT exchanges to receive quality service. Using what Thompson called "terrestrial wireless" technology would allow remote coastal communities to connect

[49] UHI is a publicly funded institution with 13 rural campuses across the Highlands and Islands, and a robust offering of distance learning options for those who are unable to commute. It offers research degrees that have regional appeal and relevance, including Gaelic Language and Culture, Rural Health and Wellbeing, Marine Research, and Nordic Studies.
[50] The following narrative, including direct quotes, is based on information presented on Morrie Thompson's personal website.

with each other, and with the wider world. It worked like this: Across the water to the west of little Triskaig is an institution called Eastley Folk School. As it happens, Eastley was hooked into Fishnet, a high-speed broadband network that serves research and educational institutions across the UK. The Fishnet network is powerful: with over 5,000 km of fiber optic cables, it has a backbone capacity of 100 Gbps and a connection capacity of up to 40 Gbps. This means that Fishnet could facilitate connections nearly 80,000 times faster than the average speed of existing broadband connections in remote areas of the Highlands and Islands.[51] And it had tons of excess capacity. Fishnet would be a powerful ally for the Umbrella Project, if Thompson and his colleagues could figure out how to tap into the network.[52]

It helped that Fishnet was a broadband network serving educational institutions, and that Thompson's partnership was also academic in nature. This made it easy to convince Eastley of the value of the Umbrella Project, and to get permission from them to connect to Fishnet for research purposes. But there were also drawbacks. Eastley was not well situated in relation to Triskaig. First, there was the problem of distance: Eastley was over 12 nautical miles from Triskaig. Even powerful broadband signals are subject to attenuation across distances of that magnitude. What's more, there was no line-of-

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[51] 1 Gbps (gigabyte per second) = 1000 Mbps (megabyte per second) = 1,000,000 Kbps (kilobyte per second). So 40 Gbps is equal to 40,000 Mbps or 40,000,000 Kbps. Broadband connection speeds in the Highlands average 512 Kbps.

[52] In technical terms, Fishnet was a potentially valuable "backhaul" source. Backhaul is the term used in ICT to describe the intermediary link that connects end users with the "backbone" of a network.

sight from the Fishnet transmitters at Eastley to receivers in Triskaig, due to the elevation of hills on the northwestern side of the Glenmara peninsula. (The hills always seem to be in the way.) In order to get around this obstacle so that a wireless signal could be transmitted directly from Eastley to Triskaig, the wireless receiver at Triskaig had to be positioned at a height of 308 meters on the side of Beinn Garnoch.[53] Beinn Garnoch happens to be one of the highest and steepest mountains in the surrounding area – "not an easy walk," Thompson says. It took work to get up the hill to position the wireless receiver, but Thompson describes the climb as a satisfying, if exhausting, collective effort:

> Amazingly, one afternoon in very early January 2008, a group of about eight residents of Triskaig and Rhudale, all somewhat the worse for wear from Hogmanay celebrations[54] turned out and, in the space of a few hours, climbed the hill and erected our first relay. It was then that we realised the importance of community involvement to the project.

Indeed, wireless signals don't transmit by themselves. It took an assortment of different allies – professors, university departments, wireless receivers, Fishnet, and enthusiastic residents – to get the Umbrella Project off the ground. It was a motley choreography. Once a connection was successfully established between the wireless transmitter at Eastley and the receiver on Beinn Garnoch at Triskaig, it was possible to

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[53] With an elevation of 974 meters (3,196 feet) Beinn Garnoch is classified as a Munro.

[54] Hogmanay (New Year's Eve) is the most important annual holiday in Scotland, observed more widely and more exuberantly than Christmas. Festivities, particularly in the Highlands, can last for several days.

get a superfast broadband connection in Triskaig – at speeds that easily eclipsed the available commercial alternatives. Meanwhile, Thompson continued to work his professional network to support the project's aims.[55] Thanks to a loan of desktop computers from the School of Informatics at Edinburgh, Triskaig residents young and old began learning how to interact with a technology that had previously been out of reach.

Within six months, Thompson and his colleagues had created five additional nodes within the Umbrella testbed network, all pointing back to the Fishnet transmitter at Eastley. But the coordination efforts didn't stop there. Like all connections, Umbrella's wireless signals required continuous support in order to remain effective: it takes work to maintain stability, and to sustain viable connections. By 2011, several years after the project's launch, Umbrella was still being run as a research partnership, but it had become so successful that a free connection to the Fishnet network was no longer justifiable. From now on, Umbrella would have to enter a formal agreement with Eastley and start paying to use its backhaul. But while the remote communities that Umbrella served had come to rely on the connections afforded by the network, they were not going to be able to afford the cost of maintaining them long-term. Unfortunately, Eastley couldn't accommodate local communities by lowering the cost of connecting to Fishnet

[55] Latour shows that a great deal of "science" is done outside the lab. Lead researchers have to write grants and promote their work at industry conferences, while "bench scientists" are responsible for lab work. Latour, *Science in Action*.

because UK legislation required educational institutions to sell backhaul at commercial rates. Suddenly, things weren't looking good for Umbrella.

While all of this was going on, Glenmara, its neighbor the Isle of Scapa, and other small outlying islands were also experiencing network problems. For years, these communities had been reliant on satellite broadband that was subsidized by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and delivered by various satellite providers.[56] But there were a number of issues with the service. In addition to the usual latency and interference problems that affect all satellite connections, the satellite providers were themselves unreliable: when one of these providers went bankrupt, as several of them did, locals were left without service for weeks at a time.

The system was also structurally unreliable. In Glenmara and Scapa, there was a single hub that powered the whole network, and houses were connected to this central node by means of relay transmitters fixed at different points along the way. Thus, the network was structured as a series of chains extending outward from this central point. Houses located farther from the center were connected through multiple relay points, meaning that they were dependent on each of the intermediary links remaining stable. Glenmara, Scapa, and neighboring islands were all off-grid, and each house used its own diesel generator to generate electricity. If an interruption in the power supply shut

[56] The following narrative is based on the description provided on the "History" page of the Umbrella website, with some modifications for clarity.

down the relay point at any one of those houses – not an uncommon occurrence – a domino effect caused all of the houses located downstream to lose signal as well. So if satellite signals are inherently unreliable, this instability was replicated within a network architecture based on chain links between individual power supplies, each of which was prone to failure. Interdependence, here, was not a source of strength. The situation improved marginally once Scapa and Glenmara were able to set up centralized electricity supplies – Scapa using wind power and Glenmara using hydroelectric power. It also helped when HIE contracted with a better service provider. But at a cost of £23 a month for only 512 Kbps, a speed too slow to support applications like Skype and video streaming, subsidized satellite connections were still not good value for local users.

In light of these problems, Glenmara, Scapa, and neighboring remote areas looked to Umbrella for inspiration. These communities had not been included in the original testbed network, and wanted a piece of the action. One enterprising local on the Isle of Scapa, who had been following Umbrella's progress, contacted Morrie Thompson for help. By this time, the Umbrella Project had convincingly shown that a network using simple, affordable terrestrial wireless equipment could bring impressive connection speeds to the most remote locations – provided that sufficient backhaul could be sourced. The Isle of Scapa successfully courted Thompson, who visited in 2010 with a postgraduate student who was eager to take on the project for research. But there

was a problem: Scapa wasn't well positioned in relation to the Fishnet network transmitter at Eastley, so backhaul would have to be sourced elsewhere. Where to look?

Lucky for Scapa and its neighbors, there was another untapped high-speed broadband network within reach – and even more conveniently situated than Eastley. Again, it would be an educational institution that saved the day. Kilmory High School was a member of Datalink, another government-provisioned high-speed broadband network that served hundreds of primary and secondary schools throughout northern Scotland. Datalink would be an excellent alternative source of backhaul. To test the viability of a connection with Datalink, the network pioneers in Glenmara and Scapa wanted to beam signal from a transmitter at Kilmory High School to a receiver mast located at the top of a 393-meter hill on the Isle of Scapa. But they would have to convince the headmaster and IT department at Kilmory High School of the value of this experiment.

It didn't take much. For one thing, they all knew each other. And the school staff empathized with the problem of living remotely without viable Internet connections. Though distances appear greater in underpopulated remote areas, social relations are much closer. More importantly, people may be more willing to establish links on the basis of informal agreements because they understand the difficulty of getting things done. But the trust that allied Kilmory High School with Scapa and Glenmara was not shared by the government. The local council refused the proposal on the grounds that

such a link would compromise the integrity and security of its network. So Scapa and Glenmara were back to square one. For a time, they made do with slower ADSL connections running from St. Columba's, the Catholic Church down the road from Kilmory. (The priest "gave us his blessing," one of the network engineers said.) A speed of 8 Mbps per line was nowhere near what Datalink or Fishnet could provide, but it was sufficient to allow about 15 users to connect without seriously compromising connection quality.[57] Crucially, small populations on Scapa and Glenmara accommodated the reduced connection speed: if you have only 100 users to serve, you don't need as much bandwidth to guarantee each of them a decent connection. But the situation wasn't ideal. Despite all of the hard work, Umbrella and its analogues in Scapa and Glenmara had come to a standstill by late 2011: there were two superfast broadband connections lying at their doorstep, but they remained tantalizingly out of reach. Datalink was off limits, and Fishnet was too expensive. Short of a miracle, it seemed everyone would have to accept the reality of perpetually poor connections.

Enter Ocean Ranch. Ocean Ranch was a large Norwegian fish farm operator that had recently installed three net pens on the south side of Loch Nèamh, facing Glenmara. An interest in farming Atlantic salmon brought Ocean Ranch to the West Coast of Scotland. But Ocean Ranch needed a stable wireless connection to facilitate

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[57] Contention is the ICT term that describes an overpopulated network, where there are too many users competing for a fixed amount of bandwidth.

communication between its farms, boats, and processing facilities. This was something Umbrella, via the Fishnet network, could provide. And so Ocean Ranch set off a positive cascade: Umbrella formalized its agreement with Eastley, and Ocean Ranch became Umbrella's biggest client, underwriting the cost of the Fishnet backhaul. Suddenly little Triskaig, along with Glenmara, Scapa, and their neighbors in the Umbrella partnership, had access to a stable wireless connection at speeds rivaling those in Edinburgh and London. And because the connections were managed by locals, for locals, subscription rates were more than fair: £75 for a one-time connection fee, and £15 a month thereafter for unlimited usage. Ocean Ranch played a major role in facilitating these remote connections. But in no small way, it was the Atlantic salmon that ultimately saved Umbrella and its partners in Scapa and Glenmara. Salmon, represented by Ocean Ranch, were the missing link that allowed Umbrella to sustain and stabilize its connections to Fishnet, Triskaig, and the five additional testbed nodes. Salmon ensured the survival of this fragile network.[58] Salmon finally brought Wifi to Glenmara.

Sometimes, claims to remoteness allow you to multiply the connections at your disposal. Morrie Thompson cared about connectivity in Triskaig because he valued its remote location to begin with: he wouldn't have bought a second home there if he didn't. Improving connectivity in Triskaig required Thompson to make Triskaig become

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[58] John Law and Marianne Lien also write about the agency of salmon. "Slippery: Field Notes in Empirical Ontology," *Social Studies of Science* 43, no. 3 (June 1, 2013): 363–78. As does Richard White in his ecological history of the Columbia River region and dam. Richard White *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996).

seen remotely. It was a matter of translating his own values in order to persuade others to care. It was a matter of corralling and coordinating other powers, getting them to work together, in sync.[59] Glenmara benefitted from the connections that Morrie Thompson worked so hard to establish in Triskaig because of its position within a field of active experimentation. But what's clear from this story – the story of how Wifi came to Glenmara – is that while position is in some ways determining, it is not itself determined. History has something to do with it. Geography, money, and power have something to do with it. But ultimately position is an accidental relation. And as such, it is always changing: positioning matters multiply.

Remoteness becomes valuable when viable connections are put in place, as long as they can be sustained. As Morrie Thompson suggests, these tethers may allow someone like a successful professor at the University of Edinburgh to spend more time living in a place like Triskaig. By tracing distances, viable connections ensure the survival of remote places. But there is something else – a liquid motor – that causes the boats to float and the signals to sign. This is the primary connection, without which all of the others would fail. In remote areas, money is the ultimate lifeline.

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[59] Cf. Callon, "Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay."

3.4 Money's Mileage

Money is constantly surfacing in Glenmara, as a liquid value that allows remote connections to be sustained. But it takes a conversation near the end of my time in Glenmara to understand how it matters. Two weeks before I leave Glenmara, I visit Richard and Evelyn Lawrence at their home, a small bungalow named Sidhein tucked in a wooded grove at the top of a hill overlooking Glenmara Bay. It is November, and the sky has grown dim around four o'clock. As I walk up the steep gravel road to the house, I search in the blue twilight for the long necks of the Lawrences' seven Alpacas (Evelyn keeps them to spin yarn). Seeing none, I assume they were put to bed early.

I've never been up to Sidhein before. One afternoon in August, I had crossed paths with Richard in Kilmory and he expressed surprise that I had not visited them yet. I imagine the Lawrences will think I'm impolite for not having introduced myself sooner, and for showing up unannounced, at this dark hour. In the year that I've spent living in Glenmara, I have learned to question myself, to seek the hidden barb in people's kindnesses, to disclaim sincerity. If I have not approached the Lawrences yet, it is on some level because I don't know how I will be greeted if I do. I consider the possibility that Richard's comment in Kilmory was an ironic invitation, that in fact he did not expect me to follow through. In late November, with a couple of weeks left before I return home, I will myself to go.

I am cheered by the house, which glows invitingly. Simon lets me in. He is Richard and Evelyn's adult son, who lives in Fort William and visits Glenmara at least twice a month. An avid runner, he has mastered the punishing gravel track leading up to the house. Simon has always been kind to me and I feel reassured that he is here. He asks how I take my tea and shows me into the sitting room, where a fire sparks brightly in the hearth. Evelyn is there, smoking a fag in grey cashmere pajamas. She introduces me to two sleeping cats and invites me to sit down. The room is cozy, with two well-worn couches facing each other in the middle of the room. I sit on the edge of one facing the fireplace, cautious not to appear too comfortable.

I sense there is something refined about the house, despite the casual disorder, the evident wear on the upholstery. Richard enters at the back door, removes his wellies, hangs his hat in the hall, and offers me tea again. Turning around to greet Richard from where I sit, I wonder how he manages to be both stiff and affectionate at the same time. I realize I don't feel entirely welcome here, though I am sitting in the heart of the house. It's a feeling I get often with people in Glenmara, as if their warmth is being displayed and yet simultaneously withheld. When the kettle has boiled, Richard comes back, sits in a dining chair next to Simon. The three of them have chosen the least plush of the chairs, and are sitting some distance away on the same side of the room, facing me. I feel as though I am having an audience with them. I consider whether I have been rude to sit on the couch.

We talk for a couple of hours. Simon brings me a second cup of tea and insists I have another biscuit. Richard confirms what others have told me with admiration: that he is a retired submarine Commander in the Royal Navy. Richard and Evelyn raised their three children in London, but it was not a place they wanted to live long term. Evelyn saw a property listing for Sidhein in a newspaper at the time the Glenmara Estate was being split up and sold off in the mid-eighties. She said she had always dreamed of living nestled within a woodland. The Lawrences bought Sidhein and moved up to Glenmara in 1985 when Richard was pensioned. For many years, they were active in village initiatives, sitting on the Village Hall Committee, the School Council, the boards of the Glenmara Forestry and the Glenmara Community Association. Richard describes his involved committee work as a bonding force with other locals. But lately, in the last ten years, they have pulled back. Evelyn explains that she doesn't attend meetings anymore because she can't stand the politics. In fact, she hardly goes down to the village at all. Certain opinions are unpopular, she warns. Take the Scottish independence referendum.[60] If you weren't a "Yes" voter, you had better keep quiet. In such a small place, she says, you don't want to talk about politics too much. You have to be careful what you say. I sense there is hurt here. An image of the Lawrences comes to

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[60] The referendum for independence in September 2014 was unsuccessful, with 55% of Scotland voting "No" to remain with Britain. The independence referendum follows two historical referendums for devolution (delegated powers from Westminster and the creation of a Scottish government). The first referendum on devolution in 1979 was unsuccessful. The second referendum on devolution in 1997 led to the creation of the Scottish Government in 1999.

mind: swaddled in a kind of scrupulous discretion, quietly imperiled because of their conservatism.

Richard changes the subject, addressing me. You know, he says with whispered gravity, there are quite a few people with money in Glenmara. Evelyn adds, there is a significant divide between the haves and the have-nots. Richard says ironically that the have-nots are not really that bad off. He inclines his head as if to wink. Initially, Richard's comment strikes me as stating the obvious. Wealth, status, and property: it's a Highland cliché. Studiously, I affirm his theory. Of course, there's Lord and Lady Stewart who own Rose House, and the Millers who own the Big House, I say. I also consider Gordon and Aileas MacDonald who have done well with the Red Stag. Richard overtakes me. At one time, he says, there were seventeen millionaires that had a connection Glenmara. My ears prick: seventeen is more than I realized. Look, go around the peninsula, he instructs. He counts them off on his fingers, spanning the properties from east to west, naming those I have overlooked. You've got the Wrights, who own Carnach. Alastair Davies, who used to own the whole of the Glenmara Estate, Mr. Brunet, who owns Malvern Estate. Then there's Graham Leach and his partner Charlie who own Crann Mòr: bankers in London. At Ardconnel you've got Belinda Stroud, as in Stroud Chocolatiers. Lord and Lady Crosby who own Inverglen Lodge. Pete Granger at Scourie: he made his fortune manufacturing lanyards. And Troy Campbell at Arnatish:

no one knows where his money comes from but he has a thing for spending it on heavy machinery.

Richard lists most of them, instructively, speaking with measured intensity. I am surprised by only two names. The Grangers, whose tireless efforts kept Sea Link afloat, and Troy Campbell, an enigmatic character whose collection of diggers and military tanks has altered the scenic view at Arnatish. I realize I have been fooled by modesty, and that money in Glenmara really follows conventional nineteenth-century distinctions. Hereditary wealth displays titles and tweeds. New money flaunts its industriousness.

I am impressed by the numbers Richard has given me, but I don't understand the significance right away. I am tempted to minimize the place of money in Glenmara. I say it doesn't feel like these people – the observably rich, the wealthy property owners who live away from Glenmara – are the ones who actually contribute to the community. How could they, when their presence is so intermittent? They present themselves here only in deed, or on holiday. Richard is patient: he wants me to understand something. Well, think about Brunet, he says. How many building projects has he undertaken to improve the properties on Malvern Estate? How many local builders has he employed? Belinda Stroud has done extensive work on Ardconnel. And you know she employs Mac and Aggie Ross to look after it year-round, which makes sheep farming more attractive for them. Think about Alastair Davies' tree planting projects, which pay local forestry

wages. Abe and Nella Hayes who manage Crann Mòr. And Robin living in the cottage at Rose House and looking after the property for the Stewarts. Richard wants me to understand that locals are the stewards of other people's money. And that living remotely becomes possible only through these exchanges.

Now that it has been exemplified for me, this fact feels so crucial to my understanding of Glenmara, that it is virtually the only thing I remember from my conversation with the Lawrences that evening. Richard was trying to tell me something about the numbers, something so obvious that it passed as unremarkable. He was trying to show me how money mattered. It was a basic but potent truth: Glenmara feeds on money made elsewhere. People have to be away from here, churning money at a distance, in order for others to be local. Money is a liquid lifeline, as essential to sustaining remoteness as boats and signals. But money is more coy than these other technologies. It shape-shifts and slips through the fingers. Money values remoteness. And if this fundamental truth is not self-evident, at least initially, it is because money itself is a slippery signifier. What is vital often goes unseen, or unsaid.[61] Money can make people squirmy to talk about. But it is what brings life to this place. It is, in sum, what keeps Glenmara remote.

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[61] Michel-Rolph Trouillot makes this argument in relation to the historical record: absences in the historical archive have much to say about the relations of power through which history is constructed and preserved. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

3.5 Conclusion

Remoteness is an inherently ambivalent relation, the subject of a constant tug-of-war between accessibility and retreat. Whether through the connectivity afforded by boats or signal or money, remoteness is always valued through the care and craft of tethering lifelines. Thus remoteness is a positioning that is both flexible and vulnerable at the same time. It responds to the kinds of signals that can be transmitted across distance, and to the quality and reliability of those connections. But remoteness is not given in the order of things, it is done: it becomes a source of value – and a livable situation – only when viable connections preserve it from tipping into extreme states of ordinariness or isolation. Often, the value of these connections is realized precisely when they are out of reach. Or disrupted, or lost. Vital connections are tethers that sustain remote communities, but they are also at the same time emotional lifelines, critical to the survival of those who live there. What does it mean to become attached remotely? To lose connection? These are questions that elicit the emotional substance of lifelines: the experience of remote proximity.

4. Heavenly Hosts

Around nine o'clock on a warm evening in August, I'm playing a card game at the kitchen table with a couple of Glenmara locals: Pam and her boyfriend Don. Though the air is balmy, all of the doors and windows are closed. It's the height of the season, and the midges are out for blood.

Pam works as an office manager and housekeeper at Malvern Estate, and she's been hosting me in her home for the past six months. I enjoy the evenings when Don is over, and we share a meal or watch a TV program together. Tonight, we're playing a game called Quiddler, which, though advertised as "America's Favorite Card Game," is new to me. You have to spell words on the table with the cards in your hand. I'm good with words, and it's a game I can feel competitive about. It's about quarter after nine, Don is about to win, and the phone rings, startling all of us. Pam looks confused as she gets up to answer – she often jokes that no one calls her at home except Don, and he's sitting right here. Pam is a bit curt with everyone, including Don, and when she says "hello" to the caller it sounds more like a statement than a question. I exchange a glance with Don across the table as I imagine who might be on the other end of the line. Pam is giving the caller instructions about where to find a bread machine. No, they don't provide that, and she's not sure whether it's available in the Post Office shop. Did they check the cupboards to see if any had been left behind by other guests? Were they wanting to make the bread tonight? She pauses to listen, says she thinks she has some at

home and will bring it to them in the morning. I'm looking at Don with disbelief. Pam puts the phone down. Guests in the Farmhouse,[1] she says flatly, looking at Don. It's a moment I can't decipher – is she annoyed or habituated? I say I can't believe guests would call Pam at home, so late in the evening. But I'm the only one who's bothered. Don snorts. Pam says it's not a big deal and we're back in the game.

Here I was, the only non-local at the table, so quick to jump on entitled tourists in anticipation of what Pam and Don might say. Instead of complaining though, Pam casually offered the caller yeast from her own pantry. These kinds of encounters, where resourceful locals are called upon to satisfy visitors' tastes, or to get them out of a pinch, are not uncommon in Glenmara. In fact, Pam's nonchalance speaks to the ubiquity of such moments. "Tourists are our bread and butter," someone told me, and it was a crucial statement of the obvious. In Glenmara, it's easy to lose sight of this basic fact, when so much energy is publicly and vocally directed towards so-called land management issues: restoring native woodlands, controlling red deer populations, eradicating invasive rhododendrons. But the work of caring for visitors is a key ingredient in all of this. Hospitality leavens the mix: by activating nature, it makes Glenmara a place worth visiting.

[1] The Farmhouse is the largest property on Malvern Estate (four en-suite bedrooms, gas range, underfloor heating, views to the sea), and rents for £1200 a week during the season.

Of course Glenmara has a lot of things going for it: the Munros and Corbetts that hikers want to tick off their lists, the rough bounds that no one bothered to tame, the candy-colored sunsets. Sensorial natures are assets, but you can't bank on them. And superlatives don't come for free. They balance on a knife's edge, always in danger of tipping into the ordinary. Just as remoteness takes effort to position and sustain, a reputation has to be tended if you want to keep hold of it. Qualities of remoteness and wildness are no less lively for being nonliving: they are fragile and perishable, and they need care to survive. This chapter explores the sensory work of feeding strangers in Glenmara: catering to visitors' tastes and comfort, creating a setting that is warm and memorably inviting. As long as care and comfort can be sustained, Glenmara's remoteness is a source of value, a reputation that floats future returns. Without attention to pleasures like good food and comfortable surroundings,[2] nature becomes flat and lifeless. When bodies and tastes[3] are not attended to, the coziness of being remote easily gives way to isolation: an undesirable situation for visitors and locals alike. If tourists are the bread and butter in Glenmara, it is precisely because hospitality enlivens wild

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[2] For an elaboration of pleasure in food, see Annemarie Mol, "Language Trails: 'Lekker' and Its Pleasures," *Theory, Culture and Society* 31, no. 2–3 (2014): 93–119. Mol follows uses of the Dutch word *lekker* (delicious, pleasurable) in a nursing home to show how "flesh and talk jointly participate in a practice" of caring. *Lekker* is not part of food, it is a quality of appreciation that changes how we experience eating, in the encounter between food and bodies (100).
[3] Tastes are an embodied and relational site of care/work. Harris Solomon discusses how new tastes are made in a restaurant in Mumbai. Harris Solomon, "Taste Tests: Pizza and the Gastropolitical Laboratory in Mumbai," *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 79, no. 1 (2014): 19–40.

land, creating an environment where bodies mingle with landscape in deliciously memorable ways.

Figure 19: Tasty Memories

Photo by the author.

This chapter explores hospitality not as an accessory to Glenmara's "nature," but as a vital ingredient that activates the meaningfulness and enjoyment of it: the yeast in the bread. This approach invites a different way of sensing the relationship between the

domestic and the wild. Historically, these terms have been locked in a binary relation,[4] an opposition that many scholars writing in the poststructural moment have sought to dislodge.[5] While there have been spirited attempts to dissolve this boundary – studies of hybrid naturecultures,[6] and the ways in which distinctions between nature and culture are made in practice[7] – the literature on eco-tourism tends to view hospitality and nature conservation as social practices in two ways that dull what is sensorial and nature-y about both: in particular, tourism and nature are often taken to be separate but conjoined, and are flattened through a focus on representations and processes of

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[4] There are multiple versions of this dichotomy. For example, Hayden White discusses the mythic figure of the "wild man," who both stands outside society and internalizes society's collective fears. White, "The Forms of Wildness: Archaeology of an Idea." Marxist literary critic Raymond Williams shows how urban and rural spaces become differentiated under industrial capitalism. Williams, *The Country and the City*. Environmental studies scholars Bill Cronon and Roderick Nash also examine the ideological role of "wilderness" in American settler colonialism – as both a threatening frontier of civilization, and a longed-for return to nature without people. Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature"; Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*.

[5] The notion of "social natures" has had particular appeal within cultural geography and poststructuralist political ecology. The social natures idea is that nature and wildness have no substantial or preordained meaning outside human culture. It is thus a revision of nature/culture dialectics. For an elaboration of this concept, see Bruce Braun, "Nature and Culture: On the Career of a False Problem," in *A Companion to Cultural Geography*, ed. James S. Duncan, Nuala Christina Johnson, and Richard H. Schein (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 151–179.

[6] Bruno Latour argues that the nature/culture dialectic is a modern invention. There is no a priori nature or culture: the world is actually populated by "hybrids," and it takes work to purify objects and processes that we come to think of as either "natural" or "cultural." See Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[7] Donna Haraway also cares about mixtures, particularly the ways technoscience assumes categorical distinctions between nature and culture, while proliferating hybrids that create new possibilities for both life and death. See Haraway, *ModestWitness@Second Millennium.FemaleMan Meets OncoMouse*.

commodification.[8] Might we begin instead to see them as muddled qualities that work together to make worlds that are livable and inviting (or not)? Starting from the middle opens a different set of questions. What if nature were already indoors? What if wild land, and the social practices of caring for it, were also already in the pressed sheets and the expertly fluffed pillows of a guest bedroom, or on a plate of house-smoked mackerel? What if we took the home and its comforts seriously as a space that is cared for, cultivated, made just so – with the same attentiveness that is given to the native trees and the deer and the rhododendrons? What if hospitality and nature were co-conspirators in the making of a charismatic environment? This chapter inhabits the merging of these worlds by exploring how practices of "heavenly hospitality" sustain the value of Glenmara's perceived wildness and remoteness, creating a world that survives precisely because it is comfortably on the edge.

Memory is its own kind of advertisement, a necessary ingredient in the making of a reputation. In Glenmara, local hosts strive for heavenly hospitality, the kind of attention that – beyond nature – makes visitors remember where they've been. Heavenly hospitality isn't necessarily lavish, though it can be. Rather, it's a quality of care that

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[8] Juno Parreñas' work on wildlife rehabilitation is a lively exception. Although it makes familiar arguments about power/inequality and transnational capital, it does so by focusing on embodied relationships between (white, Western) volunteers and the animals they relate with in wildlife sanctuaries in Southeast Asia. See Juno Salazar Parreñas, "Producing Affect: Transnational Volunteerism in a Malaysian Orangutan Rehabilitation Center," *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 4 (November 2012): 673; Juno Salazar Parreñas, "The Materiality of Intimacy in Wildlife Rehabilitation: Rethinking Ethical Capitalism through Embodied Encounters with Animals in Southeast Asia," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 24, no. 1 (February 2016): 97–127.

uses the gap between expectations and context, place and presentation to create value. It's care that saves. In a place like Glenmara, where guests are far from the familiar, have fewer choices, and must rely on locals' knowledge and assistance to get around, good service – warm attention, gracious resourcefulness – goes a long way. Visitors don't expect everything to work smoothly in a remote place. On some level, they don't expect to have all of their desires catered to, even in a luxury guesthouse. When things go well, when visitors' needs are met unexpectedly, ordinary hospitality becomes heavenly. In a place known for its remoteness, there is something miraculous about yeast that appears in a pinch. It's not quite the same leavener that you can buy at the supermarket in Kilmory. It may have the same chemical properties, but it is a difference substance. Yeast that comes remotely at a time of need is blessed. And the bread tastes better too.

Heavenly hospitality[9] is work that remoteness both enables and requires. Small acts, delivered in a context of remoteness, appear magnanimous. Favors become blessings. In this way, remoteness works at least two ways in Glenmara. If it is part of what makes Glenmara known as a destination in the first place, it also creates the conditions under which hospitality becomes valuable. In a context of remoteness, locals' warmth creates a vital link with grateful visitors, an attachment that is not exactly debt,[10]

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[9] There is a vast literature on hospitality within anthropology. For an excellent review, see Matei Candea and Giovanni Da Col, "The Return to Hospitality," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18 (June 1, 2012): S1–19.

[10] For David Graeber, all social relations are rooted in debt. See David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2011).

but an affect that binds the memory – the kind of feeling that makes you want to buy a t-shirt from the Red Stag, write a glowing review on TripAdvisor, or book your next holiday a year in advance. It's not that heavenly hospitality doesn't generate returns – it certainly does.[11] It's that blessings are valuable precisely because they can't be returned. A blessing is bestowed, not exchanged.[12] And so the relation that is created is not one of mutual obligation.[13] It is not even bilateral, necessarily. It is a relationship that flows outward, floating on the future. Blessings, like reputations, work through a logic of productive contagion. In this world, a little makes more. Like how yeast makes the dough rise. There are no trades with heavenly hospitality, even if there are rewards. And so the value of a reputation isn't exactly exchanged.[14] It blooms.

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[11] One way of measuring "returns" is to count the number of annual visitors in Glenmara: there were 6,000 in 2013.

[12] Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Postscript: The Place of Grace in Anthropology," in *Honor and Grace in Anthropology*, ed. J. G. Peristiany and Julian Pitt-Rivers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 215–46. Pitt-Rivers describes grace as "inspired by the notion of something over and above what is due, economically, legally, or morally; it is neither foreseeable, predictable by reasoning, nor subject to guarantee. It stands outside the system of reciprocal services" (231).

[13] For Mauss, gifts must be freely given in order to count as such. But norms of reciprocity – the expectation of a return – simultaneously structure gifts as debt. See Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Routledge, 2002).

[14] I am suggesting that reputations in this context are proliferating, not circular in the way anthropology has classically understood them. For example, in descriptions of the Melanesian Kula ring given by Malinowski and Munn, value, prestige, and reputation are created through the circular exchange of armbands and necklaces. Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (London: Routledge, 1932); Nancy D. Munn, *The Fame of Gawa: A Symbolic Study of Value Transformation in a Massim Society* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992). For a general description of theories of value in anthropology, see David Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (New York: Palgrave, 2001). In his unsettling account of transnational organ harvesting, STS scholar Warwick Anderson describes the network process by which power makes scientific prestige. Warwick Anderson, "The Possession of Kuru: Medical Science and Biocolonial Exchange," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 04 (October 2000): 713–744.

4.1 Wayside Blessings

Transportation is fairly limited if you're a visitor in Glenmara. This can be challenging, but it's also part of the charm. Most visitors arrive by ferry from Kilmory, but the hardiest ones may walk in, about 16 kilometers overland on a narrow beaten track from the bay at Loch Ifrinn on the other side of the peninsula. If you walk in, you have to be prepared for all kinds of weather. Pack the essentials: a cooking stove and porridge, extra socks and underwear in a dry bag, and heavy duty tape for mending incidental tears in waterproofs. You'll spend a night wild camping in a quiet glen, protected by the Outdoor Access Code.[15] Nothing could be more Scottish than this.

Once you get here, you'll be on the same footing as any other visitor, including those who arrive by ferry, or private yacht, or helicopter. Remoteness doesn't end once you arrive in Glenmara.[16] In fact, it is constantly reinforced by codes that affect visitors' mobility on the peninsula. This starts with vehicle restrictions. On the one hand, there is something inevitably material about these limitations: Glenmara's notoriously rough terrain prevents even the toughest Land Rovers from barreling through. But beyond this

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[15] The Outdoor Access Code is included in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The Land Reform Act gives the general public statutory rights of access in outdoor environments in Scotland (including on privately owned land). Users must adhere to three principles as defined in the Access Code: (1) respect for the interests of other people; (2) care for the environment; and (3) taking responsibility for one's own actions. "Introduction," Scottish Outdoor Access Code, accessed March 2, 2018, https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/The-Act-and-the-Code/introduction. For a description of user rights and responsibilities, see Scottish Outdoor Access Code, "Part 3: Exercising Access Rights Responsibly" (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2005), https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/sites/soac/files/docs/scottish_outdoor_access_code_-_part_3_exercising_access_rights_responsibly.pdf.

[16] For an inspiring true story of road building by hand, see Roger Hutchinson, *Calum's Road* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006).

matter of practicality, land use codes also have a say in what is proper and doable here. As a designated National Scenic Area[17] and Wild Land Area,[18] the Glenmara peninsula is subject to multiple, overlapping landscape controls that limit the construction of new roads, and prohibit the use of 4x4s and other motorized vehicles on protected roads without consent of the landowner.[19] At the same time, one needs a special permit from the Highland Council in order to bring vehicles across Loch Nèamh to Glenmara. In effect, these controls limit vehicle ownership and use to local residents. So while locals may be outnumbered by visitors at high points during the season, they have a decisive home court advantage with respect to mobility. Unequal access to transportation gives body to visitors' experiences of remoteness in Glenmara. In this remote place, visitors aren't equipped to do whatever they want. They continuously rely on locals as a resource to get around. This imbalance is a crucial ingredient in the doing of hospitality. It gives locals the chance to show beneficence toward visitors, and creates the conditions necessary for visitors to feel grateful and attached. In Glenmara, dependence is an asset. It structures relations of remote proximity, and it sets the stage for blessings to occur.

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[17] Glenmara was designated as a National Scenic Area by the Countryside Commission for Scotland in 1980. There are 40 designated NSAs covering approximately 13% of Scotland. See Scottish Natural Heritage, "National Scenic Areas: Scotland's Finest Landscapes."

[18] Glenmara is among 42 Wild Land Areas identified by Scottish Natural Heritage in 2014. The Wild Land Areas cover 19.5% of Scotland.

[19] This provision is given in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. See Scottish Outdoor Access Code, "Part 3: Exercising Access Rights Responsibly."

When it comes to getting around in Glenmara, options are limited. Most visitors have to travel by foot on the single-track road that runs through the village along the shore of Loch Nèamh. This quaint passageway connects Malvern Estate at the far eastern end of the village to landmarks like the Village Hall, the Red Stag, and the pier. The council-maintained section of the road passes a cluster of whitewashed homes and guesthouses on the west bay before it forks. One branch leads straight on through a dense wood to Rose House and Ardconnel, two 18th-century estate houses now owned by English peers. The other cuts to the right, narrowing as it ascends sharply up the bank of a hill teeming with bracken. The road curves tightly along the hill face. An old wooden guardrail leans out over the water, as if inviting a chute to the bottom. It's a hairy stretch: you can't see what's ahead of you and there are no passing places to accommodate vehicles traveling in the opposite direction. But visibility improves once the road crests and curves inland, opening onto a flat horizon of tufted moorgrass and scruffy heather, bordered to the south by Loch Nèamh. You pass through the flatlands that the Gaels knew as *Reidh-an-daraich* (the smooth ground of the oaks), and which the Glenmara stalkers now call the "golf course": an easy place to shoot with guests when everyone's hungover at the end of a week on the hill. But one still has to be cautious driving through this gentler terrain. It's pitted from years of wear,[20] and narrow enough for big vehicles to slip off, even in good conditions. The road continues like this for six

[20] The local council does not subsidize road repairs outside the village.

miles, finally coasting downhill into the old farming settlement of Arnatish, where it ends. Here, a handful of Glenmara locals live with their heritage chickens and diesel generators, nestled in this quiet little bay away from the hustle and bustle of the village.

Arnatish is where Pam and I drove on the Saturday before Easter, an outing to have lunch at the new restaurant Lena Kowalczyk had opened at the road's end. Lena was an enterprising young Polish woman who had recently lost her job as a skipper on the Sea Link when Bonny Shores bought them out. She lived alone in the tiny one-room cottage she rented from Troy Campbell, a former British Army captain and reputed millionaire with a habit of undertaking but never finishing large projects on his property. Over the winter, with Troy's blessing, Lena spent two months refurbishing the abandoned blackhouse that stood facing her tidy cottage. Cheap as dirt, it was calling out for some loving attention: the perfect place to take an entrepreneurial risk. Pam had already heard wonderful things about Lena's restaurant since it opened for its first evening meal on Friday. And she wanted to see Lena do well. So our trip to the Little Bay Café was motivated by not only by curiosity – a hunger for new things during a slow part of the year – but also an ethic of intentional support. Lunch was not just for us, it was for Lena too.

It was a dreich morning. Just after noon, we set off in Pam's green Defender. We hardly made it to the bottom of the steep gravel track to turn onto the main road, when we crossed paths with the MacDonalds driving their slick black Discovery. Both vehicles

slowed and rolled down their windows. We're going to Lena's, Pam said. The MacDonalds had just been. They gave a brief but glowing report, enough to whet our appetites. And so we carried on up the road, bumping along for six miles outside the village, a trip that took close to forty minutes. Pam was a careful driver, and understandably so: not only did the road demand a special degree of attentiveness, but she was also driving a Malvern Estate Land Rover owned by her boss, Mr. Brunet. She had use of the vehicle for work and personal purposes, and these often coincided in a place as small as Glenmara, particularly during the season: a trip to pick up guests at the pier might result in a coffee break at the tearoom, or a quick stop at the community garden to check on her tomatoes.

And so the drive was both cautious and purposeful. For Pam and others who lived in Glenmara proper, Lena's restaurant was a new landmark in a geography that was centered rather tightly around the village, between the pier and the Big House. It was the second place on the peninsula where locals could afford to have a meal out – a welcome addition to the lunches and BYO dinners on offer at Flora's tearoom. Beyond the novelty, its location was also an enticement. But there was an additional reason why we were making the trip to Arnatish together, and by car. I had mentioned to Pam that I wanted to walk to Arnatish tomorrow, on Easter Sunday. Pam was going to have dinner at her son Ross's house, and I didn't have any plans. I thought a meal bookended by four hours of walking would make the day pass more quickly, that I could exhaust

myself as a distraction from my loneliness. Pam strongly discouraged the idea, and warned me of dangers along the way. I wondered what she could mean, since I wouldn't be driving. On two feet I should have no problem navigating the bad road, and I was in shape for the distance. But she wasn't worried about the road itself, or my endurance; she was concerned about an obstacle that I would have to pass on my way to the road's end. She wanted to make sure I wouldn't get hurt. At first I didn't understand why she sounded so serious. But then she told me about the wolf pack.

The "wolf pack" was the name some locals had given to Troy Campbell's dogs. There were seven of them, agitated and lean – a bunch of English shepherds with no real work to do. The wolf pack ranged freely over Troy's property, and they were known to run along the road barking at vehicles, cyclists, and walkers coming and going from Arnatish. There had been more than one reported attack by Troy's dogs. Several years ago, before he left Glenmara, Rowan the ranger was bitten by one of Troy's dogs on the Arnatish road. It was a dark afternoon in winter, and Rowan was walking the short distance from where he had parked his van, at the top of the road, to the house he rented from the Glenmara Forestry. Suddenly, perhaps tipped off by some minute motion or sound, the pack was aroused, barking and rushing out to the road from Troy's barn. Normally they stayed by the side of the road, barking and running back and forth along the road's edge, as if tracing a property line. But this time one of the dogs broke from the pack, ran across the road, and jumped up Rowan's thigh. Rowan was injured and

notified the police. In response, Troy reputedly confronted Rowan in the pub. A compounding of threats, both human and canine, drove Rowan to withdraw his complaint. The police might put down a dangerous dog,[21] but they could not pacify relations between neighbors in Glenmara.

It's only one dog that bites, Pam says. But that dog was persistent. After Rowan, it got a tourist riding a mountain bike on the Arnatish road. At that very moment, Hugh – the Head Stalker at Malvern Estate – was driving toward Arnatish with a couple of friends who were visiting, saw the dogs, and shouted at the tourist to get in the car. But it was too late: as the tourist was climbing into the backseat of Hugh's Land Rover, struggling with his bicycle, the dog bit him in the back of the leg. The man was shaken but didn't pursue an official complaint. Perhaps he thought it was his fault for startling the dogs. Hugh had tried to save the cyclist, and it was lucky: he was able to drive the man back to the village and locate a first aid kit at the community hostel. The man was grateful for this kindness, and appreciated the hospitality everyone in Glenmara had shown him. Not wanting to cause trouble for the locals, he let it go.

Perhaps it was the wrong decision, because the dog did it again. It was several weeks before Easter, this time another local. Maggie was an Aussie, taught in the primary school, and lived in Arnatish with her husband, Andrew the stalker, and their two young children. The dog bit Maggie's calf as she was walking up the road, tearing

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[21] Control of Dogs Act 2010 (asp 9), http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/9/contents.

the fabric of her trousers above her wellies. Thank goodness the children were still at school. Naturally, Andrew was distressed when he came home with the children and learned what had happened. He immediately dialed Troy on the landline and was surprised by his neighbor's response. Does she want me to kiss it better?

The dog's behavior was concerning. Someone wondered why Maggie and Andrew hadn't notified the police about the dog bite given it was part of a known pattern. Another local, in town to see the dentist, raised the repeated biting incidents with the Highland Council. The local explained that all of them had occurred on a public road connecting Glenmara to Arnatish, and asked the councilperson what could be done. The councilperson said that anything involving biting dogs was a matter for the police. The local left it at that, feeling it wasn't their place to file a report given they weren't directly involved. Some felt it was important for Maggie and Andrew to report the bite to the police, to keep other locals and visitors safe. But given how Troy had responded to his neighbors, keeping quiet was its own kind of protection. Biting dogs can be avoided, perhaps, but an intimidating neighbor could make your life difficult if you got the police involved. In a remote place, it can be better to keep things close. Even – perhaps especially – when they hurt.

Pam convinced me that it was a bad idea to walk to Arnatish alone, but there was another reason that the wolf pack was concerning to her, a way in which she felt implicated although she had not been bitten herself. She wanted to advertise the Little

Bay Café to guests at Malvern Estate, but she didn't know if it was safe for them to go there at all, either cycling or on foot. Lena was also concerned. The dogs were bad for business, posing a roadblock to the fledgling restaurant. Lena gave the problem some thought during the first two weeks that the Little Bay Café was open for business. It was imperative to find a solution before the season picked up, when hundreds of tourists – the restaurant's future clientele – would begin their summer migration to Glenmara.

Lena found a way to approach Troy using a neighborly tactic, emphasizing the vulnerability of her new business and the anxieties expressed by local accommodation providers who wanted assurance that it was safe for their guests to come eat at the Little Bay Café. She didn't have to play dumb – the biting incidents were common knowledge among Glenmara locals – but she found a way to appeal to Troy. How about he keep the dogs in the barn during the restaurant's opening hours (Wednesday to Sunday from noon to 8 p.m. during the season)? This way, everyone would be protected. Troy would avoid potentially damaging liability, and Lena's customers would have a clear path to the Little Bay Café at the end of the road. It was an example of the kind of informal pact making that kept Glenmara apart from the rest of the mainland, insulating locals from outside influences that might threaten the remote freedoms everyone enjoyed.

All of this is in my mind as Pam and I are approaching Arnatish in the Land Rover. As I look around, I remember hearing that Arnatish used to be a scenic place. There is earth dug up everywhere you look: big, deep, muddy tracks in the grass along

the side of the road and odd bits of rusted machinery scattered around. A digger is parked in the middle of a mud-slicked field, its arm raised as if the work had been abandoned suddenly. A gray army tank squats next to the barn, decked with strings of camo netting like sea kelp, more marine than military. There used to be daffodils everywhere, Pam says, painting the picture for me. And green grass. Her nostalgia surprises me, but I empathize. It would look better than this.

We arrive at the end of Troy's property that has been lovingly tidied up: Lena's bright little cottage with its polished windows, linens strung like bunting on a clothesline outside. The Little Bay Café stands pertly opposite Lena's house, its red lacquered door propped open to reveal an inviting robin's egg interior. As we inch through the narrow lane between the houses, Pam remarks that there will be a problem with parking for people coming down to the café. It's something I hadn't considered, but seems obvious when she points it out. There's hardly any level space alongside the road, and everyone drives Land Rovers. We park in the grass in front of another cottage at the road's end. I ask who lives here, and Pam says it's just a holiday house. Fair game.

Inside, the café is delightful and warm, medicine for a dreich day. We are greeted by painted tables and a big picture window overlooking the bay, and dozens of art objects placed on window ledges and hung on the walls. There are carved wooden bowls, oiled to a shine; quilted wall hangings with boats and gulls; and rusted fisherman's lamps of all sizes. Bags of lemons and oranges hang from the rafters in the

kitchen area, which is completely open. Lena seems exhausted but upbeat. It's her first full day serving meals in the café and she's been up since 5 a.m. making soup and cakes. It's only locals in for lunch today, and it makes sense. While the four-day Easter weekend is a popular time for Brits to visit Glenmara, these are modest numbers compared to the summer months. And Arnatish is a long way to travel from the village if the weather's shite and you don't have a Landy.

Lunch is puréed vegetable soup with a sprig of parsley and a slice of white bread, for £3.95. Lena has posted a 5% discount to locals on the chalkboard menu. Jimmy comments on this when we visit the restaurant together for a fish and chips night several months later. He says that the people at the Glenmara Community Association, who do all of the marketing for Glenmara, won't like it. Tourists will ruffle at the suggestion that locals should be catered to. They will feel taken advantage of. He doesn't think Lena should be advertising the discount in a way that's visible to everyone. Pam views it differently. Lena's restaurant is less expensive than the tearoom, where everyone eats by default because it's the only place to have lunch in Glenmara. She says that more places should have discounts for locals, who probably make a third as much in annual income as the average tourist. And she appreciates the visibility of the discount. Tourists should pay more than locals. Besides, the ones who care about community empowerment will feel good about supporting locals. For all of these reasons, the Little Bay Café is a blessed addition to the peninsula – even if, or perhaps because, it is at the end of the road.

Pam and I are seated at a communal table with four or five other locals. As we eat, I distract myself by watching Lena in the kitchen and admiring the space. It occurs to me that we're not really in a restaurant – that, although Lena is preparing food and serving us, we are not exactly customers. We (or they) are locals. This means that we get to ask Lena how all of this came together, and she gets to tell us that she's stressed out and sleep deprived. The other locals are impressed with the place, and congratulate Lena. Pam says Lena is a grafter – a hard worker – which is the highest compliment she ever pays anyone. Indeed, Lena has done everything herself: cleaning out the house and painting the walls; buying food in the nearest mid-sized town and lugging it back by train and ferry. Lena doesn't have an electric supply in her house, just a generator, but she's managed to get the Little Bay Café hooked up to the hydroelectric system in Arnatish, so there's no generator noise to interfere with our meal. The tables and chairs she bought online and had delivered to Glenmara – I remember seeing them being hauled off the boat a few weeks back, along with a dozen sacks of animal feed for Andrew and Maggie. Her hand-painted chalkboard signs and menus are so gorgeous, it's like they're the work of a graphic designer, except she's not one. One of the other locals compliments the granny square crocheted warmers that are buttoned onto a set of ceramic mugs on a shelf on the opposite wall. Lena deflects. There's not much to do in the winter without power or TV, she says. In this way, she is already Scottish.

After lunch, we give one of the other locals a lift back to Glenmara in the Land Rover. Max gets in the front seat out of habit – as the ghillie at Malvern Estate, he's always riding shotgun to Hugh. It's pissing down and the sky is heavy. As we approach the turn off for Scourie, we see a man getting out of a little red car parked on the side of the road. It's Gill Donaldson's car, an old, boxy Honda Civic. Someone who is not Gill Donaldson has evidently found refuge in it. The man waves us down. Pam puts the Land Rover in neutral and rolls down the window. The man's waterproofs are slick with rain, and he sounds out of breath. He points back to the red car and says his wife is breastfeeding. He says the word quietly, as if it's impolite. I can see the woman through the open car door holding a baby to her chest, looking out at us with a kind of wincing grin, as if to apologize. There is a stroller parked next to the car. The man says they were trying to walk to Scourie but had an unhappy baby. Would it be too much to ask for a lift down to the village if we are going in that direction? Pam tells him to get in. Max jumps out of the car to help them put the buggy in the backseat.

The couple clambers into the backseat with me and apologize several times. The man is sitting in the middle seat, leaning forward to chat with Max and Pam. He talks a lot as if to normalize the situation, but everything he says only increases the distance between us. They're from London and are staying here for a week at Heron House. They booked it two years ago and just arrived yesterday. The man jokes several times, in multiple ways, that perhaps it was overly ambitious to try to go on a two-hour walk

with a nursing baby. He says in amused relief that they had been told there was a track down to Scourie and they assumed they could push the buggy down it. What they don't know is that it's a steep, winding, rocky path, difficult to manage even in good conditions. One might call it a hike. The man finally turns the conversation away from his mistake, asking Pam and Max where they live and what they do. It's a classic tourist question. Max says he lives on the estate at Malvern and Pam lives in the village.

The man is interested to hear that Max is the ghillie at Malvern Estate, and asks whether they have any salmon fishing. He says his family has been visiting a Speyside estate for many years and the ghillie there is like family. He says he knows it's part of a ghillie's job to make guests feel welcome, but this particular ghillie excels at it. The whole scene is instructive to me: the strange concatenations of familiarity and power, the intimacy of strangers in bad weather. The evident need for a kind of controlled detachment, sought through multiple apologies and ironical understatements. The obedient ghillie who performs family, fooling (but not quite) the guests who are buying something like kinship, this labor that feels like love. And the additional layer, unspoken and perhaps unnoticed as well: how two Glenmara locals are making this family feel like they've been saved.

And then he appears, the perfect messenger. If we were going any faster we would have missed him, under this thick sky. His coat is matted, rain clinging to his hairs like dew. He is close enough to spook, but he doesn't run off. A stag, Max says,

pointing to the left out his window. Pam slows down the car for the guests. They inhale audibly. Still, he stands there – proudly. Too majestic to be real, too real to be staged.

Something is ruptured after the stag, something like communion, a feeling of being together. The conversation splits into two sotto voce sidebars, the man and his wife beside me, and Pam and Max in the front. Soon we are back in the village. Pam turns up the gravel tracks where the skips are parked and explains that she is taking a different route than they may be used to, to get them closer to Heron House. It's an explanation for this brief glimpse behind the scenes, driving past the peninsula's trash collection site. When we pull up in front of Heron House, Max gets out of the front seat to help the guests unload their buggy. The man is profusely grateful, and Max meets his display with casual warmth. Maybe we'll see you at the ceilidh tomorrow.

The guests return to their warm, dry house – the one they reserved, for only a week's stay, two years ago. For £2500,[22] from Friday to Friday, they have four bedrooms to choose from in which to breastfeed the baby. We are driving down the road toward Malvern, well out of sight of Heron House, when Pam finally speaks. Well, she says. That's a job done.

In Glenmara, a chance encounter on the side of the road is a calling to do the work of transcendent hospitality. This, more than playing family, is what Glenmara

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[22] Heron House rates vary throughout the calendar year, from an average of £2500 per week during the summer, up to £3500 during Christmas week.

locals excel at. It's not so much about making kin with guests, but about giving service in times of need. It is the kind of hospitality you need in a place as remote as Glenmara. When roads and weather conspire to make passage challenging, lifts offer an unexpected save – a wayside blessing – that makes all the difference.

4.2 Feeding Strangers

Tourists can only be the bread and butter of Glenmara if they are themselves well cared for. In a remote place, which feeds itself through hospitality,[23] providing food for visitors is no ordinary service. The work of feeding strangers is a higher calling, and grateful guests are made by managing hunger. But there are different ways of providing sustenance here – for locals and visitors, and for different kinds of strangers. Such discernment is essential in order to generate warmth while retaining remoteness. In Glenmara, food is a substance that creates relations of remote proximity. Feeding strangers is a risky practice precisely in the way that it plays with the boundaries of intimacy. It is hard to do it just right.

Good remoteness feels cozy,[24] but remoteness poorly done flips easily into its opposite. In Glenmara, locals must take care to nurture remoteness while keeping it

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[23] For an elaboration of the relationship between hospitality, dependency, and eating, see Michel Serres, *The Parasite* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007). Serres notes that, in verb form, "parasite" means "to eat next to" (7). The book is organized as a series of "meals" that develop three expressions of the parasite in French: biological dependency, social dependency, and interruption.

[24] Frank Heuts and Annemarie Mol show that people materialize the value of what is "good" through caring practices that are always both social and sensorial. See Frank Heuts and Annemarie Mol, "What Is a Good Tomato? A Case of Valuing in Practice," *Valuation Studies* 1, no. 2 (2013): 125–46.

from becoming isolation or deprivation. And visitors have to cooperate too. Meals must be planned ahead, since there are only two places to eat in the village, and there are no shops to stock up on food or forgotten ingredients. Some staples like milk, eggs, and canned beans can be purchased at the Post Office, which is run by an older couple from Essex, but these items are not always the freshest. A local tells me, laughing, about a time when she needed a tin of Lyle's Golden Syrup last minute to use in a cake recipe. She went across the road to the Post Office, where there was a single dusty tin on the shelf. When she went to open it, she realized that it had expired five years before. On another occasion, a pair of hillwalkers visiting from London described, with typical ironic amusement, the strangely ripe taste of the Post Office butter.

In this remote context, baseline expectations may be low, but specific needs and tastes can arise unexpectedly. Maybe you forgot to buy yeast in Kilmory, or you didn't realize that the pub is closed on Wednesdays and you need someone to cook you dinner. Such exigencies are common. But in a place that constantly walks the line between isolation and ordinariness, it is better to keep conveniences minimal. Meeting needs as they arise, in a context where expectations are low, makes ordinary services feel like blessings. If a guest wants to make bread and there aren't any shops, you find them yeast from your own pantry. If a large group needs a hot meal in a pinch, you find a way to provide in-home catering. While permanent conveniences disrupt remoteness,

heavenly hospitality makes room for it. Feeding strangers in a time of need activates gratitude. And grateful visitors are eager to return.

In September, Kevin is trying to set up a catering business in Glenmara. He calls it Taste of Glenmara and gets to work creating a Facebook page and asking locals to post a few positive reviews on TripAdvisor to get things started. As the pub becomes increasingly unreliable under Mr. Pichon's management, there are more opportunities for local businesses to step in and fill the gap. The catering model is appealing for a number of reasons: it has lower start-up costs than a restaurant, and can be more flexible responding to fluctuating demand for meals. This agility is crucial, particularly during the off-season, when the Red Stag and Flora's tearoom are closed for evening meals and guests may arrive in large parties for big events like birthdays and anniversaries. At the moment, Inga is the only caterer who is available for such occasions. Though her catering business is well established, Inga operates it out of her own kitchen, and has a hard time keeping up with increasing demand. She gets slammed by requests – many of them last minute – at peak moments throughout the year. During a single evening in February, around Valentine's Day, Inga has 49 meals to prepare. It's feast or famine in Glenmara, she says. But feast times are growing, and a small business like Inga's won't be able to say yes all the time. With the creation of five new self-catering accommodation venues in 2016 alone, there are plenty more guests to feed.

With a culinary background on the mainland, Kevin saw an opportunity to set up his own business to meet growing demand for in-home catered meals. On the day of his first gig – preparing Indian food for a group of eight hillwalkers from Newcastle who had phoned two days before – Kevin messages me on Facebook to see if I can give him a hand. I head over around 2 p.m. It's a gorgeous day, and the sun is bright enough to warm the air and keep the midges away. The sliding door at the front of Kevin's house is all the way open to let the breeze in. The house smells wonderful between the fresh springtime air and the spices mingling in the kitchen. Kevin greets me proudly: he's making three different curries, two vegetarian and one with local venison. He's going to serve cumin rice, poppadums, a green salad, and a lemon trifle for dessert. It's an elaborate menu, and far more delicious than what the hillwalkers might expect.

Ten minutes before we're scheduled to serve the food to the group, we are packing it up in banana boxes at Kevin's house and loading the boxes into the car. The Stalkers Den,[25] a self-catering[26] cottage owned and operated by Mr. Pichon from the Red Stag, is just two houses over from Kevin's. But we will pack everything carefully in the trunk of Kevin's green Honda CRV, creep down the driveway and over the bumpy gravel track, and drive up behind the building to unload the food. I am amused by the production involved in driving a distance not exceeding 20 yards, but it does make

[25] The weekend rate at the Stalker's Den is £1490 during mid-season (July to September).
[26] Self-catering accommodation refers to a rental property that is let on a weekly basis without meals.

sense to transport everything in one go. We pull up a minute before 7 p.m., and the guests have only just arrived from the 6:30 p.m. boat. They had walked down the road from the pier with their rucksacks and walking poles, geared up for a long climb tomorrow. Tonight though, they will rest.

There are eight men, all between 40 and 65 years old, a group of Geordies who take an annual weekend trip together. They have never been to Glenmara and are already enchanted, walking around the house in bright thermal shirts and stockinged feet, eagerly choosing the beds where they will sleep, and laughing at the mounted taxidermy heads on the walls, trophies from Mr. P's extravagant hunting trips across several continents: a zebra, a wild boar, a mouflon, a massive Glenmara ten pointer.[27] It's a grotesquely masculine space. I think to myself that I couldn't sleep in a house with so many empty, glassy eyes, so many dead icons of machismo.

The hillwalkers bring good spirits into the house, laughing and talking together, beginning to compliment the food although we haven't served it yet. The idea of it is delicious enough. One of them holds the door for us as we carry boxes in from the car and unload them in the kitchen. Kevin goes to turn on the oven first thing to reheat the dishes. I'm interested in how casual all of this feels, yet there's something about the way Kevin presents himself that is more than just friendly. He's in host mode.

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[27] A "ten pointer" is a red stag with ten points on its antlers (five on each side).

The walkers are curious about the catering. Kevin saved them at the last minute when the Red Stag abruptly stopped serving evening meals for the season. But the favor goes both ways. Kevin says he's glad they contacted him. He's just starting out with Taste of Glenmara, and emphasizes that it's going well so far. He makes sure they know about his experience working as a chef in restaurants before he came to Glenmara: this is an appetizing detail. The men are animated and genuinely conversational. They are gathering in the kitchen to chat with us, arranging craft beers in the fridge and bending over to smell the food on the counter. Someone opens a bottle of Prosecco to toast their arrival. The men toast and I take photos of them with multiple smartphones.

Meanwhile, Kevin is struggling with the oven. It's on but it's not heating at all. Kevin is quietly frustrated. Mr. P, he says under his breath. It's explanation enough. This is typical Mr. P. behavior: charging guests mainland rates for something that doesn't work. We had already noticed the typed and laminated sign on the dishwasher informing guests that it is out of order, but the oven is a surprise. Kevin suspects that Mr. P hasn't been in a hurry to fix the dishwasher, judging by the laminated sign, and that he may also be aware that the oven doesn't work. I recall when the hot tub at Heron House was leaking, how quickly Gordon and Aileas responded when they realized they had to replace it (at a cost of £7000). The hot tub was one of the main attractors to Heron House, as integral to the property as the beds and the bathrooms. Why wouldn't Mr. P

repair his own appliances in the Stalker's Den? Wouldn't proper care give guests a better experience?

Kevin has a theory: if the guests can't cook meals for themselves, they'll end up at the Red Stag. It seems plausible enough. Pub food is easy, greasy, and hot: just the thing when you're thawing out with a pint at the end of a long day. In fact, eating at the Red Stag was exactly what these guests had originally planned to do. When the Geordies discovered last minute that the Red Stag was no longer serving evening meals, they found the next best thing: an in-home meal catered by a local business with seven reviews on TripAdvisor.

Unfortunately, Mr. P's oven presented an additional obstacle to dinner. There was only one possible response to the situation: Kevin will heat the food at his house and bring it back within an hour. Guests have to be fed. It's a pain packing up the food in the banana boxes, and I feel bad about the extra stress this is causing Kevin. But Mr. P's loss becomes a twofold gain: a valuable opportunity for Kevin's catering business, certainly – but even more importantly, a chance to give guests a taste of Glenmara's heavenly hospitality. Of course it was inconvenient to have to take the food back to Kevin's house. But it made Mr. P look bad, not Kevin. When Mr. P failed, the walkers' meal was twice home-cooked, and Kevin came out smelling like a saint.

Strangers are around the table on one of my last evenings with locals in Glenmara in December, during a dinner at Perry and Carol Smith's house to which I am

invited along with my flatmate Zophie. Though I have been friendly with the Smiths for months, particularly with Perry, I have only eaten at their house once, and that was by accident. It was the afternoon after Donald Trump was elected president and I had dropped by to have a chat with Perry. Carol calls for me to come in when I knock at the glass door at the front of the house. She is busy packing for a trip down south tomorrow, leaving on the 8 a.m. boat from Glenmara. Carol is from near Chester, and speaks with a softly bouncing northern English accent. She says they have a stationary caravan down in the Lake District, and she's going to get it ready for winter: disconnect the gas, empty the pipes, and vacuum pack the bedding so it doesn't get damp.

While Carol is packing for her trip, I sit with Perry in the bay window overlooking Loch Nèamh, where they have a kitchen table with banquette seats. Their house is invitingly warm. Wood paneled walls made from untreated lodgepole pine. A large wood burner at the back of the kitchen, several days' firewood stacked in a woven basket next to it on the floor. A stodgy old Rayburn cooker. Sections from old Kilmory fish crates installed as mouldings. The whole space is an earnest romance with the local. I end up talking with Perry about the election and we watch BBC coverage on his tablet. For months, everyone has wanted to know what I think about Trump. And it's actually a safe topic in Glenmara. The disaster is something we can agree upon. It's not a secret, it's not personal, and it's not my research. Commiserating at length, it is now past 6 p.m., and the sky is dark as night. Perry has served me two glasses of wine and Carol has

come back into the kitchen to get dinner ready. I am surprised when they invite me to stay for dinner (Perry will cook steaks on the Rayburn stove), but maybe I shouldn't be. Perhaps it is a way to show generosity without taking on the full risk of hospitality the way Pam did, by inviting me to live in her home.[28]

The Smiths live full-time in a beautiful cottage called Càirdeas[29] overlooking Glenmara Bay. They have recently become permanent residents after ten years spent visiting Malvern Estate on holiday. They joke good-naturedly that it took five years of Pam picking them up and dropping them off at the pier before they would all speak to each other in the car. And now their lives are meaningfully and substantially entwined: Càirdeas was Pam's before she sold it to the Smiths and built Grinn. It's a house full of stories, where Pam raised her children and, years ago, managed Malvern Estate from her living room.

Perry and Carol are loving stewards of the house, and have kept much of it original. But they are also making their own mark. November finds them knee-deep in an ambitious two-story extension project, which will nearly double their house's current square footage: there will be a sunroom off the side of the house, and a master bedroom

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[28] For a description of the ways hospitality incorporates fears of transgression, see Tracy McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006). In a similar way, Derrida (following Émile Benveniste) says that hospitality is inherently risky: it contains both the warmth of welcoming a stranger (Lat. *hospes*) and the threat of hostility from an unknown enemy (Lat. *hostis*). Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2000). Michel Serres also discusses the ambivalence of the French word *hôte*, which has two meanings in English: host and guest. Serres, *The Parasite*.

[29] In Scottish Gaelic, càirdeas (pronounced car-jas) means "friendship."

overlooking the loch. There will be more space for everything: for Perry's books, Carol's clothes, and for family to come visit. Lately, Perry spends his days reading in the remodeled garage or walking around the muddy yard in his wellies, trying to make himself useful on the job site. Carol teases him indulgently about getting in the way. Despite the ongoing improvements, Perry and Carol are still romantic about Glenmara, and they twinkle when they tell the story of falling in love with the place. Carol describes how, before they first came to Glenmara, she had told Perry that she wanted a holiday on a remote Scottish island. She was initially irritated when Perry booked a holiday in Glenmara, which is technically on the Scottish mainland, although not accessible driving via national roads. But when Carol stepped off the boat arriving in Glenmara for the first time, she had tears in her eyes. In an instant, she was moved by the whole feeling of the place. It was perfect, she says. You can tell that the Smiths are still enchanted with the novelty of living remotely in Scotland: the wood burners, the limited ferry timetable, the constant noise of community politics, the deep-cratered roads. These things have yet to become ordinary to them.

Recently pensioned, Perry and Carol both had successful careers in the English public school system[30] – Perry as a head teacher and Carol as an administrator. I identify with their established middle-class tastes. They joke about not being able to buy the

[30] In the UK context, "public school" refers to an independent secondary school that is tuition based and highly selective.

Financial Times in Kilmory and they eagerly share stories from their holidays in India and Cyprus.[31] Carol dresses elegantly yet functionally: only in black, down to her wellies. She spent a year teaching English in Paris after university, and she seasons conversations with properly pronounced French words. While she is cooking dinner for us, she puts "crudités" on the table: olives and pita and homemade tzatziki. Perry doesn't get up to cook until the steaks are ready to be turned, and Carol humors him. It is a second marriage for both of them, and they dote on each other like newlyweds.

Our meal that evening is vaguely European as well, between the red wine and talk of America's decline. When I get up to leave, Carol says something that gives me pause. It's a non sequitur, a surprising suggestion that she understands me and knows what I need. She tells me that their home has been a place for people to come and talk about their problems any time: there has been more than one conversation crying around the kitchen banquette. This expression of support is generous, yet it saddens me. I have spent the last year longing for friendship, and I think I was quietly looking to the Smiths for that because I liked them. Now that the invitation has come, it is too late.

Still, I am delighted when they extend a dinner invitation to me and my flatmate Zophie a month later, two nights before I go home. It seems fitting: as if, now that their

[31] Perhaps it is not surprising that the Smiths have ended up in Glenmara, a place that has been described by *Caledonia Magazine* as having a "rhythm of life closer to Mediterranean."

home has been opened to me at a safe distance – when I'm leaving and won't become a burden – I am passing Zophie into their care.

The Smiths serve us a meal in honor of Perry's Greek heritage. The familiar crudités are followed by a roast leg of mutton with rosemary and oregano. Perry tells us that the meat was raised organically by Mac Morrison in Bracadale on the other side of the peninsula, and Carol encourages Zophie to buy lamb from him. She says you can get in touch with him and pick it up from Ardconnel, one of the guesthouses he manages in Glenmara. She says it's not very expensive: you can get a package of mince for something like £4, and a rolled shoulder for £10. The roast they are serving us tonight was only £30. I consider whether Zophie will buy local lamb on her local wages.

The Smiths are consummate hosts: generous, warm, animated. The meat is well seasoned, the potatoes are crisply fried, and the wine is poured generously. Zophie and I offer compliments between mouthfuls. Perry and Carol describe to us with amusement the headache of their current construction project, and the memorable delights of their many trips to Cyprus. In fact, they have just returned from a month's holiday in Cyprus, and still have their color. The building project at the house kept apace while they were away, with Perry managing the local diggers and joiners by email.

But there are more tender moments as well. We talk about Zophie's arrival, and my transition home. They ask me how I feel and I say truthfully that it feels like I'm leaving in a bit of a slump. Perry registers my loneliness. He reminds me that I had a

great birthday party back in September. He says if people don't greet me anymore it's because I'm already part of the furniture: I'm not being snubbed, I'm being taken for granted. Perry compares me to Zophie, and it's instructive: our situations are opposite. Zophie has recently arrived, and I'm on the way out. Zophie is a member of the functional community, but I will always be on the outside looking in. Perry seems to be confirming the feeling I described, rather than soothing it. Zophie is already becoming local because she is employed. My departure feels like an anticlimax. When Zophie leaves, Perry says, there will be a ceilidh in the Village Hall.

All of this hurts because it's true and I wish it weren't. In the last two months, during the time we have lived together, I've grown very close to Zophie. She is a real friend, someone I care for deeply and will keep in touch with long after I leave Glenmara. I want to be happy for the hospitality Zophie has been shown, for the promise of a warm and supportive relationship with the Smiths after I leave, but I am also experiencing regret. Zophie is just at the beginning of her time in Glenmara. Locals still like her and they are extending themselves to her when they have already retreated from me. Perhaps more importantly, Zophie still knows who she is. I remembered being happy in Glenmara. I remembered feeling like myself. As I reflected on these differences, I realized it was hard to say goodbye to the Smiths not because I was sad to leave Glenmara, but because I was relieved. Not quite knowing what to say in parting, I

gave Carol a loose hug and thanked her for her "warmness." I realize that I had probably said a lot in choosing such an awkward word. I wanted to disappear.

I go to bed that night thinking about different kinds of strangers. How Zophie and I don't belong, but differently. It's a feeling that is storied, layered, densely allegorical – passed around like a dish at various moments throughout the dinner. Earlier in the evening, with several empty bottles of red wine standing on the table between us, Perry turns to me and asks didactically if I've heard of the term "philoxenia," the love of foreigners. He smiles wryly as he explains that the Greeks show hospitality toward strangers with the understanding that anyone could be a god walking on earth.[32] At the kitchen table of a house called friendship, Perry adopts his head teacher's voice to tell me two stories about fateful encounters between hosts and guests in Glenmara. Stories that matter together, stories that need each other to make sense. Each over a pint at the Red Stag.

The first takes place twenty years ago, when the Red Stag was run by its previous owners Gordon and Aileas MacDonald, an entrepreneurial couple from Aberdeen. Perry speaks with ironic gravity. One night about 10:30 p.m. in the dark rain, four hillwalkers arrive by foot into Glenmara village having walked the mountain track 16 kilometers from the other side of the peninsula. The pub is empty but still open –

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[32] The ethic of Greek hospitality and friendship (*xenia*) is supposed to originate in a myth, told by Ovid in the *Metmorphoses*: Zeus and Hermes, disguised as peasants, appear to a poor family and are generously taken in. See Julian Pitt-Rivers, "The Law of Hospitality [1977]," *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2, no. 1 (June 19, 2012): 501–17.

barely. Gordon, the owner, pours them four pints. The walkers are soaked to the bone, and hungry. Meekly, expecting nothing, they ask whether there is any food available this late in the evening. Gordon offers them soup and the walkers are demonstrably and sincerely grateful. Oh, soup would be wonderful! Thank you, thank you! Then Gordon makes them an offer they can't refuse. And how does fish and chips in three quarters of an hour sound? The walkers were overjoyed. Perry has a glint in his eye when he concludes the story. It turns out, he says, that the walkers were in fact four food writers. And their positive reviews of accidental kindness were the beginning of a golden era for the Red Stag. Indeed, under the management of Gordon and his wife Aileas, the Red Stag became a destination in its own right, solidifying its reputation as one of the most remote pubs in Britain: a place worth visiting not only for the novelty, but also for the hospitality.

In 2012, Gordon and his wife sold the pub to a European entrepreneur who had been visiting Glenmara to stalk deer for more than 15 years. Mr. Pichon, the new publican, is widely perceived to have mismanaged the pub, allowing the quality of food, drink, and service to deteriorate while continuing to ride on the reputation established by Gordon and Aileas. Perry can hardly contain his satisfaction as he describes how Mr. P once poured a pint for a walker with "about an inch of shaving foam on top." The customer took a picture of the pint with his phone and posted it on Twitter. Now, Perry asks didactically, who do you think would be the last person you would want to serve a

bad pint in your pub? I indulge him – I don't know, a reporter from *The Guardian*. Gleefully, he leans towards me across the table. The Travel Editor of the *Financial Times*! Carol interrupts, laughing. So that's why we had to you to dinner Zophie, because we think you are a goddess! Looking at me, she adds: and we hope you are too.

But if Zophie was a goddess, Carol seemed reluctant to trust my strangerhood. This uncertainty was indicative of the kind of restraint that was consistently applied to me by Glenmara locals. Indeed, in the week before I left, four different people expressed regret that they had not spent time with me sooner. One confessed, as if to explain the distance she took, that she had been warned not to talk to me. In Glenmara, I was not exactly part of the furniture, as Perry joked, nor was I simply a stranger – after all, every visitor is. I was a strange stranger, a local but not quite, someone who was uncomfortably proximate.[33] Carol assessed Zophie's strangerhood differently from mine.[34] And this distinction matters: it says something specific about social life in Glenmara.

In a remote place that feeds itself through encounters with strangers – a place where well-fed visitors contribute to reputational value, but too many newcomers present a threat to remoteness – there must always be different degrees of openness,

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[33] Wariness towards anthropologists is a fieldwork cliché, but I am suggesting it has particular meaning in a place that is practiced in hospitality.
[34] For an ethnographic case that discusses how Greek islanders apply *philoxenia* selectively to different strangers, see Cornélia Zarkia, "Philoxenia: Receiving Tourists - But Not Guests - on a Greek Island," in *Coping with Tourists: European Reactions to Mass Tourism*, ed. Jeremy Boissevain (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1996), 143–73.

different registers of intimacy that come into play, contextualized in relation to specific others. There is a risk to feeding certain kinds of strangers: strangers who are already too close, or who might make a home in your generosity.[35] Strangers who might need you too much. And so the question is not how to feed strangers, as if they were all alike. It is how to open oneself to the right kind, in the right ways. Invitations to cry at the kitchen table, to share meals, or to drop in anytime are truly hospitable only when they are timely. Last-minute kindnesses invoke the possibility of warmth without taking on the full risk of intimacy. Because it is safe to be welcoming too late. It is much riskier to take strangers in when there is a possibility they might stay.

4.3 Saving Grace

In June 2015, a month before I had originally planned to begin my research in Glenmara, I still had not found a place to live. At the beginning of May, I had sent a brief letter to the Glenmara Community Association, introducing myself and my research. It seemed like the best way to reach community members, to share what I intended to study, and to request offers of long-term housing. The letter appeared in the June community newsletter. I received a single response, from Murdo McLeod the postman who rented a three-bedroom flat above the Post Office for £400 a month. Council tax, electricity, and Internet would bring the monthly cost to £600. At the time, the exchange

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[35] One of the requirements of Greek *xenia* is that the guest not be a burden on the host. See Pitt-Rivers, "The Law of Hospitality [1977]."

rate was hovering around 1.55 and it would have made my research budget very tight. I remember thinking that the cost of rent seemed high for a rural area, and I wrote back to Murdo, hoping to find a monthly rate I could afford. I assumed that the certainty of a long-term occupancy would be appealing, given Glenmara's seasonal highs and lows. I did not yet understand how limited the housing stock was in Glenmara, or how costly privacy could be. After a few emails back and forth, we could not come to a workable arrangement. When I received no additional responses, I submitted a second letter to follow up in the July newsletter. This time, I received two emails. One from a man named Robin, who identified himself as "40 years old, a cool guy, up for drinking and smoking." Another came from an unidentified person who said they had a place for me to sleep on the floor.

I remember being confused why there were so few housing offers. Were there no families with spare rooms in Glenmara? Or younger people who needed a flatmate to split the rent? A delay with my UK research visa gave me more time to keep looking. After three months and two letters, it was an email to which I expected no response that finally smoothed the way. I got what I was looking for, just in time, and the offer blew me away: it was a blessing. An angel appeared and took a massive risk. She opened her home to me.

When I still had not found accommodation by August, I took a different tack, contacting a dozen local accommodation providers to see if I could rent a room long

term. Initially I had assumed rooms and houses let to tourists would be too expensive. I contacted Aisling, the Glenmara hostel warden, explained my situation, and asked if I could stay in the hostel for several weeks when I arrived (£17 per night), until more permanent housing became available. It wasn't ideal but it would help me get my feet on the ground. Aisling said they didn't allow long stays at the hostel, and she couldn't make an exception. With boldness born of necessity, I sent an email query to the Malvern Estate office to see whether it would be possible to rent one of their properties during the off-season. The most modest of these was unrealistic (£650 per week), but it might be worth the upfront cost if it meant having somewhere to stay initially so I could begin my research.

Pam, the Malvern Estate administrative manager, didn't have to respond to my email. And she certainly didn't have to reply the same day. But she is that way: direct, no-nonsense, and deeply kind. She offered me a room in her house for the month of September to help me get settled. Months later, I would come to understand the personal cost of this offer to Pam, the risk she took in sharing her home with a stranger, and what all of this meant in a remote place like Glenmara.

Pam sent Don to the pier to pick me up when I arrived on the 6 p.m. boat in late September. Don loaded my luggage in the truck bed and drove me up the hill to Pam's house in the Toyota Hilux he drives for the Glenmara Forestry. I briefly gathered my things in the upstairs guest bedroom where I would be staying. It was a charming space,

defined by a steep A-line roof and large glass doors opening onto a balcony that overlooked the hills to the east, and softened by a paper floor lamp, a shag rug, and a floral duvet cover. In a strange place, in the midst of a significant transition, the room put me at ease. When Pam came home, she poured us a glass of white wine at the kitchen table, and I gave her a gift of spices from a farmer's market in St. Paul. She told me she didn't cook much but maybe Don would use them. Don sniffed them approvingly. Then the three of us drove down to the village in Don's truck for quiz night at Flora's tearoom. It was the last evening meal of the season and a good opportunity to meet some locals. I was on Don's quiz team along with a couple of other locals. I correctly identified the first three words of the Bible but others knew the Gaelic spelling of Glenmara's most famous Munro peak (*Cluideann*), and the title of a song we heard played for 15 seconds (Jimmy Cliff, "The Harder They Come"). Our team won, and they all said it was because I'm "smart." I did not know Glenmara, or Scotland, enough to realize that this was taking the piss.

This evening marked the passage from "high season" when tourists flock to Glenmara for hiking and stalking in spring, summer, and fall, to "low season" (winter) when the whole community takes a breath. But it also marked a different kind of energy transition. The village had been on generator power all summer, during the lengthy project to replace the pipeline at the hydroelectric dam at Loch Bhraomisaig, and this was the last night of the curfew. When the lights cut out at 11 p.m., everyone booed.

Wooden chairs scraped the tile floors and twenty people walked out of the tearoom into the road. A scuffle broke out between a lumbering Geordie and a short guy with tattoos on his hands. Two others stepped in to break it up. There was incoherent shouting and someone's eyeglasses got stepped on. I walked away while everyone was distracted. Pam had gone home earlier and I got lost on my way back to her house in the dark. I walked around for an hour under the shadow of trees, cradling our team's winnings – a bottle of Rioja – and endeavoring to reconstruct what I would have seen driving with Don from the pier a few hours before. I passed industrial trash dumpers, heavy machinery, and stacks of logs waiting to be milled up at the Forestry. As this less-scenic side of Glenmara revealed itself to me in the dark, I experienced a frisson of the uncanny. At the top of the gravel track, after exhausting myself walking in all directions, I finally saw the way: a rustic beacon, a carved wooden arrow pointing me to "Grinn" – Pam's house – which, for now at least, was home.

I climbed into bed that first night in Pam's guest bedroom grateful for the warmth and safety of her house. During the coming months, this feeling would mature as I came to understand Pam's house as not merely a home, but a sanctuary: a place that sheltered and nourished me, but even more profoundly, Pam.

Home has a particular significance in a remote place that needs strangers to survive, a place where three quarters of the housing stock is owned and rented as holiday accommodation. In Glenmara, there are more than two times the number of

beds available for visitors than there are local residents.[36] And yet there is a perennial shortage of housing for locals. This fact is not ironic, it is structural. When tourists are your bread and butter, when wild land is your raison d'être, you invest in the growth and stability of those resources: you convert homes into visitor accommodation, and you spend grant money on the purposes for which it is awarded: planting native trees, developing visitor education programming, and designing nature walks. It makes sense to feed money into the things you know will grow. By comparison, there are virtually no funds available or earmarked for developing housing for local residents, including renovating existing housing stock and building new homes.[37] But, somehow, people want to come live here anyway, and those who are determined – those who fall in love with the place – find a way.

My own housing search exemplified the difficulties faced by other newcomers, whose intentions to stay are tested by the uncertainty and instability of housing, and therefore the insecurity of home. The struggle to find housing in Glenmara is a structured social experience, necessary and common for all but the retired and well endowed: those who, like the Smiths, are able to come into localhood by buying

[36] This estimate was given by a local development officer based in Glenmara, and cross-verified by my own count (242 beds), with some estimates for several large estate houses which are privately owned and not advertised for visitors. This figure does not include any spare bedrooms in locals' homes. Glenmara receives approximately 6,000 visitors a year.

[37] While several new homes intended for local residents have been built in the past five to seven years, these are owned and let by the local council, and were not an investment made by the Glenmara Community Association.

properties listed for sale. I heard stories of newcomers shuffling between four of five short-term living arrangements over the course of several years before moving into permanent rented accommodation on their own. There seemed to be a necessary passage through rather undignified circumstances – sleeping on people's couches and floors, or in unheated caravans – before privacy could be secured. Because housing was so compressed, romantic relationships formed quickly, and couples tended to cling on even when things soured because no one could afford to move out. As people shared these stories with me over time, I began to understand why the spare room was such a coveted asset, and why so many needed it to remain empty. I had compassion for the MacDonalds, who lived in a five-bedroom cottage and had converted their spare room to a pantry. I considered it to be a hard-earned reclaiming of space and privacy, after years during which they must have felt compelled to take wandering newcomers in.

While I originally arrived in Glenmara on Pam's generous offer to stay with her for the month of September, I ultimately stayed with her off and on for about nine months. Originally, the plan was for me to use that first month to locate other housing on a short-term basis, and I did try. In Pam's first email to me, she was already giving me clues about the ways housing both reflects and structures sociality in Glenmara. In particular, she suggested that I may have an easier time finding something once I arrived and people had a chance to get to know me, and that it may be better to propose shorter stays in people's homes (1-3 months) than a long-term stay. These details began

to make sense as I learned more about social life in Glenmara, the value of remoteness, and the cost of privacy. It takes a special kind of trust to take an unknown person into your home in a place where most strangers are visitors you are employed to serve.

Over the course of nearly a year and a half in Glenmara, I moved a total of four times and lived in three different houses. I stayed in Pam's house for two months during the fall and Blythe's flat at Malvern Estate for two months during the winter, while Blythe was away traveling in Central America. When I could not find a place to transition to following Blythe's return to Glenmara in late March, Pam said I could come back to stay with her. I had not yet come to understand at what cost that offer came to her. This was a blessing that I could not justify or return, and it was deeply sacrificial.[38] I can't describe all of the ways that Grinn mattered to Pam, all of the ways that it cradled and protected and vindicated her, because that would be to violate its very function as sanctuary. I can tell you that this house saved her from an unlivable situation. I can tell you that it was the materialization of a dearly held vision, and that it was lovingly designed and built by her son Ross. I can tell you that from the time construction was completed in the spring of 2015, until the time that I moved out for good in October 2016, she had only lived in it by herself for four months. For all of these reasons, Pam was no ordinary host.

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[38] For an elaboration of this idea, see Pitt-Rivers, "Postscript: The Place of Grace in Anthropology."

Of uncountable moments in which Pam showed me care, two evenings – two meals – in particular stand out. Not because they were typical, but because they exemplified the ways her generosity surpassed ordinary hospitality.

In July, my parents came to visit me from the States. Although we planned the trip in early March, it was already too late to book accommodation in Glenmara: everything had been booked since January, with the exception of Heron House, the most high-end self-catering venue on the peninsula: it had been booked two years prior. The Glenmara community hostel, cheap lodging preferred by hillwalkers, university students, and stag parties, could book the three of us for a single night during the first week of July. We thought it would be an adventure. It was difficult to plan an itinerary around scraps of time in other places on the West Coast, B&Bs that could squeeze us in for one or two nights at a time. But we managed to come up with a plan, which culminated with one night in Glenmara, where we would sleep together in a room with two sets of twin-sized bunk beds – like school kids having a sleepover – before heading back to Glasgow the next day.

For the single evening we would spend in Glenmara, I decided we should eat at the restaurant in Scourie, a beautiful place where meals are served family style, in multiple courses, at £30 a head. It's a place everyone loves, but locals rarely go. It's expensive by local standards, and it's a treat. I would invite a few locals I had come to know, to show appreciation to these people who had helped me in so many ways. When

the day came for the dinner, everyone backed out except Pam. Don was spending time with his children. Aisling and Robin were working. Jimmy was simply busy. It was too late to alter the reservation as the restaurant had already prepared the meal. We paid for the empty seats and accepted that we would have leftovers.

Getting to the restaurant was a bit more challenging. I hadn't considered the possibility that my parents wouldn't want to walk six miles to Scourie along the road to Arnatish. And, like the family Pam and Max rescued in the rain, I had not calculated the degree of the "path" down to Scourie Bay. I imagined that the evening would be bright as day, just a couple of weeks past midsummer, and that my parents would enjoy the exercise and the fresh air. I told them to bring walking shoes.

On the afternoon of the dinner, it started to rain. Not a squall, but gentle Highland rain, the kind that quietly persists in soaking you through. After a short walk through the village to lunch at the tearoom, my parents and I were holed up in the common room at the community hostel, where there was already a fire going. The day before my parents flew into Glasgow, I had spoken to Pam about the dinner. We were sitting at her kitchen table having a gin and tonic, and I was jabbering about how we would walk with my parents to Scourie to work up an appetite. Pam wanted to know how we would get home. I paused. It was a roadblock. I suppose you'll be needing me to drive you down, she said.

It was clear: we did need her. Pam didn't seem to be annoyed, but the question – and the reflection it prompted – unsettled me. In the postcard world I had imagined, I would play the host at this dinner and Pam and the other locals would be the guests: a role reversal that I intended to honor them. But if I came up with the idea of a dinner, I didn't take care to make a proper plan suited to local conditions. I was concerned to think that at some level, in spite of the months I had spent living in Glenmara, I was as clueless as any other visitor.

Ever the resourceful local, Pam saved us. She showed up in the Malvern Estate Land Rover to pick us up at the hostel, in the rain, with my wellies and two extra pair from her house for my parents to wear, for the hike up and down to Scourie Bay from the road. Pam was wearing her full waterproof outfit: jacket, trousers, wellies. My parents were wearing light windbreakers and department-store tennis shoes. They admired the view on the six-mile drive but complained all the way down the path to Scourie Bay. It's not that they lacked a sense of adventure. It's that it wasn't the "walk" I had described. The path was stony, winding, and treacherous, and it rained the whole way. The trip demanded a degree of fitness and preparation that I had not considered. Although I had been living in Glenmara for ten months by that time, I was no more resourceful than the couple from London who thought they could carry their buggy down the path. My parents thought I was crazy. I don't know what Pam was thinking, but it wouldn't be unlike her to tease: tourists.

The dinner was in every way deliciously memorable. House-smoked salmon with lettuces and edible flowers from the restaurant's garden. Homemade bread. Venison stew with stout and olives. Mashed tatties and steamed Brussels sprouts. A huge pavlova with whipped cream and fresh currant sauce, prepared with eight people in mind. And cheeses and homemade oatcakes to follow. It was a heavenly meal, which transported us to a place where, briefly, it could be forgotten that we could not so easily pay for it, that a hellish ascent back to the Landy awaited us. But there was a taste of regret, too, which unsettled me. When my parents paid the bill, which Pam had a hard time letting them do, it almost felt like compensation. For the ride each way, for the wellies, for housing me. I think I bought Pam a bottle of gin as a thank you gesture after my parents left: it's her favorite and it would be the thing to do. But you can't really thank someone for a kindness of that order. Something like caring for someone's daughter isn't exactly a gift, because it can't be returned. It's a blessing, and it stops you in your tracks. Maybe it's not exactly hospitality either. Maybe it's more like grace.

There was a second evening when this asymmetry – my helplessness and lack of preparation, Pam's resourcefulness and generosity – came into focus. In August, my best friend from college who now lived in London was coming up with her British boyfriend Michael to climb Cludin, Glenmara's most famous peak. They planned the trip because they had wanted to do the hike for a long time, but also because it presented a unique opportunity to visit me. It was a strange and beautiful crossing. Christine had moved to

London to sing at the Royal Academy of Music two years before, and fell in love with Michael, who was raised in a suburb outside Glasgow. Meanwhile, my fieldwork had rerouted me unexpectedly to Scotland, to a place that was remote, but which Michael knew because of its notoriety within the hillwalking community. I hadn't seen Christine in five years, and it would be in Glenmara of all places – not in London or Chicago – where we would finally reconnect.

More specifically, the reunion took place in Pam's house. Grinn was located at the top of the track leading out of the village of Glenmara toward the hills. It was the main access path for hillwalkers going to climb Cludin. The morning Christine and Michael arrived off the 8:30 a.m. boat in Glenmara, they trekked up the hill with their rucksacks and walking poles to greet me at Grinn and walk onwards to Cludin, where they would be camping overnight at the summit. We had a few moments to connect before they headed on toward Cludin, and we made a plan to see each other the following evening when they would return to camp on the beach. Christine texted me before they began their descent the next day so I would know approximately when to expect them, but they were much later coming down than they had anticipated.

It was after seven o'clock and the sun was still shining. Christine and Michael were exhausted from six hours of walking and the midges were coming out for blood. The three of us wandered around looking for a place they could camp overnight near Pam's house to avoid a further three-mile walk to the beach campsite. We walked

alongside the path for a half hour scouting spots, but everywhere the ground was too uneven, or soggy, or crowded with scrubby heather and Scots pine. The Glenmara beach campsite was a preferred location for a reason. We toyed with the idea of setting their tent up at the beach first, but once they got installed they probably wouldn't have the energy to go anywhere else. We had wanted to share a meal together but it no longer seemed possible. They were too exhausted to think and I wasn't coming up with any good ideas either.

Pam came home in the midst of our indecision. I asked her for her advice thinking she would help me run through the options. She took one look at my friends and spoke matter-of-factly, as she always did, particularly in situations where I didn't know what to do. Why don't they stay? Christine's eyes widened at the suggestion of a hot shower. Michael called Pam a saint. Pam reminded me to turn on the water heater before she grabbed her torch and walked over to Don's.

We ate dinner in our pajamas, Christine and Michael rosy and scrubbed clean from the hike. I had worked in my garden plot that day, picking carrots just this side of ripe. Most of them were thin and gnarly. As much as I had raked my plot, I wasn't able to remove all of the stones in the soil. But there were a couple of fat, straight ones, which Pam complimented as "crackers." I also had a bunch of rainbow beets, which grew the best of everything I had planted. The three of us scraped together a vegetarian meal from my garden produce and an assortment of leftovers in the fridge. Glazed carrots, a

beet salad, maybe a rice pilaf. I don't remember the food as much as I remember the company, sitting around Pam's kitchen table with the multi-colored fairy lights on, getting to know each other again in this stage of life. I thought about how Pam had given us each a home that night, which was not just a place to sleep but also, more lastingly, a place to nourish friendship anew.

Christine and Michael left the next day, after a long walk down to the swimming area that locals called Cable Bay, where the BT phone cable was laid. We relished the cold water, drying off like seals on warm rocks before we clambered through thickets of bracken on our way to meet the ferry. Our last meal together was at my favorite restaurant in Kilmory, a little gem of a place that served excellent West Coast seafood on the second floor of a building overlooking the harbor. We had craft beers and crab legs with butter and fresh garlic, langoustine, and a big bowl of steamed mussels. As we were idly picking at the remains, I glanced at my watch and realized I had to leave to meet the boat: Aileas MacDonald had hired a private RIB to take her back to Glenmara and offered me a spot for a tenner (£10). We exchanged hurried hugs and a promise to meet in London.

When I got back to Grinn, Pam was sitting at the kitchen table with a drink in a highball glass. I was about to go into the bathroom to wash when she said with seriousness that we needed to talk when I was ready. Embarrassed, I suddenly became

aware of my own movements. I saw myself in that moment treating her home like it was mine, and it didn't feel right.

When I sit down with her at the kitchen table, Pam says she is going to cry. This disruption of her normal state of composure makes me think something must be wrong. She explains it all quickly, as if it might hurt less that way. She says she can't do another three months of this, by which she means hosting me. She's been having a hard time since the spring and it's been causing strain in her relationship with Don. All this time, she's been scared to talk to me about it. She said she couldn't bear the idea of my having to return to America if I had nowhere else to stay in Glenmara. Yet she needs her own space. She says she's barely lived alone in the house since it was built: before me, her oldest child Carolyn was staying here, followed by her youngest, Murray, along with his girlfriend. I can feel the sadness mingled with frustration, and I instinctively reach out my hands to hold hers. It's a risk: we never touch.

I say the only thing I can think of, which is that I know how long it took to build the house. But then, with cautious tenderness, I hazard something else, a thought that I have also been keeping to myself over the past few months. I say that I know how the house matters to her, that it's a sanctuary. It's the right feeling, and Pam affirms this in her own way, speaking twenty years in the space of a single word: I went through shit to get this.

It is good that I left Pam's, because the ending gave me a clear perspective on all that she had done to support me, and at what cost. It is one thing to care for strangers for a living: to drive them around, to take them out stalking, to cook for and clean up after them. It is quite another to bring a stranger into your home, to risk a kind of intimacy that may disturb other relationships, and the security you've earned at the price of unspeakable shit. All because you can't bear to let that person fail. All because you care.

4.4 Conclusion

In Glenmara, hospitality is out of the ordinary. And it has to be so: remoteness is sustainable only when it can be made delicious, cozy, and memorable. But this is work that visitors to a remote place cannot do for themselves. This gap between desire and ability, expectations and limitations, creates an opening for a special kind of work, a form of care that might be considered a blessing. In Glenmara, locals frequently come to the aid of visitors who are stuck or hungry. Rather than creating frustration, the experience of being "saved" from a difficult situation cultivates visitors' gratitude, encouraging attachments that make them eager to return. But while remoteness, paradoxically, needs strangers to survive, this openness comes at a cost. Glenmara locals make judgments about what kinds of strangers can be cared for, and to what degree. Proximate relations are not always safe ones, and intimacy comes with its own hazards. The following chapter explores ambivalent intimacies further, through stories about substance, values, and the inherent risks of living remotely together.

5. Intimate Strangers

It is a Friday morning at the beginning of November. Balmy air, wet gravel, squeaky wellies. I'm doing a changeover with Mandy at the Heron Nest, the MacDonalds couples' flat. When I walk into the house, Aileas is there to greet me. You're leaving so soon! She asks if I'm looking forward to it, but I don't have a chance to answer. What she really wants to know is the date of my last day cleaning for her, because she's going to have a hard time covering changeovers in December.

I'm actually going to be in Glenmara for another six weeks. But locals, including Aileas, will not let me forget how quickly the time will come. In fact, people have been wondering when I will leave for the past eight months. I am prodded repeatedly, and in different guises. Back in March, I take a weeklong trip to sit my Deer Stalker's Certificate exam in Abernethy. One of the Bonny Shores skippers makes a perceptive joke when he hefts my luggage off the boat in Kilmory. Is that you banned from Glenmara so soon? In September, someone sees me walking through the village and expresses surprise that I am still here. Others ask me directly when I am going home, with a tone that sounds like forced casualness. My departure becomes a kind of anodyne conversational filler, like talking about the weather. The questions are frequent and varied, and they begin to unsettle me. But they are also instructive. It's not that people are confused. It's that my leaving is already on everyone's mind, an inevitable and, it would seem, anticipated horizon. And while the questions say something, equally significant is my own tendency

to string them together, to find meaning in the repetition. To begin to feel, on some level, that they are an invitation to leave.

In the front of the house, Aileas has already filled the port decanter and positioned a bottle of Prosecco in an antique silver wine cooler. Now she is moving around the living room, fluffing pillows and arranging tinder for the wood burner. Mandy is in the kitchen cleaning the cupboards. I'm crouched behind the welcome table wiping the floor-to-ceiling window, which is gummed up with slobber from the previous guests' retriever. Despite the heavy sky, the scene feels cheery to me, the three of us busy together, working separately but close enough to talk.

I'm not sure how the subject of strangerhood comes up this morning, but it does, and it leaves a certain impression. I try to remember how this goes. Aileas has moved on to dusting in the bedroom and I can hear the intermittent hiss of the wood-polishing canister. Perhaps she has brought up the date of my departure again. Perhaps she has asked me what I will miss the most when I go home. To that question, I will have come up with something pleasing and noncontroversial to say, parroting a story locals love to tell themselves. Something about what makes Glenmara special, about family feeling and intimacy amongst locals. Perhaps this is what prompts Aileas to tell us about the time the police officer from Kilmory came to visit the Glenmara Primary School.

It was several years ago, when her two children were still in primary school. The police officer came to Glenmara as an ambassador of a larger paternal order, with a

specific mission: to educate the school children about "stranger danger." There were several teachers and parents assembled in the Village Hall for the presentation, along with the six students enrolled in the primary school at the time (one-third of whom were Aileas's children). Aileas asked a question in front of the group. So what is a stranger? The police officer had a hard time explaining it. Rhetorically, Aileas describes her thought process while we continue wiping the windows and the cupboards in the house. Is a stranger someone you don't know? Because we all know everyone here. And the kids will speak to anyone. It's like Dave McLaren, she says. We know him. We've known him for twenty years. But if he invites you into his boat is he going to offer you sweeties or rape you? We don't know.

I sink a little when she speaks about Dave this way. Dave, the sixty-year-old Irishman who walks around the village in a leather jacket carrying a shopping bag of Tennant's. Dave who lives on his houseboat named "Rebecca" for his daughter who works in South America. Dave whose father Bill, a legendary diver, travelled the world and helped build the Kilmory pier. Dave who, though he has a history of belligerence in pubs, now lives as a lone wolf, preferring no one to conflict. Dave who, himself an outcast, has spoken to me when few others would. Dave who has whispered caution to me about getting on in Glenmara. Dave who has imparted to me his social defense moves, and urged me – as well as any anthropologist – to stay observantly detached. Dave the scallop-diver-sensei.

I ask Aileas how she talks to her kids about safety. She says she tells them to go by feeling, whether they feel good around someone or not. Mandy pipes up from the kitchen, where she is standing on a stool to reach the upper cabinets. When my brother was wee he asked my mum how he would make friends if he weren't allowed to talk to strangers. She says this with a proud smile. It's a perceptive remark, but it's especially meaningful coming from a kid who is growing up in the rough-and-tumble Partick neighborhood in northwest Glasgow. We all laugh.

I am struck by this conversation, but particularly by Aileas's reflections, which are both apt and somewhat out of touch. Of course strangerhood is ambiguous – it always is – even, perhaps especially, in a place as small and remote as Glenmara. But I wonder if she realizes the ways those ambiguous intentions present themselves here, in whose shape and under what guises. I wonder whether she is distracted by the gruff and the antisocial, misreading a character like Dave McLaren who intentionally keeps to himself, who adopts loneliness as a protective strategy, a means to live in the place he loves while insulating against its harms. I wonder if Aileas can see how danger more often walks as friendship here, and popularity. I wonder if she can tell the real wolves from the sheep.

This chapter is about intimate strangers, and the ambivalent experience of living remotely together[1] in Glenmara. It describes a sociality of "remote proximity": how social relations in Glenmara are organized in and through its remoteness, and how the reality of remoteness designates different calibrations of intimacy and detachment.[2] It examines how, in a place that is valued – indeed survives – by virtue of its remoteness, such relations – amongst locals, and between locals and newcomers[3] – are necessarily both close and detached, intimate and strange.

In Glenmara, being close is non-optional precisely because the geography of remoteness concentrates social life in the village. It is easy to forget, in a place that feeds itself by caring for strangers, that locals may also be uncomfortably proximate to each other: that living on top of one another is not necessarily a condition of comfortable intimacy. This situation focalizes a problem at the very heart of remoteness: What happens when people live with each other as proximate strangers? How is it possible to

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[1] Anthropologists Sherry Turkle and Daniel Miller have studied, in different contexts, how digital media and technology are facilitating new forms of distanced intimacy and relationality. See Miller, *Social Media in an English Village*; Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

[2] For a critique of relational assumptions in anthropology, and a case-based elaboration of "detachment" as a social strategy, see Matei Candea et al., eds., *Detachment: Essays on the Limits of Relational Thinking* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

[3] Marilyn Strathern discusses how distinctions between "insiders" and "outsiders" are internalized within the social world of Elmdon village as concatenating levels of authenticity, from the most marginal newcomers to the core of "real" Elmdon. Marilyn Strathern, *Kinship at the Core: An Anthropology of Elmdon, a Village in North-West Essex in the Nineteen-Sixties* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

be open to others while doing remoteness? What kind of porosity is livable in this place, under these conditions? And how much hospitality is sustainable?[4]

Crucially, being together – being social – entails both pleasures and harms.[5] This ambivalence is universal, but it may be more pronounced in a place like Glenmara, where reputations of remoteness and wildness need to be carefully tended in order to survive. Remoteness and wildness are ideals that put pressure on population and land use. They call into being a paradigmatic social world, one that people lovingly call a

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[4] Different communities accommodate tourists differently. As in Glenmara, communities valued as tourist destinations often need to balance warmth and distance in order to keep social boundaries intact. For examples from Europe, see Boissevain, *Coping with Tourists*.

[5] Anthropology and psychoanalysis (via the Greeks) have always shared this understanding: that kinship is a site of nurturance and danger, and that intimacies can be at once affirming and fraught. Peter Geschiere gives a richly comparative account of this ambivalence, drawing on examples of witchcraft and social transgression across Africa and Europe. Peter Geschiere, *Witchcraft, Intimacy, and Trust: Africa in Comparison* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013). Freud's work exemplifies the idea of intimate danger, but this is particularly the case in his theory of the emergence of human society: reason and civilization are birthed in a primitive/archetypical Oedipal conflict, where brothers lustfully kill their father and then work together to regulate their own desires. See Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, trans. James Strachey (London: Routledge, 2001). Families are always fatal in Greek/Roman tragedies, and examples of matri/patri/fratricide are too numerous to list. But two iconic examples are the blood feud in the lineage of Orestes that Aeschylus dramatizes in *The Oresteia*, and Atreus' deception of his brother Thyestes in Seneca's *Thyestes*. See Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*, trans. Peter Burian and Alan Shapiro (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Thyestes*, trans. A. J. Boyle (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

"community":[6] small yet welcoming, open yet not overrun. Quaint, but viable. To be valued as remote and wild requires repeated efforts of invitation, retention, and exclusion. Indeed, this is how value works: it is a process, a life cycle.[7] And so while Glenmara is a place hungry for visitors, it must also be a keeper of its own remoteness, a guardian of its wildness, an accountant of intimacy. To ride the value of a reputation, to survive remotely, a place like Glenmara has to be attractive yet selective: seducing strangers, courting lovers, and managing those who get too close.

5.1 Leftovers

The Heron Nest is the MacDonalds' second property, a compact but ornate couples' flat adjacent to Heron House. The building is handsome and angular, like something out of *Architectural Digest*, with a burnished copper roofline and raw wood cladding. It's discretely modern – edgy, yet remarkably suited to its rustic surroundings.

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[6] Part of what makes Glenmara valuable as a destination is the romance of "community," a word/image that does a lot of emotional work on the West Coast of Scotland. "Community" evokes family feeling, purity, and – in a postindustrial world – a vulnerable and waning artefact in need of loving preservation. Community, more than society, is something you can feel attached to, even as a stranger, an idea/place that people want to put money behind. "Community" is an affective idiom through which Glenmara locals typify their relationships to each other, but it is not necessarily the sum reality of those relationships. Community is also a spatial metaphor that anthropologists recast in writing about places that identify themselves as such. British Anthropologists studying village life in England, Scotland, and Ireland discuss how the social reality of "community" takes shape in symbolic practices that modulate spatial and linguistic boundaries between self and others. See Anthony P. Cohen, *Symbolising Boundaries: Identity and Diversity in British Cultures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986); Anthony P. Cohen, *Whalsay: Symbol, Segment, and Boundary in a Shetland Island Community* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987); Nigel Rapport, *Diverse World-Views in an English Village* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993); Strathern, *Kinship at the Core*.

[7] Anthropologists have classically understood value as a cyclical process. The Trobriand Kula ring is the ur-site for anthropological theories of value. In classic studies by Malinowski and Munn, value – as reputation, prestige, and political power – emerges in the coordinated circulation of armbands and necklaces among the different Trobriand Islands. See Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*; Munn, *The Fame of Gawa*.

At least that's what the local planning office seemed to think when they approved the construction of both Heron House and the Nest without comment or reservation. Some locals grumble about this: how the MacDonalds' properties have sailed through a notoriously lengthy planning process, even as their designs break with tradition. Heron House and the Nest are not your typical whitewashed Highland cottage, and it is precisely this aesthetic distinctiveness – along with the sumptuous and impeccably furnished interiors – that makes both properties so valuable.

I have been cleaning regularly for the MacDonalds since March. Initially, I was asked to do it as a last-minute favor, seemingly out of the blue. On a Thursday evening mid-March, there is a knock on the door at Blythe's flat. I'm lonely and my heart leaps. A visitor? It's Gordon MacDonald, who gets straight to the point. Can you work? Maybe it's procedural question about my visa status, but I also wonder if the ambiguity is intentional, ironic: no one here thinks what I'm doing here constitutes work. But I can, and he explains.

One of the women who works for them – Sheila, a middle-aged Australian woman – can't come in tomorrow and they need extra help doing the changeover. I'm eager to accept the request. It feels like an opportunity: to be useful, to be valued, to see hospitality from the inside. I would start promptly at 8:30 a.m. Pay is £8 an hour. He says he knows what state the house will be in based on what he has seen of the hot tub. He adds abruptly as if to provoke me: Academics.

I left Blythe's flat on Malvern Estate at eight the next morning to walk to Heron House, which was at the other end of the village, a mile and a half down the road. The weather was fine, and I counted on my physical fitness – on being a fast and adept city walker – to get me there on time. But on the road I panicked, realizing that I had miscalculated the walking time. It would be embarrassingly academic to be late. Thankfully someone else was running on time. In a moment of typical Glenmara synchronicity, a lift made the difference. I would arrive to Heron House on time thanks to the punctuality of a hippie in a banged-up white Toyota.

Colin the forestry intern was on his way to the Glenmara Forestry woodshed, always half an hour before work started so he could smoke a fag and pour a second cup of tea before Don the head forester arrived for work, predictably ten minutes early. Colin slowed down out of habit when he saw me walking up the road and I climbed in. He was proud of his truck, a gift from his girlfriend Jenny after several years of searching online. It's a real Teuchter wagon with faulty transmission, a tarp window, and a broken door fastened with a bungee cord. The truck would never have passed inspection on the mainland, but its defects made it ideally functional, both mechanically and socially, in Glenmara: suited to the poor road conditions, and to social values of frugality and resourcefulness. Colin's truck, like so many vehicles in Glenmara and other remote West Coast communities, materialized the answer to Gordon's question, can you work? It visibly displayed the pains taken to maintain it, the skillful use of

things at hand, the value of modest ingenuity. It seemed meaningful to be given a lift by Colin on my first day at Heron House, to be carried along in this growling symbol of effort and care. While I was handicapped in ways that Colin and other scrappy locals were endowed, I hoped to prove my value to Gordon, to show him that I, too, could work. Raised by a single mother in a middle-class Protestant family, I come from people who locate dignity in a tidy home. If I couldn't MacGyver a Land Rover, I certainly knew how to clean a house.

You're on toilets, Gordon announced when I arrived at Heron House that first Friday. He showed me the supply closet in the annex next to the garage, where I would find an array of cleaning supplies: Ecover brand all-purpose cleaner and toilet bowl cleaner, a spray bottle of lemongrass essential oil deodorizer, a toilet scrubber, sponges, dustbin liners, and the indispensable industrial-size paper towel everyone called "blue roll." All of these products I gathered from the closet, stashed in a plastic bucket, and brought into the main house. Later, I would come back for fresh rolls of toilet paper and soap dispenser refills, which I would replenish before spritzing the bathroom with the lemongrass spray and closing the door.

The paper towel equivalent called "blue roll" was a source of lasting confusion for me. Aside from its evident affordability in bulk, it did not occur to me why it should be so essential. It was single-ply, tore easily, and disintegrated on contact with wet surfaces. On this first Friday, it takes me three hours to clean all four bathrooms: four

toilets and sinks, three showers, and one bath. Thinking my work will be checked by Aileas and Gordon before the guests arrive, I want each of the bathrooms to be spotless. I have used wads of blue roll to polish, as best as possible, cloudy shower doors and soap-slicked sinks. After I finish wiping up what remains of the previous guests, I am exhaustingly meticulous cleaning up after myself: no errant paper fibers or specks of dust or hairs left behind. Perhaps they trusted me. In any case, no one bothered to look.

Although the work is uncomplicated, it is fussy, and it takes time. After bathrooms, I move on to hoovering, and finally polishing, which is positively Sisyphean. Both the Heron House and the Heron Nest are full of reflective surfaces: floor-to-ceiling glass windows and sliding doors, stainless steel appliances, glass-paneled staircases and catwalks, antique mirrors. For a conscientious person who can't help noticing the small things – precisely the quality that makes a good cleaner – it's hopeless. There are grease marks everywhere: children's handprints on windows and panels, elbow smudges on sliding doors, inexplicable spots and streaks that stare you in the face just when you think you've finished. When I first started at Heron House, I could think of nothing more embarrassing than for a high-paying guest's prized view of Loch Nèamh to be interrupted by a greasy fingerprint.

Wiping is always the last thing on my list after bathrooms and hoovering, and when there's only five minutes left before the guests arrive, you learn to move quickly, wiping around door handles, or at eye-level. Mandy tells me, laughing seriously, that

when she builds a home someday, she knows exactly what she's going to do: There's not going to be any shiny surfaces, or glass, or metal. And I'll have a gas cooker. She's been cleaning for the MacDonalds for five years, in this house she calls a "weird dungeon" because it is beautifully decorated and always takes you longer than you expect to finish. She knows how ensnaring the polishing is, how caught up we are in our own fastidiousness. And how easy it is to become trapped in a dependency relationship with the MacDonalds, how quickly one learns to oblige them because they are generous, and because there are no holiday houses here that are quite as nice to clean.

Changeovers at the Heron House and the Nest always had a different character. The House was four times the size of the Nest, and cleaning it felt like an endless task, an undertaking Pam would call "painting the Forth Bridge." There were seven beds to change, four bathrooms to clean, two floors to vacuum, and what felt like miles of glass windows to polish. Each of the bathrooms was tucked in a different corner of the house, keeping me at a remove from the heart of the action: the main living area with combined kitchen, dining room, and sitting room where Aileas and Mandy were able to work and carry on a conversation at the same time. Crouched in a glass shower or on my knees in front of a toilet, I experienced the loneliness of bare utility.

My relationship to the work was different in Heron Nest. Changeovers in the Nest were more intimate and convivial because the whole space was designed that way, with couples in mind: the entryway merged seamlessly into the kitchen/living room and

the bedroom/bathroom to the other end of the house. Here, where the interior was deliberately open and connected, I felt more in touch with everything. Perhaps most importantly, when I could be seen by the others and hear what they were saying, I felt like more of a person.

In both houses, Mandy always cleaned the kitchen. The kitchen cleaning supplies were kept under the sink: scouring pads, bright-colored dishwashing liquid, dishwasher tabs, powders and sprays in lurid canisters. Sheila, when she was around, would dust, change beds and fold linens. I finished the house by hoovering and polishing upstairs and downstairs. Meanwhile, Gordon floated in and out of the house doing the work of a property manager: emptying the recycling bins in the skips down the gravel road, bringing fresh linens up from the MacDonalds' house, filling the hot tub.

When we are doing changeovers at Heron House and Nest we are employers and workers, intimate strangers. We make frictional contact with each other in the awkward conversations we share as we work, feeling the crud of misaligned values under our skin. But we are also making substantial encounters with the bodies, tastes, and habits of others: those guests who have slept here, eaten here, voided here, and now left. We are not so much invisible as we are unbalanced in our palpability of each other. We meet them with our hands and noses, our breath and our backs, but they can't feel us. Our job, precisely, is to wipe away those who have left, and to leave nothing of ourselves behind. Our job is to create an interior in which new arrivals will feel not us,

but themselves. This is the transitional space of the changeover, where hands make environments and bodies meet substance, doing wildness discreetly.

Cleaning is a strangely intimate practice, all texture and touch. It matters who's doing it, and whose dirt it is. You're more aware of dirt that's not your own. It feels stickier, filthier, more threateningly alive. I was sensitive, initially, to touching strangers' leftovers: their hairs sticking to the shower doors, their dried urine on the underside of the toilet seat, their fatty pink skin grease lining the drains. On my first day, I ask Aileas for gloves to clean the bathrooms and she hands me a box of thin powdered latex gloves. I was expecting something more heavy duty but this, she tells me, is what they have. I use the gloves but the soap film and the water gets inside them anyway, so my hands are as wet as they would be without them. After a couple of weeks, I ditch the gloves, even on the toilets. I am surprised by how quickly I have become porous.

As the weeks progress, I see more parts of myself that would have disgusted me before. I start going barefoot when I clean the showers. I ditch the toilet scrubber and immerse my bare hand in the toilet bowl, using a sponge to wipe off mineral rings and sticky flecks of poop. Even after this habituation, there is one substantial encounter in Heron House that repulses me, when the underside edge of the toilet bowl is lined with curdled red wine. This, too, is wildness.

There are pleasurable encounters with bodies and their remainders as well, times when we make a positive choice to be absorbent, incorporating strange things. Any

leftover food, for example, is ours to keep. Each week there is something, however small. Everything is opened and half-eaten: jugs of milk and orange juice, cartons of eggs, loaves of bread, jars of jam, packages of pasta. Sometimes a jar of Nutella, a pot of double cream, a bag of sugar. Pam, who does the changeovers in the self-catering lodges on Malvern Estate cleans up well, too. At Grinn, she has an cupboard full of food that was abandoned by Malvern guests over the previous year, pounds of rice and pasta, dozens of jars of store-bought pesto and curry sauce. It's more than she can eat by herself, and while I'm staying with her she encourages me to use what's there. One evening she comes home with chorizo, tangerines, and a hunk of Comté: dinner. I used to be disgusted by the strange intimacy of leftovers, the idea of dipping into food that someone else has already partially consumed, sharing unknown germs with unknown people. It also felt sad to me, like we were scratching for breadcrumbs dropped by the insouciantly wealthy. But over the months, eating leftovers, like cleaning toilets, became normalized – safe – and I began to curiously await the discoveries every Friday morning when I worked for the MacDonalds. While Heron House accommodated larger groups (up to ten adults), Heron Nest had the greatest likelihood of tasty finds because couples tended not to be able to eat everything they bought. We got to scrounge there too.

There was another reason to look forward to cleaning the Nest, and this was because Inga often provided in-home catering for couples on romantic getaways. Inga's food was consistently delicious and high quality: homemade scones and chocolate cakes,

venison stew and smoked salmon. But this was the problem: there was never anything left. One morning in November is special, though. Mandy is cleaning the kitchen, washing breakfast dishes the guests have left behind, scrubbing the oven and the cooktop, cleaning out the fridge. Hungrily, distractedly, I come over to peek in the fridge to see what's there. Mandy takes out a plastic to-go box with a half-eaten piece of Inga's homemade cheesecake and a puny looking strawberry garnish. The cheesecake has been squished by multiple forkfuls and the blueberry sauce has slipped off the top. Inspecting it, she is about to throw it away. I grab the box from her before it lands in the bin, and I break one of the last hygienic rules I have maintained up to now: not eating on the job, when everything about my body feels dirty. Mandy tells me I'm "mingin,"[8] but I heed sugar's siren call and lick the box clean.

The kitchen and bathrooms were, predictably, the areas of both houses that were the most difficult and time-consuming to clean. Mandy would sometimes give updates on things she found that were unconscionably mingin. Splatters of cheese or sauce crisped on the bottom of the oven. Piles of dirty dishes crusted with starch from tatties or pasta. Cup rings on the oiled butcher-block counters, willfully dark. One morning Mandy announces: this is the worst I've seen. Mandy has been working for Gordon and Aileas for five years, so that's saying something. There are pots and pans left on the stove with food left in them: pea soup, some kind of tomato sauce. The bin is full to

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[8] In Scotland, mingin is slang for "disgusting."

bursting. There is milk dripping from a shelf in the fridge. Aileas walks in the kitchen from the back of the house where she has been hoovering, repulsed. There are nail clippings everywhere, she says. I keep finding them – somebody must have had claws! This makes all of us shudder with disgust. I say that I always trim my nails over the toilet and Aileas says she does it outside – either way, we are both horrified.

Today is notable for another oddity, which is that Izzie the Ranger is filling in for Sheila, who is not well. What a day to choose! I mention to Izzie that it's strange to get a glimpse into people's habits once they've left. There are things you feel you shouldn't know about someone, like how they trim their toenails. It's shocking sometimes, she says, the state people will leave a place in. Izzie says she and Brody have been staying in cottages in the Highlands for 15 years, and doing changeovers in Glenmara makes her realize how well behaved they are as guests. Mandy says whenever she stays in a hotel, she makes the bed in the morning and strips it before she checks out, out of consideration for the housekeeper. Somehow, hearing this, I feel closer to both of them, as if we are bound together in our conscientiousness. This, perhaps, is what makes all of us good cleaners: our meticulous sensitivity, our diligent care. I remember Pam telling me how satisfying it feels to leave a clean house at the end of the day, all quiet and trim. She says no one notices when cleaning has been done, but everyone notices when it has not. That's the point: cleaning disappears itself, and us along with it. The work of

cleaning, and what caring hands leave behind, is a kind of hopeful emptiness: a gift of neutrality for others to enjoy, a receptacle for the dirt of other strangers.

It takes us four hours to finish the House on this impressionably disgusting day. When we are finished, Aileas asks me to report on the state of the bathrooms. They're not the worst I've seen over the last six months, but there are some gnarly pubic hairs and urine stains clinging to the toilet rim, and this seems worth mentioning for the ick factor. Aileas says she has gathered enough information to ban the guests from future bookings if they try to come back. These people are filthy, she concludes. Izzie is more specific. They've left it, she says, like a hotel.

At Heron House, in the interstitial hours of the changeover, we all share a strange intimacy, a coming together in our mutual disgust, particularly on this worst-ever Friday in August. There is a horizontality that emerges in our common norms around personal hygiene and proper housekeeping.[9] Aileas, Mandy, Izzie, me: we are all proprietors in these moments, in our contact with the matter that has been left behind, and in our shared offense at its filth. Substances unite us intimately and absorbingly in the space of this house where none of us live. Today, when the kitchen and the floors and the toilets are all as mingin as each other, I feel this connection strongly. This

[9] Mary Douglas says that the identification of dirt/disorder also comes with a directive: how to clean. See Douglas, *Purity and Danger*.

repulsion fuses us perfectly together, enough to make me forget, if only briefly, our more categorical and stubborn differences.

In the economy of labor in Glenmara, workers are condensed socially with guests, yet often remain unnoticed, unappreciated. Pam has told me that when she picks up stalking guests at the pier to drive them to their accommodation on Malvern Estate, the first question they ask is: So what do you do here? Deadpan, Pam looks at them in the rearview mirror: Nothing. It's a kick in the mouth, she tells me. Guests don't see that she works, even as she is chauffeuring them down the road.

By the end of the summer, after six months of cleaning for the MacDonalds and nearly a year of knowing Pam and hearing about Malvern guests, I begin to feel irritated. Why are visitors mystified by local livelihoods? Why are they so unable to see the work, to connect the dots? The beds don't make themselves. Though it was never my place, I get the urge to be irreverent, to talk back, finding small ways to disrupt visitors' assumptions about Glenmara. When a couple posts on the Glenmara Facebook page about losing an engagement ring during their stay on "your beautiful island," I make an ill-considered comment: Island? Later, outside the pub, Jimmy tells me off for being disrespectful of visitors, and his aggressive scolding embarrasses me. Another Friday afternoon in August, when the lights are off in the pub because everyone is outside enjoying the sun, I lean on the bar as I'm waiting to order a round. Next to me is an attractive man, a visitor, who looks to be in his mid-thirties. I play the proud local.

Understanding my role as a host and a social gatekeeper, I initiate, asking him how he is enjoying his stay. His family has just arrived, they're here for a week to celebrate his mother-in-law's seventieth birthday. Where are they staying? When he says Heron House, I can't help myself. Oh, I say, I just had my hand in your toilet.

Telling someone you've had your hand in their toilet is less about making them see you, than it is about making them feel you. I didn't care if this man thanked me or recognized me by face in the village the next day. I wanted him, for the week he was staying in Glenmara, to be spooked by an uninvited intimacy, by the touch of my hands on the toilet seat. I wanted him to feel this stranger, barely, and for it to be a little bit disgusting.

5.2 The Price of Paradise

When Izzie the Ranger is speaking to a captive audience of visitors on one of her "Glenmara Discovery" walking tours, she likes to say that a house in Glenmara is automatically worth £100,000 more than a similar property located elsewhere, because everyone wants to live in Glenmara. It's an unresearched but not wholly baseless claim. There is a strong attraction to Glenmara as a landscape and destination, and the listed value of residential properties has increased dramatically over the past 15 years.

Table 4: Selected Glenmara Property Values, 2001-2018

House Name	*Sale Date/Value*	*Sale Date/Value*	*Description*
Alder	**2010**	**2016**	
	£295,000	£330,000	4 beds, 4 baths
An Diaden		**2017***	
		£260,000	
Auld Kirk	**2004**		
	£400,000		
Big House	**2001***		
	£200,000		7 beds, 5 baths
Birch		**2014**	
		£210,000	5 beds
Càirdeas	**2012**	**2016**	
	£230,000	£35,000	3 beds, 2 baths
Cladach	**2006**	**2015†**	
	£19,000	£420,000	
Coul-na-Mara		**2016**	
		£320,000	4 beds
Framers	**2004**		**2018**
	£92,000	£197,000	3 beds, 1 bath
Keepers		**2012**	
		£194,000	
Lakeview	**2005**	**2017***	
	£460,000	£640,000	6 beds, 4 baths
Scourie	**2003**	**2017***	
	£580,000	£1,101,000	9 beds, 9 baths
Shoreline	**2003**	**2017***	
	£205,000	£428,000	
St. Cuthbert's	**2002**		
	£190,333		
Weavers	**2007**	**2017**	
	£2,000	£390,000	5 beds, 3 baths
Yew		**2016**	
		£300,000	3 beds, 2 baths

Sources: Registers of Scotland, rightmove.co.uk, zoopla.co.uk

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*Estimated value

†List price

This growth may be attributed, in large part, to the significant events that have become memorialized as the Glenmara "community buyout."[10] In 1999, property on the peninsula changed hands when the Glenmara Community Association combined donations of over £750,000 to "buy out" the former owners of the Glenmara Estate. Though Glenmara locals and sympathetic newspapers describe the buyout as a revolution – a triumphant story in which the underdogs are given the chance to shape their own destiny[11] – in reality the buyout amounted to a fairly conservative changing of hands, from one landlord (Sir Wesley Aldrich) to another (the Glenmara Community Association). The Glenmara Community Association was a registered charity comprised of a local membership body governed by a board of directors that included influential outsiders including a local council officer, representatives of two wildlife protection bodies, and a famous mountaineer.

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[10] A "community buyout" in Scotland refers to the process of transferring landownership from a private landlord or corporation (the "laird") to a group of local residents represented by a community association and board of directors (the "community"). Since the first successful change of hands in 1997, the community buyout has become an icon of rural development in the Highlands and Islands. The Scottish Government, led by the Scottish National Party (SNP), has made "community land ownership" a priority following the passage of the comprehensive Land Reform Act in 2016. Currently, about 500,000 acres are owned and managed by communities in Scotland. The Scottish Government has committed to a goal of 1 million acres under community ownership by 2020. See "A Nation with Ambition: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2017-2018" (The Scottish Government, September 2017), http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00524214.pdf.

[11] For a narrative portrayal of relationships between an absentee landlord and the local community on a Hebridean island (through the eyes of an American non-fiction writer), see John McPhee, *The Crofter and the Laird* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970).

When the buyout was completed, ownership of the 16,000-hectare Glenmara Estate[12] and a dozen historic estate buildings was transferred to the Glenmara Community Association, which, in the romantic haze of the post-buyout period, was viewed as a unanimous body, a spotless and united defender of local interests, a grassroots custodian of Glenmara's future. But the buyout's immediate result was to make the Glenmara Community Association the largest landowner on the peninsula, a role that quickly became burdened with tension. It was an ironic return of the politics of landlordism in a supposed new era of total egalitarianism and permanent horizontality.

If the buyout was a cause célèbre, a kind of cathartic ousting of centuries-old landlordism and uplifting of the people, heralded as a "victory" in the press and buoyed by generous donations, the work of maintaining this brave new world was less newsworthy. The Glenmara Community Association had numerous historic buildings in its portfolio, most of them falling to pieces from disuse, and very few resources to invest in their restoration or upkeep. The 18th-century Big House presented the biggest challenge. While community members floated the idea of restoring the building and operating it as a museum, full restoration of the property would have cost the Glenmara Community Association an estimated £500,000.[13] With an initial business development plan totaling £800,000, the Association needed to shed weight as quickly as possible,

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[12] The Glenmara Estate totaled about 56,000 acres in the late 1970s. It was parceled out and sold between 1982-1987, under a previous landowner. The "Estate" acquired during the Glenmara community buyout was thus only a slice of its former self.
[13] This estimate is given by the organization Buildings at Risk. See https://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk.

putting receipts from the sale of its properties toward other projects, like refurbishing the hydroelectric system,[14] developing the "market garden," and renovating a handful of properties for local residences and visitor accommodation.[15] Several properties were sold at fire-sale rates of less than £20,000, and a dozen more are unregistered.[16] Some of these were retained by the Glenmara Community Association as rental properties with modest improvements. The Big House, a real money sink, was sold to an artsy American couple reputedly for between £150,000 and £200,000.[17]

Property values increased during the aughts as Glenmara cashed in on its reputation for exceptional remoteness and wildness. The Red Stag pub did a lot of the publicity work. Under the MacDonalds' ownership from 1992 to 2012, the Red Stag became an institution, a destination unto itself. The MacDonalds entered Red Stag into the Guinness Book of Records as the "most remote pub on mainland Britain."[18] Capturing this official superlative was a wildly successful business move. Press

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[14] In the end, this initial refurbishment in 2001 was funded by £500,000 in grants from the European Regional Development Fund and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, a regional development body funded by the Scottish Government.
[15] The development officer of the Glenmara Community Association has reported these intentions and figures in press interviews. I was not able to verify how the money was actually spent.
[16] Historical property registration data (including sale dates and prices) is held by the Registers of Scotland (RoS). RoS is currently transferring all recorded property registrations and sales to a new map-based Land Register, which is publicly available online. All records prior to 2003 are contained in the historical General Registers of Sasine, which dates to 1617. In the online Land Register, price data do not appear in the register when properties have changed ownership without a recorded monetary transaction – this happens in the case of gifts or inheritances. If properties are registered, they should still appear in search results but without price information. I was able to retrieve records for properties sold in Glenmara after 2003. See "Scotland's Land Information Service" at https://scotlis.ros.gov.uk/.
[17] Several newspapers, including *The Scotsman* and *The Herald Scotland*, speculated on the value of the sale. The exact figure would be recorded in the Sasine Register (sales recorded prior to 2003).
[18] This is a country-level record, so it is not verifiable in the Guinness Book of World Records.

attention, travel reviews, and bookings snowballed, and every property owner in stood to benefit. In fact, the more "remote" Glenmara grew by reputation and renown, the more attractive it became as a destination both for visitors and for property buyers: incomers looking to retire to a scenic location, or to start second careers as B&B operators in a highly coveted and promisingly underdeveloped area. While Izzie's claim about property values in Glenmara – that the location alone adds £100,000 to the selling price – was intuited rather than calculated, the available numbers[19] bear out this general trend.[20] What she didn't mention is that properties in Glenmara are valuable precisely because they can be used to make more money.

In 2016, five Glenmara properties were put up for sale at prices between £200,000 and £420,000. Three of these were being operated as self-catering accommodation, and two were family homes. While two of the self-catering houses are still on the market, the two family homes that sold in 2016-2017 have now been converted to holiday accommodation. One of these houses was Weavers Cottage, the home of Gordon and Aileas MacDonald.

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[19] I was able to compile property data from three sources: the Scotland Land Information Service hosted by the Registers of Scotland (https://scotlis.ros.gov.uk), and two property sale websites, Zoopla (https://www.zoopla.co.uk) and Rightmove (http://www.rightmove.co.uk).

[20] Individual home prices in Glenmara are in line with those in other highly desired locations across the Highlands and Islands, but average property values are higher due to the small number of available properties. A couple of recent high-value sales, including Weavers Cottage (£390,000), have tipped the scales. While property values average £193,000 on the Isle of Skye – a coveted and more densely populated destination for second-homers and B&B operators – Glenmara's average property values are floating in the £260,000 range. Both Zoopla (https://www.zoopla.co.uk) and Rightmove (http://www.rightmove.co.uk) provide average property values for a given postcode area.

After finishing my cleaning one Friday morning, I walk over to Gordon and Aileas's house to pick up the previous week's wages: £23 in cash for just shy of three hours' cleaning. Weavers Cottage is just down the hill from the MacDonalds' holiday properties, on the main village road, a two-minute walk to the pier. Across the road, facing the house, Gordon's orange RIB is parked next to a black Land Rover Discovery, a yellow-and-red Royal Banner of Scotland waving at its stern. There is a trampoline sitting on the lawn next to the house, and a cluster of white rose bushes bordering the walk. The interior is eclectic and tasteful: beautifully tanned leather furniture, a stone hearth, antique Kazakh rugs, jewel-rich draperies and buttery walls. There is a sunny bay window in the front of the house where the MacDonalds sit for breakfast, watching the boats come in, unloading people and cargo at the pier. It's a scenic view that doubles as a crow's nest: from here, Gordon says, nothing escapes him.

When I walk through the door, Gordon is sitting on the couch and Aileas is talking on the phone in the kitchen with an insurance agent. The MacDonalds are in the process of selling Weavers Cottage as part of their plan to move towards retirement. But it's hard to imagine that the transition will be permanent. The MacDonalds are serial entrepreneurs. When the Red Stag was on the market in 2012, Aileas was quoted in a newspaper saying, "I've decided to stop pouring pints and start drinking them." But

Aileas never put her feet up. In 2011, the year before the Red Stag finally sold,[21] the MacDonalds opened Heron House as a unique luxury self-catering venue for up to ten people, followed by the Heron Nest couples' flat three years later. When Weavers sells, they plan to take the final year's bookings for Heron House, redecorate, and move in. Bets are they won't stay retired very long.

In 2016, Weavers was listed by Edinburgh-based estate agents McEwan Fraser for offers over £390,000. Five bedrooms, two full baths: not bad for a cottage. When I ask Gordon how the sale is going he seems pleased. It's only been on the market for two months and they already have a viable offer. Gordon says the buyer has paid a non-refundable deposit but, of course, he won't consider it sold until the money's in the bank. What I think is a fairly bland question turns into an unexpected discurus on entrepreneurship. Gordon doesn't want to talk about his property. He wants to talk about business.

Gordon says there are a lot of people who don't know how to run a business in Glenmara. I know it sounds distasteful, he says, but you run a business for one reason only, and that's to make money. He gives an example, one of the other properties that has recently turned over: Lakeside, a family home, which has just been bought for £330,000 by a Glenmara couple's daughter. Marcie is moving up to Glenmara from

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[21] The Red Stag was put on the market in 2010 for offers over £790,000. Public records from the Registers of Scotland indicate that the property was sold in 2012 for £250,000.

Essex[22] with her husband Vic and their two teacup Yorkies. Together, they will convert Lakeside into a two-bedroom B&B. Gordon says the floor plan is unfavorable given the position of the staircase. It will take a lot of work, and it's unclear if Marcie and Vic have the management experience to run the B&B properly. I consider that Gordon would make a good small-business consultant, and he would corner the market in Glenmara.

This is the first I've heard of Marcie and Vic's plan for Lakeside. But perhaps I should have expected it. Why would I assume that a family buying a house 500 miles away would actually live in it as a family home? Why would I have thought there were already enough B&Bs in Glenmara? There is a revolving door of property value here: residences are converted to businesses, and businesses are converted to holiday homes. It's a continuous circle, and the common motor is tourism.

I am reminded of this relationship – the necessary equation of home and business in Glenmara – when a visitor makes a passing comment to me in November. Walking on the road through the village early one Sunday, I cross paths with Peter, the adult son of one of Glenmara's repeat stalking guests. Last night was Bonfire Night, and we had laughed together over roasted marshmallows and hot toddies with a gaggle of other visitors and locals on the beach. This morning, standing in front of Weavers Cottage, we are looking at the McEwan Fraser "For Sale" sign on the glistening lawn.

[22] Essex is a county in England that borders Greater London to the northeast. Average property values in South East England are the second highest in the UK, after London. See Aime Williams, "Value of UK's Housing Stock Rises by a Third to £7.14tn," Financial Times, January 19, 2018, https://www.ft.com/content/c253d6c2-fc51-11e7-a492-2c9be7f3120a.

Peter is wondering about the sign. He has heard that several properties are on the market at the moment (in fact, there are five) and is curious whether I know anything more. I mention the high listing prices and locals' speculations about future buyers – the likelihood that most of these properties will be retained as, or converted to, B&Bs. He says it makes sense. How else could you afford to live here? Value was hiding in plain sight, and it was another visitor who brought this to my attention. In a place where 80 percent of the housing stock is let to tourists, holiday accommodation is an unoriginal but reliably successful business model, a way of affording to live in a remote place where salaried jobs are few and properties are desirable investments.

Changes of ownership are significant in Glenmara because there are so few properties to begin with. Sometimes they are emotionally fraught. This occurs to me when, still talking with Gordon, I ask whether he knows what the prospective buyer is planning to do with Weavers. He is on the edge of defensive: he has no idea, no way of knowing. Does he feel any obligation, as a long-term resident of Glenmara, to find a buyer who wants to be part of the community? This question provokes a sidestep. People can tell you anything, Gordon says. Just look at him! He points in the direction of the Red Stag, just 50 meters outside his kitchen window. "Him" is Mr. Pichon, Glenmara's resident scapegoat, a permanent stranger who has managed to offend everyone in the community. What has happened to the pub under his ownership is unfortunate: false advertising, inflated prices, unpredictable closures, bad service, and a

general loss of craic. But in a small place that is riven with disagreement, Mr. P is also a useful villain, a universal bad guy who keeps the rest of the locals bound together in opposition.

In this moment in the MacDonalds' living room, Mr. P does his job, stepping in to distract from the thing I am actually curious about: the relationship the MacDonalds have to Weavers Cottage, their own family home, and the ways they may or may not feel personally implicated or responsible in passing it on. I imagine they must feel some regret given what happened to the Red Stag after its sale. Visitors still come to Glenmara to eat and drink at the Red Stag, but now they are motivated by a different kind of intention: to verify the negative rumors, to spectate a disaster in motion. The expense of this brutal fall affects everyone. Pete Granger estimated, during a community-wide meeting in the Village Hall, that the Red Stag's disrepute has cost him £23,000 in ferry bookings since Mr. P took over. Others note the reduced traffic of day-trippers, and the general death of good times. After 20 years of service to the community, running one of the most famous pubs in Scotland, how could Gordon and Aileas not take this loss personally?

Property is always about business in Glenmara, but it is also an intensely personal matter, as Gordon and Aileas' story showed. There is an emotional cost to living here, which is more than just a £100,000 scenery surcharge, or being away from shops, or having to commute long distances, as Harry Robinson did when he and Cass

first bought St. Cuthbert's. The cost of living remotely together, amongst intimate strangers and nightmare neighbors, is a burden that only some are willing, or able, to bear. And while locals are fond of saying, as Cass did, that "Glenmara isn't for everyone," it can be a misleading platitude, a euphemism that conceals the painful realities that many locals endure for the sake of their attachment to Glenmara. For the sake, simply, of staying here.

Different locals have different ways – and different means – of dealing with the stress of strange intimacy that characterizes social relations in Glenmara. Mandy stopped going to the tearoom years ago because of a falling out with Flora. Don avoids it when he sees Abe's car parked outside. Ross and Ewan can be there at the same time, sitting at the locals' table next to each other, but they don't speak to each other, and haven't for years. These adaptive avoidance patterns carve up a social space that is already limited in a place as small and remote as Glenmara.

No one seems to think this is a problem. You can't get on with everyone, Pam says matter-of-factly. But this means, if you want to protect yourself from uncomfortable encounters, you can't go everywhere either. Even spaces that should be restorative and non-controversial are fraught with tension. One local is tired of the moaning and one-upmanship that have taken root amongst those tending plots in the Market Garden. After two growing seasons, she decides to vacate her plots and build her own raised beds next to her house, where she can garden in peace. Another gardener expresses the

same frustration to me. He says he wants to go to the garden to get away from it all, but it's full of "politics." His kale grows out of control and cherry tomatoes rot on the vine because he can't be bothered with it. But politics is an understatement too. It is an anodyne gloss that speaks of conflict so unbearable that it causes people to instinctively limit their own movements, abandoning places and activities that used to bring them joy. Romantic relationships are also challenging in a place where 115 locals live on top of each other. Partners fall out and rearrange themselves in painful ways, if only because there is so little room to move and recover from heartbreak. Divorced couples live and work side-by-side, sometimes in the same office. Spurned lovers make efforts to dodge each other in public spaces like the tearoom and the Village Hall, and the spheres in which they feel comfortable socializing become, out of fear, even smaller. These are the people who are too smitten with Glenmara, or too stubborn, to leave. Love demands its sacrifice, and everyone suffers in their own way.

Getting on here is always a matter of learning how to get lost. Aisling says you can have whatever you want in Glenmara but you have to be "furtive as fuck." Other locals emphasize the importance of finding a secret place, a spot in the woodland or on the hill where you can be perfectly alone. Some people, like Aileas MacDonald, go on long runs in the glen. Jimmy says with proud mysteriousness: no one knows what I do. Rowan, the former Glenmara forester who moved away, struggled with this. His 40th birthday was coming up one year and he knew, because of difficulties he was facing in

the village, that it was going to be a shit day. So he escaped the best and sneakiest way he knew how: by foot, on the 16-mile track leading out of Glenmara to the loch on the other side of the peninsula. A friend was waiting for him there with a birthday present: a half bottle of whisky, a chocolate reindeer, and enough ecstasy to take the edge off.

It's hard to escape from people in nature when nature is Glenmara's main attraction. But a hunger for disappearance, the vital necessity of getting lost, motivates the pursuit. I remember feeling this way too. It was deep in January, my first week living in Blythe's flat on Malvern Estate, and I was feeling both exiled and exposed. Kevin had cut me off, Jimmy was ignoring me, and I worried I had lost my relationship to Pam, too. I was swallowed by something I didn't understand and I wanted to run away. At dusk, I pulled on my wellies and decided to walk up the hill path that led to Loch Gorich, where the Glenmara hydroelectric dam was sited. I was so determined to feel better that I made it to the top of the hill above Malvern Estate in record time, a 1000-foot ascent in half an hour. I remember standing at the top of the hill feeling the exhilaration contract as I realized that I had not escaped at all. In reaching a bird's eye view of Glenmara, I had come that much closer.

Some have the means to escape in more dignified fashion, traveling greater distances with less desperation. One spring evening in the pub, I find Perry Smith sitting by himself at the bar, looking distinguished as he pages through a recent issue of *The Economist*, a large glass of white wine at his elbow. We have just attended a presentation

in the Village Hall about the usefulness of adapting a Norwegian model of native woodland regeneration on the West Coast of Scotland. I had been on my way back to Pam's but saw the crowd in the pub and decided to stop in for a drink. We briefly discuss our thoughts on the presentation. Perry observes that there was a lack of historical analysis, that despite the climatological correspondences, Scotland's experience of reforestation will be different to Norway's because of the legacy of the Highland Clearances. Our conversation ends up being much more about Perry than about woodlands, but this keeps me engaged. Mostly, he wants to talk about how much he enjoys not working.

Perry retired from his teaching post two years ago, and the leisure of retirement is still novel. He can do what he wants, when he wants. If I don't want to go to a meeting, Perry says, I don't have to. This surprises me, since Perry is one of the elected board members of the Glenmara Community Association, and serves on two other community boards. He always appears to be in his element at community meetings, ever the retired professor: talking elegantly and longwindedly, lavishing the discussion with nuance, sprinkling witticisms like fine seasoning. It never occurred to me that he might find meetings burdensome. I ask whether he feels an obligation to attend meetings as a board member. He does, but he is also fortunate to have what he calls "fuck-off money." If someone is nasty to him, he says, he can just go traveling for a month or two. I start to wonder whether the Smiths' holidays in Cyprus satisfy this

need: not just a break from damp West Coast weather, but also an escape from social tensions. I think how different one's experience of Glenmara would be in retirement, provided ample leisure and savings to travel. Even if getting drawn into local politics is unavoidable in Glenmara, fuck-off money makes it easier to extract oneself. It provides a degree of detachment from difficulties with other locals, a lifeline that allows one to sustain, simultaneously, a romance with Glenmara itself.

Through words like "politics" and "fuck-off money," and other ironic figures of speech, locals make light of the social and emotional burdens of intimate strangerhood. But these are modes of detachment that, precisely in their instinctive minimization, point to the seriousness of the harms they are intended to conceal. It was in the midst of my own breakdown that all of this became clear to me: the real cost of living here, the sacrifices made in the name of Glenmara, the painful tribute given to the idea of this place. On a greetie[23] day in early December, I spent eight hours pulling rhodies with Brody, Colin, and Zophie, during which I got lost during a round of our coordinated sweep of the hill face, tripping over rocks and falling into a heap on the wet grass, crying as wind and rain buffeted me on all sides. The next day, Zophie went back out in foul weather for a second day of rhodie pulling with Brody and Colin. I stayed home inside the flat, sitting on the floor in the narrow space between our twin beds so I couldn't be seen from the large sliding glass doors. I was claimed by a sadness so wild and

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[23] Scots word for heavy rain

profound that it moved less like water than like fire, catching everything it touched. And to get out of that place, I desperately needed privacy.

In the afternoon, a knock at the door jolts me into awareness. I hope that whoever it is won't see me and will go away, but Izzie lets herself in, pushing open the glass door and calling to me inside. Before I can say a word she is clomping toward me in muddy boots. Brody had mentioned to her yesterday that he was worried about me, that I didn't seem like myself, and she was coming over to check in. Tearfully, obligingly, I give it up. Anxiety about leaving Glenmara. Worries that I haven't done enough. Sadness because living here has become so hard, by which I mean, intolerable. Yes, Izzie says, but you survived it.

It didn't occur to me, as overwhelmed as I was in that moment, how odd it was to describe living in Glenmara in terms of survival. In a word, Izzie was acknowledging the substance of a suffering to which I had only made passing allusion, as if she already knew where it came from. But she was also ratifying the generality of my experience. She was telling me something about what it takes to stay in Glenmara, what it takes to become local. She was telling me that suffering, here, is a way of life.

In reflecting on this moment, several things come to mind. I remember how Izzie once told me, casually, that she uses her background as a social worker every day in her job as the Glenmara Ranger. I remember one of her favorite sayings on visitor tours: that in a community of 115 people, you get 115 different opinions on everything. And

another: that “Glenmara is like a family, with all of its horrors, and all of the care and support too.” But this – the message she was giving me in a moment of apparent reassurance – was a bleaker notion. It said that life in Glenmara, in the arms of this strangely intimate family, was at base a matter of survival. It was a theory of Glenmara that came to me personally at a high cost, a bodily comprehension of a place and a culture that I had earned through my own pain – much like other locals. It was something that Izzie could confirm only because it had already happened, to me and – I am certain – to her. It was a statement about the cost of intimate strangerhood, and the harms people are willing to endure for the love of a wild place.

What happened to me was already done. What was more distressing was what was beginning to happen, already, to Zophie, and how it appeared to mimic my own experience. I had thought I was getting special treatment – special exclusion – because of my status as a researcher. But I was, in fact, perfectly normal in this way. I allowed myself to cry in front of Izzie as I described how hurt I was to see the way people were treating Zophie. Izzie said she was hurt too, and that she hadn’t confronted Aisling about the rumors because she knew they would fall out if she did. I said I didn’t understand why people do this to each other, why they multiply such meaningless wounds. I remember being surprised by Izzie’s response. Surprised, that is, to hear this message coming from the mouth of a former social worker: someone who, by virtue of this professional identity, I was beginning to trust. I remember thinking that living here

must have changed Izzie too, that Glenmara must have worn part of her away. In this moment, I saw Izzie as a true child of Glenmara. What she said next I couldn't get out of my head. It was a callous commonplace, an explanation for why people were hurting Zophie, an excuse for intimacy turned strange. She gave me a look that should have been regret but was more like acceptance, and said: there is a price to pay for paradise.

5.3 Shit Work

Zophie was tanned and smiling when I first saw her picking lettuce in the polytunnel at the community garden. I knew who she was before we properly met, and I was already jealous of the stranger who would become the new favorite.

On a warm day in June, the afternoon sun is shining through translucent polythene, cooking the air inside the polytunnel into a thick, fragrant haze. I am crouched next to my plot assessing the cilantro situation. It had bolted and yellowed in the warmth of the polytunnel before the leaves got big enough to pick. Meanwhile, beets were taking off like mad and nasturtium was crowding out everything else. I hadn't given the plots much attention, and the results were disappointing. Glancing up, I see Zophie walk in at the far end of the polytunnel. Instinctively, stupidly, I duck behind the withered cilantro, hoping she will ignore me. But my fear is no match for her friendliness. She greets me in a booming voice, so deep and commanding on such a small person. Hellloooooo! she calls, in a way that was both authoritative and

completely adorable. I look up and greet her warily. At the time, I had no knowledge of the events that would bring us together, and how close we would become.

Zophie was the young woman everyone has been talking about since she arrived in May. Everyone, including Pam, has been asking me: have you met Zophie yet? Before I have even seen her, Jimmy does an impression of her imposing voice and her Eastern-European accent, an act that I perceive to come from a place of endearment. It's true that Zophie has many qualities to recommend her in Glenmara. Locals love that she plays the accordion. They comment on how quick witted she is, how uninhibited, how frank. And young! To be a twenty-year-old living in a foreign country, so far from home: how adventurous! How brave! I was old news months ago. Now, everyone has their eyes on the new girl.

I recall distinctly this first encounter with Zophie because of the hot air and the green lettuce and the prickling feeling of something like envy. But it is more difficult to retrace how we got to know each other over the course of the summer. I don't think we really did, or at least not well, until later, when circumstances required it. At that point, when crisis hit, it was too late not to be friends. We were thrown together in a desperate situation, in which Zophie's experience of predation met with my hungry loneliness. We became a pack for each other. This is how it happened.

In early May, before I left Glenmara for a short visit home, I learned that a job had become available with the Glenmara Community Association. The Board was

looking for an Assistant Ranger, someone who would work part-time during the season (10 hours per week, June through September), with the possibility of extending for a full year should funding become available through Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). The work would be straightforward: some landscaping duties in areas frequented by visitors, monitoring and maintaining the beach campsite, responding to visitors' inquiries, answering phone calls, helping to lead walking tours, and occasionally giving talks to the schoolchildren. Mairi Ferguson mentioned the position to me one day when I was walking through the community garden. She was sitting having a smoke on the flagstone steps outside her house and I went over to say hello on my way out. She thought I should go for it, that it would be good exposure to the tourists, to understand how they experience Glenmara. I remember being surprised and touched by her thoughtfulness since we hadn't spoken much before, and certainly not about my research. She seemed to know where my thinking was headed before I had even articulated it to myself. I gave the proposal some thought and asked my supervisor at the University of Edinburgh. He was convinced I should apply, so I did, and a great deal was revealed to me in the process.

The application was straightforward: relevant experience, statement of interests, references. But there was one question that stood out because of its particularity to the employment situation in Glenmara. On the last page, applicants were asked to "state reasons why you want to live in Glenmara." This made sense to me at the time, because

Glenmara is a geographically difficult place to access: you can't just drive in and drive out when it pleases you. Anyone who took this job would have to commit to living here. Commuting from Kilmory or anywhere else was not an option. But what didn't occur to me at the time was that the commitment of living in Glenmara might be a job in itself.

The Assistant Ranger position would be part-time, not to exceed 10.5 hours a week. Salary was advertised as up to £17,373, commensurate with experience. The job announcement was put out in mid-May 2016: batch-emailed to environmental collaborators and grant agencies, plastered all over Facebook. Preferred applicants would be able to start immediately. I was surprised when Izzie, the head Ranger, contacted me for an interview. I didn't think I was qualified for the job because I didn't have an environmental science or outdoor education background, and wasn't a British national. Besides, my position as a researcher in Glenmara was rather awkward already. But preparing for the interview, I shored up my confidence, figuring that my past experiences as a camp counselor counted for something. Perhaps my familiarity with Glenmara was a plus as well.

Izzie wanted to schedule the interview within a week of receiving the application. I was visiting Durham at the time, staying with my friend Liz. While Liz was at work, I took a Skype call from Glenmara. The connection was intimately strange: I was at so great a distance from Glenmara, back in the place I call home, but nowhere near fitting in after the time I had spent away. Izzie wanted to know, off the top of my

head, what facts I might tell visitors about Glenmara on a walking tour. I mentioned the stories and sites that interested me most on the tours I had accompanied: the fully operational 100-year-old weighbridge near the Big House, the nondescript rod from an old estate shooting target sticking up in the loch, stories about growing pineapples in the old estate glasshouse, art projects completed by Glenmara schoolchildren in recent years, planted as a visual surprise in the woods around the village. I also mentioned the need for visitors to understand how hard people work here, how the peninsula is not in any way untouched "wild land," but a landscape that is richly historical, thoroughly labored, and deeply social. This was my anthropological angle, but it also reflected the Glenmara Community Association's vision to use its landscape as a resource to support community growth.[24] This seemed to go over well. Izzie also asked how I would respond to a visitor who is upset. She said she has had to deal with aggressively unhappy tourists in the past, people who want their money back from the shop, or who come to her complaining about bad experiences in the pub. I had a hard time picturing this, since all of the visitors I had encountered in Glenmara appeared to be completely blissed out, and I struggled briefly for a response.

My answer would have been much different three months later, when I did witness an interaction with a distressed stranger, during an idle moment with Mandy in

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[24] The Glenmara Mission Statement elaborates this commitment. The first of its stated objectives is: "To conserve and preserve the character and natural beauty of the Glenmara Peninsula for the benefit of the public to enjoy and study in keeping with the views of the local population."

the Ranger Office. The phone rings and Mandy picks up because Izzie is away. A Norwegian man, calling long distance, looking for his daughter who was walking in to Glenmara from Finlochy, 28 miles away. She should have arrived today, and he can't reach her on her cell phone.

Mandy does her best to calm him down by giving specific orientations. She describes Glenmara, where the path from Finlochy comes in, where the campsite is located in relation to the village. She says it's unfortunate that it's a Wednesday because the pub is closed, and normally that's the place everyone goes first. It's also a place with free Wifi until 6 p.m., where a Norwegian hillwalker would sensibly be able to contact her anxious father. She says she doesn't want to make him nervous, but it is not uncommon for walkers to be delayed and arrived a day later than anticipated. Maybe they go off the trail a bit and get detoured but end up making it in all right. You can tell Mandy is exhausting herself trying to reassure him, telling him everything that is in her power to do, which is not much. She says she will send someone to check the campsite right away and call him back. Gordon MacDonald drives down in the black Land Rover but there are no tents on the beach. The father calls back later in the day to confirm he has found his daughter. Apparently she had turned around midway through and headed back towards Finlochy. Mandy says, with relief but not resentment, that he put her through all that worry for nothing.

Walking on rough terrain can be a matter of life and death, and parental anxieties around interrupted communication are not overblown. But worry gets instantly transferred long distance to ordinary people living and working in Glenmara, whose job it is to show up in times of distress, even when little can be done but hope. During my interview with Izzie, I couldn't imagine a scenario with visitors as upsetting as the missing Norwegian walker, so I said something vague about being gentle but firm.

Being a Ranger in Glenmara entails more than just taking visitors on informative walks and responding to polite inquiries. It means being on call when emergencies strike. And in all elements of the job, even the most mundane, it requires regularity and dependability. Izzie wanted to make sure I was willing to get up every morning before 8 a.m. to check the campsite: dispose of any misplaced rubbish, collect contributions from the cash box, clear out any abandoned personal belongings in the cabin. I knew this would be challenging given the late nights and fuzzy day-afters I had become accustomed to in Glenmara, but I gave her my assurance, with the earnestness of someone who used to be a morning person. Her last question was greeted with some giggles. Was I willing to help empty the compost toilet?

I was willing to get my hands dirty but I wasn't offered the position. Instead, the Association hired a young Eastern-European woman named Zophie who was already doing tree planting and outdoor maintenance in a Highland community south of Glenmara. The decision made sense to me. She sounded like a better fit, and I didn't

think I could have accepted the job anyway. In an email to me explaining the hiring decision, Izzie said that while Zophie did not have any formal qualifications, she had a range of practical experience that would be "very useful to us." She added, "we thought it would be a good opportunity to give someone else a chance to gain experience and bring someone else into the community." The Association didn't just want someone to work, they were looking for someone who might stay. When I returned to Glenmara from the US, before Zophie arrived, Izzie said, I think you're going to love her. She added: as soon as we met her we knew she could get on here. I wondered what this said about Zophie. Several months later, I began to ask myself what it said about Glenmara.

The Glenmara Community Association wanted Zophie to start work right away. Due to the shortage of housing for locals on the peninsula – a perennial problem – the Association could not offer accommodation to any of the newcomers it employed. This was the case in 2011, when Robin was hired to do work for the Glenmara Maintenance Group. He ended up living in an unheated caravan for three years. Nothing had changed when Zophie was hired in 2016. I believe this, more than anything, was what earned me an interview for the Assistant Ranger job. It wasn't about being familiar with Glenmara, it was the fact that I was already here. No one would have to find housing for me because Pam, and Blythe, and Wallace and Mairi had already done that.

It was concerning to discover, a few months later, that the housing offer Zophie received was a room in the home of a reclusive, 46-year-old single man. Zophie was 21

years old and, like me, had no family or friends in the area. She was young, unattached, and in this remote location, dependent on the organization that hired her. I didn't realize the extent of what was going on until Zophie came to my door, crying. It was the beginning of October, and I had just moved into the empty studio flat at Wallace and Mairi Ferguson's house. The Fergusons were renovating their B&B throughout the winter, and it was pure luck that they were able to rent a room to me after they took the last bookings of the season. The flat was perfect for one: there was a desk and small living room area, a large wood armoire, two twin beds, a galley kitchen, and a wet room. A pair of glass doors faced westward, looking out to the community garden, and beyond that, Loch Nèamh and the hills of Kilmory rising behind it. The flat was connected to Wallace and Mairi's house by a conjoining door through the kitchen. The space immediately felt good. It was private yet attached: separate, but not remote.

Zophie knocked at the door on a dreich Tuesday afternoon. She looked like a frightened animal: wide-eyed, trembling, short of breath. I made us tea and she sat down on the edge of the chair, as if prepared to bolt at the slightest movement. I understand what she must have been experiencing in two ways now: traumatized by her living situation, and fearful because of the risk she was taking to tell me about it. She said it had been four months and she couldn't live there anymore. I could read the tension in her body, and that was enough. She said she was approaching me because she knew that I was living in Wallace and Mairi's flat with two twin beds, and she

wondered if I would take her in. I said yes without hesitation. Inwardly I questioned why I had believed her host to be a harmless misanthrope. I didn't know Zophie well and hadn't given thought to how she was doing. She seemed to be always in a good mood – the life of the party – and this gave false assurance that she was doing well. But Zophie's spiritedness, her positive energy, was precisely what had landed her in an unsafe situation to begin with. She was a tough cookie and this came across when she interviewed for the Assistant Ranger job. Izzie said that she knew Zophie could "get on" in Glenmara. It is a lot to put on a young woman. I wished I had seen that sooner.

There were other things piled on Zophie: jobs that no one else wanted to do because they were what she called "shit work."[25] Part of the attraction of the Assistant Ranger position in Glenmara, besides Glenmara's reputation as a superb natural landscape and a coveted tourist destination, was its emphasis on visitor education and program development within the Ranger office: new walking paths, new thematic tours, new informational leaflets and brochures. Zophie didn't have time for much of this professional enrichment because she was busy with odd jobs: checking the campsite every morning, strimming grass[26] around the village, supervising the Ranger Office on Sunday afternoons from 2 until 6 p.m., when no one was around.

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[25] I use "shit work" here as an emic term, since it is how Zophie described the demands of her job. Juno Parreñas also talks about "shit work" in reference to volunteer work in an elephant sanctuary in Malaysia (shoveling elephant dung). Her usage is tongue-in-cheek. See Parreñas, "The Materiality of Intimacy in Wildlife Rehabilitation."

[26] "Strimming" (UK) is the colloquial term for cutting grass with a "strimmer" or weed whacker.

Strimming ended up being the most important part of the job, from the perspective of hours spent working, even though it was not the stated priority of the position. Strimming had to be done every three or four days during the summer, and there was, remarkably, quite a large area in the village to keep tidy. Zophie described the uncomfortable exposure of being suited up in midge netting, noisily cutting grass in the middle of the day as visitors and locals milled about. But this was work that was high in demand in Glenmara. Zophie joked, strimming takes you far! When locals realized that Zophie was willing to do strimming, everyone started hiring her to cut their lawns. Some paid £10, which was her hourly rate working for the Association. Ken Barnes gave her three loaves of bread for a sweep through his backyard.

I once asked Zophie why people wanted her to do so much strimming. Because, she said, you get covered in shit! In a place where visitors and tourists delight in letting their dogs run free, strimming becomes a dicey job. Zophie has learned how to navigate lawns like a minefield to avoid whizzing up the piles of shit that careless dog owners leave behind. She has a method: scanning the lawn and strimming in circles around suspicious clumps to make them visible before carrying on. The hard part is seeing them in the first place but, she said, it's becoming intuitive for me.

If strimming was the kind of gross work that you can joke about, there was another substantial job that was pure shit. Izzie's question about emptying the compost toilet was funny but ultimately serious. It had to be done once every year, and the time

had come in the summer of 2016. Refuse from the compost toilet was dumped in a large hole dug in the brush behind the cabin shelter on the beach, to be covered with dirt and left to mature for another two to three years before it was safely decomposed and ready for garden use. When Izzie had asked me if I was willing to help empty the compost toilet, I laughed and said that I had lost a few inhibitions living in West Africa. Zophie found out what that meant when she was given the job of dumping raw, liquid excrement without protective clothing.[27] Operating in a remote context with few employment options and casual oversight allows for such risks to be taken: responsibilities placed on people who have few options to choose from, shit piled on the bodies of young and serviceable recruits. Reputation does work too. If you say you've been an Assistant Ranger in Glenmara, Zophie says, no one will know that you were only shoveling shit.

Things started to get worse for Zophie in the fall. She began to be cut off by locals for seemingly minor offenses. Aisling came to the flat one afternoon to confront Zophie, accusing her of sleeping with Robin, whom Aisling was seeing at the time. The suggestion was absurd, but it had obviously been fed to Aisling with some conviction.

[27] A properly designed compost toilet uses a funnel mechanism to divert liquid away from solid material, which is collected in chambers called "vaults." Most compost toilets use a dual vault system: when one chamber reaches capacity, the toilet is shifted over the second chamber, while excreta in the first continue to break down over 2-3 years. Hygienic "compost" is formed as the excrement is incorporated with a sawdust compound in the chamber. The bulking material should absorb any moisture in excreta, yielding compost that can be shoveled by the time the chamber needs to be emptied. In Zophie's experience, the compost material was not the right consistency. This could be due to a failure in the urine separation mechanism, or insufficient bulking material in the chamber. It is also possible, since the Glenmara compost toilet was being emptied once a year, that the excreta had not broken down adequately for hygienic disposal.

Zophie was frozen out of a number of social relationships after this rumor took hold: Aisling and Robin, who had once been very warm and solicitous, never spoke to her again, and other locals, believing Aisling, treated Zophie coldly at community events in the Village Hall.

Small conflicts snowballed from there. On the six o'clock ferry coming back from a shopping trip in Kilmory, Zophie was in the cabin talking with Mandy and Greg about problems she was having supervising the Glenmara Community Association office in the village. An older man named Dougal, who often wandered the village in a state of solitary inebriation, was coming in to the office while Zophie was working alone on Sunday afternoons, smoking rollies and peeing on the wall displays. One evening, Zophie was startled to find Dougal sitting in Andrew the stalker's desk chair in the office. Zophie expressed her frustration to Mandy and Greg on the boat. It's my place of work, she said. Imagine what would happen if some tourists walked in and saw him? Mandy empathized. She often had to scrub the carpets in the office to get the smell out. As Zophie remembered, Flora, who was within earshot, stood up from her seat and pointed her finger at Zophie: you shouldn't talk about Dougal like that, she said. I grew up with him. He's like family to us.

As Zophie described, the cabin fell silent for a couple of minutes. Apparently, no one spoke up in her defense – not Mandy, not Greg, even though they were part of the conversation too. Zophie defended herself, saying she thinks Dougal is a good person,

she was just telling the truth. Kyle, the skipper, shushed her. Zophie said she felt like a child who had been scolded. She was confused why she was being singled out and came home from the boat crying.

I wondered whether Flora's response was partly about protecting Dougal from visitors who might form judgments about him. Dougal was beloved in the community, and his alcoholism was indulged and ignored. But he was treated with a kind of cautious embarrassment, given lifts home when he was too pissed, and steered away from tourists in the pub when he started reciting lewd limericks. Zophie had considered the importance of keeping face in front of tourists, but it didn't make sense why Flora had responded so harshly among locals, and why no one else spoke up to defuse the situation. Confrontations like these began to multiply. Zophie understood that something dramatic had changed in her relationship to locals at this point. Now, she said, I'm on their menu.

Against the background of these petty but wounding ordeals, living with Zophie was a relief and a delight. We were both lonely and scared: stuck in a situation in which, out of commitment to our work, we both felt compelled to stay. We found ways to cope with the stress of perseverance. I smoked rollies and played the violin. My friend Louise came to visit us for Bonfire Night and we made borscht with beets from my garden and played on the tire swing in the woods near Wallace and Mairi's house. On a day off,

Zophie climbed one of the Munros on her own, in the snow. When she came home in the evening she said she hadn't seen anyone all day and it was great.

We took care of each other in friendship as well, through compassionate listening and laughing and good food. We talked about animal intelligence, and tree planting, and psychics. We played tunes on accordion and fiddle with Wallace and Mairi and took their dog Otis, a Jack Russell, on long walks along the beach. We streamed two seasons of the Great British Bake Off. Sharing our experiences helped to put our struggles in perspective. The things that happened to us were part of a larger pattern. This wasn't the only side to Glenmara: there was enchantment too. But through the difficulties we each endured, the shadow remained.

During one of our cathartic outings with Otis, walking along the beach facing out to Loch Nèamh, Zophie spoke about the fragility of lifelines. She said she got depressed thinking that she can only live here – in Glenmara – at the mercy of Izzie, her supervisor, and Brody, Izzie's husband. What if the gossip and drama about her got to be too much for Izzie? Would she send her away? I asked Zophie if she thought she could talk to Izzie about this. She said she thought it wasn't appropriate because it was just an inner fear. Izzie would never do that.

Izzie and Brody didn't send Zophie away from Glenmara, but the "drama" effectively made it impossible for her to stay. In fact, everyone seemed to have taken a step back from Zophie by January, after I had left. Mandy stopped speaking to her,

Ewan stopped speaking to her, Flora stopped speaking to her. Aisling continued not to speak to her, believing a false rumor about Zophie sleeping with her boyfriend. In a community of 115 people, many of them pensioned and withdrawn, the mistaken bitterness of a few makes it exceedingly difficult to get on with everyone else.

Zophie was now utterly alone, but choosing to be alone was in fact the only way to cope with the exclusion. She limited the time she spent socializing in order to protect herself from what she called "energy attacks": unexpected, heated confrontations, cold stares, the pervading feeling of not being welcome. It's hard to explain this energy, to express what it feels like to live with people who give you trouble, as Rowan once described. It's as if putting words to it would diffuse the pain, make it less believable. But energy attacks are not merely imagined, or paranoid. They are palpable and they are very real.

Still, certain attachments provided a sense of hope while Zophie counted down until September when her grant-funded contract would be up. Zophie pushed Izzie to buy proper clothing for that year's compost toilet dump and to give her more growth opportunities in her role. She designed and led a "Bird Song" walk and a "Bees" walk for visitors, and sought additional training to lead Land Rover tours to Scourie. Izzie said Zophie couldn't do Land Rover tours because she didn't have experience driving on Glenmara's notoriously hazardous roads. Zophie felt her ambitions to learn were

being blocked, but Dave McLaren the scallop diver bought a truck in the meantime and let Zophie practice driving it while he was away on his boat.

In the spring, Zophie bought a dog on Gumtree for £500, a German shepherd puppy she called Miro. Dogs were essential companions in Glenmara: everyone had one, or wanted one. Collarless, they trailed their owners everywhere: through the village, up hills, on the ferry, bumping along in Land Rovers and resting under foot at board meetings. You got the impression that dogs were spirit animals to their owners – constant and vital protectors – and that if Brody were one day without Bramble, or Don without Scout, or Ewan without Reggie, the humans would somehow become more raw, exposed. Indeed, the companionship of dogs makes intimate strangerhood survivable. Dogs are safe, non-judgmental, good at keeping secrets: crucial extensions of human awareness in a world of remote proximity. Miro came into Zophie's world like a fluffy, wagging guardian angel. But soon he, too, was targeted. One afternoon sitting in front of the pub, Brody got irritated when Miro bounded over to greet his old dog Bramble. Zophie was told to get Miro under control or Brody would kick the fucking shit out of him.

Perhaps a better way to explain how energy works is to talk about the ways it expresses itself unbidden. In January after I returned to Durham, I began having dreams about Glenmara. It started with walking alone through the village in a blue dusk, realizing this was happening, and feeling myself say: I don't want to. Then Diane, one of

my committee members at Duke, sends me back to Glenmara against my will. I am in an airplane approaching a forested Scotland, looking out the window, leaden with dread. Diane is in a beautiful red dress, standing on the runway waving a flag to ground my plane. The plane takes a sharp left and heads in the direction of Loch Nèamh. I feel everything in my body resisting.

Another time, I return to Glenmara, to Pam's house. Pam is showing me her garden at Grinn: holding up a juicy pear the size of her face, and then pointing to the blueberry bushes on the other side of the house that have withered and died. Walking me down towards the village in that same blue-grey gloaming that colored all of these dreams, Pam tells me about the attacks that have been taking place recently: attacks against humans by some unidentified, wild animal. Pam tells me that one young woman has already been taken down. Then, walking through the village I see Zophie lying in a ditch with her leg torn apart and bleeding. Upon waking, I try to describe the feeling of this predator to myself, since I never saw it. A shadow wolf?

Zophie and I kept in touch throughout her remaining time in Glenmara. The Wifi connection in her flat was unreliable, and this was a constant source of stress because it meant she couldn't communicate easily with any of her friends, and so at one point she was speaking to virtually no one. It took several months to get the connection stable with help from the community development officer who managed the local

network, and by that time Zophie had already planned her exit strategy. It was a good thing, because living this way was not survivable.

During the summer, before her contract was up, Zophie started looking for ranger jobs elsewhere. She had wanted to fulfill the length of her contract with the Glenmara Ranger Office but she couldn't wait another two months until the end of the season. She took a job doing community forestry work in Aberdeenshire in eastern Scotland – far from her Highland heart, but importantly, far from Glenmara too. In September after she was settled in her new position, she sent me a postcard for my birthday to which she had taped tiny sprigs of heather and bog myrtle. It was the best gift because it transported me to a landscape we both loved. But I have also preserved in memory the message she wrote, because it spoke to me of a more profound commonality. She said she still has bad dreams about Glenmara, but she wakes up in the morning with a big relief not to be there.

5.4 Conclusion

Living together is tricky anywhere, but perhaps especially so in an environment that survives by its reputation for exceptional remoteness. In Glenmara, where locals feed on the bread of tourists, strangers touch each other in intimately alienated ways. Property commands high market and entrepreneurial value, but it is also a personal matter in a place where no one can escape each other. Newcomers are useful to locals because they take on shit work, but they also serve as a social resource in a community

starved for new relationships. The experience of newcomers – those who stay longer than visitors but aren't quite accepted as locals either – dramatizes the tightrope of mattering value in Glenmara. On one hand, a need to attract the money and labor that visitors and part-time workers bring. On the other, the need to remain exclusive and remote in order to sustain this attraction in the first place. Glenmara is in the business of managing a highly valuable image: remoteness and wildness are not merely associations, they are expectations of this place. And they define the stakes of surviving as a community. Floating a superlative reputation requires contradictory modes of seduction and sacrifice. People are needed here, but not everyone can stay. It is this dilemma that gives license to a specific cultural process in Glenmara. This is a process of making remote proximity. A process by which hospitality gives way to harm, and intimacy becomes strange.

There is a social stress, a psychic weight of living remotely together, which is felt in locals' interactions with visitors and, crucially, amongst themselves. Social energy needs a pressure valve when it builds up, and a boost when it is depleted. In Glenmara, this is accomplished by a kind of unstructured collective reverie, an effervescent environment that emerges spontaneously when bodies and substances and moods combust. It is not a party, exactly. It is the wildness of craic.

6. The Business of Wildness

She remembered it as the night she saw Glenmara's shadow. It was a Saturday in October, and there was music on in the Village Hall: a performance by an up-and-coming neo-trad[1] group from Glasgow, a band called Aurora. Tickets were £5 and there were drinks available at a makeshift bar in the corner of the room next to the stage, which was just large enough for three hipsters playing fiddle, concertina, and guitar. White folding tables and metal chairs were pushed to both sides of the room to make space in the middle, presumably, for dancing. Multi-colored fairy lights added a certain whimsy. It was festive in a homespun way, a space that was far from the fluorescent-lit community meetings that also took place here. Those meetings were often long-winded and occasionally tense. Seven or eight locals in their jackets and wellies, sitting around a single table in the middle of the room, shuffling meeting minutes and agenda items printed on white A4 paper. A persistent chill in the air: the space heater couldn't keep up with the drafty windows so no one bothered to turn it on.

Tonight, thankfully, was not a meeting. It was a special occasion. Music, particularly during the off-season, brought vibrancy to a community that could become leaden by routine, and by the ordinary stress of what someone called "living with people who give you trouble." There were fewer than a dozen events in the Village Hall

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[1] Abbreviation for "neo-traditional" music, which is a genre that combines traditional Scottish instruments and performance practices with new compositional styles and, frequently, electronics.

scheduled during the year, and each one was anticipated with the eagerness of children awaiting summer. Men showed up showered and shaven, dressed in button-downs and yellow wellies. Women wearing makeup and dangly earrings sneaked bottles of Prosecco in their purses. Everyone made an effort to show up. Everyone, that is, except those who stayed home in protest, some because they disagreed with the positions the Glenmara Community Association had taken on specific issues, some because of falling-outs with specific people they would prefer to avoid. For others, it was both. After all, the Glenmara Community Association Board was made up of real people – real neighbors – and disagreeable issues tended to follow them around even off duty. The burden of living with this social stress was part of what made locals reluctant to join the Board. Even on a festive occasion, during an evening that seemed to promise an uplifting alternative to the everyday, the Village Hall was crosscut with the tensions that could make social life in Glenmara so difficult to endure.

It took a few drinks for everyone's mood to match the lighting. There were several small cliques along both walls on either side of the room, talking amongst themselves. The stranger went up to the bar for a glass of rosé because it seemed like the thing to do. She went back for a second because everyone looked so down, at this party that felt oddly like a fishbowl. Soon the "young folk" arrive: Blythe, Jimmy, Kevin, Gemma, Ross – the whole crew of them, already warmed up. The musicians have taken the stage and thanked the Glenmara Village Hall for hosting them. It's a common thing

to say at a concert, but is particularly appropriate in Glenmara: in view of the remote location, the musicians will be staying overnight.

The first set follows the traditional form: a slow reel in 4/4, transitioning to a dignified hornpipe that swings on beats 1 and 3, and then resolving in a raucous, stomping 6/8 jig. The fiddle and guitar have a familiar reedy quality, but there is something especially stirring and sentimental about the sound of the concertina, something otherworldly even. This strangely evocative instrument is like a small accordion but sounds more like a bagpipe chanter or a flute when talented fingers are fluttering on the buttons, deftly flipping the subdivided ornaments that make a simple melody danceable. The music enters you through the chest. It is hypnotically mournful and enlivening all at once. Flooding the space between your heart and your lungs, it calls something out of you, something like a deep and primal longing. The stranger couldn't help being awakened in this way. She was transported in spite of herself.

After a few songs, people start ungluing themselves from the walls and moving toward the middle of the room in front of the stage, stomping their feet in time. Aisling and Robin are the first ones to dance, and their enjoyment of each other is an invitation to let loose. A handful of people are jumping and smiling and spinning each other around. These are the wild ones, the ones who are willing to get sweaty and sloppy, and their energy is infectiously activating. She felt this was her tribe, the ones who dance. She was so elevated by the music that she almost forgot about the locals who were

hanging back in the corners of the room, tense and unmoved, watching everyone else having fun.

When the music ended, after a rousing encore, the wallflowers were the first to leave. The young folk helped to clean up the hall, which mostly involved pouring open bottles of wine into large plastic cups to take down the road to the "after party" at Kevin's house. Flora, Gemma, and Blythe walked into the hall just as things were closing down. Breathless with wet hair, they had just been swimming in the loch. The water must have been 10 degrees Celsius and they were freezing. They were not ordinarily this adventurous, but tonight there was a bioluminescent bloom. The stranger felt a sudden rush of kinship with these women, who run towards magic when it appears.

She looks around for other young folk who will come with her. Jimmy is the only person left. She runs outside, giddy, and he trails her. They strip down at low tide, carelessly scrambling over slick algal rocks. The water is cold like glass, and a toe's step stirs green glowing shards like fairy dust. Immersion shocks the blood, chokes the breath. There is a high in laughter, in fluorescent flickering on wet skin. It recalls the expansive wildness of youth, the inebriating enchantment of being in the right place, just in time. How could she not remember this moment as falling in love?

The after party went until 6 a.m. People were sitting around Kevin's living room and standing in the kitchen, a bunch of locals and some campers from the beach, three guys visiting out of season from London. No musicians, because they were leaving on

the 8 a.m. boat the next morning to play another show somewhere civilized. There was a lot of talking, and some music. Blue swimming lips and bloody fingers scraped on rocks. It was fun to be at a party, but it felt somehow sad, caged in this tiny house in this tiny place, a comedown to ignoble humanity after the illuminating transcendence of the loch.

She walked two miles back to Pam's house in the dark, feeling like a teenager sneaking home past curfew, nervous what her host would think. How could there have been eight hours of this? Pam was sleeping on the couch in the living room. She woke up as the stranger came through the door. Not waiting for her, but for Don. Don the philosophical forester, who had left in someone's boat after the music ended, speeding six miles over the dark water to party on the Isle of Scapa. Pam fixed cheese toast and the two of them sat at the kitchen table until 7 a.m., worrying. The stranger didn't know enough yet to feel Pam's distress at Don's disappearance. She didn't understand that, on the West Coast, this is how real people die.

Don must have been safe because his hi-vis jacket was hanging in the back of the house the next afternoon when she woke up. It was a relief, but she was still trying to make sense of what happened to the grown folk, the ones whom she expected to be sensible and restrained. They were acting like the young folk, and this felt like a strange inversion of the order of things. She felt better thinking about the algae twinkling in the water, about spontaneous joy and the exhilaration of being synchronous with nature. That wildness was purifying. But this other impression, dusky and indistinct, clung to

her still: it was a feeling of darkness on the edge of exuberance, of wildness becoming sad. The possible too-far of collective effervescence, the shadow of Glenmara.

Glenmara is a destination for thousands of tourists every year because of its singular nature: because it borders a landscape designated as wild, and because it is known for being exceptionally remote. Conservationists, hillwalkers, and ordinary people come to Glenmara for the scenery and the wild land: things that drew many locals here too. But this is not the reason why they come back, or why some choose to stay. The real heart and soul of this place – the real value – is not an image or a landscape. It is a feeling, like getting close enough to touch something and being exceeded by it at the same time. You might call it Nature, or God.[2] You might call it sublime.[3] It is moving, electrifying, ecstatic.[4] West Coasters have their own word for this kind of wildness, a form of spontaneous transcendence they locate in music and parties

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[2] I am referring to Spinoza's conviction that God and Nature are one universal and immanent substance. See Genevieve Lloyd, *Part of Nature: Self-Knowledge in Spinoza's Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).
[3] Kant's aesthetics of the sublime elaborated in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790) is actually not about the feeling of "overwhelm" as such, but about the way the magnitude of an object or a force illuminates human reason. In other words, the sublime experience is in the ability of reason to overwhelm the overwhelming: by constituting an idea of absolute freedom or absolute totality. For excellent digests of Kant's theory of the sublime, see Douglas Burnham, "Immaneual Kant: Aesthetics," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed March 16, 2018, https://www.iep.utm.edu/kantaest/#SH2c; Hannah Ginsborg, "Kant's Aesthetics and Teleology," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2014 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2014), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/kant-aesthetics/.
[4] Durkheim calls this phenomenon "collective effervescence" and vividly describes its effects: "The very act of congregating is an exceptionally powerful stimulant. Once the individuals are gathered together, a sort of electricity is generated from their closeness and quickly launches them to an extraordinary height of exaltation" Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 217.

and rousing good times. They call it craic,[5] and it is what – beyond nature – puts Glenmara on the map.[6]

This chapter travels to a scenic place in order to see how textures, moods, and atmospheres participate in the making of a destination.[7] It tells stories about energies of wildness in Glenmara in order to stage a larger discussion about the nature of environment itself. Bodies, sensation, and substance invite ways to experience and think with environments beyond politics of representation, commodification, and production.[8] There is something palpable in the space between the seen and the felt, between wild land and wildness, which is real but not quite made. You can assemble the necessary ingredients of craic – bodies, substances, music – you can craft the conditions, but craic isn't something you can produce. Craic isn't made. It happens.

Craic and feelings like it pose a challenge to social scientists who want to understand how things work. We have a handful of words for talking about how social

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[5] Pronounced "crack."

[6] In a similar register, Catherine Allerton discusses how host-guest relationships in Indonesia are mediated by an experience of "liveliness" conjured by bodies, food, and drink. Catherine Allerton, "Making Guests, Making 'Liveliness': The Transformative Substances and Sounds of Manggarai Hospitality," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18 (June 1, 2012): S49–62.

[7] For two lovely experiments with the ways atmospheres conspire to make places, see Mikkel Bille, "Hazy Worlds: Atmospheric Ontologies in Denmark," *Anthropological Theory* 15, no. 3 (September 2015): 257–74; Kathleen Stewart, "Atmospheric Attunements," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29, no. 3 (2011): 445 – 453.

[8] This is work that political ecologists have ably done. Wildness is certainly a business in Glenmara, but I am also curious about what might be called a material/semiotic mattering of environment as sensation, in the spirit of Donna Haraway and her affines. Haraway, *ModestWitness@Second Millennium.FemaleMan Meets OncoMouse*. On the metaphysics of sensation and transspecies connections, see: Karen Barad, "On Touching: The Inhuman That Therefore I Am," *Differences* 23, no. 3 (2012): 206; Eva Hayward, "Fingeryeyes: Impressions of Cup Corals," *Cultural Anthropology* 25, no. 4 (November 2, 2012): 577–99.

phenomena occur in the world. We might say that something is made, or produced, or represented, or performed. But all of these fall short of communicating the immediacy and the essential instability of culture. There is a promising move toward a more active and activating scholarly language in the STS literature – a curiosity about how social phenomena are "done,"[9] through practices that involve specific choreographies and arrangements of objects and events.[10] These models are vital, but they aren't a universal fit. We can't "do" everything. Sometimes things happen that exceed and overwhelm us, emergences that shatter our attempts to condition and control.[11] In fact, this is anthropology's originary idea of society: a collective experience of cohesion that exceeds the aggregation of individuals.[12] Durkheim found this feeling in the Australian Aboriginal substance of *mana* (sacred power), and in the contagious "electricity" of the *corroboree* (gathering). Victor Turner described the ritualized dissolution of anti-structure amongst the Ndembu.[13] Ethnographers of trance and dance have explored the

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[9] For example, Heuts and Mol discuss how the value or goodness of a tomato is "done" through different caring practices – by different people, and in different scalar contexts. See Heuts and Mol, "What Is a Good Tomato?"

[10] Choreography is one way of expressing the idea that social phenomena are "achievements": they don't exist a priori in the world, but are manifested in particular relationships between things. Cf. Thompson, *Making Parents*. For elaborations of the "arrangement" concept, see: Marianne de Laet and Annemarie Mol, "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump: Mechanics of a Fluid Technology," *Social Studies of Science* 30, no. 2 (April 2000): 225–63; Mol, *The Body Multiple*.

[11] Shattering is queer literary critic Leo Bersani's word for the self-losing experience of Lacan's *jouissance*. Leo Bersani, *Is the Rectum a Grave?: And Other Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

[12] Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.

[13] Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995).

possibilities and limits of collective euphoria and intoxication.[14] Others have shown how complex social phenomena like addiction and disease materialize in the interface of design/experience, and bodies/worlds.[15] I think this work has everything to do with environments: how we structure certain conditions of emergence, how we become attached to each other in their midst,[16] how we allow ourselves to be overtaken by energies that exceed our conscious doing. An attention to matters of atmosphere[17] and sensation can enliven our understanding of environments, creating space to articulate relationships between structure and susceptibility, bodies and becoming, power and persuasion. Maybe we need better concepts to do wildness, or maybe we just need to throw our hands up and join the party.

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[14] Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson produced an early documentary on trance in Bali. See Margaret Mead, *Trance and Dance in Bali*, DVD (University Park: Penn State Media Sales, 2005). Luis-Manuel Garcia's current work on electronic dance music is also exemplary here. See Luis-Manuel Garcia, "Beats, Flesh, and Grain: Sonic Tactility and Affect in Electronic Dance Music," *Sound Studies* 1 (2015).

[15] Michelle Murphy, *Sick Building Syndrome and the Problem of Uncertainty: Environmental Politics, Technoscience, and Women Workers* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Natasha Dow Schüll, *Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Solomon, *Metabolic Living*.

[16] Tim Ingold discusses the spatial metaphor through which Euro-Americans experience the "environment." For Ingold, when we speak idiomatically about being "in" an environment, we imagine ourselves to be inserted within something that is fundamentally different and separate from us. Ingold suggests that we lack prepositions in English to describe our relationship to environments otherwise. See Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London: Routledge, 2011).

[17] Timothy Choy and Jerry Zee describe the mattering of atmospheres across scales that are at once embodied and technological. See Tim Choy, *Ecologies of Comparison: An Ethnography of Endangerment in Hong Kong* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Timothy Choy and Jerry Zee, "Condition—Suspension," *Cultural Anthropology* 30, no. 2 (May 25, 2015): 210–23. In a different register, Kathleen Stewart experiments with ways

6.1 Guns and Dicks

The beasts started roaring in September that year. They were loud, hollering sex from the hilltops at all times of day and night, but I couldn't hear them. Rather, I hadn't learned how to hear them. Max the ghillie knew how. In fact, he remembered the day of the first roar: September the eleventh. For those with trained ears,[18] the first roar is always a memorable event. It is a rupture both in sound and in time, announcing the beginning of the red deer mating season, the greatly anticipated and highly profitable "rut." This was the time of year when red stags began their aggressive courtship: traveling miles across the hills in search of hinds to mount, corralling them along with their young calves in large "harems" of as many as 60 to 80 beasts. It was the time of year when stags fought brutally with each other, sparring and locking antlers, proudly displaying their dark coats and bellowing voices, generally throwing their weight around to intimidate their rivals. It was during this time that stags competed with other stags for a kind of domination that was simultaneously territorial, social, and sexual – all the while being hunted themselves by wealthy stalking guests who, in their own way, were after the same prize.

Max heard the roaring because it was his job to pay attention. The stags didn't belong to Max, but his senses were utterly keyed in to theirs, both on and off the hill:

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[18] Using the perfumer nose as an example, Bruno Latour shows that sensing is always process of "learning to be affected," using a particular set of tools and techniques. Bruno Latour, "How to Talk About the Body? The Normative Dimension of Science Studies," *Body & Society* 10, no. 2–3 (June 1, 2004): 205–29.

spotting them with his binoculars, identifying their tracks and their dung, listening for their roars at night, sniffing out their musk. It was almost as if he were serving them, developing a sensorium adapted to theirs, one which was put to use, of course, in order to kill. But I think Max was also attuned to the stags on a sensory level more primary than these, something more powerful and ineffably communicable: a charged alignment of transspecies masculinities, a smoldering sexuality that fused stags with the men who stalk them.[19]

Stag season is an ecological event in the life of red deer, but it is also a carnival of wildness and value on the hill that attracts wealthy stalkers who shoot stags for sport. It is a season that corresponds, historically and still today, with parliamentary recess dates in the House of Lords and House of Commons.[20] Critics of blood sports say that this coincidence is intentional: that parliamentary recess dates were designed so that lords could spend a month at their shooting lodges during the fall stalking deer and shooting game. This may be so. But beyond elite machination, there is a more potent alliance at play, a subtle conspiracy between symbol and hormones and power, which makes stags

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[19] Cultural geographer Hayden Lorimer gives a historical critique of Scottish deerstalking, attributing present-day inequalities in land ownership to 19th-century networks of knowledge and power. Lorimer is particularly interested in the patriarchal homoerotics that characterize what he calls the “culture of nature” of deerstalking. See Hayden Lorimer, “Guns, Game and the Grandee: The Cultural Politics of Deerstalking in the Scottish Highlands,” *Cultural Geographies* 7, no. 4 (October 1, 2000): 403–31.

[20] In 2017-2018, the summer parliamentary recess dates were July 20-September 5 and September 14-October 9. These dates were the same for both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. See “House of Commons Recess Dates,” UK Parliament, accessed March 2, 2018, http://www.parliament.uk/about/faqs/house-of-commons-faqs/business-faq-page/recess-dates/.

the romantic icon of heteromasculine privilege, and men the lusty servants of their seasonal-sexual drives.

My first stalking day is in the beginning of October, during the stag season. Hugh, the Malvern Estate Head Stalker, has agreed to take me out with two of Malvern's longstanding guests – wealthy Norwegians, one of whom is a professional deer hunter. I am surprised to be allowed to spend the day with such seemingly important people, but it becomes clear that this is precisely what makes it low risk: these clients are already secured to Malvern, and my presence is not going to imperil that relationship. New clients, on the other hand, are still in the courtship phase: they are impressionable, persuadable, and potentially losable.

In the morning, it is not clear that we will go stalking at all. Around eight o'clock, the fog is sitting like meringue atop the loch and the village. You can't see the trees from Pam's window. A call to the Malvern Estate office confirms that we will in fact be going out. And it makes sense: the guests have paid to shoot a certain number of stags this week, and it's Hugh's job to deliver. Cancelling a day would be dishonorable, and a bad business decision besides. The other reason not to cancel is that you can never tell what the weather here will do. There is a throbbing tension in the uncertainty of conditions, which is part of the thrill, but also part of what makes stalking work. The guests desire a kill – that's why they're here – but the stalkers don't have a choice. It is impossible to know just how it will happen, in what ways the weather and the deer and the humans

and the rifle will conspire together, but for the stalker, whose role is to satisfy the guests, a kill is non-optional.

We meet the guests on the pier – the professional hunter called "Trigger" and his friend Hans from Bergen. It is a boat day, Hugh says. I don't know what this means yet, except that we will have to travel down Loch Nèamh to get where we need to go. It is hard to describe the feeling of going out on a boat to this unseen hill, in pursuit of nocturnal animals, in fog so thick you can't see 10 meters in front of you. Max says this is the thickest he's seen it. Somehow, in the space of a breath, a black seal body surfaces on the starboard side of the boat. It is a flash of wildness, an icon of the more-than-human synchronicities that surround us, and a reminder of our susceptibility to surprise.

On a different day, I am out with Glenmara Community Association stalkers and their guests. Andrew the stalker is pleased with the kill. You can tell by the way he describes how it happened, when he comes back to join me, Martin the ghillie, and the French woman, who stayed behind with us while her husband went with Andrew to shoot. Andrew says it was a very old stag. He was lying down; keeping two hinds and a calf nearby. It was a neck shot at 130 meters. Andrew says the stag didn't feel a thing. The stag is rather lean, seemingly undernourished. Andrew says it's normal at this point in the season. He says that the stags have been "rutting hard to keep their ladies happy," that they haven't been eating for weeks. Their only job, until winter comes, is to mate.

We stand back as Martin begins the *gralloch* (evisceration). It is not going particularly smoothly. When Andrew hands Martin the knife he say, you'll remember how to gralloch? It was a dig: Martin is a newer ghillie and hadn't been up the hill in two weeks because he was saddled with the working ponies. I walk over to where Martin is kneeling, turning over the stag to expose its belly and preparing to eviscerate it. Seeing Martin struggle to cut through tough hair and flesh, I say that the knife seems rather small. Andrew says, "it's not the size, it's what you do with it." I've been on the receiving end of comments like this for weeks, and I'm becoming weary of moments where an earnest curiosity to learn gets twisted and sexualized. I think, no wonder there are so few women in the stalking world. They can't stand the dick jokes either.

Humor is one of the ways that phallocentrism is sustained within a male-dominated sporting culture.[21] While male stalkers love to talk about how women are better sharpshooters than men (because they are more "cool headed"), there seems to be something inherently funny about women being on the hill. In 2014, a reality TV show called "Ghillie Girls" aired on BBC Alba, the BBC's Scottish Gaelic-language channel. Three young women from Gaelic-speaking areas in the Western Isles were brought to the remote Ardnamurchan peninsula, where they were suited up in stalker's gear and

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[21] Sharon Traweek's ethnography of academic physicists similarly shows how the professional practice of "objective" science is structured by gendered stereotypes. Sharon Traweek, *Beamtimes and Lifetimes: The World of High-Energy Physicists* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

taught how to shoot, gralloch, and drag.[22] It was a story about women becoming stronger and more self-assured in four episodes, under the ennobling guidance of career-stalkers: men who lived and breathed deer, who were willing to take on women ghillies for the sporting comedy and the exposure. Caledonia TV, which produced the show, released the following promotional description:

> Three girls leave the cosy comfort of home to train as ghillies on a Highland Estate. They'll swap their mascara and hair-straighteners for tick-removers and guns. These girls have never met a deer, let alone shot one. They will have to pull the trigger on Bambi, gralloch (or gut) a deer and cut off its head and legs, charm wealthy hunters and beat to raise game birds – while avoiding being shot themselves. There are challenges – physical, mental and social. Have they got what it takes?

There was a lot of squeamish giggling.[23]

Humor on the hill, at least as much as the stalker's walking stick and expertise, is what keeps gender in its place. It is how men assert their intimacy with the stags, a kind of instinctual and hormonal ownership. And it is how women learn to deal with the disgrace of not being men.

On a bright day in October, I am up the hill with Andrew the stalker, Martin the ghillie, and a guest named Jane, a pharmaceutical executive from Surrey who is in

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[22] In "dragging," a rope is around the stag's body and attached to a walking stick. The ghillie grabs the stick horizontally and drags the stag down the hill. This takes a lot of strength and skill, as stags can weigh up to 250 kilos (over 500 pounds). Dragging is used in "traditional" open hill stalking particularly in remote areas, where hills are inaccessible to modern all-terrain vehicles.

[23] "TV Challenge for Three 'Ghillie Girls,'" Herald Scotland, August 23, 2013, http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13119600.TV_challenge_for_three__Ghillie_Girls_/.

Glenmara on holiday with a “stag group”: other businessmen who shoot, and who have left their wives at home. I wanted to go out with Jane today, though I was presented with a choice among her male companions, for one reason: she is a woman.

There is a tension in stalking, and it is already there, even before we start climbing. It is not knowing whether the shooter will be a good shot today. And if target practice is a bit off, as it was with Jane, it is not knowing whether the shooter will get a kill. At target practice, Jane takes two shots and both are left of the bull’s eye. Andrew the stalker takes over – lying on the ground, elbows bent, one leg cocked to the side – and shoots a bull’s eye effortlessly. Seeing how I’m observing the scene, Martin explains there’s a margin of error in shooting stags. The target we use is an A4 sheet of paper because there is an area on the animal about that size that stalkers call the “kill zone,” just behind the shoulder. If you hit this area, even if you’re slightly off, you’ll kill the stag. There was hope Jane would be able to pull it off when we got up the hill.

In stalking, the tension mounts all morning as you’re trying to figure out whether you’re going to find a beast to approach, because it really doesn’t depend just on you. There is an entire choreography of elements at play: stalker, ghillie, and guests, stags and hinds, weather and wind. When the stalker takes the guest to set up the shot, there is tension between you and the ghillie as you hang back, hidden from view, waiting to hear the shot ring out. Today, with Jane, the tension remains suspended after the first shot. It’s hard to describe this feeling: I don’t trust that it’s over – it sounds

unresolved. Within 30 seconds there is another shot. And then, incredibly, a third. I look over at Martin and neither of us can believe it. We speculate about what might have happened. It must be a mistake because there's no way they ever would have shot three animals with only one ghillie and one anthropologist to drag them. I start to worry that maybe the stag they targeted had gotten away, wounded. And then I wonder why I feel so invested in the drama. The truth is, I'm already completely taken with stalking, and my experience of the day is directly connected to everyone else's. The long descent, the drinking: everything that comes after this moment will be soured if we come home empty handed. I realize that, in spite of myself, I desire a kill as much as the others. I've become hooked to the euphoria that rushes in after the kill, when everything unravels all the way down.

There is a climax in stalking and there is a dénouement – just like a story, just like sex – and when the climax fails to produce the desired result, the ending is no resolution at all, just a meaningless tangle, purpose lost. It seems to me that, rather than the kill, it's actually the gralloch that's the pivotal moment, when the party is reunited and the ghillie takes his knife out to eviscerate the beast. Martin has said the best part of stalking in the winter is the gralloch, and I can imagine it: thawing out your bare hands in the deep red warmth, feeling the faintest pulse of life as it leaves the animal's body. It's a kind of birth, or rebirth, or becoming animal. After the gralloch, we release ourselves to baser instincts: a flask is passed around, fags are rolled, tongues are loosened by all of

this. We are energized by the endorphin rush of having accomplished what we set out to do, which is also the rush of having avoided the shadow outcome in which we don't kill anything and the shooter is shamed among her friends. There is always that fear, and Jane is vocal about her relief that she hasn't had a blank day. That has only happened once, she says, on a terribly foggy day. I say it's a good record and she is quiet, as if it may not be true.

Today Jane has shot the stag three times. She jokes when Martin approaches the body that he should look for the bullet holes and then tell her what he thinks happened. He turns the animal over and we realize it only has one antler. The other antler has been knocked clean off, revealing a round patch of smooth, pink flesh. Before Martin has done a full inspection, Jane opens her jacket and pulls out the missing antler to show him. She's not impressed with herself but she's blowing up the oddity of it, I think, to protect her own ego. She shot the antler and you can see that a bullet has grazed it, leaving a mark that looks like the thing has been chewed. Jane explains that the first shot killed the animal, but it was still moving around, so they thought she should shoot again. The second shot hit the antler, and the third went through the head. The stag's jaw was broken and completely loose, tongue flopped out on the ground, blood spilling from its mouth. It was undignified. I wonder if Jane is disappointed or embarrassed with her three shots, and if her loud and repeated joking about it is an effort to appear not to care. I imagine that's how I might compensate if it were me. Andrew tells me I

have witnessed something truly remarkable, which has never happened in the 20 years he's been a stalker. Martin says the antler will make a "trophy." It's not the kind you can proudly hang on your wall, but perhaps a trophy fit for a woman: ridiculous.

Winter stalking during hind season is a different scene altogether. I am out again with Trigger, a long-time guest of Malvern Estate. When we approach the beasts he's killed he points out that one of the hinds was pregnant. He asks if I'd like to see, or if it would bother me. I am curious. He slices open the uterus and amniotic fluid spills out over the snow, a pinkish grey color that appears sick and lifeless compared to the bright spots of fresh blood all around us. Inside is a deer fetus, small enough to hold in two hands. I asked if it's possible it is still alive, and he said it would have died instantly when he shot the hind. You can see its translucent, floppy ears, its hooves, and its tiny penis, which delights Trigger. He estimates the fetus was about 3-4 months along in an eight-month gestation – hinds give birth in early June. He checks the other hind as well and finds another male fetus. He says proudly, laughing: these could have grown up to be two Royal hill stags!

I remember feeling uncomfortable about this for reasons I didn't fully understand at the time. I was fascinated by the anatomy, but I also felt injured by the slicing open of raw motherhood. Maybe it was the way Trigger aimed the rifle at the hinds as they were running, with an intensity of focus and a calm that unsettled me. He was a good shot: three down with three bullets. Except the calf that was with them,

which he shot in an area just below the spinal cord, leaving it twitching on the ground. Hugh the stalker climbed lower to get within range, reloaded the rifle and shot it in the head. Trigger wanted to reassure me: the calf was already dead, but it wasn't pleasant to watch the nerves die. Hugh's second bullet stopped the movement instantaneously.

At first I couldn't even tell where the animals went down. The snow was falling heavily, and their bodies were slump and indistinct as rocks. Hugh said he didn't think we would have gotten them if it weren't for the snow. The snow vivified the stalk in forensic detail, showing the bright spots of a trailing death like blood coughed into a handkerchief. When we have located the beasts where they were shot, Trigger says, now it's photo time! This is his favorite moment: the digital trophy. He is energized by the moment in an almost childlike way, and it is possibly this that makes me uncomfortable too: a gleeful hunter, a playful boy with serious guns. Trigger always wants the carcasses to look a certain way in his photos. He drags the two hinds and the calf around by their back legs, arranging them like a still life, legs tucked underneath steaming bodies, heads mournfully limp, mouths stained with blood. There is nothing you can do to make these hinds and their sad little nerve-blown calf look perky in these conditions. Trigger asks me how I feel about this: the killing, or the photos, I'm not sure which. I can only say, with inarticulate honesty, that I feel differently about it than I did before.

After the winter, I would start to see stalking in the way that Don talked about it: as a "parade of guns and dicks." When the end of summer came, I realized I couldn't go

on the hill for a second season. I couldn't stomach any of it: the blue-glowing larder building where carcasses were washed and broken down, its slick white walls and wet concrete floor. Toes frozen in wet boots, tobacco smoke mingling with sodden stag musk and cheap tins of lager. I'm not sure how to describe what changed. Something in me softened over the winter, or wore away. Like a hind in the snow, I felt exposed, and I couldn't face stalking anymore. The stalkers would have winded the fear.

And so I backed away. I was not just uninterested in stalking – I was actively avoiding it. I stopped inviting myself out with guests. I stopped walking by the larder at night, when I knew the stalkers would be there, drinking and washing carcasses. My flatmate Zophie used my stalking clothes and boots. She was more than eager to go on the hill and help break down carcasses in the larder. She liked hanging around the guys. She kept pace with the banter and the crass humor, and was endlessly entertained by the job of cutting out stag pizzles, which were tossed into a big black bucket in the corner of the larder, sold to the game dealer in Kilmory, and shipped to China to make powdered aphrodisiacs. Zophie felt accepted among the stalkers, and useful, and she was even getting paid part-time at forestry wages. I recognized some of my initial enthusiasm in Zophie, an attraction to mastery and masculinity that was vaguely erotic. It felt better now to take on some of Don's cynicism, to see the stalking world as a compensatory performance, masking the real fear that someone's already taken your power away.

6.2 Good Scottish Weather

In the "Landscape, History, People" booklet, Howard Nelson says that Glenmara is "magic in any weather." What he is saying is that bad weather doesn't diminish what is seductive about Glenmara, that love's heartbeat remains constant even in wildly changeable conditions. But I think what he means is something else. Perhaps the point is not that magic survives in spite of weather, but that it erupts within and because of it. Perhaps changeability is not what defies love, but what sparks it.

Aisling, who manages the Glenmara community hostel, has the job of being attentive and patiently answering visitors' questions, several of which are recurrent. How many children are in the school? Where does the trash go? How does the hydroelectric system work? What's it like to live here? One of these questions is particularly wearing. Don't you get bored?

It is five o'clock on a Tuesday in February, pissing down and dark as night. We are sitting around Aisling's kitchen table in the flat adjacent to the hostel, where she lives with her two Great Danes. I am here with Bruce, one of the Sea Link skippers. Today is a day off for him, not because of scheduling, but because all of the boats have been canceled. It is a "red day" according to the wind forecast on XC Weather,[24] which uses a colored numeric Beaufort scale that ranks winds from 0 (light blue) to 11 (deep red). Winds were at 50 knots by mid-day, a 10 on the Beaufort. Loch Nèamh looked like

[24] This website tracks wind direction and speed across the UK on an hourly basis. See http://www.xcweather.co.uk/.

a pot of boiling water. Today was a day for staying local and landed, a day for taking cover. After Aisling finished her sweep through the hostel this morning – wiping the surfaces in the bathrooms and kitchen, changing duvet covers on the bunk beds, arranging tinder for the fire in the common room – she spent the rest of the day at home, painting and lighting incense, savoring the quiet of a miserable day. Bruce had ventured farther afield, walking down to Glenmara in the wind and rain from his house in Scourie, six miles from the village. When I came over and found him sitting in Aisling's kitchen, he had already dried off and changed clothes, his underlayers tumbling in the dryer, and soaked waterproofs and boots arranged in the hostel drying room.

Bruce had warned me of the bad weather that morning, and told me I was crazy for going rhodie pulling with Brody and Colin. But Bruce had chosen to meet the storm too. And perhaps he was the crazier of the two of us, because he was sucked into chaos by love rather than work, a worshipper of the wild wet. Now, scrubbed clean and rosy, he was sitting in a warm kitchen in the East End of Glenmara, where Aisling was doing warmth for both of us: pouring cups of pale herbal tea and ladling homemade borscht into mismatched soup bowls.

What is boredom? Aisling is getting philosophical, as if she were trying to answer a visitor's question in a way she couldn't do on the job. You can't be bored here, she says. There is a wistful insistence in her voice, deflated by the suggestion that Glenmara could ever be anything less than captivating. Bruce feels this too. You can

walk out of the house and have a powerful experience in a flash, he says. Indeed, bad weather is its own kind of enchantment. Weather is powerful, not as a force that resists you, but as an intensity that tells you you're alive. Stand on the beach in a storm, leaning forward until the wind topples you. Walk six miles in raging weather just because you can. Bruce was going to stay inside all day, but decided to pay visits to people in the village instead. You find a moment to yourself in a storm, Bruce says. He wasn't trying to test his own endurance, or not only. He was looking to be alone. In a place that is visited by tourists half of the year, where locals are constantly sought as a reservoir of attention and answers, and where neighbors can make it difficult to get along, everyone dreams inwardly of being alone. Bad weather is inviting because it is the magic that makes this possible.

Another voice from the booklet speaks of this, the longing for a chaotic atmosphere that will strip things down to a desirable level of intimacy. It is Ellie, Mac Morrison's daughter, a talented artist and passionate horse rider, an earthy child of Glenmara. Floating in an enlarged text inset is a message that seems like an odd choice in a booklet intended for curious visitors. It seems like something that is too special to be said aloud. But there it is, printed in black and white, a phrase that speaks of a kind of secret world conjured by bad weather, an alternate dimension revealed for those who are paying attention, and the pleasure of its undetected intimacy. Perhaps Ellie is too young or too in love to understand that this is sacred. Perhaps, growing up in Glenmara,

she hasn't learned to value it, because it's only natural. In any case, she lets it out. My favorite season is winter, she says, because you have the place to yourself.

Tourism is seasonal in Glenmara, as it is up and down the West Coast, and indeed across the whole of the North Atlantic. This is partly because winter weather makes traveling impractical. High winds are an impediment in a place like Glenmara, which is accessible only by boat but does not have a robust ferry fleet. In fact, many of the outlying Hebridean islands are more accessible than Glenmara in winter, because their lifeline services are run by CalMac.[25] CalMac's fleet includes sturdy 50-meter passenger and vehicle ferries, some of which can handle winds up to Force 7.[26] Sea Link's boats are more agile than big ferries in good weather, but in strong winds and choppy waters they get dangerously slapped around. Sea Link starts canceling sailings at Force 5 or 6 winds, but because wind speeds can vary dramatically over the course of a day, cancelations are also erratic and subject to change. Skippers are constantly monitoring wind speeds, and they do their best to keep as many boats on the water as possible, safely. Indeed, the unpredictability of bad weather can sometimes be helpful for locals who are trying to get across. A turbulent day might resolve unexpectedly into

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[25] Caledonian MacBrayne (formerly David MacBrayne Ltd.) was founded as a private steam shipping company out of Glasgow in the mid-19th century. It now operates as a subsidiary owned by the Scottish Government. With 22 routes, it is the largest ferry operator in the Highlands and Islands, and receives government subsidies to provide "lifeline" services in the region. See description at "Company History," Corporate, Caledonian MacBrayne, accessed March 1, 2018, https://www.calmac.co.uk/corporate/history.
[26] Force 7 winds are in the range of 28-33 knots or 32-39 mph, and are classified as "near gale" on the Beaufort Wind Scale.

tolerable wind speeds, providing safe passage to shopping and appointments in Kilmory. The return trip isn't guaranteed.

Bad weather can be an unfortunate disruption of life's ordinary needs in Glenmara, but it is truly catastrophic when it hits on a special occasion. This was a problem over Hogmanay in 2015. Hogmanay, as New Year's Eve is known in Scotland, is the biggest night of the year. Jimmy from Glasgow calls it "our holiday." And it is true that New Year is celebrated with particular enthusiasm in Scotland. There are historical reasons for this. Hogmanay has its roots in Norse and Celtic rituals, but became important when celebrations of Catholic feast days, including Christmas, were banned during the Reformation. Christmas wasn't made a public holiday in Scotland until 1958. And by that time Hogmanay had already become the most important time for revelry and ritual and family gathering in the calendar year, with celebrations continuing on through the second of January. Huge public celebrations in Scotland's major cities last through the morning, with torchlight parades in Edinburgh and fireball festivals in Aberdeen. If somewhat more tame in other parts of the world, New Year is a proud Scottish cultural icon. Jimmy reminds me of this. You all sing the song don't you?[27]

Although Hogmanay is a monumental holiday throughout Scotland, it has special significance in Glenmara, where it is the biggest night of the year for visitors. All

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[27] The text of "Auld Lang Syne," the song sung across the world on New Year's Eve, is from a Scots dialect poem by Robert Burns.

of the available accommodation is booked by July, six months out. That's approximately 240 beds for visitors – double the number of resident locals. And then there are all of the locals' visiting friends and family, coming up on the train from London, Leeds, or Glasgow, or across the loch from neighboring islands. Hogmanay is a legendary endurance game in Glenmara. One member of the Village Hall Committee suggested selling bumper stickers saying "I survived Hogmanay in Glenmara."

Celebrations start with a big ceilidh on New Year's Eve. There might be 200 sweaty people crammed into the matchbox Village Hall, well over its capacity, jumping and yelling, spilling drinks and stepping on each other's toes. The party lasts through New Year's Day, when everyone staggers back to the Village Hall for the "First Big Session" of the year. It's a Celtic music free-for-all, guitars and fiddles and flutes playing tunes all afternoon from 3 p.m. on into the night. Most visitors make it out of Glenmara by January 2nd, which, mercifully, is a banking holiday in Scotland. If you're local and have nowhere else to be, the festivity carries on through the fourth. Coming down can be brutal, though. Taking account of the hangovers, ordinary life resumes the second week of January.

Hogmanay in Glenmara has gotten bigger and bigger every year. In 2015, the Village Hall booked three bands, all of whom had to be brought over on the ferry and put up in Murdo McLeod's three-bedroom flat above the Post Office. It was an ambitious event. The organizers, two of Glenmara's most seasoned partiers, had to

borrow £4000 from the Village Hall Committee bank account to pay the bands (£800 each) and the accommodation (£600) and buy the drink (£1000). There were decisions to be made about entry fees for locals and visitors. In previous years, visitors paid £10 for entry, while locals paid £5 and children were free. Aileas MacDonald thought there was room to charge more, that visitors could be reasonably asked to pay £20, locals £10, and children £5. Other members of the Village Hall Committee were certain that locals would stay home rather than pay £10, so that ended the discussion. Some changes to the drink menu had been made as well. Again, there were different prices for locals and visitors. Locals drank lager at £2 a can and visitors paid £2.50. There was also a move to bring in more up-scale drinks. To supplement the workingman's Tennant's and McEwan's, there would be bottled microbrews – Skye Ales named after famous Munros and saccharine Thistly Cross ciders – alongside bottles of red, white, rosé, and Prosecco for the ladies. These changes required a bigger up-front investment, but they paid off because visitors weren't cheap – particularly when it came to drinking.

Hogmanay 2015 was risky in another regard, which was that it would be the first New Year on the refurbished hydroelectric system. In previous years, the evening of December 31st could be a time of spectacularly disruptive blackouts, as everyone was taking hot showers and blow-drying their hair before the ceilidh. Locals in charge of the system's operations – Andrew the Glenmara Community Association Head Stalker and Ewan Potts – would have to rush to the turbine shed to turn off the hydro and put the

village back on the diesel generator. Although the hydroelectric system had an installed capacity of 280kW, it would routinely shut down at demand levels of 180kW. Everyone agreed that this couldn't continue in light of Glenmara's aspirations for growth.

In 2013, a team of German student researchers from a Scandinavian university visited Glenmara to conduct a five-week study of the hydroelectric for a thesis project. The researchers found the efficiency of the system to be below 80 percent.[28] There were significant leakages at the dam site, where water was escaping before it even reached the pipeline, and significant head loss (loss of pressure) along the pipeline. The student researchers recommended a refurbishment of the existing hydroelectric system to bring capacity up to 250kW, and implementation of new data monitoring and demand-side load management technology. The Glenmara Energy Company followed the researchers' recommendations. Leveraging the novelty of Glenmara's remote location and its reputation as a spirited "independent" community, the company attracted £400,000 of loans and grant money for the refurbishment project. Improvement works, which involved cementing the dam site and replacing sections of pipeline all the way down to increase flow, were completed in September 2015. The result was a smoother running and more reliable hydroelectric system that could meet its full capacity of 280 kW. This was a ceiling no one imagined the community would reach, and yet there was

[28] Efficiency is calculated as a proportion of output (power) to input in the system, and indicates how much energy is wasted or lost in converting inputs to outputs.

some trepidation approaching Hogmanay. The scale of the celebrations would be the final test of the resilience of the refurbished hydro.

But Hogmanay wasn't in the bag yet. On December 31st, an uninvited guest arrived. Frank brought severe gale Force 9 winds (50 mph), heavy rain, and flooding throughout the Highlands, threatening to dampen everyone's plans for a fiery and festive New Year. Trains from Glasgow to Kilmory were canceled because of flooding, so visitors from down south had an impossible time getting to Glenmara. The determined ones made it (barely) by car, but then there was the challenge of getting across Loch Nèamh facing 30-foot waves. Pete Granger was trying to run boats across to Glenmara, but the schedule was entirely disrupted. He was on the phone with passengers and accommodation providers, and the only assurance he could give anyone was of the unpredictability of the storm. If you see a boat, he said, take it. If you don't see it, it means there's no boat.

Frank brought utter chaos. The previous night, one of the bands booked to play in the Village Hall had performed in Orlay, a town eight miles down the road from Kilmory. They were stuck on the mainland and it didn't look like they would get over in time to play at the Glenmara ceilidh. The night, Jimmy said, looked like it was going to go "tits up." And then, miraculously, it didn't. Frank slowed down to catch his breath, and Pete Granger worked tirelessly to get passengers safely to Glenmara during a dicey and tenuous intermission. The musicians arrived by mid-day on December 31st, and

dedicated friends and family made it over no worse for the wear. The organizers, whom no one took seriously because of their hard partying reputation, were able to repay the £4000 loan and leave an extra £1000 in the Village Hall Committee's bank account. Through all of this – the chaotic storm, the collective stress of pulling off a big event – the hydroelectric system kept pace, meeting peak demand of 215 kW, keeping the lights on and hot water in the pipes, and letting good craic flow all around.

Indeed, Hogmanay 2015 was a huge success in Glenmara, not just because of its scale, but because it had come together as if by magic in the worst kind of weather. If somewhat blurred in the memory, it was an epic night that deserved a wordy update in the monthly regional newsletter:

> Happy New Year folks! And I hope everyone had a lovely Christmas too. It's safe to say 2016 certainly started with a bang here, with one of the best Hogmanays I've seen yet. The amazing Tartan Tribe played us through til the bells and the hall was so jam packed you could barely move. It's been a while since we've had a night of that scale. It was utterly fantastic! It was lovely to see so many former Glenmara residents back to bring in the New Year as well. It was a bit of a reunion really! I was going to name everybody but as I thought about it, the list kept on getting longer and I thought then it might just be a column full of names…
>
> I think a lot of people had a bit of a nightmare getting here though, with all the bad weather and flooding further down so it was quite amazing that we got such a massive turnout. Good effort!
>
> I'm struggling a bit here now to remember what happened BEFORE it was Christmas and New Year! Does anyone else get to that point? Where you've been off work and being merry for what seems like endless days? And it could be Tuesday but it might be Saturday, and you just don't know anymore? All you know is you have gained ten pounds and are well on your way to becoming a raging alcoholic. Well, that's how I feel.

In Glenmara, bad weather isn't necessarily a bad time. Sometimes, it is precisely the kind of volatility that gives life to magic. I wasn't there for Hogmanay 2015, but I can imagine how exhilarating it must have been. Not just a familiar celebration with old and new friends, but also a rage electrified by supernatural wind and rain, an ecstatic communion of bodies and sweat and substance, heightened all the more by the sublimity of an earthly survival.

Before Frank, there was a bigger storm. Not one for the books, certainly not one deserving of a name. But a storm I remember distinctly because it was my first. Friday, October 30 was clear and sunny. It was a cracking day for climbing one of Glenmara's four Munros. From the height of Cludin, overlooking Loch Ifrinn, you would be able to see the whole chain of the Inner Hebrides, all the way to Scapa. Scots would call this kind of day "braw." Sublime.

The stranger spent the day on more pedestrian terrain: at Pam's house, writing up field notes. Grinn was sited at the top of a steep hill overlooking Glenmara pier, on an old woodland planting scheme that had recently been felled and milled for local timber. The house was of simple construction: a two-story A-frame with timber cladding, designed and built by Pam's twenty-three-year-old son Ross. It was the most recently built house in Glenmara, and the highest up. At the time of construction, Pam had a few established trees on the side of the house removed, giving clear sightlines to Loch Nèamh. Between the elevation and the lack of obstruction, Grinn had the best

views in the village. You could see the boats coming in at different times of day. Perhaps more usefully, you could hear the everyday sounds that textured social life in Glenmara. Engines grinding as boats docked at the pier, Land Rovers grunting along the tarmac, hillwalkers crunching and clicking their poles on the gravel track below: the whole symphony floated up to the house, carrying vital clues about what was going on below. Coveted lochside properties couldn't see or hear half as much, and they didn't have the privacy either. Pam could see and not be seen, hear and not be heard. The house itself was a loving accomplishment: Ross's hands were all over it. Pam was justifiably proud.

Taking breaks during the writing, she stood on the porch in bare feet and a knitted wool sweater, stretching her arms above her head. The hills to the east behind Malvern Estate were browning as the bracken died off. The loch was searingly blue. She saw a pair of white streamers in the sky overhead – jet trails – and made a mental note to ask Pam about them. Glenmara had had a streak of sunny days that week. In fact, the whole month of October had been unseasonably warm, compensating for a summer that locals described as disastrously wet. (You could see it in the diminished tourist numbers, they said. There's not as much to do when the weather's shite.) People kept insisting that this pleasant weather was too good to be true, but this sounded to her like typical British pessimism. Scotland had always been beautiful for her, and the threat of winter seemed distant and exaggerated. But on this cracking day, under this brilliant sky, a storm was already preparing itself.

The stranger slept in the guest bedroom on the second floor of Pam's house, at the end of an exposed wooden catwalk that overlooked the main living area. It was an inviting gabled room, with oiled timber flooring and French doors opening onto a small balcony that framed a view of Malvern Estate to the east. The steep roofline and the textured wood gave the room a warm feel, lofted but cozy, something like a cabin or a ski chalet. In the mornings she would pull the curtains open with a brisk movement, revealing the hills in a single, decisive flourish. She liked falling asleep to the muted crackling of logs in the wood-burning stove on the ground floor of the house. And she liked the feeling of being nested out of sight: above Pam's bedroom, above the village, above the trees, at a height that afforded expansive views of the hills and the loch, and the gravel track that ran below the house. The stranger knew that she was spoiled by the location, by the feeling of home Pam had extended to her. She felt privileged and secure.

That night, the wind picked up. It wasn't so much a howl as a hurtling sound, so powerful it slammed against the glass of the French doors, whistling through the tiny gap in their closure, rippling underneath her in whatever space there was between the mattress and the bed frame. It came in big gusts, crashing against the side of the house like waves. This would be followed by a hesitant quiet, and then another walloping gust. The tumult was haphazard, and as soon as she began to feel relieved that the wind had died down, inching finally towards sleep, another crash would jolt her awake. Her heart was beating out of her chest. The house felt fragile, unsound. She imagined it was

made of sticks. There was wind coming through the gaps in the outside doors, through every crack in the floorboards, up from underneath the bed. The mattress rippled and thudded against the bedframe. The interior door trembled and shook. The room was throbbing with wind. She thought about how the house was newly constructed, how it had been built by Pam's son. Had it been storm tested? Had it been properly inspected? She was terrified to be at the top of the house, uniquely exposed. She was convinced that the wind was going to rip through her body and pick her off with the roof before flattening the rest of the house.

She stayed on high alert, lying anxiously awake from two until five. She turned the light on and read from Emerson's guide to writing ethnographic field notes – imagining, perhaps, that she would be soothed by the plodding cadence of an instructional manual. All the while she remained studiously attentive to the erratic collisions against the side of the house. The house continued to creak and pitch. She went to the bathroom three times. Walking downstairs in the dark, her terror of the wind was displaced by another, now more immediate fear: that she would manage to wake Pam and, in disturbing her host, find herself without a place to live. Finally, exhausted by worrying, she falls asleep.

She wakes up around eight, less the result of feeling rested than out of surprise that she is still alive. She goes downstairs to cook breakfast, pulling a bowl of leftover porridge out of the refrigerator. Pam is sitting at the kitchen table reading on her Kindle.

The stranger excitedly narrates her fear of the storm, how she couldn't sleep, how she thought the house was going to fall down. She anticipates that Pam will laugh and tell her it's okay, that she'll get used to it. Pam looks up from her reading. That was nothing, she says.

She was never woken by a storm in Glenmara after the first one, even as they grew louder and more intense throughout the winter. It's as if she had internalized Pam's comment as a universal principle: It is nothing. And so she felt nothing. She slept soundly thereafter, perfectly unaware of storms even when they shook locals awake in the night. This was a kind of super-naturalization, a habituation she wished she had not acquired, or at least not so soon.

Several weeks after Halloween, there was another storm, this time more than "nothing." It hit the West Coast of Scotland on November 10, a red-orange force 11 on the Beaufort Wind Scale.[29] Abigail was the first storm named by the Met Office in 2015. "A big gale," someone quipped on Facebook. But Abigail wasn't kidding. She slammed the Western Isles with winds as high as 135 kilometers per hour, causing over 20,000 power outages in a vast coastal region with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants. A lightening strike brought down one of the electric masts in Glenmara, killing the phones and Internet for a day until a small group of locals could safely hike up the hill, locate the

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[29] The Beaufort Wind Scale maximum is Force 12, which is described as hurricane force. Force 12 storms have wind speeds over 64 knots = 118 km/h = 73 mph.

place where it fell, and extract and replace it. Meanwhile, the stranger was laid up at Pam's house with a nasty cold, which had suddenly bloomed the morning after Bonfire Night.[30] She was in bed for three days. The rain was unrelenting. By the fourth day, she was beginning to stir with boredom. When the phone lines came back to life, she called Pam at work to see when she would be home. She posted a comment on Facebook, attributing her isolation to Abigail and the "plague" that was "ravaging" Glenmara, failing to appreciate the irony of being connected at a distance. Someone commented: Welcome to a remote highland [*sic*] community ☺. Another posted:

[30] Bonfire Night is celebrated on the 5th of November, originally to commemorate the failure of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, when a group of English Catholic agitators attempted to assassinate King James I by lighting dynamite in the House of Lords. Typically, neighbors gather together to build large bonfires, which are burned all night until they collapse. In Glenmara, the foresters use tractors to stack timber left over from milling firewood, besting themselves in height year after year. In 2015, the Bonfire Night structure was over 30 feet tall.

Figure 20: Good Scottish Weather

Unattributed meme.

By the time Abigail left Glenmara on November 15, the stranger had virtually recovered though her enthusiasm had not returned sufficiently to hike in the rain with members of the Glenmara Energy Company, who were tasked with climbing up to the site of the fallen mast to take pictures for the insurance claim. This she learned about second hand, when Andrew, Don, and Ewan Potts had come down the hill and were having lunch in the tearoom, camo jackets and waterproofs darkened with rain. Ewan's yellow hi-vis added a certain cheer. It was a Friday afternoon. Don's teenage son Keegan had been up to the mast with the men because he was not at school in Kilmory: he had been lucky to get on an early boat this morning during a window of calm in the storm,

and would not have to board over the weekend. This made his schoolmates jealous because he got to leave class early when the boat was departing.

Keegan showed the stranger the pictures he had taken on the DSL-R camera. There was the pole, charred on one side, electrical wiring frizzed in all directions, passed out in a thicket of browning bracken like a cartoon villain. There was an accelerated video of Don shimmying up the mast in his harness and hiking boots while Andrew and Ewan stood there looking up, dancing as they shifted their weight back and forth with concentrated boredom. Facetiously, Andrew said that he was acting as supervisor and Ewan was the Health and Safety inspector. He joked that Don should only submit the photos in which everyone was wearing their hardhats. Don said winking that the council insurance would cover the cost of pole repairs unless, of course, the lightening strike were considered an act of God. In any case they would have to wait until a new pole could be brought over on the landing craft, sometime the following week.

Until the new pole arrived, the village would be on the diesel generator, which had a lower capacity of 160 kW. Some outlying properties weren't connected to the generator however, and these residents had to clear out their chest freezers and stay with friends. Thankfully, the tourist season was over. There was plenty of empty freezer space in several of the unoccupied guesthouses on Malvern Estate.

Abigail blindsided the West Coast, but her force also distracted the stranger from sensing what was socially meaningful about powerful weather. She could not yet

perceive how, in the estrangement wrought by the storm, there was also a coming together, which was not so much a miserable camaraderie as it was a trial of habituation. She did not yet perceive how connections were being both forged and interfered with across distance, and how this distance was a condition of the ordinary in Glenmara. She did not yet sense the real danger of living remotely together: the real threat of being hurt by remote proximities, the unromantic violence of losing vital connections. These things she would ultimately come to feel, in her own experience and on behalf of others. But in the wet and waning days of her first November in Glenmara, her senses had not yet become attuned to these realities. Inside the turbulence of wild weather, she could not yet see the storm.

6.3 Craic is Life

There is a group of Reiki practitioners from Denmark who make an annual pilgrimage to Glenmara. Each year, around the end of August, they rent the big Inverglen Lodge for a week to do intensive training. Rudy, their facilitator, is Scottish – from Glasgow – but has been living in Copenhagen for 10 years. He has a Danish wife and two children. He's rooted there. But Glenmara is a kind of seasonal and spiritual home for Rudy, which is why he brings his students here on retreat. It's a scenic place to be doing energy work, but it's more than that. It's where the energy comes from.

When the Reiki practitioners were in Glenmara in October, I went to see Joanna for a session. She was camped out in one of the self-catering cottages – Crann Mòr, the

one owned by the banking partners in London – doing sessions for locals at £20 per hour. It was a way, she said, to give back to the community for hosting her. It was a nice gesture. I didn't realize at the time how much that kind of healing was needed.

Joanna had set up a massage table in the twin bedroom at the front of the house, facing Loch Nèamh. She had me lie down on my stomach first, and then turn over onto my back midway through. My understanding was that Reiki was supposed to be about hovering touch, a connection that healed without direct contact, but Joanna placed her hands on me, with a gentleness that radiated warmth. For some reason, when I was lying face up, she put a paper cocktail napkin over my face. There was a stag printed on the napkin, and I found myself amused and distracted by this. But Joanna was very attuned. She coughed as she did this, and her hands smelled like camphor. She was not sick, she said. She was channeling some grief that was stuck in me.

After the grief is released and the napkin is removed, Joanna explains to me how energy works in Reiki. Anyone can heal themselves or their family, but certain people have more healing power and can direct it to heal others. The energy comes through her from the universe. It charges her up so she can send it to someone else. Sending it doesn't deplete her because she is always plugged into the earth. I am curious why the Danes keep coming to Glenmara for retreats, so I ask Joanna if Glenmara is a place where you can find this universal energy. She says there is a very special energy here, you can feel it. This is a very happy place. I remember her instructor Rudy telling me

that there were some dark energies here too. There are, she says: in the mountains. The mountains are full of pain. There is a light here, too, one that she has never seen anywhere else. Sometimes you see unusual lights flickering on the mountains. The mountains demand your attention all the time, she says. Many people died as they were running away from here. The mountains want you to notice them.

Rudy the Reiki instructor said something else to me about Glenmara, which I remember because it responded to a thought that was playing on my mind, a question about why Glenmara seemed to oscillate between opposite modes of restraint and excess. I must have shared this with Rudy as a way of asking whether this was typical in Scotland. He said, people build up so much energy living on top of each other here. They have to release it, and they go wild.

I'm not sure when I realized that wildness mattered as an environment in Glenmara, but a few images come to mind.[31] A bright day in April, I am climbing Glenmara's most famous peak Cludin with a group of middle-aged men: white-collar professionals visiting from Glasgow, experienced hillwalkers who regularly met to do ambitious hills on the weekends. After 11 hours of hiking and a 3,000-meter ascent, after dozens of photos taken on smartphones at the summit and a couple thousand calories in snacks, someone finally said what was on everyone's mind: We've earned our pint. And

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[31] Lisa Stevenson, following Benjamin, uses images to tell stories. Lisa Stevenson, *Life beside Itself: Imagining Care in the Canadian Arctic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

so if the summit motivated us to climb, it was the pub that magnetized our descent, drawing our limp bodies back down the way they came, to the village where warmth awaited them in various substances: in hot showers and golden lager, loud voices and fat-fried food. Although the summit was the reason we were together, and the reason the men's group existed in the first place, it was also a pretense. The summit was a hurdle on their way to the pub. Liquid pleasure came at the cost of peak exertion.

Another time, at the beginning of August, there's a ceilidh on in the Village Hall. It's the night of the "Glenmara Games," the local version of summer Highland Games, which is more tongue-in-cheek than traditional.[32] There's a classic hill run and a locals versus tourists tug-of-war, but there's also a soapy waterslide, a "dog show," and a makeshift obstacle course. It's a fun day for visitors and folks from neighboring islands. The drinking starts at 10 a.m. and the party will go on until the wee hours. A group of locals are huddled outside getting the craic because the Hall is heaving with visitors and their small children. A visitor approaches a group of locals standing together smoking, puts his nose in the air, and takes an exaggerated inhalation. He's looking for a good time. We don't do that here, one of the locals says. The guy slinks off when it dawns on him that no one's going to share.

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[32] Of course even "traditions" are constructed, as Hugh Trevor-Roper has shown in his history of "Balmorality" and the modern Scottish kilt. Trevor-Roper, "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland."

Visitors come to Glenmara sniffing for experience, but craic is not always inclusive. And it's not something you can ask for – if you do, you'll be turned away as quick as Scottish wit. Experiencing craic requires openness without expectations. And, at least in Glenmara, where tourists bring the money but locals run the show, craic demands that you show deference to its gatekeepers.

There are rituals for managing the boundaries of craic in Glenmara, just as *mana* requires its appropriate containers. Visitors may have their own fun over drinks and meals in the pub, but they are only selectively invited to experience craic with the locals, horizontally. Locals love interacting with visitors because they bring the world to Glenmara's doorstep. But they are also always assessing which visitors are "good craic," and public spaces where alcohol flows – the pub, the Village Hall, beach bonfires – are the sites of these exchanges. Those who pass muster may be invited to back to someone's house for a party after the pub closes or the ceilidh ends, and the really special ones become Facebook friends. Others play a different role, for locals to get the craic amongst themselves.

There's a night in the pub that dramatizes this asymmetry. A group of hillwalkers – four twentysomething Scousers – are having a couple of pints in the pub after the day's climb. It's a natural finish, and it's part of why they've come here: not just for the wild peaks, but for the wild nights as well. The walkers have loosened up and they're scuffing about in their woolen socks shooting billiards, thermals smelling like

dried sweat and damp earth. It's a quiet Wednesday night towards the end of April, and there's just a small gaggle of locals, four or five at the front of the pub sitting around the bar. At a certain point, when everyone's well watered, one of the locals proposes the "table game." A pub table is dragged out into the middle of the floor and the rules are explained. You start standing on one side of the table and have to get over and under it – all the way around – without touching the floor or tipping over the table. Murray, the tallest and strongest of the locals, demonstrates: easy. The Scousers are just drunk enough to be enticed to play, arms splayed awkwardly from end to end of the table, socks slipping on the wooden floor. There are some spectacular falls. Meanwhile, one of the Scousers has passed out on a bench and is finally awoken when Blythe pulls down her trousers and sticks her bare arse in his face. This is craic too, but it's one sided.

Historians talk about Scotland being the "playground" of the English aristocracy. And it's an idiom that is borne out by the available evidence. For centuries, a massive proportion of Scottish land has been held in the form of private estates, used by generations of titled elites for leisure and sport: for stalking deer, and for grouse and pheasant shooting. The situation is much the same today, although most of Scotland's privately owned land is now used for conservation purposes by organizations like the Forestry Commission and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and by

conservation-minded elites.[33] There is a traceable line from elite recreation to public outdoor access and bourgeois hillwalking culture. And Scotland is still very much a playground, judging by the economic value of tourism.[34] But while some Glenmara locals critique visitors who treat their turf like a "theme park," it's important to know that locals play too. Maybe they horse around with visitors in the pub. Maybe they enjoy the relaxed culture, the feeling of living away from normative restraints. Maybe they decide to quit their jobs down south and move to a place where property is a scenic investment, where any moment can take your breath away. But for locals and visitors alike, there is something else that activates nature and makes it stand outside itself. Wild land is a summit to climb, but wildness is an atmosphere, an expression or feeling that gives incalculable value to remote West Coast destinations like Glenmara. If people are drawn here by wild land, by the fantasy of nature undisturbed, it is a specific and irreproducible environment – the effervescence of craic – that brings them back.

You may begin to sense craic after a couple of pints in the pub, or a rousing Canadian barn dance at the Village Hall. But you only begin to theorize it in an intimate environment amongst locals. In states of altered consciousness, in spaces where visitors can't intrude, you might begin to explore a definition of what craic is and feels like.

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[33] John McEwan's groundbreaking political/legal analysis of landownership in Scotland was famously revised and updated by Andy Wightman in the 1990s. Wightman's eponymous book accounts for private land ownership by publicly funded conservation bodies (like the Forestry Commission) and private charities (like the RSPB). See John McEwan, *Who Owns Scotland?: Study in Landownership* (Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1977); Andy Wightman, *Who Owns Scotland* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996).

[34] Estimated at £12 billion or 5% of Scotland's GDP in 2015. Scottish Government, "Tourism."

Someone says that growing up on a Hebridean island teaches you how to distinguish between tourists and *tourists*. It's a feeling you get, as soon as they walk off the boat. Someone puts his hand on a can of lager and says that getting the craic can be you, by yourself, with a drink. Others loudly disagree. Craic is active, someone says, there's something happening. And there's no word for it in English. The closest we come is vibe or buzz, and those are already too abstract. Finally, someone finds a way to speak what can only be felt, a word for wildness. Craic is life, he says, and everyone's with him.

But if craic is life, it is not clean, or wholesome, or safe. It is always on the razor edge of too much. It is only in this potential toward excess that craic really lives. Bad craic is disappointing, but there's no word for craic that turns ugly: craic that hurts. This is wildness too: real and visceral and transformative. Wildness can never be pure exaltation. To emerge at all, it must carry its own shadow.

6.4 Conclusion

There is something about Glenmara that makes it magnetically alive, something that is more than scenery. People come for nature, but it is the pulse of the place – the craic, the wildness – that hooks them. We all need to be called outside ourselves periodically, propelled into a higher valence. We need this feeling in order to carry on living with each other, in order to continue being social, perhaps especially in a place as remote as Glenmara. But we are all in danger of letting it take us too far, of tipping into darkness. This is where experience is – this is where culture is – dancing on a hair.

7. Conclusion

Maybe all that happened to me was a slow and great dissolution?
– Clarice Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.*

Public debates over the wild land category in Scotland – whether it exists, where it should be located, what political motives and power plays it conceals – tend toward stalemate because no one has been able to explain why it actually matters. Various justifications have been given for its preservation: wild land has important social, economic, psychological, and ecological benefits. But this is not exactly it. Because the conservation endgame is not wild land, just as the sporting establishment and conservationists are not actually fighting about red deer. In both cases, there is a larger and more diffuse value at stake, something that needs a figurehead in order to represent and advocate for itself.[35] Red deer are enlisted as the face of power, and wild land, similarly, becomes the icon of something everyone wants but no one can explain. The value of wild land is not wild land. It is wildness.

Different people register wildness differently. This was part of the problem with the Wild Land Areas created by Scottish Natural Heritage. Though they did their best, it

[35] Bruno Latour has elaborated what he calls a problem of "representation," in which non-human actants are enlisted by human spokespeople who use them and advocate on their behalf. The politics of this representation is in the unequal allocation of rights to speak, for what and for whom. See Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*; Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.

was impossible for Scottish National Heritage to designate categorical zones of wild land that would transport everyone to a state of wildness,[36] partly because wildness isn't bounded or partible across a landscape, and partly because not everyone gets their kicks that way. But locating wildness is not just a problem. It is the problem. You can't fix in place something that is essentially indescribable. You can't hold onto it without undoing it. Wildness has to be unstable if it is to be at all. It can't be organized or willed or produced or performed. It is precisely for this reason – the fact that everyone can experience wildness but no one gets to keep it – that conservationists are working so hard to solidify wild land. Wild land is not the object. It is the setting of a potential emergence.

Steve Carver – the map guy – is one of those people who look to wild land for wildness. He used to be a bit of a rogue in the hills, like many conservation-minded hillwalkers of his generation. If he found a live animal trap on his path, he would stop to disengage it. Safer for other hillwalkers, yes, but also a foxy move to foil landlords and their factors: powerful people who want to kill animals in order to kill more animals. Steve's not the kind to cut deer fences, but there are wild land lovers who do that too. Steve says he likes mountains because, although he's never done drugs, climbing a

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[36] John Hausdoerffer and Gavin Van Horn have compiled a lovely volume on wildness, a word/concept they use to describe how people can become reenchanted with the worlds they inhabit in work and play. Wildness as a feeling is a way to get beyond binarist debates over what constitutes the "wild." See John Hausdoerffer and Gavin Van Horn, eds., *Wildness: Relations of People and Place* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017). George Monbiot is also for social "rewilding" via ecosystem restoration. George Monbiot, *Feral: Rewilding the Land, the Sea, and Human Life* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014).

summit gets you pretty high. He can imagine how this feeling could be even better: knowing that you're not the top predator anymore, that there's some animal bigger and hungrier than you skulking about, and that you could be its next kill. It's a role-play fantasy, an erotic reversal of the world: the hunter is now the hunted, and man is merely beast. The conservationist becomes prey in the landscape he is trying to protect.

How would you feel if someone came and put wolves in your back garden? Would you ever want to leave the house? Mandy was rehearsing a conversation she had had with one of the guests staying at Heron House – a man, a stalking guest. He was older and wealthy, a mansplainer, moralizing rewilding to someone who had equally principled reasons to question it.[37] Mandy – twenty-six and street-wise from her Glaswegian upbringing – was doing her best to keep up. The man wants to talk about apex predators and ecosystem restoration, but Mandy won't let him get away with this. Do you think a deer fence would stop a wolf from coming into my back garden? We

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[37] Wolves are the iconic species of rewilding projects in Scotland (following the successful reintroduction of grey wolves in Yellowstone in 1995). Ecologists are trying to show that the reintroduction of apex predators like wolves can initiate what is called a "trophic cascade," in which an ecosystem regenerates itself completely from the top down. The famous claim is that wolves can revitalize rivers beds, by reestablishing a food chain that allows vegetation to grow, which prevents erosion. For a description of this process, see Staff, "Wolf Reintroduction Changes Ecosystem," My Yellowstone Park, accessed March 16, 2018, https://www.yellowstonepark.com/things-to-do/wolf-reintroduction-changes-ecosystem. *Guardian* journalist George Monbiot has become a popular proponent of rewilding in the UK, and argues for the social/psychological/environmental benefits of these projects in his many articles, and in his widely read book. See Monbiot, *Feral*. Controversy over wolf reintroduction in Scotland has followed a similar format to conflicts in Montana, where farmers were concerned about wolves preying on their livestock. In Scotland, however, large landowners are concerned about wolves hunting red deer.

have children living here! The man waves her away with aristocratic indifference. His wildness is of a certain taste. It is not for everyone.

There are differences between us that remain edgy, even when we make efforts to soften ourselves in relation to each other. There are different kinds of nature, and different kinds of flourishing. Wolves and children can't live easily together. In a world where we can't choose who our neighbors are, we have to find ways of living with invasive species, and spiky loves, and the predators that stalk us. The truth is, we all have our own rhodies. We all have loves that we care for and weaponize at the same time. And we are all wolves, in different ways, to each other.

But what do I know? This is Gordon MacDonald's parting message to me. Not the last thing he ever said to me, but the weightiest. He wants me to believe that I haven't understood anything about Glenmara. He wants me to believe that I haven't been here. It's a Friday in early September. I am scheduled to leave Glenmara for an academic conference down south. I've already booked my train tickets from Kilmory to Glasgow and Glasgow to Leeds – a nine-hour journey – but I can't get a place on the 12-person Sea Link ferry that would take me six miles across the water to the train station in Kilmory. It is still the season, and tourists are taking up space on the morning boats. They, too, want to get on the 10:10 a.m. train.

Two nights before the trip, I call Gordon and Aileas MacDonald to ask for help. I get Gordon on the landline and explain the boat situation, knowing that this is one of the

local issues he gets fired up about and that he and Aileas often help Mandy with this kind of thing. It can't hurt to ask. I tell him I'll cover the cost of petrol. He tells me not to worry, he needs to buy more petrol in Kilmory anyway.

After we finish the morning's changeover, Gordon meets me at Pam's house to gather my things, and drives us down to the pier in the blue Land Rover the MacDonalds used for Heron House errands. It's a long way down the side of the pier to the RIB, and I get nervous hefting my luggage down the narrow metal steps. I see myself slipping, tumbling into the dark water, and cracking my skull. Gordon watches me impatiently and walks up the stairs to take the suitcase from my hands while I take gingerly steps down to the boat. He tosses me a life jacket and gets quietly annoyed by my confused struggle with the straps. Reluctantly, he adjusts them for me. As long as I've spent in Glenmara, I'm still sensitive, and ill equipped. Everyone here knows this. My helplessness is not cute. It's just what makes me strange, like any other visitor.

The sky is thick, milky, but it doesn't rain. I'm sitting close behind Gordon, straddling the bumper seat in the middle of the boat like a motorcycle. It's as close as safety requires, but closer than is comfortable. When the boat growls to life we can barely hear each other speak. We are quiet because the engine is deafening, and the intimacy of this unnerves me. The RIB tears across the loch, lifting off the surface of the water and smacking the waves like a drum. It's aggressively meditative. Look at that, Gordon shouts over the engine. A silver thread has appeared on the horizon before us,

tracing the grey domes of a fish farm floating like buttons on the loch. A crow flies overhead. Heaven, I say. The sound of the engine overtakes us. After a while, Gordon shouts again. You know Glenmara is a complicated place. What you see is only the surface, he says, not what's going on underneath.

It's textbook ethnography, and a little bit mystery horror: the naïve inspector is frozen out, or finds herself at the burning center of the thing she was sent to discover.[38] She doesn't get to touch the mystery until she is consumed by it. I consider Gordon's words, the allegory of Loch Nèamh, as if it is a message to me about my work: how we become enchanted not so much with the surface of things, but with the suspicion of their depth. How we desperately want there to be something there, underneath. Something glimmering and elusive, perhaps, but always within intelligible reach. I consider that understanding is not about cracking the surface, but allowing oneself to be illuminated by what is unknowable and strange. That it is less like mining diamonds and more like swimming with fairy dust. We don't know what we don't know, and maybe we don't need to. Maybe it's enough just to be alive to the possibilities.

This – the flickering fluorescence of algae on skin – is how I will remember Glenmara. And it is the only way I can understand, as an anthropologist, what culture is. It is not how Gordon described it. It is not about surface and depth, or complicated

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[38] In Robin Hardy's *The Wicker Man* (1973), a police inspector is sent to the fictional Hebridean island of Summerisle to follow up on a tip about a missing child. He finds himself darkly attracted to the islanders, and uncovers their secrets at the cost of being captured by them. Robin Hardy, *The Wicker Man* (Troy, MI: Anchor Bay Entertainment, 2001).

things that remain hidden from view. It feels different than that. In my body, Glenmara is labile, combustible, serotonergic – not elusive exactly, but potential, evanescent. Wild.

Wildness isn't just craic, although craic is one of its most seductive expressions. I think wildness is anything that calls you out of yourself, anything that gives you the feeling of being simultaneously infinite and granular: in other words, human.

In August, Pam had two friends up visiting from Glasgow. They stayed in one of the Malvern guesthouses that Pam cleans. One evening, we go out with Don for a fish and chips dinner at the Little Bay Café in Arnatish. The five of us are driving back to Glenmara in Pam's Land Rover, talking animatedly about the good food we have just enjoyed, and how pleased we are that Lena's business is doing so well. I had cycled to Arnatish but now my bike is in the back because the sun is fading and the midges are hungry too. It is a spectacular evening, one of the first clear and warm days we have seen since May. The narrow community-maintained section of the road is uneven, and we are aggressively jostled despite Pam's cautious driving. Don notices a few patches of weeds growing in the middle of the road. He scolds himself mockingly. The roads need spraying! As we crest over a gentle rise in the road, Pam's friends inhale audibly. In the fading pink of evening light, we can see the glimmering domes of the fish farm at the head of Loch Nèamh, and farther out to sea a dusky grouping of neighboring islands washed against a pale sky. Pam is the first to speak. Shit view, eh?

It's not that locals are unmoved by what visitors experience as captivatingly wild. It's that we all have different ways of expressing breathlessness. Sometimes, a moment affects you so profoundly that the only way to cherish it is to dismiss it. It's not a lack of appreciation, it's a way of habituating what can only be shatteringly excessive. So you don't gush over a sunset like an impoverished and impressionable visitor. Instead – if you can bear the price of paradise – you spend the rest of your life living here, in the place with the shitty views.

Figure 21: Shit View

Photo by the author.

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Biography

Miggie Mackenzie Cramblit (Mackenzie) was born on September 20, 1987 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She completed her undergraduate work at the University of Chicago (A.B. 2010), where she studied French Literature (Honors) and Economics. She was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, Beta Chapter Illinois in 2010.

In 2010, Mackenzie was awarded a U.S. Fulbright Student Research Grant to Cameroon, where she conducted ethnographic research over a period of 11 months. In 2012, she was admitted to the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Duke University with a James B. Duke Fellowship. Her doctoral research in Scotland has received generous support from The Graduate School at Duke University, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Mackenzie received her Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from Duke University in May 2018.