Senses of Place and the Struggle for the Cairngorms

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ABSTRACT

My thesis is based on fieldwork in the Badenoch and Strathspey area of the Scottish Highlands, on the northern side of the Cairngorms. Its starting premise, inspired by the work of Tim Ingold, is that people's attitudes and beliefs about their environment and environmental issues arise out of their practical engagement with that environment. By focusing on the activities that people are engaged with, I identify three approaches to the environment: livelihood, recreation and conservation. The first part of the thesis explores in detail how these 'senses of place' arise out of, and are manifested in people's practice.

The next section uses case studies to show how the three approaches, with their contrasting perceptions and perspectives, often come into conflict. I first examine disputes between canoeists and anglers and debates between conservationists and sporting estates over red deer and native tree regeneration. I then go on to explore the conflicts over the building of the funicular railway and planning powers in the National Park, in which the main line of conflict is drawn between local livelihood interests against outside conservation and recreation interests.

The final part of the thesis will go on to argue that the approaches are not fixed, bounded groups as might first appear. I use my data to demonstrate that there is in fact much common ground as well as much overlap in people's identity.

The main conclusion of the thesis is that what appears to be irreconcilable conflicts between people with different senses of place are actually conflicts that emerge because of issues to do with power and social, political and economic inequality. I offer some ideas, based on my fieldwork data, about how these conflicts can be overcome for the benefit of both people and the environment.

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

BASC – British Association for Shooting and Conservation

CCC – Cairngorm Chairlift Company

CP – Cairngorm Partnership

FWAG – Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group

HIE – Highlands and Islands Enterprise

JMT – John Muir Trust

MC of S – Mountaineering Council of Scotland

NTS- National Trust for Scotland

RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

SNH – Scottish Natural Heritage

SWLG – Scottish Wild Land Group

SWT – Scottish Wildlife Trust

WWF – World Wildlife Fund

CHAPTER ONE

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3. National Trust for Scotland
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5. Scottish Natural Heritage
6. Highlands and Islands Enterprise Board
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8. People Too
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10. Mountaineering Council of Scotland
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12. Ramblers Association
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10. Bo
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3. Guinard Island
4. Osprey Centre

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2. John Muir Trust
3. Speyside Wildlife
4. Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group
5. Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce

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Organisations
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3. British Association of Shooting and Conservation
4. Deer Commission
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2. Chris-fisher
3. Shawn or Shaun?
4. Lord seafield
5. Claire
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7. Kevin- Fife
8. Alan Keegan
9. George Leggett
10. Roy Turnbull
11. Jamie Williamson
12. Dick Balharry
13. Gus Jones
14. Robert
15. Robbie- Mar Lodge
16. Donnie Ross- shepherd, Glen Feshie, KIncraig
17. Alasdair- stalker
18. John Brownlee
19. John Driver
20. MA
21. Roy Dennis
22. MP Fergus Ewing (SNP)

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3. Strathspey Mountain Club
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3. Craig
4. Seamus Grant
5. Rosie
6. Anne and George
7. Bill Wright
8. Peter Ord
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10. Shaun and Julian- Glenmore Lodge
11. John and Phillipa Grant
12. Sally Dowden

13. Stewart Fulton
14. Dick Balharry
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16. Basil Dunlop
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18. Adam
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20. Nigel Williams
21. Alan Blackshaw
22. Murray Ferguson

Organisations

1. Cairngorm Chairlift Company
2. Highlands and Islands Enterprise
3. John Muir Trust
4. Mountaineering Council of Scotland
5. Glenmore Lodge
6. Waltzing Waters
7. Strathspey Mountain Club
8. Ramblers Association
9. RSPB
10. World Wildlife Fund
11. Speyside Wildlife
12. SNH
13. Cairngorm Campaign
14. Ski Scotland
15. Aviemore Chamber of Commerce
16. Morrisons Construction
17. Cairngorms Partnership
18. Newtonmore Business Association
19. Woodlands Trust
20. Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group
21. Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Community Association
22. Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce
23. Recreation Forum
24. Local John Muir Trust Group
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

AIMS AND RATIONALE

The 'environment' is one of the central focuses of debate and conflict in the world today. It is generally accepted that the relationship between humans and their environment is seriously flawed. Most agree that the environment is a 'problem' and that 'something must be done', but there is no clear agreement about either the *extent* of the problem or *what* should be done. Though environmental issues are usually presented as physical or technological problems, requiring 'objective', 'scientific' solutions, the scale and scope of the debate and conflict indicate that environmental issues are firmly embedded in the social, economic, political as well as ethical fabric of society. Therefore, an anthropological approach to the environment, which can integrate theoretical perspectives and knowledge from a number of disciplines, has an important contribution to make to our understanding of both the 'problem' and debates about the way forward (Milton: 1996: 22-23).

The difficulties lie in the very basis of the human-environment relationship. Humanity exists as it does today because of the way we have evolved within this environment. Everything about us is dependent on the resources of the planet, from the air we breathe to the minerals that provide us with materials for making mobile phones. However, there is a contradiction in our relationship with this very condition of our lives; the more successful we have become in using and transforming resources, the more we seem to undermine those resources. In addition, our efforts to make the earth more habitable have destroyed countless other life forms. Whether one is concerned about these other species 'for their own sake' or because we do not know the consequences of their disappearance for *human* survival (Tenner: 1997), the problem remains. The result of this apparent contradiction between human material well-being and the well-being of the planet is that it seems that the only way we can safeguard our environment for the future is to make sacrifices in our standard of living. This is

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something people are reluctant to do, especially those who have little in the first place. Disagreements therefore exist about how much sacrifice is necessary and how soon. The Bush administration refuses to sign the Kyoto agreement and scours the globe for more oil rather than alter consumption patterns. Some environmentalists, in apocalyptic fashion, argue that we need to immediately reduce our use of the earth's resources or risk devastating environmental destruction and extinction of the human species. There are also struggles over *who* should make the sacrifices. Many developing countries question why they should cut down on greenhouse gas emissions or establish reserves to protect endangered species at the expense of economic development, when they are not the cause of global environmental problems (Guha and Martinez-Alier: 1997, Neumann: 1998).

The apparent incompatibility between human short-term interests and the long-term interests of both humans and the rest of the planet, and the disagreement about how to deal with this incompatibility, are manifested in conflicts all over the world. Anthropologists have played an important role in documenting these conflicts. They have shown how livelihood interests clash with conservation agendas in a number of contexts including the developing world (Olwig: 1977, 1980, Guha and Martinez: 1997, Neumann: 1998, Berglund and Anderson: 2003, Walley: 2004) and metropolitan countries (McCarthy: 1998, Cronon: 1995, Proctor: 1995, Pulido: 1996, Theodosopolis: 2000 and Satterfield: 2002). They have found that the conservation and environmentalist perspective is one held largely by westerners or urban elites within the developing world, such that conservationists are also seen as being powerful outsiders. Anthropologists have made an important contribution to understanding environmental conflict by revealing the 'negative' side of environmentalism and giving a voice to groups who are socially, economically and/or politically marginalised. However, the way the problem has been posed , environment *or* social justice , makes it difficult to see a way forward (Brechin, Wilshusen, Fortwangler and West: 2003).

It could be argued that establishing non-capitalist economic relations would effectively remove the dilemma as capitalism is the root cause of the overexploitation of resources and inequality (Harvey: 1996, Kovel: 2002). A redistribution of wealth

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would remove the desperation many people exhibit when, for example, they poach elephants (Neumann: 1998), cut down forests to eke out a living on marginal land in Amazonia (Anderson and Berglund: 2003), or dynamite coral reefs to increase the fish catch (Walley: 2004). Though this argument has considerable merit, and will be discussed in the course of my thesis, it is not a solution that can be implemented in the short-term. Moreover, there is no guarantee that a redistribution of wealth will eliminate conflicts of interest. Consumerism in the West has reached epidemic proportions. There is no certainty that in a post-capitalist society people will easily abandon their consumption aspirations. The end of capitalism could only mean that *everyone* can now start consuming, at the expense of the planet.

The aim of my thesis is, therefore, to consider whether it is inevitable that an environmentalist programme, including conservation of wild places and non-human species, has to be seen as incompatible with social and economic justice.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT IN SCOTLAND

I chose the Highlands of Scotland for my fieldwork because it has seen many bitter conflicts over land use, very similar to the conflicts documented by anthropologists elsewhere in the world, for example the Isle of Harris superquarry (Milton: 2002, McIntosh: 2004). The Highlands have a long history of economic and social injustice, similar to the experience of other colonised people. The power of the landowners, either English or in close association with the English ruling class, transformed the Highlands from a society based on the clans, cattle and arable farming to one in which people were 'cleared' from the land to make way for sheep and deer (e.g. Hunter: 1976). The land that visitors so admire today is not so much empty as 'emptied' (Short: 1991: 75). The Highlands have since been considered a 'deprived' area and are the target of much European Union (EU) and other 'development' funding.

Meanwhile, the explosion of interest in outdoor recreation and the growing concern and appreciation of 'wild' places has made the Highlands a prime tourist destination. It is one of the few places in Britain where people can come close to having a 'wilderness'

experience, complete with the feeling of expanse and solitude, far from the trappings of the urban world (McCarthy: 1998: 1). People come to 'do the Munros' (climb all the 273 peaks over 3000 feet), go on long distance backpack trips, kayak or mountain bike, or just enjoy a quiet picnic by a remote loch. A number of organisations have sprung up to cater to the full range of outdoor activities available and outdoor shops and businesses have become a pillar of many local economies.

In addition, there has also been a growing concern to protect fragile ecosystems and habitats. The Highlands, because of its 'empty' character has become a focus for various projects to preserve habitats or restore ecosystems that have been destroyed by centuries of deforestation (Smout: 1992). It has, therefore, been the target for many directives and protection measures. A key way in which biodiversity policies have been carried out has been through the buying up of land by conservation organisations, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT), the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) and the John Muir Trust (JMT). Other land is managed by government organisations such as Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Forestry Commission.

The scene is set for potential conflict. The long-term residents of the Highlands, dependent on farming and sheep, the sporting estate, fishing, and now increasingly tourism, have an obvious interest in developing and diversifying the Highlands economy. The Clearances have not been forgotten and the goal is to increase the population of the Highlands, not to keep it empty. The multiplier effects of North Sea oil have significantly contributed to economic development. And, Inverness, the capital of the Highlands, is now one of the fastest growing cities in Britain. There is a need for more houses and facilities. Inverness has been transformed in recent years as developers build huge retail parks and housing estates on land sold to them by crofters. There is a general attitude, expressed most forcibly by politicians in the Highland Council and the Highlands and Islands Enterprise Board, that development and economic growth are necessary to redress the wrongs created by the Clearances and secure future prosperity. How to go about doing this is a matter of intense debate as different

interests , the sporting estate, farmers, crofters, fishing and tourism , compete for recognition and financial support.

However, the situation has been further complicated by the relatively recent arrival of other powerful interests, outdoor recreation and conservation. It appears on the surface, that the goals of these conflict with the local development goals. Outdoor enthusiasts want to maintain the wild character of the landscape, using their organisations (e.g. the Ramblers Association, the Scottish and British Mountaineering Councils) to lobby against projects such as hydroelectricity. Conservation organisations object to the number of sheep and deer, obstacles to tree regeneration projects, and therefore come into direct conflict with crofters, farmers and sporting estates. The fact that those who promote outdoor recreation or conservation are not native Highlanders exacerbates the situation and echoes of the English and southern Scottish-instigated Clearances.

Resentment against those who seek to promote outdoor recreation and conservation values is often expressed in the political arena. A recent example of this is the formation of 'People Too' by Kirsty Macleod. Macleod is from a crofting family on the Isle of Coll, but was raised largely elsewhere, her family spending a large part of their time in Canada. Now, however, she is married to the owner of Glen Roy estate, consisting of 7,500 acres near Spean Bridge, between Fort William and Inverness. The aims of the organisation are explicitly to challenge 'environmental people' who are 'getting unchallenged media coverage' and have too much influence on government policy (Maxwell: 2001). In particular, they oppose the RSPB. 'It is an organisation with so much influence at government and SNH level, and there is a growing feeling that this is simply not right. There is a feeling about the RSPB that if the choice is people or birds, then birds would always get the priority' (quoted in Maxwell: 2001).

The Highlands, therefore, mirrors the situation elsewhere in the world, with local economic and social concerns in conflict with the interests of 'outside' conservation and recreation interests. The situation is presented as one in which people have to choose between one or the other. However, a closer examination of the supporters of 'People Too', reveals a predominance of landowners. This casts doubt on whether or not

such rhetoric really represents all local views. Perhaps the antagonism towards environmentalists is due more to the fact that the power of the landowners is being curbed rather than with a real interest in the economic difficulties of Highlanders. Furthermore, the recent defeat of the Harris superquarry was the result of locals-both natives and incomers, and outside environmentalists coming together. Therefore, the purpose of my thesis is to explore, in the Scottish context, whether one has to choose between economic and social well-being *or* protection of wild land for biodiversity and outdoor recreation, or whether alternative scenarios are possible.

THE CAIRNGORMS
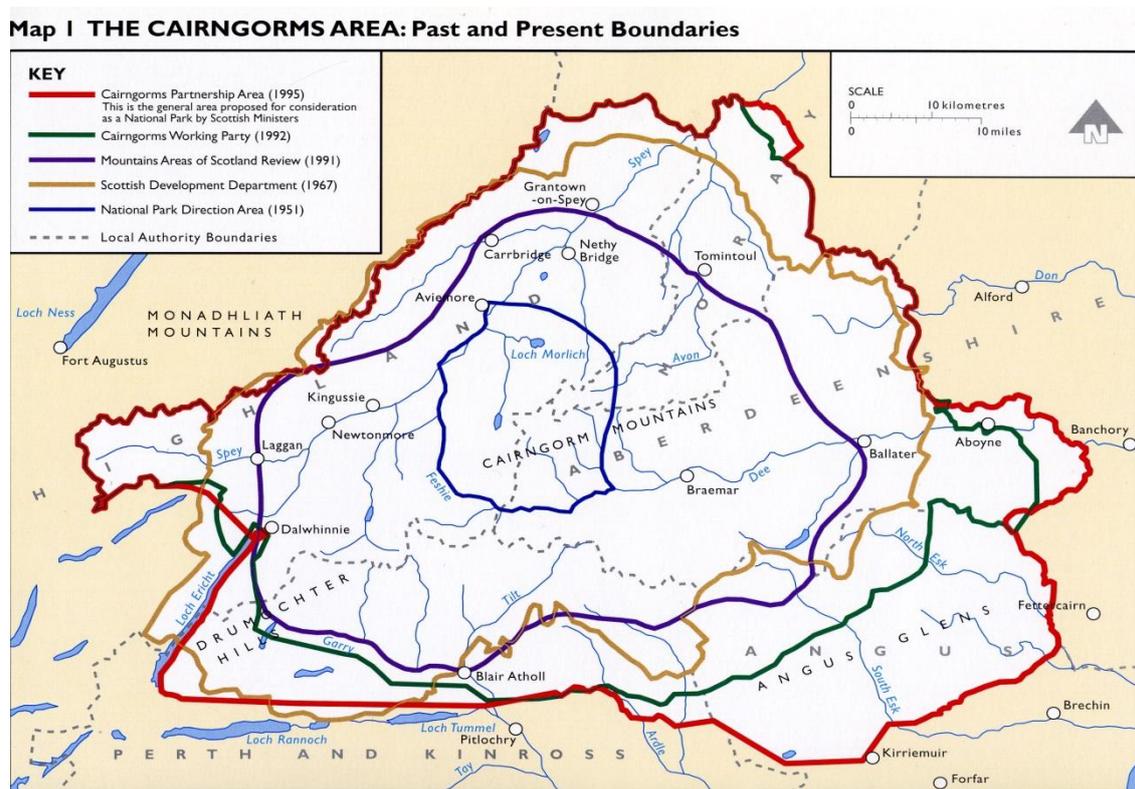
Figure 1. Scottish National Heritage Map for National Park Consultations

I chose the 'Cairngorms' as the site of my fieldwork, since it was designated as Scotland's second National Park. This name is in fact a 'nickname', as the mountain region itself is the 'Am Monadh or the 'red hill-range', distinguishing them from Am

Monadh Liath or 'grey hill-range' (Watson: 1992: 1) and there is just one single peak known as Cairn Gorm. The name is also somewhat misleading as the name is used, more by visitors than residents, to refer to both the 'high' and 'low' ground. The opening of the Cairngorms National Park reinforces this identity. However, the Cairngorms massif itself is ringed by population centres on the low ground or 'straths' (valleys) with their own names and identities, in addition to being seen as part of the Cairngorms. I focused my research in Badenoch and Strathspey, on the western and northern edges of the Cairngorms high ground. This site was ideal for my research purposes because of the battle that had been going on for some years over the redevelopment of the ski area on Cairn Gorm. It had been portrayed in the press as a fight between local development interests and outside recreation and conservation interests. It had a history of such problems when in the early eighties the ski company had lost a court case for the extension of the ski area to a consortium of environmental organisations.

Geography (See Figure 4 on page 19)

Guidebook descriptions of the area invariably involve terms such as 'wild' or 'wilderness' (e.g. Watson: 1992, McCarthy: 1998). Apart from a few rough hill tracks, no roads cut across the Cairngorms massif. It stretches for 30 kilometres east and west, and 25 kilometres north and south. It is characterised by several hill-groupings. Cairn Gorm and Ben Macdhui are the hills closest to Badenoch and Strathspey, and the most popular destination for both serious and causal walkers. They emerge out of the Cairngorm Plateau, the only subarctic terrain in Britain, resembling Iceland and Greenland in some respects. It is six kilometres across the plateau from the northern edge and its corries to Ben Macdhui. The featureless terrain can be a serious test of one's navigation abilities. What makes this walk even more dangerous is that the Cairngorm Plateau is like a giant table, cut off from the other hill-groups by sharp drops. It is these qualities, together with its accessibility, that give it its reputation for having one of the busiest Mountain Rescue Teams.

Figure 2. Looking down off the northern rim of the Cairngorm Plateau

Other hill-groupings require a much longer 'walk-in'. Braeriach and Cairn Toul lie to the west of the Cairngorm Plateau, divided by a deep pass called the Lairig Ghru. It is possible to walk from the north side of the Cairngorms to Deeside on the south side, though this usually necessitates an over night camp. To the east of Braerich lies Glen Einich, yet another ridge of hills topped by Carn Ban Mor and then a final drop to Glen Feshie, with another north-south hill track route. From the south-eastern edge of the plateau, you can look straight down at the dramatic Loch Avon, the source of the River Avon, which can be followed eastward for many miles before reaching the road that cuts down from Badenoch and Strathspey to Deeside. Ben Avon and Beinn a Bhuird are two other major peaks that lie far on the other side of the River Avon and are usually accessed from Deeside.
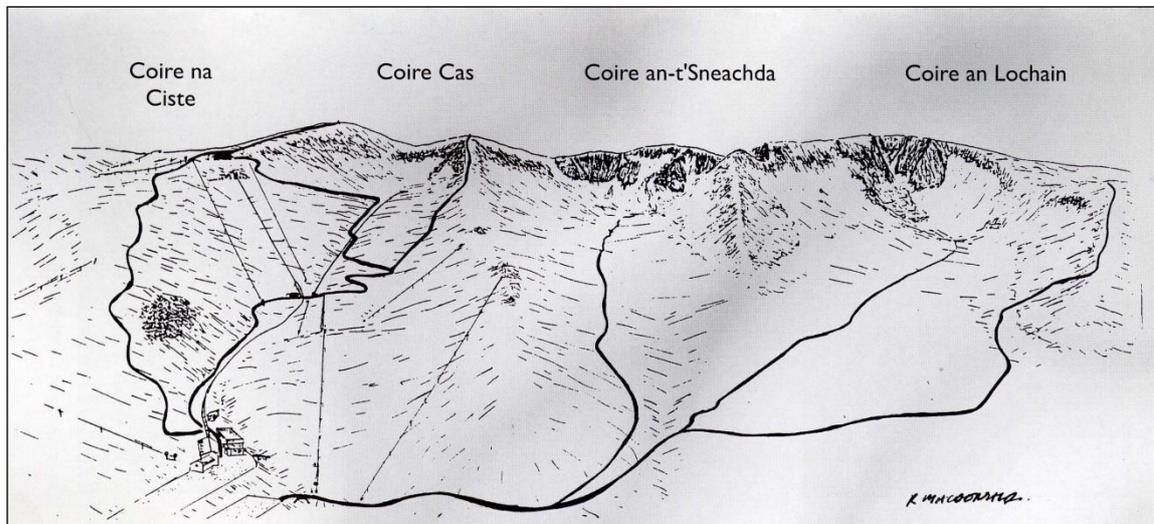
Figure 3. Map showing ski area and the two winter climbing coires

The northern rim of the Cairngorm Plateau has the most visitors and is where I spent most of my 'high ground' time. The corries or 'coires' of the northern edge are divided into two recreational uses. Coire Cas, beneath Cairn Gorm itself, has been developed as a major ski centre. Coire an t-Sneachda and Coire an Lochain are two of the most popular winter climbing venues in Scotland. All three corries are owned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise who then lease the ski area to the Cairngorm Chairlift Company, now renamed Cairn Gorm Mountain Ltd. since the replacement of the chairlift with the funicular or mountain railway.

However, the Cairngorms region also contains significant cultural landscapes in the strath. In some respects, the 'high ground' and the 'low ground' (language used in the public meeting and newspaper), are different worlds. Many who live and work in the strath, have never been on the Cairngorm Plateau. And, many who spend days on the Plateau, stop in the low ground only long enough to stock up on provisions. Yet, the fate of both is intimately linked; what happens in one has impact on the other.

Coming down from the Coirie Cas car park, the 'ski road' takes you down through Glenmore Forest, owned and managed by the Forestry Commission. Here you will find the National Outdoor Centre, Glenmore Lodge, a youth hostel and

Figure 4. Map of Cairngorm Massif and Badenoch and Strathspey. Each square equals ten kilometres.

Campsite and Loch Morlich. Further on down the road, you come to Inverdruie, part of the Rothiemurchus Estate, which has been in the Grant family for generations. The current Grants, John and Philippa, have continued the family tradition of encouraging tourism and preserving one of the last remnants of the Caledonian forest in Scotland. In addition to ski, outdoor and tourist shops and a major hotel complex, Inverdruie has a small number of residents whose houses are tucked away in the pine forest. This 'Glenmore corridor' leads down to the River Spey and the valley.

Badenoch and Strathspey follows the course of the River Spey, extending diagonally from Laggan, in the south-east close to the river's source, to Grantown-on-Spey in the north-east. Laggan is a tiny community, over ten miles from the next major population centres, Newtonmore and Kinguissie. The two communities are officially part of 'Badenoch'. Both villages, though popular with visitors, have a long history of settlement with established populations. Kinguissie is next to the A9, the major trunk road that cuts through the area, linking Inverness, 30 miles to the north and the urban centres of the 'Central Belt' - Dundee, Stirling, Falkirk, Edinburgh and Glasgow, two hours to the south. It is at this point that the 'Strathspey' half of 'Badenoch and Strathspey' begins.

The Spey itself, together with the villages, follows the 'old' A 9. Taking this road you pass through Alvie estate, owned by Jamie Williamson. This estate differs from Rothiemurchus in that it s managed more for 'traditional' land uses, sport shooting, farming, timber and quarrying, than tourism. Taking a slight detour from the old A9, you come to Insh Marshes, where the Spey enters a flood plain. During the winter, the plain floods and becomes home to many species of wintering birds, including hundreds of whooper swans. The Marsh is owned by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

Continuing north you soon come to the Loch Insh, home of Clive Freshwater and Loch Insh Water Sports. At this point, if you turn south you enter Inshriach Forest, owned by the Forestry Commission, and then Glen Feshie, largely managed as a sporting estate by its Danish owner. Continuing north, rejoining the old A9, you pass the junction with the 'ski road', heading up to Glenmore and Cairngorm, and arrive in Aviemore, the

main tourist centre of the area. Aviemore is the only place you are likely to encounter a traffic jam, primarily in tourist season, where the cross walk leads to Tesco's. This is the area's only supermarket and the one place where everyone, both visitor and resident, is likely to come to at some point in the week, often every day. The north end of Aviemore contains a number of major housing developments, many for tourists but also modest dwellings, including some council housing, for lower income families. This is where I took up residence for my fieldwork year. North of Aviemore you are soon back in open country, with forests, small farms and a few houses dotted about, built in a position to capture a good view of the northern edge of the Cairngorms. Since I left the area, two major housing developments have encroached on this open countryside.

The land north of Aviemore, fanning out both east and west, is owned by Kinveachy, part of Lord Seafield's estate, one of the top 20 landowners, private and public, in Scotland. It is an important sporting estate for both stag and grouse shooting. Heading north through the small village of Carrbridge, whose land is also owned by Kinveachy, you come again to the A9 trunk road. Crossing this, you are now in the Dulnain River valley. This is where the Kinveachy deer tend to congregate. 'The Burma Road', an old hill track and official Right of Way, follows the River Dulnain for several miles before turning north east and winding its way through Alvie Estate to join the A9 just south of Aviemore. It is a popular walking and mountain biking route, the only part of Kinveachy that is used regularly for activities other than shooting. Deer can also be found in the extensive Kinveachy forest, where guests shoot from towers rather than 'stalk' the deer. The grouse moors extend from the Dulnain up to Sloch Summit, cut in half by the A9 trunk road.

Following the River Spey, you enter a very different landscape. Cattle farms are spread all along the Spey and the continuation of the Dulnain east of Carrbridge to Grantown. Some of these farms are still owned by Kinveachy and leased to farmers. Other farmers have been able to purchase their farms. Reavack estate borders Kinveachy in this part of the Spey Valley. This estate was broken up several years ago and many farmers were given the opportunity to buy their farms.

Slightly off the road are two more villages, Boat of Garten and Nethy Bridge. Both villages are popular with visitors and are known for having a very high percentage of holiday homes, over 30% in the case of Nethy Bridge. They border on Abernethy Forest, a large estate owned by the RSPB. The forest has a large number of native Scots pines, similar to Rothiemurchus. In addition, it is home to capercaillie and the famous Osprey Centre, which is used by the RSPB to both educate the public and protect this popular bird of prey.

Grantown-on-Spey dominates this end of Strathspey. Though it would like to have a larger share of the area's tourist trade, it has more of an identity as a business and administrative centre. It is also the nearest town to the salmon fishing and is home to a smoke house owned by Ian Anderson, lead singer of Jethro Tull. It has one of the area's two high schools (the other is in Kinguissie) and one sign that it is more than a tourist town is the fact that it has regular problems with vandalism and 'loitering' young people. From Grantown, the road splits in three. One road heads south over the eastern edge of the Cairngorms to Deeside and the southern Cairngorms, one goes straight north to Forres and Nairn on the Moray coast, and the other follows the Spey into whiskey country and Aberdeenshire.

Economic, Political and Social Contexts

One of the key features of Badenoch and Strathspey is the variety of the people who have been attracted to the area over the years. This migration reveals much about what is going on economically and politically outside the area as well as in the area itself. There has been wave after wave of 'immigration', starting with the railway workers in the 19th century and then the loggers up until World War II. The next wave included immigrants from Scandinavia and Austria who established Scotland's first ski industry in the 1960s. The economic development that ensued attracted an array of people from Scottish cities looking for jobs and a better environment in which to raise children.

Farming has been declining for decades, dependent on grants and subsidies. However, as was seen during foot and mouth disease, the farmers have an influence far beyond their numbers because of their long-term link to the land. They are the only group whose families have lived in the area for many generations and therefore hold the status of 'natives'. One of the local councillors is a farmer.

The sporting estate is still important, firmly entrenched because of the peculiar culture of land ownership in Scotland. Two major estates, Kinveachy and Glen Feshie, have shooting as their main activity. Kinveachy, as part of the Seafield estate, has been in the same hands for 13 generations. However, the owner lives on the north coast, on another section of the estate, and rarely comes to Kinveachy. Glen Feshie has changed hands frequently over the years and has recently had Danish owners. The owner visits regularly but leaves the day-to-day management in the hands of the 'factor', an employee who has overall responsibility for the estate. Changes in attitudes towards shooting, the increased hostility to large landowners and increasing financial difficulties of lairds who do not have an outside source of income has meant that there is an increased tendency for estates to be under great financial pressure. New outlets for moneymaking are being sought, thus changing the character of some estates, forcing them to be less insular.

Two estates, Rothiemurchus and Alvie, have a wide range of interests, with less stress on the sporting side. Rothiemurchus, as home to one of the few remaining tracts of the native Scots Pine, has used this to develop a range of tourist-oriented moneymaking activities, not to mention obtaining numerous grants from the government. In fact, Rothiemurchus has been a tourist destination since the last century when tourists first began to visit the Highlands. Jamie Williamson, the owner of Alvie Estate has more sporting clients but also runs a quarry, a forestry consultancy and a caravan park. John Grant of Rothiemurchus, has been on the land for generations and represents the traditional Scottish laird. Both are very active in the community, involving themselves in public debates and committees. Williamson was also President of the Scottish Landowners Federation at the time of research.

Another significant development in land ownership is the conservation organisation as landowner. RSPB's Abernethy is an ex-sporting estate, previously owned by Liverpool shipping magnates. It is a very large estate, extending from the forest to high up on the northeastern side of Cairn Gorm. It's main aims are to promote species such as the endangered capercaillie and black cock, as well as promoting the growth of native trees. Another major conservation estate is Mar Lodge, on the southern side of the Cairngorm Plateau, stretching from Deeside to near Ben Macdhui. Though it still obtains income form guest stag shooting, its goals are now different, stressing the importance of native tree regeneration and restoration of habitats. The Forestry Commission is also a major landowner with different objectives to the traditional sporting estate. They manage the land partially for timber, but also for conservation objectives, in particular protecting and extending native tree cover.

The significant role played by conservation interests is also indicated by the presence of wildlife tourism companies such as Speyside Wildlife, a Scottish Natural Heritage Office and a ranger educational programme for both visitors and schools. As a result, a number of people have come to the area to work in conservation-related occupations, on the reserves as wardens, as rangers or wildlife guides.

It is the growth of incomes in the urban areas and the interest in outdoor recreation, however, which has most transformed the area. In addition to the ski area itself, there is a whole range of businesses that cater to snow sports, including organisations offering to organise school trips to shops selling ski and snow boarding gear. There are a number of outdoor centres, including Glenmore Lodge, the prestigious national sports centre. Many independent mountaineers, kayakers and climbers have been attracted to the area because of the chance to engage whole-heartedly in their chosen sport. They either attach themselves to a centre or work freelance. The editor of *The Great Outdoors*, Cameron McNeish lives in Newtonmore, as well as a filmmaker who has been behind many of the mountaineering programmes on television. Apart from those directly employed in outdoor recreation, it is difficult to calculate how many others have set up businesses such as Bed and Breakfast to cater to the outdoor tourists. According to the Ramblers Association, visitors involved in hill walking and

climbing contribute £438 million to the Scottish economy, including £150 million to the Highlands (McCall: 2002).

The area has also been a major destination for those seeking to flee the urban areas. Many of these people are retired, but fit and active. They turn their energies to doing things in the community and are present on many committees and active in clubs and associations such as the Tennis Club and the local John Muir Trust group. Like other parts of Scotland, Badenoch and Strathspey has been affected by the growth of Scottish nationalism. We have seen how unusually great numbers of incomers have transformed the area. This has led to resentment, as elsewhere, but the situation is complicated by the fact that the definition of 'incomer' is being continually redefined. As there are very few real 'natives', local and incomer is a relative term, based on how long one has been in the area. One man who came to Aviemore to work in the railway before the war told me in an interview that he still doesn't consider himself a local. Many of those who came in the 1960s in the wake of the growth of the ski industry see themselves as local, whereas the more recent arrivals in the general outdoor industry are still considered to be incomers. This resentment is often directed to the English, but often it is against those from the urban areas of Scotland as well. There is some sense of Gaelic identity, but it is relatively insignificant compared to the west of Scotland. Still, the resurgence of nationalism and the interest in heritage has had an impact on the area.

The debate over land ownership within Scotland as a whole is also present within my research area. As I have already discussed, the different landowners and their public presence and local involvement is part of their need to show that the current system of land ownership is successful, both economically and environmentally, in order to reduce the pressure for land reform. The national debate, with the new Scottish Parliament as a focus, has meant that the activities of landowners have come under greater public scrutiny. When Glen Feshie came up for sale several years ago, a consortium of conservation organisations, with support from land reform groups, tried to buy the estate. Their failure has fuelled much resentment on a national level and made it difficult for the new Danish landowner to do anything without involving

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government conservation agencies like Scottish National Heritage. In 2002 the Danish owner sold the estate secretly to another Dane, causing an uproar in the Scottish Parliament and reinforcing moves to pass the land reform bill that would make it obligatory to offer any land first to the community to buy. On Kinveachy, there is currently a move to make a community buy-out of a local wood that the estate was going to sell to a logging company. Debates about land reform on a national level are clearly linked with land issues at a local level.

The area must also be situated in the context of global capitalism. North Sea oil has had an enormous impact on Aberdeen but there have been repercussions felt much further afield. With the expansion of Inverness, just 30 miles north of Aviemore, Badenoch and Strathspey is increasingly being seen as a commuting suburb. Many oil workers' families have also chosen to live in Badenoch and Strathspey, as a convenient and quiet place to raise children whilst their husbands are off working on the rigs. As Inverness and its environs become more of an economic, political and cultural centre, land in the area has become more valuable. Rothiemurchus and Kinveachy estates have both been selling parts of their estates for new housing developments and there is pressure by other property developers for more land on which to build. In addition, with the revolution in communication systems and greater mobility of capital, the Inverness area, with its low wage economy, has become attractive to business, just as are many countries in the developing world. Aviemore has established an 'Enterprise Park', now occupied by a call centre. Also, many people choose the area as a base for either working from home, or for frequent business trips. I met one man who travelled regularly as an environmental consultant for the oil industry and then did the rest of his work from home. That meant he could live in a place that he liked because of its outdoor attractions rather than having to be based in a city office. Another woman raises her children and commutes to work in Inverness while her husband travels the world as an engineer for the oil industry.

Global capitalism has also had an effect on the tourist industry. It is difficult to predict exactly what will happen in the future, but cheaper foreign travel is changing the demand for holidays in Scotland. More and more people are going to the Alps rather

than Scotland for their skiing holiday. The Scottish Tourist Board blames the increased availability of cheap foreign travel for the general difficulties of the Scottish tourist industry. But climate changes are also blamed for the economic woes of the ski industry. Snow conditions have become increasingly unreliable and two other ski areas closed down in 2004. The industry is desperately struggling to adapt to the changing nature of the market, experimenting with different ways of attracting tourists, such as the development of mountain biking areas. These changes are very much in evidence in the Cairngorms area and the area is very much in flux, economically, politically and socially.

Conflicts

The Cairngorm region is a particularly suitable research site to examine environmental conflict. According to Lambert (2001), referring to the possibility of the area being designated as a National Park:

> The last century has pointed out the importance of nature conservation and recreation as land uses in the Cairngorms area, but time has not solved the question of balance between them, nor how to achieve this balance along with a strengthening of the economic prosperity of the region, without which any future designation would not be sustainable in the long-run' (p. 271).

This conflict is best explored through the anthropological study of people in a locality, but within a wider context. Many of the various structural changes that are taking place on a global level are reflected in the day-to-day issues confronting local people. At the same time, the actions of individuals in the local area will affect what happens to the broader structures. Holland and Lave refer to this interaction between individuals and global structures as 'history in person' (2001), which can be seen clearly in the unfolding of the conflict around the funicular, as well as in the debates about making the Cairngorms Scotland's second National Park.

The funicular was proposed by the Cairngorm Chairlift Company as a way of saving the ski industry in the face of overseas competition. Fierce battles have been fought

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over it both locally and at a national and international level, with conservation bodies going to the European Court to stop it going ahead. The current debate around the national park also incorporates issues of national and international concern as the Cairngorm Plateau is a proposed World Heritage Site. These debates raise a number of issues that can only be seen by relating what goes on in the locality to developments on a wider scale that I have mentioned above. These include land ownership and property development, the future of tourism, debates over decision-making, how changes in capitalism have affected the balance of power between different types of business and organisations, and the question of nationalism and who 'belongs' in a community.

Though my study focuses on one particular small area of the world, it is linked, as all parts of the world are, to structures and processes that are present at a global level. Though the Cairngorms is distinct and has its own identity, it is also part of an increasingly integrated world. Therefore, my study not only tells us something about the dynamics of the area itself but about issues that are relevant to people in many parts of the world who are facing many similar issues and concerns as the result of being both subjects and actors in what is essentially one world system (Holland and Lave: 2001).

OUTLINE OF THESIS

This context is therefore an ideal place to explore land use conflict. I was able to go behind the scenes of what was a very public conflict in order to understand its genealogy. By understanding the meanings, motivations, emotional attachments, perceptions and attitudes, what I call the 'sense of place', of the different groups involved, how they are formed into interest groups and why these interest groups then clash so bitterly, has enabled me to offer some possible ways out of the impasse created by the divisions between conservation, recreation and livelihood approaches to the environment.

In the course of this thesis I demonstrate how different senses of place facilitate the development of these different approaches, thereby shaping people's views on

environmental issues. However, though these approaches exist at one level, they need not necessarily lead to conflict. This is because the approaches are not fixed to any particular group of people. They become attached to particular groups at key moments in debates over issues, but in other circumstances the distinctions become blurred and there is considerable overlap. In fact, it is not the existence of the different approaches that causes the conflict, but the process of construction of a bounded group, temporarily identified with one particular approach. And this process can only be understood by examining issues to do with power. In other words, environmental conflict is often a mask hiding the underlying conflicts that exist over who has power and who makes decisions. I have organised the thesis into eight chapters following this introductory chapter.

In Chapter Two I examine theoretical perspectives from both anthropology and other disciplines. I trace the way in which the study of environmental conflicts has tended to focus on already formed *groups* with distinct identities. This has resulted in an understanding of different groups' publicly expressed interests. However, in order to go 'behind the scenes' of environmental conflict a different approach is needed; one that is based on people's individual embodied *activity* within an environment (Ingold: 1992, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001). By understanding the process by which individuals come to have a particular sense of place (Basso and Feld: 1996) one can gain an understanding of why people hold the values they do. This sense of place is more than a set of attitudes and opinions; it involves the 'whole organism-person' (Ingold: 2001: 232) as a physical, social and psychological being. It emerges out of people's engaged activities, a dance between people and their environment, at once physical and social. It is learned and acquired by this dance and not 'given' by culture (Ingold: 2000). The values inherent in the sense of place are held both intellectually and emotionally (Milton: 2002). The sense of place, developed from activity, provides a 'home' for people's lives in a particular environment, influencing their attitudes and dispositions to a range of wider issues that form the basis of land use conflicts.

This theoretical perspective influenced my methodology. In the tradition of Jackson's (1989) radical empiricism and 'phenomenological ethnography' (Wacquant:

1995, Latz and Csordas: 2003), my methods involve taking part in the activities that people do, rather than only talking to people outside the context of the particular activity. By focusing on activities, rather than publicly identified groups, I severed the link between the individual and a particular interest group, making it possible to explore alternative configurations to the 'outside' recreation/conservation and 'local' livelihood dichotomy.

The next three chapters provide detailed ethnography of the process by which people come to form their sense of place. Each of these chapters contains similar themes:

- The importance of 'activity', which is the moment in which the subjective (physical, cognitive and social) interacts with the objective (physical and socio-cultural environment). 'Activity' is both dynamic and dialectical. Different senses of place highlight different aspects of this interaction.

- How each sense of place involves an opening up of perception, the opportunity of creating new meanings and, at the same time, the closing down of perception as people's sense of place becomes reinforced by both physical and socio-cultural forces over time. All senses of place reveal what people value in the environment, showing the basis for potential conflict.

In Chapter Three I use the activity of mountaineering to explore the role of the body and the physical aspects of the environment in the development of a sense of place. Though socio-cultural factors will play a role, the focus is on how the affordances of the physical environment (Ingold: 1996) interact with the body/mind (Merleau-Ponty: 1962, Wacquant: 1995) to create a strong bond between the person and the places where one engages in that activity.

In Chapter Four, the data from birding is used to illustrate the importance of learning and apprenticeship in the development of a sense of place. The physical environment and the body are still important, but the influence of the cognitive and the social are much more prevalent (Lave: 1991, Bloch: 1989, Ingold: 2000). I also show how this activity leads to the formation of groups and institutions. Out of an activity such

as birding comes an approach to land use that has become known as conservation. This also leads to the love of an activity and objects in the environment (Milton: 2002).

The purpose of Chapter Five is to use the concept of 'historical ecology (Balee: 1998) as a vehicle of 'widening the net' of influences. Based on the individual's embedded experience, I now highlight the role played by factors beyond the immediate physical and social environment. In addition, this chapter will begin to compare more explicitly the different senses of place, introducing both similarities and differences between the livelihood and the conservation/recreation approach. This prepares the ground for the next section. In the previous three chapters I establish the potential for conflict. In this chapter I will explore how the different senses of place have led to actual conflict between particular groups. I argue that these conflicts cannot be understood in terms of contrasting senses of place. Different senses of place only create a potential for conflict. For this to happen in practice, the individuals must become a bounded group with a distinct identity and interests in contrast to other groups. This happens as part of wider historical, social, economic, political and cultural processes.

Chapter Six focuses on two micro-conflicts. I refer to these as 'disputes' to indicate that they are still to some extent 'conflicts-in the-making' and have not yet reached the stage in which 'local livelihood' and 'outside' recreation/conservation are locked in a public battle, with clearly defined positions, as is discussed in Chapter Seven. In other words, I am showing one step along the way to the development of the larger, more public conflicts. I have chosen two particular disputes in order to discuss how wider issues begin to impinge on the original cause of the dispute.

The wider issue in the conflict between anglers and canoeists is the question of who has the 'right' to be on the land. Anglers are there as paying guests of the sporting estate whereas canoeists argue that there should be a 'right' to access. This dispute shows how debates about ownership and access are interwoven with the immediate, face-to-face disagreement.

The wider issue in the choice between deer and trees is what counts as 'native' or 'natural' as well as who possesses the legitimate knowledge to decide. Conservationists,

usually supported by university-based research, argue that deer numbers are too high to enable native tree regeneration. Furthermore, trees are to be preferred to deer because trees like the Scots pine are natives, deer are an artificial introduction. On the other hand, sporting estates insist that the deer are 'traditionally' part of the land and belong as much as the trees do. In addition, they maintain that the practical knowledge and experience of the stalkers and keepers as to whether deer numbers are too high is as valid as the 'expert' knowledge of the conservationists. This argument is further complicated by disagreements amongst walkers and mountaineers as to what makes a more aesthetically pleasing landscape, barren hills with deer or forest-covered hills that might not afford the same views.

Chapter Seven builds on the material of the previous chapter in order to bring together the reasons for conflict into one framework. At this point the conflict resembles those that have been studied elsewhere. There is a public level to the conflict with clearly delineated 'sides' and 'interests'. I show how structural and discursive power (Mels: 1999, Wolf: 1999, Lukes: 1986) operates as social relations, creating and fuelling a public conflict. The social construction of conflict is seen in the controversy surrounding the building of the funicular railway and in debates about the National Park. Those who favour the funicular are presented as being local people who are concerned for the economic and social future of the area. Those against are portrayed as being 'outsiders' who do not understand the needs of the local area, but have the 'ear' of government and can therefore 'interfere' in local concerns. The National Park is also a source of contention. The main issue was what the main priority of the park should be, social, cultural and economic well-being, protection of habitats or promotion of quiet outdoor recreation. And, a related question, concerned who would have the main power to take decisions in the area covered in the Park, local 'democratic' structures (pro-development) or 'outside' interests (conservation and recreation bodies).

Chapter Eight shows how, behind the public face of conflict, there are different interpretations as well as resistance to the dominant conflict discourse. In addition, many people didn't fit neatly into one approach or another. People could also not be

neatly divided into local or incomer. It is these different meanings and apparent anomalies, these different 'voices' (Mageo: 2002: 6. Bakhtin: 1984 in Morris: 1994: 100), that provide us with an insight into the possibilities for overcoming environmental conflict, for going beyond the 'logical fictions' (Nietzsche: 1999: 7) of these oppositions that only seem to serve the interests of those in power.

The ethnographic data and analysis lead to a number of conclusions that can help to understand people's relationship with the environment and conflicts over land use. As a result, I can contribute to discussions on how to overcome the apparent impasse between social justice and environmentalism. In Chapter Nine I select examples from my fieldwork to illustrate the ways in which this process has already begun.

CHAPTER TWO
THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

INTRODUCTION

The 'Why' and the 'How'

The road to completion of a thesis is often presented as three distinct stages, consisting of the preparation stage, in which the researcher formulates a research question and familiarises him/herself with past research and theoretical perspectives, the fieldwork itself, the period in which the data is gathered, and the 'writing-up' stage, in which the researcher interprets the data in the light of anthropological theory and the work of other anthropologists. However, in practice anthropologists have found that these three stages are less distinct than they might appear (Amit: 2000: 6). The 'field' is not a bubble that the researcher enters with empty hands and a blank mind. Nor is the field absent during either the preparation or writing-up stage. Theory and methodology only exist because of their relation to the experience of living in and thinking about the world. They are like a map and compass, tools to guide us through our journey in the world and have no meaning without that world. Therefore, I will not present a survey of the literature or an account of my methodology in isolation from the process of doing ethnography. Instead, I will explain *why* I came to undertake this particular research project, and *how* I went about doing the research, as part of a developmental process which has at all points involved varying degrees of reading, thinking and experiencing people and their environments.

First Spark

The origin of my research interest in how different groups experience the natural environment can be traced to my own experience as a mountaineer, a trekking

holiday to Nepal and mountaineering literature. My discovery of mountaineering was a 'life-changing' event. However, I could not understand how something so without obvious social value could become such an obsession. The title of Lionel Terray's book *Conquistadors of the Useless* (1963) is an appropriate alternative name for mountaineers. I had not intended to become so interested. I had taken a climbing course to keep a friend company, but the experience itself 'took hold' and mountaineering continues, 15 years later, to be a major part of my life. As a result of my reluctant 'conversion', I began to wonder whether there was something innate in humans that made climbing and a love of being in the hills a universal need. If not, then where did this interest come from? The experience of trekking in Nepal in the company of Sherpas brought an extra dimension to the question. For the Sherpas, the experience of being in what are, in my view, extraordinary mountains, is part of their day-to-day life. And, trekking and climbing is their job, not a recreational activity that people pay to do. The personal physical difficulties involved in the trek itself as well as language barriers, prevented me from asking all the questions I wanted to ask. What do the Sherpas think about the mountains? What do they think of us? Are our cultures so different that we relate to the mountains in completely different ways?

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ANTHROPOLOGY

I turned to anthropology as a means of answering my questions. In the initial stages, the focus was the theoretical debates surrounding the relationship between nature and culture. The background to the debate had been arguments over whether nature or culture is more important in determining people's beliefs and practices (see for example Harris: 1980 and Sahlins: 1977). In these debates, 'culture' and 'nature' tended to be treated as two distinct concepts. However, many anthropologists found this 'dualism' unsatisfactory. Early examples can be seen in the work of MacCormack and Stathern (1980) in their critique of Ortner (1974). They did not agree with Ortner's view of women as more 'natural' and pointed out that in many non-western societies people do not appear to see culture as distinct from nature.

Such arguments came to be defined as cultural or social 'constructionist', meaning that relationships with nature are not universal but vary according to the cultural context. The focus in research moved from considering the effects of a given physical environment on people (Harris: 1980) to an interest in documenting the ways in which people 'construct' their concepts of what became 'nature'. Anthropologists used their research in non-western cultures to highlight the differences between non-western and western concepts of nature (e.g. Strang: 1997). Such distinctions were used to argue for a change in western attitudes and for a greater respect for non-western cultures and what they could teach us. For example, in Croll and Parkin (1992):

> We are here back to the 'western' idea of environment not as ontologically part of people who give and draw substance from it, but as resting on the distinction between dominating and subordinating agents (p. 28).

Such work in anthropology mirrored work in geography and environmental history and ethics. Raymond Williams (1973) has been a common point of reference in the discussion of the concept of the 'countryside' in British industrial society. Other authors such as Cosgrove (1988) and Daniels (1988, 1993) use the concept of 'landscape' to emphasise the idea that nature is a cultural symbol, similar to the way landscape painters idealised and objectified the countryside. Hirsch and O' Hanlon (1995) developed this view in anthropology, arguing that the west has objectified nature such that it has become 'landscape', a cultural rather than natural phenomenon. The separation of humans from nature has led city dwellers to go back to nature, regarded as a spectacle.

Other scholars have traced the history of the concept of nature (Horigan: 1988). Two issues are commonly raised in relation to this history. One, it is generally agreed that there is something 'wrong' with the western concept of nature, in that it encourages exploitative and unecological relationships with the natural environment. Writers differ as to where this concept came from, Christianity (White: 1967), Greek philosophy (Morris: 1996), rationalism and Enlightenment philosophy (Merchant: 1980, Plumwood: 2002), capitalism (Merchant: 1980, Morris: 1996, Plumwood: 2002, Pepper:

1996). Second, the concept of nature has been bound up with power relations. Powerful groups in society use particular concepts of nature to serve their own purposes, such as reinforcing national identity (Short: 1991 and Bender: 1993). Cronon (1995) argues convincingly that the concept of 'wilderness' has been used to further a peculiar western view of nature as something that should be pristine and kept free of human interference. His work has been instrumental in questioning the way in which the western National Park model has been transferred to the developing world and used as a form of imperialism (Olwig: 1977, 1980, Neumann: 1998).

Adams' (1996) study of Sherpas and western mountaineers in Nepal is an example of ethnography based on the social constructivist approach, including an analysis of how western concepts of nature have been imposed on other cultures through unequal power relations. Western mountaineers and Sherpas have very distinct ideas about mountains. According to Adams, Sherpas have no desire to climb mountains and only do so because of economic necessity. In addition, Sherpas have created their identity in response to the image that has been reflected upon them by the more powerful western mountaineers, very much bound up with a colonial relationship.

The stress on the way people's relationship to nature has been socially constructed has led to a reluctance to talk about nature as a physical reality. There is no such thing as 'nature' and we can only talk about 'natures' (e.g. Macnaghton and Urry: 1998, Escobar: 1998). These concepts of nature are thus culturally determined. Nature has been subsumed into culture (Soper: 1995, Milton: 1996, Soule and Lease: 1995, Ingold: 1992, 1996, 2000).

Whilst recognising the importance and value of the insights of the constructionist, or deconstructivist, approach to understanding the key role of culture in the human-environment interface, many scholars began to question the extent of its usefulness. Soper (1995: 137-145,151, 198,) argues that the implication of such an approach is that nature does not exist. Soule and Lease (1995), working in the field of conservation biology, reacted very strongly to the work of Cronon. They use the term 'social siege of nature' (reference) to reflect their view that by denying any reality to

the natural world, 'social critics' are undermining the efforts of environmentalists to protect it.

A number of authors attempted to overcome the nature/culture dualism without subsuming nature into culture. Whilst not denying the importance of culture, they recognised that there was some kind of physical world that existed independently of human interpretations of it. Dickens (1992) uses Marx's dialectic to explain how the two were interrelated and mutually determining. Anthropologists were also having misgivings and explored ways in which nature and culture could be brought together. Two critical works were *Redefining Nature* (Ellen and Fukui eds.: 1996) and *Nature and Society* (Descola and Palsson eds.: 1996). It is the work of Ingold in those volumes, and subsequently, that has spearheaded the move to a more general ecological and holistic approach to understanding human-environment relationships.

However, Ingold, emphasises the role that culture plays in *interpreting* the world, but not in people's *perception* of their environment (Milton: 1996: 60-61). Basso's and Feld's (1996) phenomenological-inspired work on 'senses of place' complements Ingold by examining how people perceive and interpret their environment. This environment is not just a physical reality but imbued with meaning. By using 'place', they bring both the physical and cultural aspects of the environment together conceptually, as they are in reality.

Other scholars have worked on integrating culture and the environment by situating human-environment relations within history. 'Historical ecology' (Balee: 1998, Crumley: 1994) adds an important dimension to the work of Ingold and Basso and Feld by stepping back from the immediate relationship between people and place and bringing the wider social, economic and historical context into the picture. A place is the result of a long ecological history of people and their environment. Human communities and cultures, together with the land with which they interact over time must be understood as a total phenomenon (Balee: 1998). Together, these scholars and their work provided me with my initial theoretical perspective as well as having a major impact on my methodology.

KEY CONCEPTS

Activity

The concept of 'activity' is central to both the theoretical and methodological approach of my thesis. This concept developed out of the work of Tim Ingold, but has a much older genealogy. Ingold is one of the first anthropologists to develop a critique of the social constructionist approach to nature and culture. As early as 1986 he argued for a synthesis of the biological and the anthropological approach to evolution 'flawed neither by biological reductionism nor by anthropocentric delusions of grandeur and ascendancy' (1986: p. 34-35). He later uses the concept of 'dwelling', borrowed from Heidegger to develop this perspective. Instead of starting with culture and seeing how it represents nature, we should start with the human condition, which involves 'being immersed from the start, like all other creatures, in an active, practical and perceptual engagement with constituents of the dwelt-in-world' (1996: 120-121). He stresses that the domain of 'nature' is not separate from the domain in which people live as persons. Moreover, there is no distinction between 'western' and 'non-western' peoples. By making this point, he supports the growing body of literature which argues that to associate non-western people with either more harmonious or more integrated relations with the environment is a myth (Kellert: 1995, Milton: 1998).

> For hunter-gatherers, *as for the rest of us*, life is given in engagement, not in disengagement, and in that very engagement, the real world ceases to be 'nature' and is revealed to us as an environment for people. Environments are constituted in life, not just thought, and it is only because we live in an environment that we can think at all (1996: 150-151, my italics).

'Active engagement' is a central concept of Ingold's perspective. With some adaptations, I make the concept of activity a foundational concept for my research. The term succinctly encompasses the notion of practical engaged experience within environments.

The use of 'activity' as an explanatory concept is not common in the social sciences but it nevertheless is associated with the work of some key thinkers. In the work of Karl Marx 'activity' could be considered one of the central foundational concepts of his theoretical system.

> That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, *active* men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process (1974: 47, my italics).

In the early 20th century, the Soviet psychologists developed 'activity theory', based on the work of Lev Vygotsky. A number of researchers from a variety of disciplines have been influenced by this work, including the anthropologists Lave and Wenger (1991). In their work on education they define learning as a 'situated activity'. The concept has also now become popular with those writing under the umbrella of 'performance' and 'performativity' (e.g. Szerszynski, Heim and Waterton: 2003).

Activity is necessarily embodied. However, in this instance, the body is not an object of study (Ingold: 2000: 170), but an integral part of the person, who cannot help but use his/her body to do the activity. Similarly, the mind, considered to be the domain of psychology, is part of activity because 'such processes as thinking, perceiving, remembering and learning have to be studied within the ecological contexts of people's interrelations with their environments' (Ingold: 2000: 171). By focusing on 'activity' my research is undertaken within the framework for anthropology set out by Ingold .

> And the discipline that will be called into being to study these processes, whatever we choose to call it, will be the study of how people perceive, act, think, know, learn, and remember within the settings of their mutual-practical involvement in the lived-in world' (2000: 171).

Significantly, a similar approach, called non-representational theory, has been developed in geography. Lorimer describes it:

The focus falls on how life takes shape and gains expression in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, pre-cognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions. Attention to these kinds of expression, it is contended, offers an escape from the established academic habit of striving to uncover meanings and values that apparently await our discovery, interpretation, judgement and ultimate representation. In short, so much ordinary action gives no advance notice of what it will become. Yet, it still makes critical differences to our experiences of space and place (2004: 4).

Sense of Place

Basso and Feld (1996), in developing their concept 'sense of place', were also influenced by the work of Heidegger. They argue that anthropologists have not paid enough attention to 'one of the most basic dimensions of human experience, that close companion of heart and mind, often subdued, yet potentially overwhelming, that is known as *sense of place'* (1996: 54). Basso, in his chapter 'Wisdom Sits in Places', examines the factors that cause people to develop a particular sense of place. He concludes that this depends on the type of engagement that the person has with place. For example, the person who has more of an emotional experience with a particular place will develop a different sense of place than someone who has just passed through.

For it is on these occasions of focused thought and quickened emotion that places are encountered most directly, experienced most robustly, and (in Heidegger's view) most fully brought into being. Sensing places, men and women become sharply aware of the complex attachments that link them to features of the physical world (1996: 55).

The concept of 'place' adds an important dimension to Ingold's concept of active engagement with an environment. An environment is not 'essentially or primarily social; it is essentially an environment, consisting of things other than ourselves with which we interact' (Milton: 2002: 4), whether they be natural processes, land, objects or other people. 'Place' is a concept that can refer to more than just the natural environment

and conveys the idea of the integration of all Milton refers to in the term environment. Whilst recognising that there is a physical reality (both natural processes and human-transformed) that people are engaged with, 'place' reinforces the idea that this engagement is inseparable from social relations and culture. Places are social constructions that emerge out of a particular physical environment and this process itself is based on activity, a dynamic interaction between the physical environment, people's actions, relationships and meanings. Places have histories. In Basso's work on the Apache (1996) he shows how a place has come to be the receptacle of memories.

> 'Place' is, therefore, not just a setting or backdrop for the 'play' of human action. Without place, things would not only fail to be located; they would not even be *things*; they would have *no place to be the things they are* (Casey: 1998: 71).

Place itself has power (Casey: 1998 and Gallagher: 1993). When Basso's informants go back to a place it has the power to evoke memories and to teach moral lessons as a result of the events that 'took place' there before. To have a 'sense of place', therefore, involves sensual perceptions, feelings, memories, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. These have emerged as a result of physical and social activity within a specific place that itself has power to evoke meaning, being both perceived and interpreted.

Places do not exist in isolation from the wider context. Places are formed through an interaction of the local and the global. Therefore the place people experience may have a particular geographical location, but has been shaped by a broad range of historical and socio-cultural forces (Olwig: 2003). Similarly, people's 'sense of place' emerges out of both the experiences they have in a locality, and the *contrast* they make between other places they have experienced.

Conflict and power

The second part of the thesis examines the contexts and the processes by which different senses of place come into conflict with each other. A 'conflict' can be defined as a situation where individuals or groups disagree about what should be done or what should happen, and where each 'side' actively seeks to promote their favoured outcome. The perception is that only one can 'win' or that one 'side' can gain an advantage or

impose its view on the situation. In my thesis, as in other environmental conflicts, the disagreement concerns *how* a place should be and what it should be used for. My data revealed two levels of conflict, though these two levels are interrelated. On the micro-level, individuals find themselves in conflict at particular points in time when they find themselves in the same place. I call these 'disputes'. 'Conflicts' occur at the 'macro' level where groups have taken on an organised form and where the disagreement manifests itself beyond the place itself. In this case, the situation has become politicised in the sense that wider social structures and institutions are involved. A conflict necessarily means that the individuals/groups will mobilise various resources in order to ensure that their side prevails over the others. Therefore, conflicts are imbued with 'power relations'.

'Power' is a slippery term and has been the subject of extensive debate (Lukes: 1986: 1). It is very difficult to define, because as Wolf (1999: 4) points out, power relations are an aspect of all relations between people. If this is the case, then to talk about 'power relations' is potentially meaningless unless one is precise about what particular types of relations one is referring to. It is not my aim in this thesis to engage in the debate as to what power is. However, as it is still the concept that best describes the kind of relations that exist between people and groups of people in conflict situations that I will be examining, I need to clarify exactly what I am referring to when I am using this concept.

Lukes (1986: 5) sees power as the ability to 'make a difference', to act towards something. Environmental conflicts involve this will to 'make a difference'; people use a variety of strategies and tools in order to influence what will happen to a place. They need to do this because there are many other possible outcomes, all which require a 'force' to move towards them. When people are consciously trying to bring about a certain outcome that is being resisted by other people, then the relations between them involve power. Lukes (1986: 15) argues that power is located where a proposed difference to significant outcomes can be made or resisted. Power is therefore located, or rather power relations come into being, in the context of conflicts between people. Wolf (1999: 4) recognises that we cannot pinpoint fully the exact content of

these power relations because as it is not a unitary force; it is instead part of the process of interaction between people. However, power can appear to exist independently of people when it is 'held' by institutions like the State or an economic system or when it is embedded in a set of persuasive ideas. Nevertheless, it is still people who are the ones who continually recreate, through their actions, what subsequently appears as a 'thing'. In the conflict contexts revealed by my data, people make conscious and unconscious use of previously created power relations that they then incorporate as part of their own relations with others in a conflict situation. In other words, the context within which the conflict unfolds contains a number of affordances, resources or tools which people use in their own struggle to influence the outcome. These include cultural capital, discourses, hegemony of ideas and structural power. Cultural capital is a concept used by Bourdieu (Jenkins: 1992: 112-113) to refer to the power certain individuals have because of cultural advantages, e.g. social and linguistic skills, which can be used as a resource to influence the outcome of a situation. Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony' is used to refer to generalised ideas that people have integrated into social and cultural practices in their everyday lives (Wolf: 1999: 44). Gramsci was concerned to show that the ruling class was able to enforce its rule through people's acceptance of ruling class ideas as much as by the economic power it had. For example, the idea that people should have the right to own land is hegemonic. I use 'discourses' to refer to ways of communicating ideas that influence how people interpret the world. As Wolf says, these discourses may emanate from dominant structures and institutions but they work on people's consciousness (Wolf: 1999: 5). Foucault refers to these as 'discourses of truth' because they appear to people as the way the world is (Foucault: 1986: 229). They have a strong impact on people's actions. Hegemonic ideas will be communicated through a number of different discourses. However, not all discourses are hegemonic; a number of competing discourses can co-exist. Therefore, I refer to hegemonic or dominant discourses when I am discussing those ideas and ways of communicating that have been integrated on a generalised level. Discourses are important tools that individuals and groups use in the conflicts over land use. Each group struggles to make its discourse hegemonic.

The conflicts also unfold within a structural and institutional framework. Structural power, according to Wolf (1999: 5) is that which 'organises and orchestrates the settings' within which people interact. This includes economic and political contexts that provide certain groups with particular resources or else facilitate certain groups' abilities to mobilise resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT AROUND THE WORLD

In December 1997 I attended a conference on mountains at the University of Oxford. Participants included, not only academics from a number of disciplines and countries, but the conference also attracted 'practitioners', people working in the field of conservation, hazard management and general policy towards mountain regions. The Cairngorms region was well represented, largely due to the on-going controversy over the building of the funicular. The conflict was presented by a number of poster presentations as one in which local people were lined up against conservation and recreation interests. It was widely accepted that the funicular would have a negative impact on the environment and therefore was something that should be opposed.

Anthropologists, on the other hand, have been questioning whether the views of environmentalists can be taken uncritically. Based to a large extent on the constructionist approach, a number of scholars have uncovered the culturally-specific aspect of environmentalism (e.g. Olwig: 1977, 1980, Grove-White: 1993, Cronon: 1995, Berglund: 1998, Guha and Martinez-Alier: 1997, Proctor: 1995, Strang: 1997 and McCarthy: 1998). Studies have taken place in both in the South (e.g. Guha and Martinez : 1997, Neumann: 1998, Strang: 1997) and in the North (e.g. Proctor: 1995, McCarthy: 1998). What they all have in common is a tendency to give voice to the local communities who find themselves in opposition to the agenda of the environmentalists. Environmentalists/conservationists are associated with 'Northern colonial' or 'urban' interests and there is both implicit and explicit criticism of the way these groups have imposed or dominated debates around land use with a particular concept or discourse of

nature. In developing countries, anthropologists have exposed the ethnocentric assumptions behind the establishing of National Parks. These studies span several decades and continents (e.g. Olwig: 1977, 1980, Baviskar: 2000, Macleod: 2001, Walley: 2004). Neumann (1998) titled his book on National Parks in East Africa '*Imposing Wilderness'*. This title accurately represents the analysis of many of these anthropologists, who stress that National Parks are a form of colonialism, opposed by the local people. Meanwhile, in the metropolitan countries, environmentalists are portrayed as romantic and naïve and having a 'totalizing discourse' similar to that of religion (Berglund: 2000 and 2001). This view is typified by the following comment of an informant of McCarthy from his work on the Wise Use Movement in the US.

> The environmental extremists' vision of the west is of a land nearly devoid of people and economic activity…everything from the 100th meridian to the Cascade Range becomes a vast park through which they drive, drinking their Perrier and munching on organic chips, staying occasionally in the Bed and Breakfast operations into which the homes of westerners have been turned, with those westerners who remain fluffing up duvets and pouring cappuccino (1998: quoted on p. 140).

In the South, Guha and Martinez stress the way conservation interests such as 'Save the Tiger' are at odds with concerns for social justice. They quote Eric Hobsbawm:

> It is no accident that the main support for ecological policies comes from the rich countries and from the comfortable rich and middle classes (except for the businessmen who hope to make money by polluting activity). The poor, multiplying and under-employed, wanted more 'development', not less (1997: p. xv).

Both North and South, there is conflict very similar to the conflict in the Cairngorms. Local people need development and outside conservationists and recreation visitors want to keep Scotland pristine and empty. Different attitudes could be 'read' from distinct economic positions as well as from different culturally based discourses of nature. As the title of Guha and Martinez-Alier's book suggest, there are 'varieties of environmentalism', or in other words, different priorities of how the land should be used.

> No Humanity without Nature, the epitaph of the Northern environmentalist is here answered by the equally compelling slogan 'No Nature without Social Justice' (Guha and Martinez-Alier: 1997: 21).

Environmentalism, then, rather than being based on any 'facts' about nature, was just a 'point of view'. As Proctor says, in his study of the conflict around old growth forests in Oregon between loggers and environmentalists:

> How, then, can we be sure that the environmentalists hold the moral high ground in their ancient forest campaign? It could be argued that there exists an infinite possible number of environmentalisms, each with its own nature to save (1995: 273).

If environmentalism is nothing but a western/elite cultural product, then efforts to protect the environment are no more valid than any other position, and in some cases could be actually undermining social justice concerns. An impasse seemed to have been reached. While the importance of the environmentalists' fight to save a 'real nature' cannot be questioned, the evidence against the role of environmentalists in neglecting social justice issues is compelling. There does not seem to be any way to resolve such conflicts in which different groups have such fixed positions, cemented by their culturally induced outlook and economic interests. It appears to be the same in the Cairngorms. The people I talked to at the conference and the articles in the mountaineering journals suggested that the only way to 'save' the Cairngorms was to impose a judicial decision on the locals, which would stop them from going ahead with the planned funicular.

The focus on conflict between different cultural groups is partially the result of the constructionist theoretical perspective. Research has tended to start with a particular interest or group, which has a clearly formulated public position, based on their beliefs and values, that can be sharply distinguished from another group's position. For example, white Australians are contrasted with aborigines (Strang: 1997), loggers with environmentalists (Proctor: 1995 and later Satterfield: 2002), farmers with conservationists (Neumann: 1998) and local islanders with the 'save the turtle'

lobby from mainland Greece (Theodossopoulos: 2000). Whilst recognising the significance of this work in helping us to understand environmental conflicts, it has nevertheless, unwittingly, promoted a pessimistic picture, making it appear that the conflict between the different 'environmentalisms' are inevitable.

Other scholars have recognised the problems inherent in promoting such sharp dichotomies and in representing conflict in terms of interest groups (Grove-White: 1993). A number of studies paint a more nuanced picture, revealing divisions in the local community itself, providing evidence for local support for the environmentalist agenda or presenting the arguments of environmentalists as sympathetically as the local opposition. In one of the first studies of National Parks, Olwig (1980: 27) stresses that not all locals were against the creation of the Park and that not only did some people benefit, some also admitted that the existence of the Park taught them to appreciate the beauty of the natural environment. Satterfield (2002), though focusing on distinct groups, does not privilege one view over the other, but uses the conflict situation to examine how each group sees the other. Walley (2004) has shown how unusual alliances were formed during the creation of a Marine Park off the coast of Tanzania, between an Australian working for the World Wildlife Fund and local fisherman, against other locals, the national government and the WWF itself.

Milton (2002) and Brechin et. al (2003), though not questioning the value of the work being done, argue that research should help promote environmental values.

> The most useful contribution that anthropology can make is to improve our understanding of why we are as we are, of what makes us think, feel and act the way we do, in hope that such understanding will provide a basis for informed change (Milton: 2002: 3).

Both Brechin et al. (2003) and Tsing (2001) challenge anthropologists to engage in 'new research trajectories' that explore collaborations rather than conflict.

> Anthropologists are used to a discussion of the divergent perspectives of groups who, endowed with long-standing and well-formulated differences in identity and interest, battle each other over political issues: villagers versus the state; frontiersmen versus natives; activists versus corporations.

> The new research I am interested in looks instead at how alliances rather than enmities are formed amongst dissimilar groups: indigenous people and urban environmentalists, Southern nationalists and Northern research foundations, fishermen and marine mammals (Tsing: 2001: 15).

Ingold defines the purpose of anthropology as 'to reach a general understanding of the kinds of beings we humans are' (quoted in Milton: 2002: 1). I would make an addition to this purpose; anthropology should also aim to try and understand what kinds of beings people *could be.*

Studies on conflicts over land use in both North and South have found that these tend to involve two main sides - livelihood interests and environmentalists. In the public debate over the funicular in the Cairngorms, *three* positions formed into identifiable interest groups including those who rely on the land for a living, those who want to use the land for their recreational interests and those who believe the land should be left free of human intrusion. The 'livelihood' perspective argued that the funicular would bring in much needed income to the area; the conservation lobby argued that the funicular would bring easy access to a fragile habitat that is already under threat from human intrusion; and the recreation bodies argued that the funicular would ruin the quality of the visual landscape and detract from the 'wilderness experience' enjoyed by hill walkers and mountaineers.

However, I did not want to begin my research by dividing the field into interest groups in conflict. Studying interest groups in the public arena would only reinforce the distinctions between the groups without revealing *how* they came to hold these perspectives in the first place. Therefore, I focused on individuals in *activities* that are associated with the three different perspectives and explored *how* they develop a *sense of place* that might lead to a particular publicly-held position. Beginning with people and their concrete activity in a place, I hoped to reveal what gives rise to different perspectives, expressed by interest groups in the public arena, as well as to consider whether the different senses of place need necessarily lead to conflict.

Beginning from the perspective of people and their concrete activity in a place, I hoped to reveal other aspects of the conflict situation, aspects that are often hidden

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behind the public debates. To do this, I participated in as many activities as possible rather than targeting specific groups in the public arena. That does not mean I neglected people who had clearly defined positions on the funicular or other issues. However, the difference is that my starting point was different activities rather than different people. In that way, I did not immediately categorise people into one group or another. What was important was the activity they are involved in, how they actually relate to their environment, rather than what they *say* their position is, or who they identify with. This turned out to be very effective and productive, in terms of both the data-gathering process itself and of the kind of data I was able to obtain. In this way, the theoretical perspective I had developed from Ingold and Basso provided me with a new methodological approach to the study of environmental conflict.

ACTIVITY AND SENSE OF PLACE: THE BASIS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The work of Ingold and Basso, with their focus on the importance of engagement and activity within a place, not only provided the theoretical basis for my research, but also necessarily suggested the method. Ingold (2000) suggests that research should be undertaken along the lines of the radical empiricism outlined by Jackson (1989). There is much overlap between Ingold and Jackson, though they use different vocabularies. Jackson objects to the 'dissolving of people's lived experience of the subject into the anonymous field of discourse' (1989: 1). For both Ingold and Jackson, as with Latz and Csordas (2003) and Lorimer (2004), what is important is to firmly situate the person in the world. Therefore, the researcher should also be part of that world, living similar experiences to the people they have been studying.

Anthropology fieldwork has always demanded a certain degree of 'immersion' (Amit: 2000: 1). Whether Jackson's radical empiricism is qualitatively different from many other anthropologists' fieldwork is open to question (e.g. Evans-Pritchard's (1976) study of the Azande or Susan Greenwood's (2000) study of British witchcraft). Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that the researcher's own lived experience

is a major source of knowledge about the people being studied. Research on the environment, focusing as it has on people's concepts of nature or on different groups in conflict, has necessarily demanded a certain distance between researcher and those being researched. This results in a tendency to focus on attitudes, expressed publicly to the researcher. Pepper (1996: 124-125, 160-165) points out in his history of environmental ideas, that the 'official' view of nature is not necessarily shared by ordinary people and may instead represent the interests of a dominant elite. What people say they think may be very different from what they actually do in terms of the care or not that they take of the environment around them. The tendency of social constructivist and representational theory to focus on cultural groups and how these groups represent the environment has a similar orientation in that research is directed towards how culture is *represented* rather than *lived* (Katz and Csordas: 2003: 285). This does not mean that such perspectives have not produced many valuable insights. Rather it is a case of not revealing the complete picture of people's relationship with their environment. Walley (2004: 142-143) found this to be the case in her study of an East African Marine Park. When she tried to get the local inhabitants to talk about their concept of 'nature', she encountered incomprehension. Rather than concluding that they did not value the natural environment, she concluded that she was asking the wrong questions and going about her research in an unproductive way. She decided to focus on what people *do* in the environment, their lived practice, and she obtained a much more revealing picture of human-environment relations.

An illustration of the limitations of a constructionist approach, relevant to my research in the Scottish hills, is Ortner's work on climbing Sherpas and western mountaineers (1999) in Nepal. She portrays the two groups as distinct cultures, who bring distinct sets of values, beliefs and practices to mountaineering. As a result, she argues that they will have very different experiences of the mountain. Despite the importance of this study, her approach leaves no room for finding points in common between the two groups, who in the course of day-to-day *activity* are often doing the same tasks and undergoing the same experiences. If she had mountaineering skills and had been able to participate alongside the Sherpas and the westerners in their

climbing, she might have found that in some respects they transcended their diverse cultural backgrounds through their common experiences on the mountain, creating an alternative 'climbing' culture that exists in that 'lived' moment.

Limitations of other methods, in terms of my own research aims, are also seen in the following two examples from sociology and geography. In their research on people's attitudes towards the Lake District, the sociologists Macnaghton and Urry conducted interviews (1998). Though their aim was to find out about social practices, such a method, performed out of the actual context itself, give a partial, one-dimensional picture. Crouch (2001), a geographer, in his study of caravaning, spent considerable time on the caravan site. However, he admits that despite participating by being on the site and doing certain of the day-to-day activities that caravaners have to do, he did not participate *as a caravaner*. He maintained his identity to both himself and his subjects of study as that of observer. He said he never *felt* like a caravaner and therefore had more difficulty in collecting the data he sought. Though not always possible, Crouch recognises the importance of *living* the part of whatever is being studied, not just intellectually, but physically and emotionally. For example, a very successful example of radical empiricism (Jackson: 1989) or 'phenomenological ethnography' (Latz and Csordas: 2003) is Wacquant's (1995) study of boxing. His aim was to discover what people feel about boxing, their lived experience, rather than gathering data on social background and attitudes. In order to do this he had to do more than just be immersed in the boxing world; he deliberately set out to study boxing from the inside out, through his own body, by learning to box.

By adopting elements of a radical empiricist approach, similar to Wacquant, wherever practical, I hoped to supplement other research methods and therefore gain a better understanding not only of what people *say* about their relationship with the environment but also of their lived *experience*, which encompasses the physical, cognitive, symbolic and emotional aspects of life, and contributes, in varying degrees, to a person's of 'sense of place'. My preferred method of research was to *do*, as far as

possible, whatever activity the group I wanted to study was doing. For example, studying mountaineers in Scotland involved *doing* mountaineering.[1]

However, my research involved much more than my doing the activities with my informants. The activities provided the basis from which to engage people in conversation, to observe behaviour and to do interviews. To explain how I put the insights of Ingold, Jackson and Wacquant into practice, the following section will explain how I went about doing my research.

In the Field

From the beginning, I participated in activities. Over the course of the year I beat grouse, went ice climbing, navigated around the Cairngorm Plateau in a blizzard at night, slept in a snow hole, burned heather, scared myself on white water, learned to build a rabbit fence, herded cows, spent hours waiting to see a sea eagle, sweated up hills on my mountain bike, took snow board lessons and suffered a head injury falling on a black run on a ski mountaineering course. In addition, I also did the usual sorts of things that have always provided anthropologists with valuable data collecting opportunities such as shopping, taking yoga lessons, going to the doctor, sitting in the Jacuzzi after a day on the hills and having my hair done.

The reliance on the 'body' will have biased the research in certain respects. If I had been unable to keep up with the beaters in what was a gruelling march up and down the heather moors, my data collection would have been severely hampered if not ended after the first day. My skill at mountaineering enabled me to gather large amounts of data compared to my data on mountain biking, a sport I found it quite difficult to get to grips with. Nevertheless, I found the method to have a number of advantages. I met a very wide range of people whom I wouldn't have met otherwise, heard views that were

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[1] A year after I completed my research, this was the method adopted by a research project organised by Tim Ingold on hill-walking in Scotland and carried about by Katrin Lund and Hayden Lorimer. The results of this research were published in 2003 as 'Performing Facts: Finding a Way over Scotland's Mountains'.

not normally heard as well as having many of Jackson's 'lived experiences'. These advantages are demonstrated in some of the following examples of my time in the field.

By taking an 'organic' approach to data collection, I was able to meet a wide range of people. I began with the activities that fitted my personal situation and the season, seeing what happened as a result, rather than deliberately seeking out particular people to talk to. The process began immediately upon arrival. As I did not have a place to live yet, I stayed on the campsite in Glenmore for the first three weeks. Because I was a visitor, my first conversations were with other visitors and with those locals whom I came into contact with in my role as a visitor. And, because the methodological basis for the research is engagement in activity and lived practice my contacts and conversations were mediated through activity. To some extent, because I was doing research, I had to consciously do activities that I might not otherwise have done. However, as a walker and a climber, and a frequent visitor to the Cairngorms in any case, I had a natural starting point. A description of 'Day One' in the 'field' will illustrate my general approach.

I arrived at the campsite in Glenmore and checked in. The woman behind the desk was another camper, standing in for the manager. We got talking and this initial conversation provided the basis for numerous future conversations. Sandra and her husband Tommy had been coming here for years, up from the Central Belt, and had much to say about both their own love of the area and political and social issues. After I had set up my tent, I returned to the office and met the campsite owner. He provided me with advice about where to walk, stressing that I shouldn't worry about any deer restrictions. He was adamant that in Scotland people had the right to go where they wanted and shouldn't pay any attention to the landowners who 'stole the land from the people in the first place'. People were already impressing their views upon me.

My next activity was walking. Like any other visitor, I thought the exceptionally good weather had to be taken advantage of. I set off, heading for the most well known feature, the Cairngorm Plateau. In the course of my walk, whilst descending through the beginnings of the funicular construction, I met people who told me their opinion of

the funicular debate and why they were against it. After the walk, I stopped in to the gift shop of the chairlift company at the base of the mountain to buy some postcards. Again, with little prompting, I was just a visitor who needed to be convinced, the sales person told me how wonderful it was going to be when the funicular was built. Both these conversations did not take place as a result of an interview but arose out of the activity we were engaged in and the place where that activity took place.

That evening I talked to some other visitors about what they'd done that day (giving me ideas for another walk) while we were doing the washing up. Back in my tent, I tuned to the local radio station and listened with pleasure to a programme that was hosted by someone I ended up meeting several months later.

My gradual transformation from visitor to resident also came about organically, the result of hunger, cold weather and worries about finance. I woke up to rain and the idea of a bowl of muesli did not appeal. So I decided to go out for breakfast. I got in the car and headed into Aviemore. I had just turned into the village when the sign '£1.99 breakfasts' caught my eye and I stopped. On the door of the place was an advertisement for waiter/waitresses at the weekend. I sat down in a booth and immediately liked the feel of it, very cosy and down-to-earth, with a varied clientele. So when I paid my bill, I took the step of asking about the job. I had had quite a lot of previous waitressing experience so I knew I could do it. Taking this job would help my financial situation as well as providing me with a possible 'in' to the local community. This decision proved crucial. The people I met through my work in the fish and chip and cheap breakfast restaurant led to an increasing network of local contacts who would have been very difficult to meet otherwise. They are not the ones who attend public meetings or write letters to the paper. These were the people I wanted to meet. Though working in a restaurant was not initially the kind of activity that I had in mind when I embarked on this research, it in fact turned out to be an important perspective from which to approach people's relationship with their environment.

I soon found, however, that I couldn't always be spontaneous in my data collection. When I wanted to get involved in deer stalking, something which I knew to be an important activity in the Scottish Highlands, I soon had to be more pro-active.

Just going walking on an estate where I knew deer stalking was taking place had proved to be unproductive. As a result, I decided to go directly to the sporting estates and see if I couldn't convince them to take me out stalking. After one negative response, I got directed to Frank Law, the sporting manager of Kinveachy Estate. He seemed very sympathetic to my request to go out stalking and would look into it for me. But meanwhile, would I like to go grousebeating? They badly needed beaters, the people who 'drive' the grouse towards the guns, as it was the height of the season. This was just what I wanted! I hadn't come across this before and I soon found myself lined up with the other beaters, walking across the heather moors along side the keepers and stalkers of the estate. I became a regular beater and my involvement in this capacity became the basis for months of a variety of activities with the employees of Kinveachy, giving me a wealth of data as well as some of the most memorable experiences of my fieldwork. My 'gaining access' to Kinveachy therefore involved a certain amount of planning, but by getting involved with the grouse beating and getting to know people through doing activities together, I was able to gain an insight into the 'senses of place' of the keepers, stalkers, beaters and guests that would have been impossible to get through interviews. And later when I did do some interviews with people, like David, the representative of the shooting holiday organisation, Holland and Holland, he was completely at ease with me because I had been with him when he had shot his first deer and had helped him and the stalker in the 'larder' as we cut the stag up into relevant consumable parts.

Grouse beating and Kinveachy became my focus for several months. I decided this because it was the 'season' and therefore the height of sporting estate activity. However, the grouse beating also led to another contact who ended up being another key source of my data. Everyone the estate knew I was a climber and walker as well as researcher. Therefore, it was not surprising that the head keeper, John, introduced me to Isobel during one of the shoots. She often came beating; she had been out with a keeper before and was a daughter of a local farmer. However, it turned out that she was also a member of a local walking group, the Strathspey Mountain Club. We got on well and she invited me to come away for a weekend with her walking group. This

walking group proved to be instrumental in both learning about a walker's sense of place and challenging the stereotype of the local as being uninterested in walking. Again, it was my method that proved pivotal. Because I was involved in a common activity with Isobel, she could get to know me to the point of feeling comfortable in inviting me, not so much as a researcher, but as a fellow walker who also went grouse beating. Because of this method, I was beginning to see that the picture of distinct groups in conflict was too simplistic. I met Isobel on the sporting estate, yet she was also a keen walker. One of the stalkers, I later came across in a ski patrol capacity. They were both locals, yet involved in activities that were supposed to be the preserve of outsiders or incomers.

The method helped me find out what people most value in the environment without directly asking them. I would be able to see for myself whether they stopped to admire the view, whether they got excited at the sight of an eagle or a deer or whether they were focused on the challenge of navigating. For example, when out with people 'doing their Munros' (climbing all the Scottish hills over 3000 feet), I found it very significant the way they decided not to go to the top because one member of the party was having difficulty. They were disappointed that they had not got to the top, but they were not overly concerned. This *action* reinforced what they told me in future conversations, that 'doing Munros' was a way of organising the hill walking and was more important as a process than a goal. Or, the anguish on the face of the stalker when he had to shoot an injured deer was worth more than hundreds of conversations about 'attitudes towards killing'.

The informal conversations that took place also provided me with views on wider issues. I would never ask people to state their view on an issue but would wait to see what issues people raised. The environment itself provided the prompts. For example, when out walking with the local walking club for the first time, a lengthy conversation took place about deer fences because we had to climb over one. Or, I found out a lot about the keepers' and stalkers' attitudes towards their clients and the general management of a sporting estate when we had a problem with one of the guests who had wanted to shoot a better quality of deer than he was entitled to. A key part of my

research findings is based on the contradiction between what people would say unsolicited in the course of their everyday lives and what they would say when asked officially or publicly what they thought.

The problem with this method is of course remembering what people have said. There is not a lot of opportunity for writing up one's diary in a snow hole! However, I found that I learned to listen in such a way that I could remember long enough to write conversations up later in the day. I would remember key words or phrases that stood out. The more I did it the better I got.

Some anthropologists have also stressed the importance of physical involvement in activities. Basso (1996), in his work on senses of place amongst the Apache found that his most revealing data was that which was gathered when he went on a horseback trip with one of his informants to a particular place. Brody (2001), in his studies of the Inuit, remarked on how he really started to understand something about the culture when he went on a long dogsled trip and nearly lost his life. Taking part in activities is important for the context it provides to speak to informants, but it also gives the researcher a chance to see the world through, not just in the metaphoric sense, the eyes as well as the body of the informants. I would have found it far more difficult to understand the attraction of deer stalking or the obsessive aspect of birding if I had not done the activities myself. And, not only was my mind learning, so was my body. I soon found my eyes scanning for birds or drawn to the heather patchworks on the grouse moors without making a conscious decision to direct my attention in that particular direction. 'Learning' became a key part of all the research I did. I realised I did not just do an activity but it had to be learned through a process of apprenticeship (see Lave and Wenger: 1991). And, as I 'learned' an activity, I could understand the process my informants had gone through, providing an insight into why they enjoyed what they did or why they saw and acted in the world the way they did. My understanding of the process by which people 'learn a place' was further extended through my own teaching. I made a point of introducing people to climbing. Watching them in the process of learning provided an interesting source of data about how people can learn to see a place from a different perspective. A sense of place is, therefore,

not just a question of mental constructs or even stories (as in Basso), but is also a physical 'being-in-the-world.'

This method also helped me when I came to do interviews. I chose people who became known to me from my informal conversations whilst doing activities. There were three main types of interview. Firstly, I would interview 'ordinary' people who had been recommended to me by others, people I knew it would be difficult to meet in the normal course of my day. For example, I interviewed the grandmother of the boy I worked with who in turn recommended a retired railway worker. Secondly, I interviewed better-known people whom my contacts spoke about frequently. For example, everyone mentioned David Hayes, the owner of the Landmark visitor centre, because of his break with the business community when he came out against the funicular. As I hadn't come across him in the course of my everyday activity, towards the end of my stay I made an appointment to interview him. He soon realised that I was already very well informed which freed him to go into much more depth on the issues making the interview very productive and wide-ranging. Thirdly, I interviewed some of my everyday contacts, such as Ailsa, whom I did not see often once she quit the waitressing job. I knew she would be a good source of information about conservation as well as about growing up in the area so I made an effort to seek her out and record her experiences in detail.

I also gathered data by attending public meetings. These increased in number during the initial phase of consultation for the national park. My first public meeting towards the beginning of my stay was limited in usefulness because I did not really know that many people. But later, such meetings proved to be an invaluable source of information, not so much for what was said during the meeting but the conversations I had afterwards. My involvement in activities again helped the process of data gathering. For example, I attended an Aviemore Community Council meeting which was more interesting for what it did not tell me than what it did. Afterwards, I was gathering up my things when a man arrived to clean the room. I started talking to him about fishing, as I had been out with the salmon fishers during the day. It turned out that he was a keen angler and this was the opening for a two hour discussion on a wide

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range of local community topics, a conversation much more informative than the meeting with the local community 'representatives'. Knowing people through activities also got me invited to meetings that I normally wouldn't have known about such as the first meeting of the conservation group formed to lobby for their views in the National Park consultation. At other meetings, I found that I had come across most of the people there, in a variety of capacities, such as on the ski slopes or at the climbing wall.

CONCLUSION

The focus on activity, rather than on particular groups of people, not only provided me with an exceptional amount of data, it also affected my findings. Though I found evidence for different approaches to the environment , recreation, conservation and livelihood senses of place , that correspond to the interest groups that have been identified by other research, there is a crucial difference; particular people did not necessarily fit neatly into any of these approaches. Because I encountered people on the basis of wanting to find out what 'senses of place' emerged out of a particular activity, I believe I saw a different side of people than if I had said I have come to research the 'conflict'. If I had said that, then people would have lived up to what they thought their public position should be. In addition, because I was focusing on sense of place and not conflict, I could discuss my work on the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) reserve with my friends on the sporting estate or my work on the farm with anti-farmer birding visitors. This enabled me to have more informative discussions as people replied to what I said were the arguments of others. I could honestly say that I did not have a definite side because I had got so involved in each activity that I really did see the value of everyone's perspective. (I still do not have a definitive view on the funicular, love bird watching, am sympathetic to the plight of farming and am willing to eat venison even though I am a vegetarian!) When I went out with the sporting estate people, I did not talk about the conflict with the RSPB over birds of

prey. In the end they did raise this issue, but it ended up being much more nuanced than I would have originally expected. When talking to local people, I did not raise the issue of the funicular, but waited to see what concerns they had in the course of their everyday life. By doing this I learned that what was going to happen to the Aviemore redevelopment plans was a more important issue to many local people than the funicular. Many did not even know much about the conflict. Therefore, I have evidence that the stereotypical battle between outside recreation and conservation versus local development is just that - a misleading stereotype that does not necessarily correspond with the complexities of a particular place and its people. It is this conclusion that I will now support through the presentation of my research findings, based on fieldwork undertaken from August 1999 to July 2000.

CHAPTER THREE

SENSE OF PLACE AND MOUNTAINEERING

Planning, Anticipating, Preparing, Walking, Climbing, Pacing, Munro-bagging, Navigating, Surviving, Looking for Affordances, Having an Epic, Learning Skills, Bonding, Sharing, Remembering

INTRODUCTION

Figure 5. Glenmore Campsite with Cairngorms view.

Your eyes are drawn upward to the skyline; it is the first thing a visitor notices coming over the pass from the south, the hills, the Cairngorms. It is not a particularly remarkable mountain range; no dramatic precipices, no pointed, snow-capped peaks. There is no 'viewpoint' to pull into, like in Glencoe, complete with bag-piper, from which the visitor can operationalise the 'tourist gaze' (Urry: 1990) and take the obligatory picture. You have to go further. At the very least you have to turn off the A 9 and then turn again, resisting the temptations of the shops of Aviemore, and head up Glenmore.

Now the Cairngorms reveal a more dramatic face. One of the best views is from the Glenmore Campsite. This is where I came on my first day. I drove to the very edge of the site and pitched my tent so that I could sit and have an uninterrupted view of the rocky buttresses and ridges of the Northern Corries. And today the view was particularly appealing, the hills outlined by a perfectly blue sky; the kind of view you are more likely to see in a tourist brochure than in reality.

The 'view' from Glenmore is what attracts many people to this campsite. Sandra and Tommy have been coming with their caravan for years, always pitching in the same spot. Sandra says she 'never gets enough of the view'. They are apologetic, however. As they have got older they do not go out walking in the hills like they used to. The view may be an attraction, but that is only the preamble to what many believe really counts, not just looking, but 'going into' the hills. As soon as you see them there is a 'stretching towards', a form of Merleau Ponty's ekstase (Merleau-Ponty: 1962: 70). It is not enough just to sit there looking, especially on a day like today. Once, I have settled into my new 'home', I set off, moving through the view that I had been looking at. The terms of my engagement have changed. I am no longer fixing my gaze on a landscape painting. I am moving through that painting. Not only has the scene become three dimensional, I am immersed in it. I have become part of the painting with my body/mind.

Within a few hours I have reached the top and the view has changed; I am now looking back down at the campsite. Somehow it is not the same as looking up. Walking through the landscape to get to this point has changed the quality of the visual experience. According to De Botton (2002: 220), Ruskin said that to appreciate beauty, you have to do more than just look at it. Ruskin painted it. Others move through it.

In this chapter I will show how the many people who come to the Cairngorms for the purpose of immersing themselves in the hill environment come to form their sense of place. This includes a range of hill experiences including summer and winter hill walking, rock climbing and ice climbing. What they all have in common is an intense engagement of the person, with the natural environment. This engagement is characterised by a dialectical interaction between the subjective, the individual's own perceptions, desires and feelings, and the objective, the physical affordances and

constraints of the environment. This does not mean that the sense of place is 'mapped on to' (Ingold: 1996: 140) the physical environment, but rather that it emerges out of the activity itself, binding together the person and the place. This chapter focuses on the detail of this interface between the person and the physical in order to illustrate the incredible complexity of the interweaving of the objective and subjective that a sense of place entails.

PREPARING, ANTICIPATING AND PREPARING

Something of value is on the roads and hills and thousands set off each Saturday to find it. Each one sees it differently. I have only described what I have found.' (Borthwick: 1983)

The question of why people go into the hills in the first place is the subject of extensive literature, often written by mountaineers themselves, analysing the many motivations and going well beyond Mallory's reply, 'Because it's there' (Bartlett: 1993, Noyce: 1954, MacFarlane: 2003, Alvarez: 1988, Simpson: 1988, 1993, 2003, Rose and Douglas: 1999, Wilson ed.: 1973). Wacquant, in his study of boxing is aware of the many complex socio-cultural factors that might push people towards a potentially dangerous and often uncomfortable activity. However, he argues that what is interesting is to understand the *experience itself* and how boxers live that experience. By understanding what is involved in the experience, we will be better placed to answer the question 'why'.

My informants' preparation began long before they went into the hills. Armed with aspirations born from past experiences of themselves or others, maps and guidebooks, hours are spent in planning a trip to the hills. The process of planning and preparing reveals much about what people think is important in their engagement with the hills. What aspect of the variety of hill experiences they select indicates what aspect of the place they value. This decision is determined partly by subjective

reactions to past experience and preferences and partly by physical factors such as weather and season.

John's Weekend

John, in his early forties, is a deputy head in a London college. Though he has been a hill walker for many years, it is only in the past ten that he has become involved in 'serious' mountaineering. Unfortunately, living in London means that he cannot indulge what he refers to as his 'craving' very often. He is typical of many London-based mountaineers who have to balance their other life commitments with their 'need' to get to the mountains. Not many are willing to go to the lengths that Mick Fowler, a tax inspector in London did , drive over night on Friday to the far north of Scotland every weekend in winter (Fowler: 1995). So when the opportunity arose for him to climb in Scotland one weekend in December, John booked his flight, despite the fact that he had a job interview on Monday morning. With only two days, John was intent on making the most of it. Friday evening was spent planning. He describes the process:

> I definitely want to do some winter climbing and it has to be good, something challenging. I have checked the forecast on the internet, including the avalanche and climbing conditions, and it looks good, fairly low risk of avalanche and reasonable snow conditions. I am a little bit worried about my fitness. I know I want to do something in the Northern Corries, it is near here, an easy walk-in, reliable conditions and some easier-graded routes. But we could do that on Sunday, when I don't have so much time. Tomorrow we could try another area.

The guidebooks were then consulted and the decision was made to go over to Torridon in the Northwest and do the traverse of Ben Alligin, which includes the difficult 'Horns of Alligin'. This ridge had several stars in the guidebook and would be challenging in snow conditions because of the 'Horns', but not too challenging, only a Grade I. This is the easiest route which is still classed as a 'climb' rather than a 'walk'. It would be a relatively 'safe' route as it wasn't a gully climb, so no avalanche danger. It

would also be a short enough day and even if we were going slower than the guidebook time, there were escape routes. And finally, it was in Torridon, a new area for John, not too far away and in a spectacular setting, contrast between sea and hills and made famous by Mick Fowler's legendary weekend trips from London. John's decision emerged from a combination of factors, ones that I observed in many other planning situations such as the role of guide books and classification systems, the desire for challenge with careful management of risk and the appeal of places with historical, cultural and aesthetic value. All of these involve a synthesis of the objective and subjective.

Munro Tables and Guide Books

Summer hill walking refers to walking any time of the year when there is no significant snow cover. This season stretches well beyond the summer months. Scotland's mountains have been categorised and given a name, according to height. Munros, named after the man who first drew up the table, is the name given to all hills over 3000 feet and these have formed a focus point for walkers. The appeal of the Munros is obvious. They give a goal to one's walking; you arrive at a top. As they are the highest mountains in Scotland they tend to be the most challenging and interesting. There are 273 of them scattered all across the Scottish Highlands so they are a way of exploring both well-known and more obscure parts of Scotland. I met no one in the course of my research whom I would call a 'Munro-bagger'. However, in pre-fieldwork experience I did come across several walkers who showed the distinct characteristics including not wanting to do a hill twice and a sense of urgency in getting 'through' the walk. My fieldwork informants, most of whom came from within the area, distinguished themselves from such attitudes. They liked the challenge and the sense of achievement, but also found it a way of organising their walking. They particularly liked the way it encouraged them to go places that normally they wouldn't go. Some of the Munros require enormous logistic organisation.

Munros are not just a cultural phenomenon (Lorimer: 2000). When walking through the hills, there are really only two options, following the ridges up to the top or following the valleys or glens around the bottoms of the hills. The latter is the preserve of the long distance walker. For the hill walker, it is the ridges that draw them upwards until they can go no further. Johnson (1987) argues that we shape our reality by 'the contours of our spatial and temporal orientation and the forms of our interactions with objects' (p. xix). We have a sense of 'up-down' because it is an imaginative structure that has emerged from our bodily experience. In the context of hill walking, this sense of 'up-down' structures our destination. However, the 3000 ft. cut off point is clearly an arbitrary, cultural imposition. There has been talk of changing to the metric system, but this has provoked outrage. 'Doing the Munros' would not be the same.

Anne has been 'doing her Munros' for several years, ever since she and her husband George moved up to the area after retiring from work in Edinburgh. She is an active member of the Strathspey Mountain Club. She loves this new life, 'I feel like I am where I belong'. The Munros are a way of 'organising and focusing' her newly discovered passion for the hills. She has a map on her kitchen wall and when she completes a hill, she colours in the triangle and fills in the date. She had done about half when I arrived and I joined her on a number of Munro trips.

Some Munros are more coveted than others. The very rounded hills of Drumochter Pass are 'boring'. On the other hand, the 'In Pin' (The Inaccessible Pinnacle), perched high on the Cuillin Ridge on the Isle of Skye, is one of the most anticipated objectives. It is a shark's fin of rock, standing out even amongst the scores of pinnacles on the ridge, easily recognised from a number of vantage points. To do this Munro requires climbing skills, a skill most Munroists do not have. Therefore Anne asked a friend Richard, a young Sheffield climber living temporarily on Skye, to 'take up' her and George. The planning began. Anne has a number of books that outline the routes of ascent to the base of the In Pin. Together with the map, she worked out the route to take. The Munro guidebooks have become a key aspect of any planning, a way of working out the most convenient way to the top (Lorimer: 2000). However, for

Anne, the guidebooks are only one part of the route planning process and she prefers to rely more on her own reading of the map and on advice from people who have done the hill before. The logistics became more complicated because Richard planned to do a climb further down the ridge before meeting them. She had to work out the timings, not an easy thing with the rocky terrain of the Cuillin. The days were long in May, but she still had to make sure that all could be accomplished before dark, a descent off the Cuillin in the dark is a dangerous proposition. The result was a successful ascent, with a hug for Richard and a bottle of whiskey. The ascent of the In Pin was a product, then, of the existence of the Munro Tables and the use of guidebooks, but its challenging and aesthetic aspects could be considered objective qualities of the hill itself (Brady: 2003).

Figure 6. Anne planning her trip.

Classification of Climbs: Aesthetics and Management of Risk

Planning for climbers also involves classification systems as presented in the guidebooks put together largely by the British and Scottish Mountaineering Councils. Early climbers did not have such aids and would instead choose their routes by examining the rock face, looking for gullies, grooves, chimneys and cracks that would afford them a way up. Today, these original routes have been codified into guidebooks, given names, grades (difficulty) and a star rating (quality). However, these are firmly based on the experiences of the first climbers. Some argue that you can ignore the guidebooks and others seek their own new routes on the 'blank' places, but most people use the guidebooks to choose routes because these routes do exist 'on the ground'. And it matters which route you choose, partly because climbers claim that some routes are actually better than others, but most importantly in order to match one's skill to the route. The grading of rock climbs is very complicated. There is one overall grade that refers to the difficulty of the climbing as well as the amount of protection available and the degree of exposure. In addition, each pitch of a climb is given a numerical technical grade, which refers only to the difficulty of the climbing.

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The Grading System (Summer)

Difficult

Very Difficult

Severe

Hard Severe (4a, 4b)

Very Severe (4c)

Hard Very Severe (5a)

E1 (5a-5b)

E2 (5b-5c)

Continuing to E8.

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Figure 7. Climbing Grades from easiest to most difficult.

The Grading System in winter goes from I to VIII. However, recently, guidebooks have begun to divide each grade into subdivisions, as for summer rock climbing.

Like Munroists, climbers will also have lists, tick lists, climbs they want to do. These will be influenced by the star system, assigning stars to routes that have gone down in history as being 'good' routes, often referred to as 'classics'. No stars means that the route is of limited interest, vegetated, loose rock or lack of a good 'line', whereas three stars indicates a 'classic'. There is also a history behind the 'classics', routes normally first done by climbers who have now become famous. The importance of tradition is illustrated by the recent 'chock stone debate' in the Peak District over whether two climbers should have removed a large rock from the chimney of a three-star route. Two climbers returned to replace the chock stone, arguing on the climbing websites that this was how the route had 'traditionally' been done.

The following entry from a Cairngorms guidebook is an example of what a climber would be confronting:

The Magic Crack 105m HVS (Hard Very Severe) ***

An excellent route with a unique finger crack. Start at a deep left-facing corner

by a huge beak of rock.

1. 35 m 4c Climb the corner and the broad brunt rib above to a platform and a large spike belay.

2. 25 m 5a Climb the rib a short way, then take the thin clean crack on the right. This leads into corners which run up to below the deep corner of The Genie (another route)

3. 45 m 5a Move up right and climb the superb finger crack. Cross an overlap and climb the cracked wall above to easier ground.

Figure 8. Description of route with technical grade for each pitch.

The 3 stars would immediately attract attention. The description of the climb makes it sound an interesting 'line', with the finger cracks, corners, ribs and walls. However, the HVS grading would deter many people as this is higher than the grade climbed by the average climber. If the climber did feel capable of doing such a climb, the next words to consider would be 'finger crack'. This is a particular style of climbing that not everyone is suited to. I asked Eddie, a very focused younger climber who visits Scotland regularly from Surrey, to explain how he went about selecting what climb to do.

'The stars drag your eyes to the route in the guidebook. You genuinely think it will be a better route. A better climb is one that has a line to follow, obvious features or the rock like cracks, corners or arêtes. The line is obvious on a good route, the rock leads you there. It is not broken but continuous. You don't want to find it suddenly disappearing where you have to start walking. Often a route is not liked because it is contrived. Or, a good route could have a lot of variety with many different types of climbing rolled into one, a crack, a traverse, an arête, with a variety of types of holds. It is also the situation you are in, the exposure or the view. When you don't get out climbing that much, maybe a dozen trips a year, you may not get back to a particular crag again so you want to do the classic climbs. I also choose a route based on personal climbing preference, like if you prefer slabs, cracks or corners. You also have to understand guidebook speak. I want a route that will give me a challenge but not too much of a challenge. So I choose a grade that I think I can do but then I read the description and watch out for words like 'strenuous' and 'sustained'. Though the grading can be a bit arbitrary. Sometimes a route gets a star and I don't know why or else the climb seems over or undergraded, but then that is so subjective, so it is a dialectic between you and the rock.'

The factors affecting the choice are incredibly complex. Eddie, who has a high level of both body and mental confidence, continually aims to 'push the grade'. Therefore, when he goes rock climbing he would prefer not to do anything below a 'Very Severe'. John, on the other hand, lacking Eddie's confidence and skill, will be happy to lead a 'Severe'. On the whole, people choose objectives that they think will match their skills but still provide a challenge. If it is too easy, then the climb will seem disappointing. Csikszentmihalyi (1998: 29) calls this combination, of the maximum risk that fits one skill, as essential for creating 'flow', the total involvement in what one is doing. He argues that it is this feeling of flow that leads to the 'optimal' experience. Happiness does not come whilst in flow but only afterwards, upon reflection. The climber knows that the objective must be chosen that will give some sense of risk, but

a controlled risk, one that he/she feels they are able to deal with. 'The evolution of self-reflective consciousness has allowed our race to 'toy' with feelings, to fake or manipulate feelings in ways that no other animal can' (1998: 17). The climber knows what emotions lie in wait on the climb and upon completion of the climb. The objective is chosen with this in mind.

Mountaineering Culture and History

Objectives are often determined by stories and memories. Sometimes these are personal stories and other times it is the collective memory as preserved in mountaineering literature and guidebooks. Stuart is training to be a full-time mountaineering instructor. He is immersed in a mountaineering environment, both terms of the physical experience itself and as part of a tradition. He never tires of talking about climbing whether it be of details of routes he has done, advice on what Gortex jacket is best, or stories of famous climbs. He continues to seek out new places as part of expanding his knowledge of the hills and gaining experience for his instructor's assessment. He was up in Scotland, from his home in the Peak District, in order to prepare for his winter Mountain Leader Assessment. He wanted to go to a new area to practice navigation somewhere that he wouldn't know very well. The south side of the Cairngorms is very remote, requiring many miles of walking up a land rover track before even getting to the base of the main hills, Beinn a Bhuird and Ben Avon. This seemed a suitable destination. But what clinched the decision was reading about a place called the 'Secret Howff'.

> The 'secret howff' of Beinn a Bhuird is a mystery that has miraculously been guarded for 30 years, the best kept secret in the history of Scottish mountaineering. The howff's location today is still tantalising those who know of its existence, but who have not been admitted to the word-of-mouth freemasonry which maintains its seclusion' (Brown and Mitchell: 1997: 126).

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When Stuart was 'admitted' to this exclusive club, the trip was on.

Implementation

Despite the close relationship between prior knowledge from past experience, stories, guidebooks and maps to the physical reality, the experience of this reality is distinct. According to Lorimer and Lund (2003: 132), the regulatory discourse of things like guidebooks is subjected to improvisation when actually manifested as embodied practice. As Hume says, the idea can never be as powerful as the sensation itself (1972). Nevertheless, the planning, the preparing and the anticipating have a crucial role to play, combining subjective factors such as humans' classification and organising dispositions and the use of history and stories as a means of marking off particular parts of the land in our imagination, with the objective affordances and limitations of the actual physical land and our own bodies.

MOVING THROUGH PLACE: THE BODY, THE GROUND, SPACE AND TIME

> Where does if all start? Muscles tense and leg a pillar, holding the body upright between earth and sky. The other a pendulum, swinging from behind. Heal touches down. The entire weight of the body rolls forward onto the balls of the foot. The big toe pushes off, and the delicately balanced weight of the body shifts again. The legs reverse position. It starts with a step and then another that add up like taps on a drum to a rhythm of walking (Solnit: 2001: 3).

According to Merleau Ponty (1962), our meanings originate in the body-subject. The body is the source of prereflective cogito. Without the body, 'we would be impossible' (Primozic: 2001: 17). However, it is not a static body, abstracted from the world. It is the movement of the body in the world that gives meaning. Our bodies are the centres of vectors of meaning. The body is the precondition of motility, the

capacity to train our projectors around us into the world. It is this 'intentional arc', which situates us in the world (1962: 135-136).

Moreover, it is the bodily activity within an environment that unifies the physical, the mental and the cultural into the seamless whole that we call a 'person'. (Ingold: 2000, 2001). Therefore, when discussing people's experience of walking it is impossible to distinguish between the physical effects, the cognitive efforts and the cultural influences. So the walk or climb begins with the person, who will be further transformed in the course of the new experience as a result of the interaction of the active person and the environment.

Movement over ground

Walking and climbing are very different types of movement. The first thing you notice as you start walking is the physical effort. The mental image gained from the map cannot tell you what it is like to be *in* the land. You set off on your planned route. You are heading 'towards' something. Sometimes you can see the objective.

As John approached Kinlochewe, the village at the foot of the Torridon hills, it began to get light. He caught sight of these distinctive hills and then, when, he saw Ben Alligin, he let out a gasp. It seemed so steep with a rocky skyline of peaks and pinnacles, and with the snow on top and the loch below, the scene was amazing. John kept saying, 'Oh, yes!' He had a good view of the Alligin 'Horns', which looked challenging, and the ridge itself looked enormous. But according to the guidebook, it should only take six hours. The view of the objective affected our pace. We walked with excitement, with anticipation and with some anxiety. What would it be like? The 'walk-in' is the time to focus the thoughts. The physical movement helps to alleviate the mental anxiety. With a less worrying objective, the beginning of the walk is more relaxing. The paths are better lower down and it is more obvious where you have to go so you don't have to concentrate too much. This is the time for chatting. The body is in

the background. It was during the first parts of walks that I did most of my 'interviewing'.

However, it is also in the first stages of the walk that one measures oneself against others in terms of fitness and walking speed. The group soon divides into people with different 'paces'. Paces are related to the level of physical fitness and to what seems to be each person's own personal rhythm. I thought I would have no trouble 'keeping up' with the sixty and seventy year-olds in my first Strathyspey Mountain Club outing. However, I was soon struggling to keep up. It can be a source of conflict in the group as there is such a difference in walking speeds. Stuart was incapable of walking slower than 6 kilometres an hour, even when going up hill. So as the gradient steepens, concentration is focused on the movement of one's body and how it is responding to the gradient. To a certain extent you can only move as fast as you physically can, but there are other factors affecting your pace. John set a fast pace on this walk-in because he knew daylight was limited. But John has also walked fast for competitive reasons. He and his friend Andy had an unspoken contest going on the 16-mile walkout from a backpacking trip in the southern Cairngorms. They both admitted that their pace gradually increased because of a silent competition between them. One would speed up and the other one would match him and then move a little ahead, causing the other one to move faster. The end result was a frantic pace. Andy said that when he got to the car park he had to keep walking around in circles because his legs wouldn't stop.

The environment itself begins to play a more obvious role in shaping the experience as the terrain becomes more challenging. As the terrain changes the body/mind needs to adapt. The gradient affects not only how fast one walks, but also affects how one walks. This can be seen in the way trainee mountain instructors are taught to measure distance. Counting one's paces may be abstractions, but these abstractions are generated through certain kinds of embodied and emplaced experience (Lorimer and Lund: 2003: 131). From looking at the abstraction of counting paces, it is possible to understand the underlying experience of movement. Stuart explained how it works.

Pacing is a way of measuring how far you have travelled. You first need to know how many double paces you take to go 100 metres on a normal flat surface such as a dirt track or good path. However, as soon as the terrain becomes more varied and steeper, with rocks and bumps, clumps of heather, bog and rocky steps, then the pacing has to be adjusted. This is not something that becomes picked up quickly. It only comes with experience and focus.

I found that you have to be incredibly aware of how your body is moving, in particular how big or small your step is. So when walking through a bog you may take a bigger than average pace but when moving up very steep and/or rocky ground then the steps become smaller. As you move, you count. Normally I take 70 double paces for 100 metres. But if I move up very steep ground I will take a step and count one, another step and count two and then call the next step two as well. The body/mind are totally involved in this process, 'reading the ground with your body' (Lorimer and Lund: 2003: 139) as well as allowing the ground to dictate how the body moves.

Climbing involves a different way of moving. Lewis (2000: 59) argues that climbing leads to an unmediated relationship with the physical environment. All human activity involves 'being-in-the world' (Ingold: 2000) but climbing is a distinct type of relationship with the world. Lewis says that it 'usurps the pre-eminence of cognitive expression' (2000: 71). I would argue that cognition doesn't disappear, but shifts. According to a sports psychologist I interviewed:

Climbers are particularly prone to a hemispheric shift because in other sports the consequences aren't so great, but in climbing they are so serious. The climber has to switch from left to right. When we have a complete shift to the right we are not aware of ourselves. There is a change in perception. Things slow down. We are not aware of time; there is less distinction between reality and fantasy, time and space (John Petts).

This supports Csikszentimihaly who characterises climbing as a 'flow experience'.

Flow refers to the holistic sensation present when we act with total involvement. We experience it as a unifying flowing from

one moment to the next in which we are in control of our actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment; between stimulus and response; or between past, present and future' (1974 in Mitchell 1983: 153).

The movement of climbing is obviously different from walking. However, there are some similarities. Walkers become more focused on the activity itself, with little room for other thoughts when the terrain becomes awkward and lack of concentration could lead to a slip or a fall. With climbing, the terrain is immediately awkward and lack of concentration in this case could lead to much more serious injury or even death. The climber therefore moves with more precision, carefully thinking where to place hands and feet. The movement itself might appear almost unconscious, the result of having made similar moves before and just 'knowing' what to do (Merleau-Ponty: 1962). The body 'is the fabric into which all objects are woven, and it is, at least in the relation to the perceived world, the general instrument of my 'comprehension' (1962: 235).

However, cognition hasn't disappeared, it has shifted. The climber does not make a move without studying the rock, looking for where he/she will place the hands and feet as well as thinking about how these holds will be used exactly by the appendages, what affordances the rock face provides. Stuart would sometimes take over 15 minutes to make a 'hard' move. He will not move upward until he knows what move he will make. Eddie commented after taking considerable time to make a move, 'you look and look and don't know how you are going to do it, and then you figure it out and you just do it. It is like finding the right combination to a lock.'

The climber may bring a certain skill, the result of past experience, and a particular mental attitude (e.g. confidence, positive feelings about the climb), but once he/she puts the first hand and foot on the rock face, the climber must move with the affordances of that rock. Though there may be different ways of 'doing a move', depending on the particular physical characteristics and skills of the climber, there are not infinite variations. That dependence on the environment creates a distinctive relationship that does appear 'to unite body and world' more intimately than many other activities (Lewis: 2000: 68).

Time and Space

The activities of hill walking and climbing invoke particular senses of time and space. Time, like pacing, can be crucial for survival. Therefore it is not simply an abstraction but is based on calculations of how much you can achieve before dark. Time is therefore measured on the basis of distance you have walked. This is not all that different from how we use time at work, where do I have to be by a certain time, what do I need to have accomplished. John decided to cut short his route by the early afternoon. He had taken much longer than anticipated and would not complete the route in the daylight left. He took advantage of the escape route that the terrain afforded, after having provided nothing but obstacles, such as extreme winds and difficult snow conditions, up until then.

Though the mountaineer is limited by the particular relationship between time and distance, time still takes on characteristics that are distinct from normal urban life. There is no looking at the watch when you want to have a break or eat. That decision is taken by the body as well as by the environment. Tops are places people stop to eat, a reward for the effort, though you might also stop at the base of a steep climb for a drink of water and an energy snack. You don't need to look at watch to know that it is getting dark and that you need to hurry. As with the counting of paces, time is an abstraction that is nevertheless directly related to the physical movement through the environment and the pace of the sun through the sky.

Many climbers have commented on the perception that time disappears whilst climbing, 'You get to the top of the climb and look at your watch and you can't believe you've been on the route for so long' and 'Time goes so quickly when you're climbing.' John commented on the difficulty of saying how long it took us. He couldn't remember what time we'd started so he had to guess. Was it two or was it four hours? 'It's difficult to keep track of the time because you are so focused on what you are doing.'

Unlike walking, time has no relationship to distance. The winter climbing routes in the Northern Corries on Cairn Gorm are only 450 feet in length, yet one climb took John several hours to get up. Time of ascent depends on so many factors such as how

long you may have to wait for others, your own skill at setting up stances and managing the rope and of course the difficulty of the climb compared to skill. Stuart once took two hours to lead just one part of a winter climb because he was at the limit of his ability.

Space also takes on particular qualities due to the nature of the activity. When starting the walk, it is common to take a photo, showing the peak that you are going to climb in the background. It always seems so far. It is said it is best not to keep looking at how far you have to go, but just to walk. And this is of course essential if the ground is awkward. There is no space left for looking up and ahead; you are just negotiating the ground beneath your feet. One of the most infuriating aspects of space, is the false summits, when you think you have arrived at the top, but then see that the real top is still further. The weather also affects the sense of space. A clear day will evoke feelings of infinite space, seeing forever, whilst a day with little visibility makes you feel claustrophobic. If you are walking at night, distances and sizes are totally distorted. Stuart got lost once whilst out practising 'night navigation'. He came upon a lake that he was convinced was the one he was camping by. But as he got closer he realised that it was a totally different size. 'Things can appear much larger and further than they actually are.' A whiteout can be equally disorientating. 'You can not even tell whether the ground is going up or down.' And then, when you get back to the start, you cannot believe where you have been. After returning from our winter walk to Ciste Dubh, Anne kept turning around and saying, 'I can't believe we were all the way up there.'

Climbing also gives you a particular sense of space. Being on vertical rock, high above the ground is not a common occurrence for human beings. The first experience of this 'void' can be overwhelming. You have put your body in a particular relation to the world that is not part of your previous bodily experience. Gradually, however, as with other activities, the body orientates itself in the world and situates itself and learns to feel at home. John describes the experience, 'You look up at the rock face or snow gully and it seems so steep. But when you are on it, what was once a blank rock face is transformed into something that you can be on, even feel comfortable on. You have

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entered another world, but one that, with the right skill, you can belong in.' Some people grow to love the sense of 'exposure', the word climbers use for parts of the climb that have particularly sharp drops, the feeling of space all around you. Others never quite get used to it, but admit that the 'exposed' parts of the climb are the most exhilarating. But often the sense of exposure does not enter the conscious part of the body until the move has been made. As Eddie says, 'I get so involved in the climb that I do not even notice the drop below.' People learn to cope with exposure.

The body-subject and its activities are the source of new meanings (Merleau-Ponty: 1962). As the novice climber has more experience with the vertical environment, what was once called 'fear of heights' is transformed into 'exposure'. Exposure can be dealt with, it can be fun and exhilarating. So a new meaning has now been consciously articulated. As Eddie put it, 'The climb is exposed, not the person is scared'. 'Multi-pitch' climbs can be particularly 'exposed' and therefore potentially terrifying because they involve going up several rope lengths in stages. (See Figure 5 on page 78). The person 'leading' proceeds up the rock face whilst the 'second' remains on what is often a very small ledge or 'stance', just big enough for the feet, and 'belays' (feeds out the rope through a safety device as the leader moves up the rock, ready to hold a fall) the leader. The leader may take some time to climb the 'pitch', which gives the second ample opportunity to become aware of the drop below. Eddie explains how his fear of heights got transformed:

> I went on my first multi-pitch, something where I had to hang around on miniscule ledges, waiting for the leader to do the next pitch. When I finally got to the top, I swore that I would never do it again. My Thai boxing matches would never frighten me again - they're nothing in comparison!

Now Eddie seems completely unfazed by the drops. However, he says he still prefers 'chimneys', where he is surrounded by rock on three sides.

Climbing has a distinctive way of dividing up space. The walker sees space in terms of many kilometres and several thousand feet or meters of ascent and descent, spread over the day. The climber's day moves through space in shorter chunks. There is first

the 'walk-in', which is ideally kept to a minimum because the longer you take to walk to the climb, the less time you have for the climb. After the climb, there is the walkout, which is also kept to a minimum, as depending on how the climb goes and the time of year, it might have to be done in the dark. The main space for the day's activity is the actual route on the rock or ice/snow. That route becomes the climber's space for the duration of the climb. The climber moves up the climb in distinct sections, called pitches. As with the pacing and measuring of distance, the length of pitches is an abstraction, a human inscription on the rock but they relate to the length of the rope your are using and the affordances of the rock for places to stop. Therefore there is a clear link between the abstraction and the physical reality. The lead climber moves up the rock or ice, placing protection (bits of metal that can be slotted into the rock) and clipping the rope such that if he/she should fall, the length of the fall will be limited by how far above the protection one is. The lead climber moves up until he/she reaches a suitable 'stance', defined as any place that affords places to attach oneself to the rock. At this point, the climber 'brings up' the 'second', who is tied on to the other end of the rope and who has been 'belaying' on the ground. Stances are indicated in guidebooks, but these are selected because they have real physical aspects that make them places where you can stop. Getting to stance is a relief for the leader as the danger of death is temporarily over. This is especially true if you are 'swapping leads' and it is now the turn of your partner to be at the 'sharp end of the rope'. So stances are special spaces, havens of relative security where you can let yourself go, as long as you have overcome your fear of heights as in the case of Eddie.
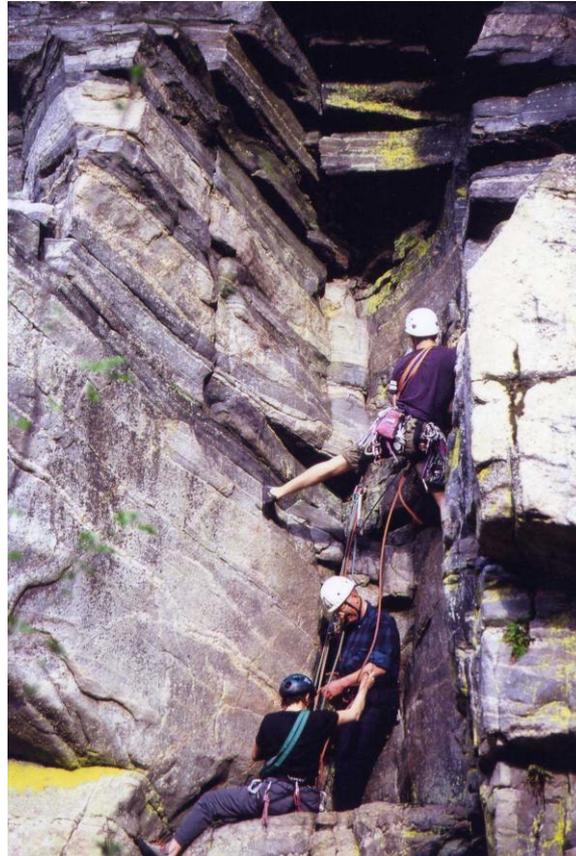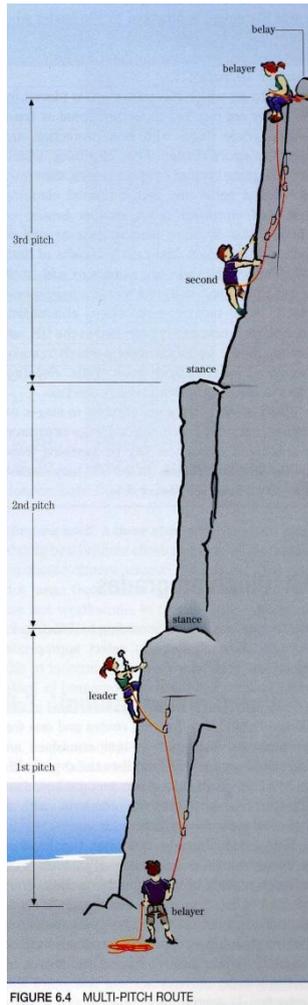
Figure 9. Diagram to illustrate multi-pitch climbing.

Figure 10. Eddie leading the second pitch of a multi-pitch route at Huntley's Cave near Grantown.

The pitch itself is also divided up according to affordances. The basic division is between places where you are able to rest relatively comfortably and those parts where you just have to keep moving because you would not have the strength to hang on if you had to stop. The hardest 'move' in a sequence of moves on a pitch is called the 'crux' and is therefore a significant space as it is at this point that you most risk falling. Another special space is the top, for different reasons. 'Topping out' marks the end of climbing space. You have now returned to where you feel totally safe.

A climb involves a set of movements through space and each move is classified in the climber's perception according to the degree of safety afforded. This will be

different for different climbers depending on skill and experience, as with the variations of response to exposure. Your mental state can play a large part in deciding what is a safe space and what is a dangerous space. Jim Perrin (1997), a well-known climbing writer once described how his perceptions of the rock changed whilst climbing under the influence of cocaine and when the effect of the cocaine wore off. However, there is a limit to how one's mental state can affect the perception of safety. It is still an interaction between subjectivity of the body/mind and the objectivity of the rock.

ATTENDING TO PLACE AND EVOLVING SKILLS: SURVIVING AND AESTHETIC APPRECIATION

Moving through place simultaneously involves 'attending to place'. Attention to place means that the person is engaged with the environment, using all the senses, skills and aesthetic appreciation in that engagement. The particular activity that one is doing will determine the nature of that engagement (Ingold: 2001). The walker and climber will 'attend' to their surroundings in different ways because they are moving subjectively through that environment. In addition, how one attends, will depend to a certain extent on features of the physical environment. Though people can perceive danger when it isn't there, with mountaineering, there are frequently 'right' and 'wrong' ways of attending or rather 'skilled' and 'unskilled' ways. If you get it wrong, there will be physical consequences such as getting lost, slipping or even death. It is the element of real, physical danger in the environment that is part of the attraction of the sport, especially with climbing (MacFarlane: 2003, Simpson: 1994, 1997).

Wacquant's study of boxing has many parallels with walking and especially climbing. The successful practice of the sport is dependent on both physical and mental skill (Waquant: 1995: 10-11). In addition it is a 'strategic and interactive contest' (p. 11). In the case of boxing, the contest is with another human being and with the walker/climber it is with the environment. For both boxing and mountaineering, the possibility of physical injury if one does not have sufficient 'embodied competence' provide the underlying conditions of the activity.

As with boxers, mountaineers deliberately engage in activities that they know will give them both a mental and physical challenge and necessarily involve some degree of suffering. The following quote from Jim Perrin illustrates how the mountaineer deliberately immerses him/herself in a hostile environment, where they have no choice but to be completely attentive to the environment with all their being:

> I used to go out looking for epics at one time. When the weather was bad, the snow coming down and a wind rattling the windows I'd thrust out of the door and set off into the Carneddau, seeking the whiteout, the wind-howled slopes streamed with snow. I would brace my shoulders and pump fists and head *pugilistic* (my emphasis) against the gusts until I was up there on the whale-roll of the great ridges with the snow-pall obliterating all stored sense of place (quoted in Ament: 1999: p. 57).

Seeing the Micro: Looking for Affordances

When setting off, the eyes are first drawn to where one is going, looking up and to the distance. As the terrain roughens, the eyes are focused downwards on where to place one's feet. The shape of the rocks is particularly noticeable, as you have to make sure that you place your foot on a flattish surface so that you do not twist your ankle. As the walker struggles up a steep slope, all that is seen is what the foot is on. There is no time to stop and study the rocks, but the different shapes, colours and textures are noticed because of the need to keep oneself moving successfully up the slope with no slips or loss of balance. The degree to which one can look around depends on one's fitness and general agility i.e. skill. Stuart says that he does not need to pay that much attention because as he moves easily over the rough terrain, mistakes are automatically rectified. He does not mind the odd fall. When coming down through frosty grass, he slipped several times in a few hundred yards. Others are more concerned to stay upright at all times and therefore have to keep their eyes more carefully focused on each step.

The climber has an extremely narrow focus, but as with walking, the range of the focus can change depending on what one can safely cope with. To move upward on the rock you need to find 'holds' on which to place your hands and feet. This involves scanning the rock, even before you set off. You look to see what the rock affords and then you make the moves accordingly. What to a non-climber appears to be a blank face of rock, has for the climber, a wealth of possibilities. Again, the ability to see depends on experience. A novice climber will often comment 'There's nothing here', whereas the more skilled climber can see affordances in the slightest protrusion. But of course this is linked to the skill to use the tiny bump or edge. This is why the novice will not see because they do not have the skill or confidence to use it. There is, thus, a close relationship between seeing and skill. Once one is encouraged to put the tip of one's rock boot on that small bump and the climber succeeds in moving, then he/she has developed their skill, which will lead to seeing more affordances in the future.

The particular characteristics of the body will also affect what one sees as a potential hold or series of holds. The rock face, far from being a blank face, is complex terrain. There is often an accepted general route up that face, as discussed above, but how you do that route can vary. Climbers talk about what kind of climbing they are best at and what kind of rock features they like. For example, Eddie, with his previous uneasiness about exposure, prefers chimneys and cracks to 'face' or slab climbing. He is therefore more likely to see the affordances provided by a crack. On one occasion he remarked on the fact that his climbing partner had taken ages to lead up one section, which he then seconded up easily. He asked what had taken so long and it transpired that his partner had not used the crack at all and had just moved up the face, which was a bit 'thin', meaning there was nothing obvious to use as a hold. When asked why she hadn't used the crack, she replied that she hadn't seen how it could be used. Eddie used such incidences to support a Freudian theory of climbing that he had heard about, men prefer cracks and chimneys and women enjoy face and slab climbing. This is an example of the way climbers can see their 'hobby' as a metaphor for other aspects of life, something that has been taken up in reverse in books devoted to improving climbing performance. For example, Ilgner (2003) describes his Rock Warrior's Way that

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'seeks to develop an adventurous, vigorous, deliberate approach to climbing. Initially it breaks down the habitual and self-limiting mental framework we bring into climbing and into life in general' (p. xxvii). By working on developing 'attention' in his/her 'normal life, the climber can then transfer this skill to climbing. And, by expanding this awareness in climbing, the climber will reap the benefits in everyday life.

The character of the walker/climber's visual perception is revealed in a more pronounced way when safety and security in the environment are the main focus of attention. In both cases, the visual perception and skill are intertwined and put to the test in action.

Surviving: Perception and Technical Skill

As I have discussed, skill is an essential component of both walking and climbing linked to visual perception. However, in the most extreme situations, the walker and climber will augment his/her skills through the use of tools. The walker will use map and compass and the climber will protect the climb by placing protection and using a rope. Ingold (2000: 294) calls this 'technical skill', rather than 'technology', because the tools used are under the control of the mountaineer.

For the walker or climber, survival of themselves, rather than a way of life does indeed depend on them combining their perception with the skilful use of their tools. The compass can be contrasted with GPS systems that no one I met would use. They were considered not to be that accurate and in extreme conditions you need pinpoint accuracy. But another factor was that it is a type of Ingold's technology, something that is external to the user and not within his/her own control. The same may be said of climbers. The challenge of the activity is that you are the one who places your own gear on the climb and manages the rope. It is your own skilful use of these tools that ensure your safety. There is no external system that you have to trust. Many British climbers mistrust the continental system of preplacing bolts on the climb. This 'insitu'

protection must be carefully examined before it is used and trainee instructors are taught how to check on the safety of this equipment.

The main danger faced by walkers is that of getting lost. In the hills of Scotland, especially in winter, losing your way can have life-threatening consequences. According to Steve, a Glenmore Lodge instructor, the Cairngorm Plateau has been the scene of many serious incidents caused by navigation errors. Much of their work at the Lodge involves training people to navigate in both winter and summer conditions. People use different ways of finding the way, depending on the conditions. If visibility is good, then you can usually see where you are going. Walkers will orientate themselves by following the paths and making their way in the direction of the objective. To a certain extent this will involve the use of the map. Ingold distinguishes between two types of moving from point to point.

> To use a map is to navigate by means of it: that is to plot a course from one location to another in *space*. Way-finding, by contrast, is a matter of moving from one *place* to another in a region (2000: 219).

Strangers to a place are navigators and inhabitants of a place are wayfinders. Way-finding is seen as 'a skilled performance in which the traveller, whose powers and perceptions have been fine-tuned through experience, 'feels his way' towards his goal, continually adjusts his movements in response to an ongoing perceptual monitoring of his surroundings' (2000: 220). Ingold stresses that the terrain is variegated and therefore the way-finder cannot just rely on instincts. The only way to 'hold a course in such an environment' is to 'be attentive at all times to what is going on around you' (2000: 223).

When examining the method of navigation used by mountaineers, it must be kept in mind that this is a continuum rather than a dichotomy. Though, as will be discussed in Chapter Five, stalkers and keepers on the sporting estates do not use maps at all and would fit the description of Ingold's way-finding local, mountaineers all use maps to a lesser or greater degree. The extent to which they use them will be affected by how often the person has been over a particular terrain, the weather conditions and his/her

skill. However, even in circumstances where the mountaineer is totally reliant on the map, their attention and response to the environment fits closely to Ingold's depiction of the local wayfinder.

The person who has been over a terrain many times and has excellent visibility will use the map the least. In this case, as a result of past experience, the visitor has become in some senses a local. One of the most regular objectives of mountaineers is to do winter climbs in the Northern Corries. On 'topping out', they need to find their way back down. In good visibility, they make their way down by looking for familiar landmarks. However, in poor visibility, both the newcomer and the most experienced mountaineer, will rely on map and compass to get them off the mountain. The later may have less need to carefully study the map because he/she is already familiar with what the ground along the route should look like. The newcomer will decide on the best route to follow and then look at the map in order to 'see' what features to expect along the chosen route. Will the ground go up or down and how steeply? Are there any 'catch' features to indicate that one has gone to far or strayed off route.

Even the most experienced local will get the map out and use the compass to check what they think is the right route in conditions of extremely poor visibility. Once located on the map, the compass provides both the direction of travel and a means of measuring distance. Anyone going into the hills is advised to learn how to use the map and compass to navigate. On training courses people learn how to take a bearing and then walk on a bearing. Skilled use of the map and compass are essential for survival in the hill environment. In the most extreme cases, they become the eyes through which you see; without them you would be blind.

John and Douglas had topped out on a winter climb to near whiteout conditions with a howling wind. Douglas, a local, and John, a visitor, both went through the same procedures. They sheltered themselves from the wind as much as possible and took their maps and compasses out of their rucksacks. They took a bearing for the direction of travel, ensuring that they 'aimed off' slightly in order to avoid walking straight over the drop. They also used the markings on the compass to measure the distance so that they could pace the distance as a way knowing what features to expect at a particular time. The route is divided into stages or 'legs' according to changes in direction. They study the route on the map. They set off, compass in hand pointing in the direction of travel. They pace the distance of the first leg. At the same time they are noticing what is happening to the slope. They expect it to first go down steeply and then descend more gradually. This is 'seen' on the map but also known by Douglas through experience. With this combination of pacing, compass bearing and noting of the features, they arrive at what they are confident is the beginning of the next leg, where they turn slightly to the left and now head up hill. They know if they have gone too far on the first bearing if they start going steeply up hill. But their pacing arrives at a flat area and they set the new bearing and repeat the procedure. When they arrive at a large boulder, a familiar landmark to those who know the Cairngorm Plateau, they know they have found the correct ridge. But again, even Douglas does not rely on past experience to get the correct direction. He checks where he thinks he should be going with the map and compass. They set off down the ridge and soon are beneath the cloud line and can now 'see' where they are going without the map. They now rely on their past experiences and landmarks. (See Figures 11 and 12 on page 86 for map of route and photo of route in good visibility.)

Figure 11. Walkers keep to the right of the step drop, aiming for peak and descent ridge on left.
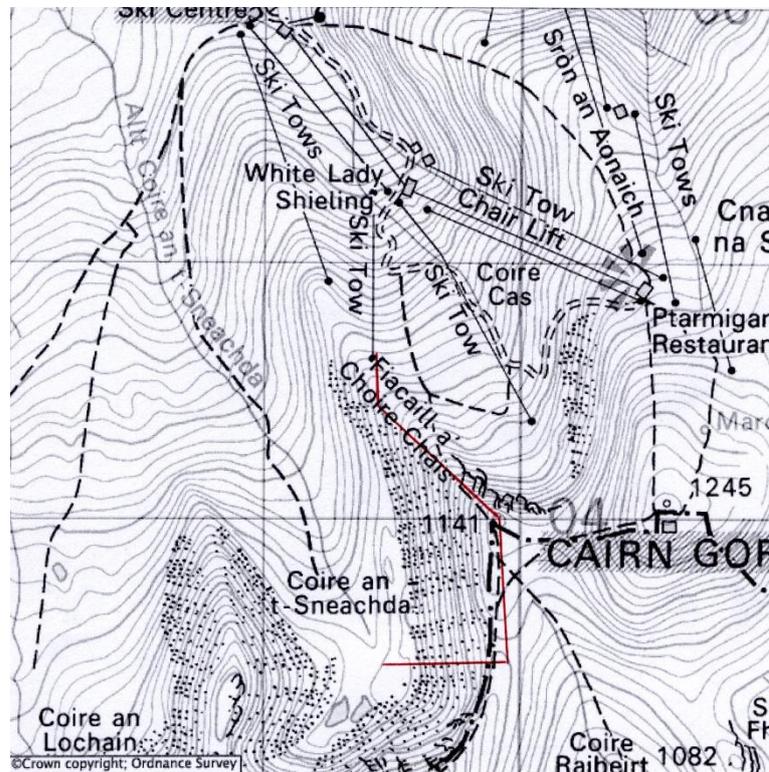
Figure 12. Red line traces climb, then route of descent

Gell distinguishes between maps that are subjective indexical and those that are objective, non-indexical. He criticises Bourdieu for arguing that locals are able to move from point to point on the basis of 'practical', indexical knowledge as opposed to 'Cartesian space' that is based on non-indexical knowledge (Gell: 1985: 271). He argues that anyone, whether a local or a visitor, will use non-indexical knowledge, whether that be in the mind, for the local, or on the map, for the outsider. In the above example we have seen that both local and outsider are relying on the map and the existence objective points that match up to the map. According to Gell:

> We are obliged at all times to locate our bodies in relation to external co-ordinates which are unaffected as we move about, and it is in relation to these co-ordinates that we entertain token-indexical beliefs as to our current location in space, and the location of other places relative to ourselves (p. 279).

Without going so far as to support Gell's assertion that we use external co-ordinates 'at all times', it is clear from the above example that the existence of external co-ordinates is a pragmatic truth. By using the map and compass to position themselves, John and Douglas were able to match up the map and the ground at all times. If they had not, they could have made a life-threatening mistake. This can be seen on the map (see Figure 12). If they had made a tiny error, they could have walked off the edge. In winter, when you cannot actually see the edge, this is a real danger. Therefore, in the case of navigation in extreme conditions, the mountaineer is relying on the existence of Cartesian space as well as using Ingold's way-finding techniques to move safely from one point to another.

'Seeing' in the case of mountain navigation involves a more general spatial awareness. You cannot see things in two dimensions as a landscape painting, but must learn through experience to perceive the land in three dimensions. With walking it is the shape of the land. Trainee mountain instructors learn about taking bearings and walking to the bearing, but as seen in the example of Douglas and John, the 'lay of the land' or the 'features' must fit with where you think you are on the map. As part of Andy's (John's mountaineering friend from London) practice for his Mountain Leader

Assessment, he would sit in one place with his map in hand. He would look at the tiniest features on the map and try and locate them 'on the ground'. Features include ring contours, re-entries and even a particular contour line on the slope. There is a continual movement from the two-dimensional map to the three-dimensional ground. It is the over reliance on the compass that causes some people to fail their assessment according to one trainer. Those who develop the skill of navigation to a fine art are those who can interchange the map for the ground instantaneously.

In rock climbing, spatial awareness is also pragmatically important. Part of moving safely up the rock face involves the 'placing' of protection. You must learn to see the affordances the rock provides for placing what are called nuts, hexes and camming devices in the features of the rock.
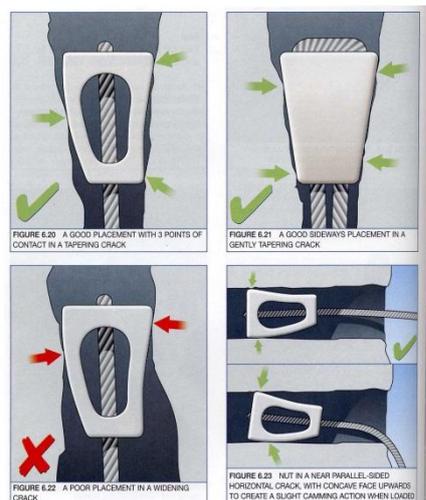
Figure 13. Correct and incorrect placements of nuts in cracks.

As with seeing holds, the novice also takes time to be able to see opportunities to place protection. When Douglas first simulated leading, placing protection as he went, he missed a number of opportunities. He just didn't notice them. I went up beside him and immediately saw what he didn't. This is another skill that evolves through experience. As you participate in the activity, your skill increases and you become more aware of what affordances are there. And this is no abstract exercise; your ability to find protection could mean the difference between life and death, just as the skill of navigation can mean survival when walking. The rope is used in conjunction with the

protection as a means of moving safely up the rock. A number of skills are involved including, tying on correctly, belaying, clipping in and setting up stances. Many climbers comment that this 'rope work' is as much part of climbing as the actual climbing. People attend courses more to learn about this rope work than they do to learn how to climb.

However, mental training is also important to climbing. The ability to climb a particular route safely involves having the right mental attitude and self-confidence. A route that should be 'well within one's grade' can become impossible if the confidence is not there. Confidence affects the movement of the body. You may hug the rock and not see crucial holds or you may be too tense, sapping your strength. One experienced climber gave advice to his son, 'Even if you are not confident, climb as if you are confident. You will soon be climbing well and this will then give you real confidence'. Eddie describes one of his experiences:

> I was climbing a route that I thought was a V Dif (Very Difficult). It should have been easy, but I wasn't finding it easy. Since I thought I should be able to do this, I carried on and completed the climb. Afterwards, I looked in the guidebook and realised I had been on the wrong route, an HVS (Hard Very Severe) rather than a V Dif! So thinking that I was on an easy route affected my attitude.

Appreciating the View: The Aesthetic Aspect of Perception

Once the objective of the walk has been obtained, the top of the Munro or the top of the climb, then seeing broadens out from a micro to a macro perspective and a different kind of seeing comes into play. Now that survival is no longer at the forefront, the mountaineer is free to see aesthetically. It is at this time that 'the view' becomes important. There is no doubt that the appreciation of the view from the top of a mountain is to a certain extent socially constructed. Much has been written about how appreciation of the mountain 'view' changed remarkably in the 19th century (Pepper: 1996, Solnit: 2001, Urry: 1990). Samuel Johnson's description of the Scottish Highlands is often quoted:

> Matter incapable of form or usefulness: dismissed by nature from her care, quickened only with the power of useless vegetation (in Smout: 1992: 23).

Mountains went from being ugly places of terror to places of sublime beauty. 'Sublimity' is a concept used particularly with reference to mountain landscapes where there is a quality of 'wildness'. According to Edmund Burke, sublime places evoke an impression of power greater than humans (De Botton: 2002).

> It is no coincidence that the western attraction to sublime landscapes developed at precisely the moment when traditional beliefs began to wane. It is as if these landscapes allowed travellers to experience transcendental feelings that they no longer felt in cities and the cultivated countryside. The landscapes offered an emotional connection to a greater power, even as they freed them of the need to subscribe to the less plausible claims of biblical texts and organised religions (De Botton: 2002: 171).

Others argue that there is something more universal about humans' attraction to mountain views. Work in environmental psychology suggests that people prefer natural landscapes to urban ones, producing more positive physiological effects (Cave: 1998).

Some of my experience suggests that an appreciation of a view comes out spontaneously and does not necessarily require cultural learning. Without fail, the arrival on the top will evoke non-linguistic exclamations from people. The way people just look up, see the view for the first time and gasp. Or the way walkers or climbers will take time at the top just to look. Chris Bonnington, on descending from Everest, 'I sat down every few paces, beyond thought, and just absorbed the mountains around me' (quoted in Ament: 1999: 108) and Stuart, despite focusing on climbing, 'You spend all the time focused on the rock and you turn around and see the view. It's great.'

Other evidence supports the argument that an appreciation of dramatic mountain landscapes is not just transmitted via culture (Brady: 2003). This comes from the experience of local people who have taken up walking. The stereotype is often that those who are engaged with the land in a practical sense will not appreciate the 'useless' beauty of the hills. However, Gordon, Douglas and Isobel, all from farming backgrounds,

recounted their emotional reactions to their first encounter with the uninhabited Scottish landscapes. The general feeling was of being 'overwhelmed by the views'. It was in fact the fact that they 'had such amazing views' that motivated them to take up hill walking. However, other data support the cultural construction approach. Alan, a member of the Strathspey Mountain Club, told me that the stark, bare, deforested landscape so appreciated for its beauty and wildness by John and Stuart appear to him as 'desolation'. He himself greatly enjoys hill walking, having completed all his Munros. However, because of his extensive knowledge of the environmental and social history of the area, he also perceives the damage that has been done to the landscape as a result of human activity and the emptying of the landscape by the Clearances. He is well aware that this landscape is not wilderness at all but the result of destruction.

The nature of people's appreciation of the landscape develops out of their engagement with a particular environment. There may or may not be an innate sense of beauty. However, views can become beautiful as a result of experiences. Appreciation of a mountain view on the part of the mountaineer must be examined in relation to the activity they are engaged in. People do not have a predisposition to appreciate the view; it develops out of the experiences they have of such views.

> We overlook certain places because nothing has ever prompted us to conceive of them as worthy of appreciation, or because some unfortunate but stray association has turned us against them' (De Botton 2002: 192).

So it is not that Isobel, Douglas and Gordon have something inside them that they brought to their first hill walk that made them respond in a certain way. Rather, the appreciation of the hill environment developed in the course of that activity.

The question to answer, then, is what is it in the activity of mountaineering that develops an aesthetic appreciation of the mountains and what is the specific nature of that appreciation. According to Yi-Fu Tuan (1974), the appreciation of scenery is fleeting unless one's eyes are kept on the view for other reasons. This is supported by Ruskin (De Botton: 2002). Part of appreciating beauty is to possess it. Many people try and possess mountain scenery by photographs. For those who are on the tour bus and

just look at the view from the lay-by, they look, probably have a fleeting appreciation and then try and prolong this by taking a photo. Ruskin finds this totally inadequate. The only way to possess beauty properly is to understand it. According to him, this is done through drawing or trying to describe in writing what one has seen. De Botton (2002) summarises Ruskin's opinion:

> True possession of a scene is a matter of making a conscious effort to notice elements and understand their construction. We can see beauty well enough just by opening our eyes, but how long this beauty survives in memory depends on how intentionally we have apprehended it (De Botton: 225).

Mountaineers may not draw or write about the mountains whilst they are on the top (though the mountain literature, poetry and art done by mountaineers is extensive). Instead, because they have moved through the landscape and have been forced to focus on a variety of details, they have developed a different kind of understanding that is not 'fleeting'. Maurice Bloch in his study of the Zafimaniry in Madagascar (1995: 65) found that people also liked to look at views. They would regularly stop at vantage points and comment on the view. They emphasise the clarity, list the hills and mountains in sight and the villages which are still there on top of them. They tested Bloch on his knowledge of these places. According to Bloch, this aesthetic appreciation of the view was bound up with other aspects of their lives, the fact that clarity is a central value of their society and that for so much of the time they cannot see because of the mist. In addition, what is important to the people is that they have made a mark on the land, so if they can see that there are villages on the mountaintops, then they have transcended their own impermanent nature and become part of the land.

There are many parallels with walkers and climbers. One of the main things to do with the view is to identify peaks. There is an element of showing off. If you can name the peaks, it is a sign that you know them well and are experienced. Rather than taking a photo, it is way to possess beauty by showing you understand, that you know. Robert, 80 years old and a member of the Strathspey Mountain Club, stopped regularly on our walk up the Hills of Cromdale, east of the road linking Strathspey to Deeside. These

are not particularly high, but they afford spectacular views over to the entire Cairngorm area. Robert had not seen them from this angle before. He first tried to identify all the peaks just by looking, but then had to get out the map. The others had left us behind, but he didn't want to continue until he had identified each one.

People also identify peaks because they have been there and have a memory and a story or because they may want to go to there and are visualising what the walk would be like. I stood with Douglas on top of Aonach Mor, a Munro near Fort William, and we could see as far as Skye in one direction and across all the mountains back towards Aviemore. He proceeded to recount in great detail, pointing to various peaks as he talked, an adventure he had had with Gordon, his main walking companion in the Strathspey Mountain Club, which involved walking an incredible distance over many of the peaks we could see in front of us. Then he turned to face the Isle of Skye in the west, and tried to identify the peaks where he would be going that May when he attempted the Cuillin Ridge traverse. These examples illustrate how looking at the 'view' within the context of the mountaineering sense of place can lead to a 'Ruskin-approved' appreciation and knowledge of the hills.

Figure 14. Eddie, Douglas and the anthropologist enjoy the view after the climb.

Attention, skill and the environment: the experience of snow

The above discussion has focused mainly on visual perception. However, when walking and climbing, all the senses are being used to some degree. Lewis (2000) stresses the important of touch in climbing. Climbers describe and rate rock according to its texture. Is it rough and grippy or smooth, polished and potentially lethal? Walkers will also use other senses to make many decisions. The feel of the wind, the amount of precipitation and the temperature are crucial when deciding what to wear or even whether to carry on with the walk. Clothes and equipment can make a huge difference and to some extent have transformed the walking experience (Michaels: 2000) but only go so far in protecting people from the 'elements'. Wind can transform a walk from a easy day out to a nightmare, battering both the body and mind.

In order to show how all the senses and cognitive faculties are used, together with skill in a particular environment, I use the following extract from my field notes, which describes the experience of a group under instruction from Glenmore Lodge for the Winter Mountain Leadership Award.

Figure 15. The anthropologist and fellow course member having a 'snow experience'.

The focus was very much on the immediate area around us. There were only a couple of times that we could see any 'views' and then there were not any comments. People were too focused on what they were doing. In fact it was the snow that dominated all of our senses, everything from its structure, to types of snow (windslab, melt-freeze and snow crystals, for the real initiates), how hard the snow was for making a snow bollard or ice axe belay, or how hard it was to dig our snowholes and whether it would drip or not. And of course, crucial was the avalanche risk, digging pits to see the snow profile and the likelihood of the layer coming off. The character of the snow made all the difference to every aspect of being in the hills in winter including whether or not to wear crampons, how hard it is to walk, the speed, the pacing. Then there was the snow in your eyes, the famous white out where everything looks up as the ground merges into the sky. As Shaun, one of the instructors said, when we were digging the snowhole, 'It puts you face to face with the snow, living in it and with it.' It protected us from the elements, provided a sleeping place, storage space, shelves for candles. It was amazing how it could be moulded to suit our human needs. Yet, if we don't understand it, adapt or retreat, it can also kill. Steve, another instructor, insisted upon going out for a night navigation exercise in blizzard conditions even though it wasn't strictly necessary. He said he just likes 'being out in it, immersed in the snow, completely dependent on map and compass'.

This extract brings together many of the points made so far in this chapter. Firstly, the mountaineer is completely embedded in the snow environment. By being and acting in this environment, the mountaineer is 'bringing forth' particular perceptions and skills. Your eyes have to 'see' snow in a particular way, for the affordances it offers for moving on or living in it as well as for the potential danger. You also use other senses. Because you cannot trust your sight, you use your map and compass as your eyes and then you navigate by 'feeling' the terrain beneath your feet. Because your visual sense cannot give you accurate information about distance or even slope, you

have to sense the slope of the ground as you walk. Your body tells you if you are going up because you find it harder going and your steps get closer together. Touch is also vital when assessing for avalanche danger. When you walk you feel the texture of the snow, is it hard so that you remain on top, or is there a layer of soft snow that you go though on to a harder surface, a potential avalanche situation on certain slope gradients. When you dig your avalanche pit you thrust your fist or ice axe point into the layers of snow that have been revealed. If your fist goes in easily to a layer on top of a layer where even your ice axe point went in, then you know that there is an avalanche risk on that slope. Aesthetic appreciation of the environment was completely related to the activities in snow. By having the opportunity to spend time in this white environment, people developed an appreciation of it aesthetically.

LOOKING BACK: MOUNTAINEERING IN THE PUB

Retrospective Enjoyment

> It is through my relation to 'things' that I know myself; inner perception follows afterwards (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 383).

Mountaineers devote a significant amount of time to thinking about the meaning of the experience, whether that be informally in the pub or in mountaineering writing. Because of the embodied nature of the activity, reflection and self-examination take place after the experience. All mountaineers agree that their activities provide them with enjoyment. What this enjoyment or happiness entails has a number of elements. One aspect is the sheer enjoyment of the experience.

> There are many ways of finding those moments of delight, which come from a sense of complete harmony with wild surroundings. Some of us seek them through the mastery of difficult terrain or stormy seas, by quickening our awareness in contrast with the elements (Shipton: 1970: 278).

Csikszentmihalyhi (1998) argues that the most intense happiness comes from being involved in flow activities, such as climbing. And in these cases we only become aware of this happiness after the experience (p. 31). Happiness is closely linked to a sense of achievement. You feel happy because you have achieved something difficult. Eddie coined the term 'retrospective enjoyment'. After his initial fright, and his vow never to do it again, he soon tried climbing again. He said it took him a while, but he reached the stage of 'retrospective enjoyment'. Now he spends a large part of his time planning his next climbing trips. He still measures the scariness of the climb by how long (and how many pints!) it takes him to say how great the experience was. The happiness derived from climbing and hill walking goes beyond enjoyment of the experience itself. Retrospective enjoyment arises also because of the sense of accomplishment that one feels having overcome the challenges. A veteran of the first successful expedition to Everest quotes Nietzsche to support his analysis of why people climb.

> We will be stronger than fear, greater than danger, we will master both of them because we know that every conquest is a step to perfection (quoted in Noyce: 1950: 134).

And Noyce (1950) himself says:

> There is discipline and concentration demanded by the effort to climb high, to see much. This discipline is all of a piece with the Nietzschean theory that suffering, itself bad, may be productive of good (p. 130).

The sense of accomplishment that one feels after overcoming a serious challenge features strongly amongst the mountaineers I encountered in the field.

Having an Epic

Mountaineers have a particular way of talking about those experiences that they find the most memorable, that give the most retrospective enjoyment; they are elevated to the category of 'epic'. Different climbers tried to define 'epic'. Eddie said that it was when you were 'subjectively terrified but objectively enjoying yourself',

meaning that when you look back this would seem a good experience. Another said it was when the challenge you had chosen 'came closer to the limit than you planned'.

On the descent from Ben Alligin, John talked about the hill experiences he remembers most. They tended to be ones that did not go according to plan and where difficulties were encountered. He remembers a time when driving from London in the minibus they didn't arrive until 3 am and then had a very long walk next day, getting to the campsite at 5:30, just as it was getting dark. They had been working on navigation so his mind was tired as well as his body. He remembers cooking a meal and then going to bed at 6:30 p.m. and not waking until 8 the next morning. He said it was the best night sleep he ever had. The next day he made a mistake finding the top of a hill, eventually found it but then had to make a steep descent where he fell and gashed his leg. He still has this scar, which reminds him of this 'brilliant weekend.' Sometimes John seems to deliberately instigate an epic. Friends recall the time John walked them all across Dartmoor, knowing full well that they would have to walk back in the dark. Or the time he encouraged his friends to descend via a difficult scramble rather than taking the path with only one hour of daylight left. He recalls one particular scene, which always reminds him of why he loves mountaineering. He remembers the 'buzz' in the Claichag Inn in Glencoe one February weekend. Climbing conditions were good and he described the scene as groups of climbers came in over the course of the evening, straight from their climb, still wearing their harnesses, with ice screws and ice axes dangling. The talk was excited and as John says, 'They'd had an epic'. John felt part of this scene as he and his climbing partner Barry had just returned themselves from a long, difficult ridge traverse.

Figure 16. John and fellow climbers recounting epics.

'Having an epic' can be analysed in terms of 'flow'. An epic has to combine challenge with skill. Too much challenge and it could end in disaster, but if one has survived an epic, then you feel as you have just the right skill to match the challenge. Stuart and Rosie, another trainee instructor, had such an epic that kept them talking for days. Stuart's first words on arrival back were, 'We had an epic!', which set the scene for the story to come. They had been busy practising navigation for their Winter Mountain Leader Assessment. They had decided to take a day off from that and do what they most enjoyed, climbing, as the conditions were so good. They went over the back of the Cairngorm Plateau and descended to Loch Avon to do a grade V climb, a challenge for both of them. It took them longer than expected and they 'topped out' on the Plateau just as it was getting dark. They still had to get themselves back across the plateau and find a safe way off, a navigational nightmare, as the Plateau is ringed with steep cliffs. To add to their problems, the wind had picked up considerably and had reached gale force. Stuart describes them crawling across the Plateau, periodically digging in their ice axes to hold them down. At the same time, they had to take compass bearings. In the end, they made it and Stuart was 'full of it'. Not only had he done a difficult winter climb, but he had put his navigation skills to a serious test and survived. During the experience itself, you are too focused to be happy (Csikszentmihalyi: 1998). In

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fact, you are in a great deal of discomfort if not terrified. It is only when you know you have survived, that you feel that you are happy, that you can relax and appreciate what you have achieved.

It is difficult to convey what an epic is to non-climbers. Many of the climbers I met expressed frustration that they couldn't share their adventures with their friends. Eddie says that he has given up trying to tell his friends about his climbing experiences. He said they 'just glaze over'. And even if they are willing to listen, they just don't understand why people find these activities at all enjoyable. According to Wacquant (1995: 10), such experiences cannot be 'captured and conveyed linguistically to outsiders'. The climber can really only tell the story of an epic to another climber. It is only by participating in the activity that you can appreciate its value for your life. Again, there are parallels with boxing.

> This is why, in spite of all the pain, the suffering and the ruthless exploitation it entails, of which fighters are painfully cognizant, boxing can infuse their lives with a sense of value, excitement and accomplishment (Waquant: 1995: 9).

Many climbers recount how the impact of a climbing trip will spill over to other aspects of their lives, giving them confidence and an identity. In some ways the experience could be compared to that of participating in a ritual or a performance. According to Schieffelin (1985, 1998), rituals achieve some kind of social and psychological transformation, which happens in the course of the performance, making present realities vivid enough to beguile, amuse or terrify' (1998: 194). This is because there is a juxtaposition of the 'ordinary and non-ordinary' (Hughes-Freedland: 1998: 2). And, you cannot dictate the meaning of the ritual by looking at content; it emerges out of the interaction between performer and audience. In climbing, the meaning would emerge out of the interaction with the environment. Though climbing may involve conformity to the rules of the 'ritual', it is an activity that is done 'in comparison to other, usually more quotidian activities (Bell: 1992: 74). According to Lewis:

> As an extreme experience, climbing becomes a kind of corporeal subversive politics, ripe with possibility for renewal

that feeds back into private and social life, inflecting it with new horizons for human embodied agency (2000: 65).

John blames his good climbing weekend in Scotland for his getting a job that turned out to be horrendous. When he flew back down to London and went more or less straight to the interview, he was still 'buzzing from the weekend' which he thinks made him appear very dynamic and capable at the job interview.

Phil Bartlett (1993), in a book devoted to exploring the reasons why people climb, argues that what makes climbing experiences so special is that they are contrasted with normal life.

> Given the pace and scale of recent changes and the contrasting slowness of genetic change within ourselves, modern life must be missing something. Mountaineering is one way to redress the balance. You feel caught in a system that controls your life and eats away at your self-respect; climb a rock face and feel gloriously renewed, confident that you can still 'do'. In all this mountaineering is an escape from a world that seems one-sided (1993: 97).

Many climbers talk about the importance of climbing in their lives. For Jamie, a City insurance executive and a new father, there is little opportunity to go climbing. But he says he can't give it up completely. He says his wife understands; she knows that it is the 'only thing in my life that gives me a sense of accomplishment'. Jason, a 16 year-old climber says, 'It gives me something to channel my energies into, something to focus on. I don't know what I'd do if I didn't have climbing.'

In addition to gaining a sense of personal identity and achievement, climbing and hill walking also link people with each other and the land itself. Again, we can make a comparison with ritual. Bloch (1989) describes physical rituals as a way of constructing an identity, a place in the social group. Gow (1995) argues that stories told about the land are expressions of kinship. We have already seen that for mountaineers when looking at a view, their memories are infused not only with the places they were, but with the people they shared the experiences with. Once you have experienced 'an epic' with someone, a bond has been formed. So any memory of place or experience, mingles with the memories of the people you shared that experience with. As a result of that

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bond, you will go on to have more experiences together, further strengthening the ties of climbing 'kinship'. This often extends to other climbers that you have never met to the point that people often refer to the 'climbing community'.

CONCLUSION

Returning to our car and driving back the way we came, heading south down the A9, we may take a moment to pull in to the viewpoint to look back. The view is the same, but somehow different, just as we are different. The place is the same, but your sense of it is so different. It is not just an abstract view, but a place to care about. A sense of place has been embedded in the body/mind, becoming part of who you are (Harrison: 2000) and establishing a bond (Hay: 2002: 157).

> When you give yourself to places, they give you yourself back,
> the more one comes to know them with the invisible crops of
> memories and associations that will be waiting for you when
> you come back. (Solnit: 2002: 13)

The activity of mountaineering is characterised by an intensity of experience, imprinted on the body/mind that is unlikely to be replicated in other parts of life. Though there is considerable variation in the sense of place of different mountaineers (I have gone some way to demonstrate this with the comparison between hill walkers and climbers), they have all developed an attachment to the kind of environment that has enabled them to have whatever particular kind of mountaineering experience they prefer. In other words, they want a place to have the features that are conducive to the pursuit of their passion. In the Cairngorms, this has implications for their stance on development of the area. Though there are many disagreements amongst mountaineers themselves over how accessible the hills should be, on the whole they would like the Cairngorms to retain its 'wild' character, where they can be challenged physically and mentally, develop skills, appreciate the beauty of the landscape and generally enjoy themselves. This sense of place is in many ways *relative*. It exists in *contrast* to the places they have come from. In other words, what they notice,

appreciate and love about the hill environment are the qualities that mark it off from the urban environment of their 'normal' lives. And even though they do not live permanently in the area, their often epic adventures have created a sense of belonging, at least to the 'high' ground of the Cairngorms. Therefore, they feel that they have a part to play in determining its future.

In this chapter I have shown how the sense of place of walkers and climbers emerges out of the activity, a synthesis of the subjective and the objective. In particular, I have focused on the physical attributes of the environment. However, the activity of mountaineering also had a social aspect, The next chapter will build on the points made in this chapter, about the importance of the interaction of the person with a physical environment, but will highlight the social aspect of the environment that is part of the bringing forth of a sense of place.

CHAPTER FOUR

SENSE OF PLACE AND CONSERVATION

Watching, looking, scanning, seeing, focusing, hearing, listening, listing, classifying, naming, noticing, enjoying, loving, caring, counting, capturing, consuming

INTRODUCTION

John and Ross work for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) at Insh Marshes. Pete is a birding guide for Speyside Wildlife. Andy, a client of Pete's, is an amateur, birding only in his spare time. They would proudly admit to being 'birders', a name that implies not just a hobby but a passion. They use the term 'birder' and 'birding', as opposed to 'birding watching' for a reason; the activity involves so many more ways of 'seeing' than just watching, as will be shown in this chapter. Birds are a central feature of any place they find themselves. John's house is full of bird books. He has a telescope set up in his window and would leap up to have a look at the slightest sign of anything. No matter where he is or what he is doing, often driving, his senses are open to birds. Andy admits that he is obsessive and that birding is addictive. He spends twenty hours a week on his 'patch' of ground near his home in Cheshire, observing and monitoring the bird life there. He has a lot of friends who are also birders and they socialise together. He also has a passion for books, all about birds. He thinks about birds all the time and his wife knows that given the choice he might prefer to go birding than spend time with her! This interest in birds of the feathered variety elicits many sexual innuendoes from non-birders, a source of some irritation for the serious birder (Cocker: 2001: 8).

In Britain, birds have a special status for many people, much more so than in other countries (Cocker: 2001: 14). This is reflected in the upwards of 1 million members of the RSPB and the take-up of birding holidays. However, this interest is not new. Whether it be birds or other flora and fauna, observing and 'collecting' (literally

or metaphorically) is a pastime that can be traced back to the 18th century. According to Thomas (1983), 'Equipped with a pocket guide to the Linnean classification and a portable press for drying plants, they roamed the fields and woods in search of new discoveries (p. 271)'. Natural history had become fashionable amongst the middle class and nowhere more so than in the British Isles, especially England (Thomas: 1983).

This chapter uses the activity of birding to explore how people come to develop a sense of place that is 'tuned in' to the wonders of the natural world. As with mountaineering, the activity involves an intense interaction of the body/mind with aspects of the physical world as well as taking place within a social environment. In this chapter, whilst still recognising the importance of the sensuous experience of place, I focus more on the social and cultural processes at work. I go on to discuss how the popularity of birding has contributed to the emergence of 'conservation' as feature of the wider economic and political context. With the increase in leisure time, standard of living and ironically the car, more and more people have the opportunity to spend time observing and learning about flora and fauna. The interest has been fuelled by the plethora of nature programmes on TV (Franklin: 1999: 46, 48). People's love of nature, augmented by their experiences (Milton: 2002), in particular of birds, has motivated them to form groups and organisations to protect what they perceive to be a most precious component of any place. 'Conservation' as an issue is firmly on the political agenda. And, conservation organisations, helped by the fact that they have become major landowners, are now key 'players' in local, national and international politics. As a result of the economic and political significance of conservation, many who start out as amateur birders find careers, either working directly for organisations on reserves, like John and Ross, or as birding guides like Pete. What begins as an activity of the individual within a social group has an impact far beyond that group.

BIRDING: THE ACTIVITY

Tuning In

John talks about being 'tuned into birds'. 'It's like a channel frequency you have never turned on, but once you do you can't turn it off!' But it's not something that can be explained, it is an awareness that is learned by doing, a form of 'non-linguistic knowledge' (Bloch: 1991: 186). There are a variety of stories of the first 'tuning in'. Many people are introduced to the activity through friends and family. Ross first learned to be aware of birds and other species as he grew up on Alvie, one of the local estates, where his father is the farm manager. Pete, from England, first started birding with his father when he was ten. He left it for 20 years and then came back to it as an escape from work. Birding exists on another 'time plane' from his daily routine. You need to be in a position to be still, to look and observe. This decision to change pace has to be consciously made. Ross's background meant that he already lived a lifestyle that involved working and being part of the natural environment. However, his father disapproved of his decision to become a trainee warden for the RSPB as he considered it to be a threat to the interests of the sporting estate.

Sometimes the change in life style is forced upon people and provides the opportunity for them to begin to notice birds. John had always climbed trees and played in the woods in his native Yorkshire. He had also shot birds when he was 14-15 and had an interest in falconry. But it was only when he was on long-term convalescence that he really got interested. Because he had nothing else to do, he just spent his time birding. As he did this he became aware of the amazing variety of birds. This is similar to the experience of Michael Fiennes described in his book Snow Geese (2003). His trip to follow the snow geese was the result of a fascination developed during a long convalescence. Several people I met had taken it up as a retirement activity, something that they now had the time to do that also did not require them to be in the peak of physical fitness.

My informants remarked on the social composition of birders. During a day out with a group of birders on an organised tour, there was only one woman in twelve, and she was part of a birding couple. This was my experience throughout my fieldwork and is supported by Cocker's comprehensive study of birders (2001). When I discussed this issue with people they offered a few ideas. John said that especially with the photography, it is like an extension of the hunting role that men had. Some said it was related to 'the male thing about collecting'. Birding is very much about collecting species. But in the 18th century, both men and women were mentioned as having an interest in natural history (Thomas: 1983), something which can be seen in the number of female nature writers (e.g. Anderson: 1991).

However, John said that in his experience birding cut across class boundaries; it is no longer the preserve of the middle class. The difference is that today, such hobbies are not the exclusive preserve of the middle class (Cocker: 2001: 45). I found no evidence to the contrary. Conservation managers tended to have some education but for some, like Tom Prescott, the warden at Insh Marshes, it had been in a different field, in his case engineering. Some, like Ross, had a traditional rural background. Others came from the urban areas. Amongst the amateur birdwatchers, there were a variety of occupations. For example, in the course of my birding on one day I met a builder, small business owner and a white collar worker in a tax office.

It is difficult to pin down exactly what social factors or characteristics have *pushed* people towards birding. The environment provides the affordances and then a complex combination of factors influence whether the affordance is taken up. My aim is rather to explore the sense of place that develops once the initial contact has been made, focusing on what there is in the activity of birding itself that *pulls* people in (Wacquant: 1995).

Eyes and 'Bins': Seeing, looking, watching, focusing, scanning

Figure 17. Ross using the telescope to 'focus in' on the hen harriers at Insh Marshes.

The activity of birding brings out the fact that there are endless ways of using the eyes, just as there are many ways of walking (Edensor: 2000, Ingold: 2001). The aim of the birder on the most general level is to 'see' the bird. This is not as straightforward as would first appear but involves different levels of skills. The first is that of seeing that a bird is there at all. When I went out to try and see the hen harriers roosting on Insh Marshes with Ross, John and some of the other volunteers, the others had all seen them and I couldn't see anything! They seemed to have the skill to notice the slightest difference in colour from the surroundings or the tiniest movement. This is a skill that requires you to *look.* Dick Balharry, now Chairman of the

conservation organisation, the John Muir Trust, and a resident of Newtonmore, has decades of experience working in conservation. He first learned his skills, though, as a trainee gamekeeper and then understalker on a sporting estate. He said that he learned how to see and hear the animals from the head stalker. If he couldn't see something that the stalker could see, he was told, 'You're not looking hard enough'.

'Looking' involves another activity which people call 'scanning'. In order to look you need to know where to look. As they already possess a certain amount of knowledge about the habits of particular birds, the birders have an idea of the kind of places the birds might be found. In the case of the hen harriers, they knew the birds would nest near the ground and could sometimes be found on fence posts. The aim of scanning is to find the type of area where the birds might be and then to further scan to see if a bird was there. Sometimes, when looking for anything, the birder would do a general scan just to see what he/she could pick up.

The most advanced skill of seeing is called recognising what Pete called the GISS of a bird. This is a term taken from the US airforce and refers and stands for the General Impression of Size and Shape. This could be something like recognising the wing. John told me how to group raptors into broad, long and short winged. But it is more than this. Some of the better birdwatchers could tell a bird by just getting a sense of the way it moved, so far away that the colour and wing size are undetectable.

Once a bird has been located, the birder will *focus* on the bird, either with the binoculars or the telescope. (See Figure 17 above). It is this technology that enables the birder to actually be a bird *watcher*. The birders would delight in observing the details of the bird, its colouring, its movements and actions. The relationship between watcher and bird is both practical and embodied, where the watcher is totally immersed in the bird's environment. However, as Michael (1991) points out, our experiences of nature are not totally pure. For example, in photography, the camera is placed between observer and object (Macnaghten and Urry: 1991: 116). Michael shows how even the most mundane technologies, walking boots, reshape the affordances of nature by expanding the range of possible actions available to the body. In many respects, binoculars have given birth to the activity of modern birding by considerably

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'expanding the range of possibilities'. According to Cocker (2001), 'They convert life into something else, something almost abstract, something purer, clearer, usually more beautiful and almost always something you'd never really seen that way before' (2001:33). Two Insh Marsh volunteers said they have had nightmares about going on a birding holiday and forgetting their 'bins'.

In addition, binoculars and telescopes create a 'hierarchy of seeing'. Though birders still get pleasure out of identifying a bird at a distance, the most intense satisfaction is obtained when one can get a close up of the bird, studying the details of its 'look' and its activities. When out with Pete and his group, there was a discussion as to whether or not identifying a bird from a distance actually 'counts' as having 'seen' a bird. Some people do not even consider that they have 'seen' the bird unless they have had a 'good' look at it. Others may still add the bird to their 'list' but note the 'inferior' circumstances in their notebook, with the idea of aiming to 'see' the bird again closer up.

The intervention of technology has been taken to extremes in the osprey centre on the RSPB Abernethy Reserve. There are TV cameras focused on the osprey nest so that you can see inside it on the TV screens. When the capercaillie are in lek, preparing for breeding, the only way you can watch is by seeing the birds on a TV link or waiting your turn to go into a specially designed building and see through the telescope. The aim is to protect the birds. Many birders would not count this technologically mediated viewing as 'authentic' and search out a 'real' sighting (Boyle: 2003).

Figure 18. Visitors watching osprey through video link.

The following example, from my field notes, illustrates the way birding involves a hierarchy of seeing.

Andrew had come up from London for the express purpose of seeing some of the birds typical to the area. We went to the osprey centre and he was very disappointed. He didn't feel that he had 'seen' the birds at all. The use of bins and telescope may be acceptable but this had gone 'too far'. Ross and John told me of another osprey nest that most people didn't know about and gave more 'satisfying, watching. I took Andrew there. He later said that that was one of the best birding moments of his trip, the thrill of seeing the osprey fly in over the loch towards the island where its nest was and then watch it as it fed its young.

Binoculars are an acceptable tool because they are an extension of oneself, similarly to the way many mountaineers will use a compass but not GPS. Though there is some variety in what might happen in the televised osprey nest, going out and finding your own nest, with the uncertainty of what will be going on and whether or not the bird will even be there, is 'superior' birding.

Listening and Hearing

The visual is not the only sense used. As birders become more skilled, it is the aural that becomes tuned in. The better birders can identify a bird by its call alone. 'Seeing' the bird is still the aim, but if you can hear a bird first, you at least know the bird is there and you can start looking. Roz, one of the volunteers at Insh Marshes, has a number of bird tapes at home and listens to them so that she can learn to recognise the calls. I found this an incredibly difficult skill to learn. I remember the satisfaction when I learned to recognise the call of a curlew. It took several outings with others before I was able to identify the call whilst on my own. As with seeing, you have to 'learn to hear'. In other words, this education of the senses needs to be guided.

In his article on 'The Climbing Body', Lewis (1991) argues that climbing is an activity that gives agency to the body and provides an unmediated relationship with the world, something that is impossible in our metropolitan bodies. Though he refers to movement and touch, a similar case could be made for the heightened awareness of the visual and the aural in birding. He quotes Merleau Ponty:

> My body is the seat or rather the very actuality of expression. (It) is the fabric into which all objects are woven, and it is, at least in relation to the perceived world, the general instrument of my 'comprehension' (1962: 235).

Like climbers, birders use the visual and aural aspects of their body to bring the world into themselves. As we have discussed, being a birder involves bird awareness, a tuning in; it is not something that can then be tuned out. This awareness has been woven into the body.

The sense of place of the birder is thus based on a way of being in place, with eyes and ears, and a way of learning place, the development of the skills that allow you to enhance your perception. The being in place and learning also involve the development of stillness. Whereas Lewis's climbing body is active in terms of body movement, the birders body might appear passive, but it is the stillness that allows for the activities of looking and listening so that one can see and hear. This is why the 'birding body' can

be contrasted with the metropolitan body in the same way as the climbing body can be. In everyday urban life, we are not still and if anything we try and tune out the world. We are bombarded with things such that we retreat into our own intellectual or psychic self (Lewis: 2000: 66-67). Birding involves the opposite; you open yourself up to the world, at least a certain part of it.

Classification and the Birding List

Despite the importance of the body and the senses to the activity of birding, like any other human activity, illustrates both the cognitive and cultural dispositions of human beings. Firstly, though there is an opening of awareness there is also a closing down. This is because to see and hear birds you have to not see and hear other things. I found in my own experience that I could not do serious birding at the same time as kayaking or walking and climbing. If I was looking for birds, I had to stop walking and often cease to notice the general scenery around me. So engaging in the activity of birding involves a selection of possible sense data.

The other cognitive aspect of birding is the universal tendency to organise and classify the data received by the senses, though there is no one system for doing this.

> All observation of the natural world involves the use of mental categories with which we, the observers, classify and order the otherwise incomprehensible mass of phenomena around us; and it is notorious that, once these categories have been learned, it is very difficult for us to see the world in any other way. The prevailing system of classification takes possession of us, shaping our perception and thereby our behaviour (Thomas: 1983: 52).

Classification within birding is based on the now traditional scientific method for classifying (Law and Lynch: 1990). Natural scientists developed methods of classification that were based on structure. Previously, animals and plants were classified according to their relationship with man e.g. edible, not edible or wild and tame or according to character. With the new system, species are classified according

to their own attributes (even if these have been selected by humans) (Franklin: 1999: 13, Thomas: 1983).

> Against this long-established tendency of men to see animals and plants as mere symbols of themselves, we should place the search for new and more objective principles of classification which dominated the scientific botany and zoology of the early modern period....What is notable about their work is that they tried increasingly to group plants, not alphabetically or according to their human uses, but by relation to their structural characteristics (Thomas: 1982: 65).

Birders use the 'birding list' to classify birds, which is only partially based on structure. The way they compile their lists arises out of the needs of their activity, to record the sightings of birds in various contexts. Chris, now based at Insh Marshes, worked for Scottish Natural Heritage, the official government conservation body, on the Shetlands for almost 10 years. He has several 'lists' including a life list, a garden list, a country list and he often makes a day list. He puts all the information in a notebook, something I was told I had to get by everyone, and then transfers the information on to the computer. In these lists, different species of birds are all grouped together in no particular order. The basis for classification here is place and time. All those whom I met also spent time keeping an eye on their 'patch'. They keep track of the birds over the year. On the first of January the RSPB encourages a bird counting day where people go out and see what they can see in their area. On Insh Marshes, there was a regular monthly counting day, one of which I participated in. We toured the reserve making some rough estimates on the numbers of different birds that we saw at fixed counting points. To some extent, the existence of lists is a way of organising perception; people will be more likely to see particular birds that one is searching for to add to a list (Law and Lynch: 1990: 269-270). However, the lists themselves are a product of the experiences of the birder; they are 'embedded in practice'. There are an infinite variety of potential lists that could be created, as new situations arise; birders therefore will improvise, making up their own rules (Bowker and Leigh Star: 1999: 53-54).

Figure 19. Birding List given to clients by Speyside Wildlife.

The specific birding system of classification can also be seen in a discussion between John and Bo, one of the Insh Marsh volunteers during a birding outing. They had a debate about what kind of bird book is best, one general one or one that is organised by area. One view is that a general book means you might be open to see the unexpected, but an area book helps you know what to look for and also makes it easier to identify birds. The organisation of field guides, like the lists, may have a role in structuring the activity (Law and Lynch: 1990: 269), but this example shows how birders use them according to their own needs.

Another innovation to the scientific system of classification is the introduction of new classifications such as the LBJ or Little Brown Jobbie. This class of bird refers to all those birds that are so difficult to identify because they are so similar, especially without the aid of binoculars. A classification system is created by birders themselves, out of a practical need. The lists contribute to the 'hierarchy of seeing'. Depending on

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what list one is working on, the sighting of certain birds will be given more priority. When people are working on their life list, it is the rare and the unusual that is noted. Whereas if the focus is their own 'patch', they will notice and count the more common species. The same bird could either be noticed or not noticed depending on the context. Ailsa, a local from Kinguissie who recently graduated from University of Aberdeen with a zoology degree, remarked on this when we saw a coot on a pond. She said that maybe in London, where coots are a common sight in the parks, you wouldn't notice one, but here in Scotland they are unusual. However, if the local London birder is doing a list for their patch, then the coot will be noticed and counted. The following extract from my field notes during the Insh Marshes Christmas outing illustrates how a particular bird will be 'seen' amongst hundreds of others.

The birding was a combination of a quick glance and a tick and spending longer watching birds like the whooper swans. The goal seemed to be to see something unusual. We spent some time in one field where Chris searched and searched for a pink-footed goose amongst the greylags. I couldn't tell the difference. He didn't seem to notice the cold at all and kept going further into the field to get a better look at the pink-footed one that he had finally spotted whilst the rest of us were freezing and wanted to go to the pub.

Though, not discounting other types of lists, the life list underlies all the other lists. It is within the structure of the life list that seeing a rare bird takes on specific significance. Strathspey attracts many birders because of the chance of seeing species that are particular to the area such as capercaillie, crossbills, dotterel, ptarmigan, snow bunting and osprey. Andrew, who would describe himself as 'mildly obsessive' about birding made sure that he came to see me in Scotland. He had already been on a birding

holiday around the west coast of Scotland the year before and seen a number of rare species but not the dotterel which nests on top of Carn Ban Mor above Glen Feshie. His pilgrimage to find this bird involved a 5-mile walk up to 900 meters. Andrew does not do a lot of hill walking normally but he forged ahead, despite the strong head wind that we had to struggle against on our way up. From my field notes:

We climbed over the last steep rise and I started getting my mind in gear for dotterel hunting; this is where they were supposed to be. Then I looked up and right in front of me, about 10 feet away, was a dotterel! It seemed oblivious to us, maybe because we were downwind. Andrew was over the moon. Catching the first glimpse is an important moment, it's unexpected the initial surprise and delight. He rated this even higher than the osprey moment because this was the bird he had come to see.

Figure 20. Andrew scanning on top of Carn Ban Mor after seeing the dotterel.

This birding experience ranks very highly in the hierarchy of seeing for a number of reasons. Andrew saw a rare bird, not in the sense of being endangered but because it can only be found in a few sites. The sighting also involved effort; he made a considerable investment in time and energy in order to see the bird. In addition, he not only 'saw' the bird. The bird was immediately in front of him so he did not even need his binoculars. And, he found the bird himself; it was his own discovery. Andrew said that it is these moments that 'stand out', ones that 'remind you of why you go birding'.

Naming and Identifying

Making a list requires *naming* the bird. It isn't enough for people to just see the bird, they have to identify it and say what it is. The process of naming can tell us much about how humans relate to the species in question. Hearne (1982) refers to the process of naming as 'Adam's task'. Naming has two aspects; it can demonstrate interest and respect, as illustrated by the work of the early naturalists (Morris: 1996: 33), or it can show one's power to command and possess. 'Naming to possess' has been an integral part of the history of science. Though science inquiry has been a vehicle for opening up people to the world around them, it has also been motivated by the desire to control, dominate and rationalise (Merchant: 1980, Plumwood: 2002). Francis Bacon, one of the leading proponents of the 'subjugation of nature' perspective, says about naming, 'the first acts which man performed in Paradise consisted of the two summary parts of knowledge; the view of the creatures and the imposition of names' (quoted in Hollander: 1995: 42). By classifying and ordering, naming and identifying, scientists have brought the natural world into the human orbit, ready to be used and exploited for human ends. This has culminated today with companies searching out different life forms to patent, a particularly extreme form of 'naming to possess' (Shiva: 2001).

The aspects of naming can be distinguished in the birding world in the contrast between birder and 'twitcher'. Tom and John at Insh Marshes were concerned that I realised the difference between a 'birder' and a 'twitcher', though they were quick to

stress that all birders could be twitchers at times. Therefore, it is important to see this as particular practices rather than types of people. They define twitcher as someone who is only interested in 'ticks' and ignores birds that they have already seen. People will go to great lengths to get a tick. Tom and John didn't like it when people said 'just a crow' or 'just a robin'. Just as many of the Victorian collectors sought out the rare and exotic, so do the twitchers. Once they have seen them they can add them to their 'list' and claim ownership; they do not name and let go. Birding takes on the modern day form of collecting - shopping. Thomas (1983) recognises this tendency in the new natural history fashion that there was an element of wanting to possess or consume, a natural history version of keeping up with the Joneses.

> Much of this activity was distinctly acquisitive in character. Ladies vied with each other to emulate the great collections of shells, plants and insects amassed by aristocrats like the Duchess of Beaufort and the Duchess of Portland (p. 283).

Similar to those who tick off places they have been, what Urry calls 'collecting gazes' (1995: 138), or continually add a new consumer item to their house, twitchers tick off birds. They may not physically collect the bird but they do so symbolically and this can be just as powerful.

Photography also enables possession. Ross has recently taken up photography as an activity related to his birding. It was no longer enough to see a bird, he also wants to get a good photograph of one. This requires him to get much closer to the bird, which is an added challenge to the whole activity. This desire is reminiscent of deer stalking (discussed in Chapter Five). Instead of a deer antler 'trophy', the successful 'bird stalker' displays a photograph over the mantelpiece. The expression 'capturing something on film' is relevant here. Interestingly, John had shot birds before he started watching them. His view was that watching rather than shooting was a sign of evolution; people had moved beyond their hunting ancestors. However, photography is compatible with non-twitcher practices, as it is in the case of Ross. Though he liked having the photos, the act of taking the photos required greater effort and afforded a better sighting, thus contributing to a fuller appreciation of the bird.

Most of the birders I met, do not exhibit the 'possessing' characteristics of a twitcher that are potentially contained within the activity. Tom and John get excited about many birds, even if they have seen them many times before. While working on the reserve, John would stop to look at the whooper swans even though they were around us all the time. John looks at his 'patch' every day and talks about getting to know the birds as individuals. Therefore, identifying a bird by naming it can mean something much different than wanting to possess; it can show that by making the effort to identify and name the bird, the birder is showing respect and appreciation. Michael Fiennes (2002) realises this as part of his quest to follow the snow geese.

> Learning the names is a method of noticing. The ducks were transformed (fleshed out, coloured in) when I matched them to names: bufflehead, wigeon, gadwell' (2002: 95).

By giving a bird a species name, you are opening yourself up to the world, as Fiennes' example shows. You are actually noticing features of a particular bird species and it is not *just* a bird. According to Cocker (2001: 12-14), birding is particularly suited to Britain. The 200-225 species that breed in this country are just enough species to give variety. There aren't enough mammals and trying to identify the 20,000 species of insect in Britain would be too much of a challenge. Naming birds is therefore possible and meaningful for anyone. Naming a bird in the sense of noticing, requires much more than an observation of the structure of the bird. We have seen that the birder uses the senses in a sophisticated manner. Sight may give the birder some of the structural characteristics but perceiving GISS seems to go beyond basic structure, to a sense of the whole bird in movement. Also, the key part played by birdcalls defies classification. The role of observation in natural history is based solely on the visual.

Another key difference between birding and twitching practices is that once the bird is named, the birder goes on to *watch* the bird. This is done out of sheer enjoyment, unrelated to the bird list. This appreciation of birds was recognised early on. Thomas (1983) quotes G. M. Trevelyan:

> To preserve the bird life of the country is required in the spiritual interests of the human race, more particularly of the

English section of it, who find such joy in seeing and hearing
birds (quoted p. 302).

In the case of Andrew's viewing of the osprey and the dotterel, it was not just a case
of 'tick and go'. He spent at least a half an hour observing the birds. With the osprey,
he enjoyed watching how the osprey fed its young. Because he had such a close view of
the dotterel, he could notice the details of the bird itself such as the colouring and the
way it moved on the ground. I witnessed many more examples of the joy of observing
birds on my day out with Pete and his group, discussed in the next section.

BIRDING AS AN APPRENTICESHIP

Using the senses and the cognitive faculties to name and identify are often
partially developed in isolation. However, there is an important social aspect involved in
becoming a birder. We have already seen how a society infused with consumerism and
the desire to dominate and possess can affect the way that birding is practised.
Another key aspect in the 'making of a birder' is apprenticeship. The first experiences
of birding may be unstructured (Cocker: 2001: 15), but once tuned in, the activity
becomes increasingly complex and requires the acquisition of many competencies.
Birding is similar to those activities discussed by Lave and Wenger (1991) that are
learned through apprenticeship (Bloch: 1991). Learning is a 'situated activity' in which
learners participate in a 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger: 1991: 98). My
experience in the field was indeed an apprenticeship. I had been vaguely interested in
birds, but unless they were very obvious or remarkable in some way, I did not 'see'
birds.

Once I started volunteering at Insh Marshes and going out with John and the
trainee warden Ross, it is as if a new world had opened up to me, one that I soon
realised had much more to it then I would ever have imagined, living a life of limited
'frequencies'. Birders are very proud of the skills that they learn. In order to
illustrate the process of undertaking a birding apprenticeship, as well as to show how
the sensual, the cognitive and the social aspects work together, I will use the day I
spent with Pete and his birding group from Speyside Wildlife. I will present my findings

from this day in order to illustrate how all the aspects of birding come together to construct a particular birding sense of place. As mentioned above, this process is guided, an education of the senses.

Speyside
In Spring

Amazing accommodation in a glorious setting, the best leaders, great for beginners and expert alike – the complete Speyside holiday including an unforgettable west coast seabird day.
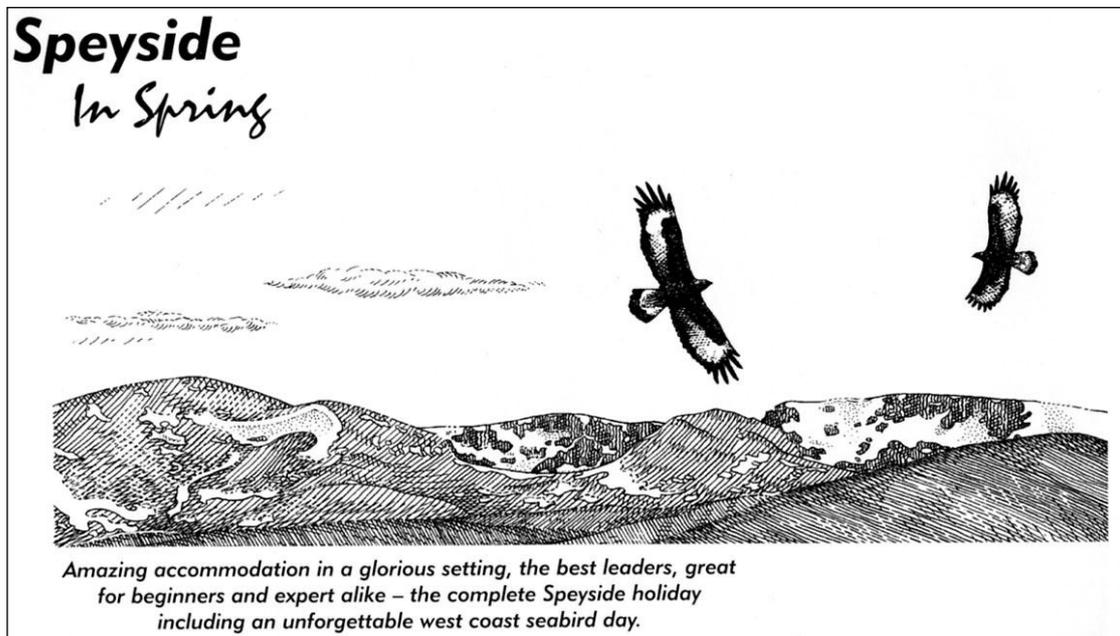
Figure 21. Brochure entry describing the birding week. I accompanied the group on the 'west coast seabird day'.

People went out of the house with their 'bins' already around their neck. We had only driven a short distance up the road when the guide stopped because he thought it might be a good place to see a crested tit, one that is local to this area and therefore of interest to the clients. Our search began with a 'scan' of the area with the bins. This is a particular way of looking that means moving our binocular-assisted vision slowly and systematically over an area. It took about fifteen minutes of scanning before someone first heard and then spotted a crested tit. You could just make it out at the top of the tree. Alan and Beth discussed whether such a view counted. Most people felt that it could count as a tick but they wanted to see it again with a better view. This stop provided the occasion to discuss binoculars. One of them lent me his to compare with mine. They showed things up so closely and clearly. Through this incident I began to

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integrate a number of lessons. I was beginning to learn patience. I was developing a desire to be able to recognise birdcalls. And, I was starting to think that I 'needed' to have a better pair of binoculars.

We got back in the minibuses and the guides organised an inter-bus bird quiz. The group was keen to show off their knowledge and got very involved. The questions were very detailed, including questions like naming birds with 'square white rumps' that can only be answered by those who have a high level of knowledge. I had no idea that there was so much to learn. I was very frustrated not being able to answer any questions so the answers helped increase my own knowledge as well as make me want to learn more.

Our first major stop was in a lay-by with of view of what the guides knew to be an eagle's eerie. We did the usual scanning and then focusing in when a nest was spotted. Unfortunately no one was 'at home'. The stop did provide the opportunity for what I was told was a typical birder encounter. A man and woman, with their young daughter, pulled up by us. He tried to get information out of Pete but wouldn't come right out and say that he was interested. Pete says that there are certain phrases that are used such as 'what have you got?' 'What's about?' Pete resented telling this guy anything because of his casual manner, pretending that he already knew what was there. Pete said that you had to be careful because of the danger of egg collectors. In any case, when we pulled out, the man followed us and managed to pull up in the next lay-by that we did. I had not realised the need for secrecy before and this encounter would structure my future encounters with other birders.

When we got to the lay-by by the coast and Gruinard Island we proceeded to start searching for our prime target of the day, a sea eagle. The clients may not have been classic twitchers, but Pete was very concerned that his group would be able to tick off this one. They had had three bad days due to horrible weather, which made things miserable for both them and the birds. This day was glorious and Pete was hoping it would be a good one for birding. We got started with our scanning. We must have been there for at least an hour. People didn't look the whole time for sea eagles but used the telescope to get a really close up view of some other species that were reasonably fixed points. The telescope, even more than the bins, provides incredible detail. So the

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procedure is to scan, find something and then where possible to focus in with the telescope that we would all share. It requires incredible patience. People were on constant alert. But even the keenest ones got bored after a while and we decided to move on. Someone said as much for the view as anything else. The general 'view' was not in the forefront of everyone's mind. I had pointed out a fantastic view of the mountain An-Tellach and no one seemed that interested, but they still commented on how birding gave them chances to see nice views. Again, this was a real lesson in patience. In addition, I got to know about the telescope and the advantages it afforded.

The next spot provided a good choice, but not for sea eagles. We had managed to give our shadow the slip by this time. Here we spotted a pair of surf scoters. This provoked great interest because they are an American species that you don't expect to find. Such species that do not regularly breed in Britain, are particularly sought after. Andy told me how he makes a special effort to go to the Isles of Scilly every year. Birders come from all over Britain to see the many species of migratory birds that may only be in Britain for one day. Therefore, the group was concerned to let others around Britain know of this sighting. Andy sent the information about the scoter to Birdline. People who subscribe to this service get messages on their pagers, which tell them of the latest unusual sightings around the country. This can prompt people to set off immediately in hopes of adding the bird to their list, even if it requires travelling long distances. This is obviously important information for an apprentice birder like myself. It also initiated me into the 'hierarchy of seeing'. This sighting ranked highly because we saw something that was unexpected in this context as well as being able to observe the birds close up for a considerable length of time. Though we didn't see any sea eagles people still enjoyed the good views of mergansers and divers. People were very good about explaining things and helping me to spot and identify birds.

The next stop was a farm near the bay. We spent quite a lot of time just looking at some very ordinary birds, such as wheatears, pipits etc., in just one garden of a house. So despite coming to look for a few key birds, some of them got very involved in just watching birds they had seen many times before. My apprenticeship continued as people pointed out how the plumage of some species had changed from winter to

summer. I also I got an excellent view of a wheatear. Watching this bird's actions made me realise how people could learn to appreciate the most common of birds.

We still had the goal of seeing the sea eagle and Pete was keeping an eye out. He had the telescope trained on Gruinard Island because he expected them to come from that direction. We had been in this spot for some time, looking at the various species of divers, when, suddenly, all the gulls who had been sitting on the water just took off. Immediately people's minds turned to 'what' had disturbed them. Gary looked up and saw it, it came towards us quite slowly so we could fully appreciate it. It flew right over us and then disappeared over a rise behind us. People were very pleased. The sea eagle could now be ticked. I could now understand the satisfaction of seeing a 'rare' bird. It was especially rewarding because we had spent so much time searching for it. A desire to seek out other 'firsts' was growing inside of me. I had enjoyed watching the other birds, but this stood out, the contrast with the usual.

In the minibus on the way home we talked about what it meant to be a birder. The people came from a variety of backgrounds and had different stories about how they got their start. However, what they most talked about was what they liked about the activity itself. Pleasure in the birds themselves was not explicitly mentioned but that this played a part was obvious from their enthusiastic and appreciative comments throughout the day. Some mentioned the feeling of accomplishment as they added to their list. However, as with the Munroists, there is more to it than the 'tick'. Beth said that it was good to have a hobby. It gave a focus for visits, a way of deciding where to go and what to do. She and her husband have visited over fifty countries as a result of their interest in searching out rare birds. She says that she gets satisfaction out of seeing the rare bird, but it is the way it gets her to explore new places in a different way that is more important. Andy likes the skill aspect of birding. He gets intense satisfaction out of becoming a better birder, learning to recognise birds quicker, learning to recognise calls. He said he had enormous respect for Pete, the group leader who he said had developed his skills to a very high level. On the day out it was obvious that people looked for the chance to display their skill. These two comments highlight the importance of the social aspect of birding. Exploring new places and developing

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skills are done with other people, in a 'community of practice'. This is further illustrated by the way Pete ended the birding day. After dinner, the group gathered together in the sitting room to go back over their day, summarising what they had seen and discussing what the highlights were for the each of them. This moment of sharing is very important, according to Pete. They all felt that this day was the best they'd had so far and asked me what I thought about it. I could only say that I too had really enjoyed it and wanted to go birding again. Maybe I was even becoming a birder.

A Birding Sense of Place

I have shown how birders use their senses and their cognitive factilities in a social context to bring forth a world. They learn, perhaps initially on their own, but primarily through apprenticeship in a 'community of practice', how to be in a place in a particular way that is known as birding. Though it means opening oneself to the world, it also leads to the closing down of perception, and, in some cases, becomes just another form of domination and consumption. This is because by noticing birds, other features of the world go unnoticed. The pivotal role binoculars play illustrates this point. The birder focuses in so closely on the bird, that nothing else has room to fit in the lens.

The birding sense of place has many similarities with mountaineering. They both take up the affordances of the natural environment and use their skill to develop their relationship with that environment. Both have an aesthetic appreciation of a particular part of non-human nature and experience immense enjoyment from their interaction whether it be with a rock face, a 'view' or a bird. They also make a contrast between the activity of birding and everyday life. However, birding is something that can still be done in the urban environment, with a garden 'bird list'. Nevertheless, the visits to places like the Cairngorms are particularly valued, partially because they offer the opportunity to see different kinds of birds, but also because they do appreciate the general surroundings. Andrew's purpose for climbing to the top of Carn Ban Mor was to see the dotterel, but he also spent considerable time contemplating the extensive views

over the Cairngorms and down to Loch Einich. Similarly, mountaineers also value their experiences of bird spotting. John often takes his binoculars with him on a non-climbing day and is able to recognise a range of birds. Therefore, both senses of place can be considered to be forms of a general 'environmentalist' sense of place. The consequence of their passions is a desire to 'preserve' that environment so that they can continue to enjoy their hobbies.

However, the birding sense of place can also form the basis for a more generalised approach to other species. Whereas mountaineers stress the importance of having places where they can 'recreate' themselves, many birders have a tendency to see birds and other species, as having intrinsic value and worthy of 'conserving'. In other words, it is important that birds exist, even if they are not there to see them. Though mountaineers are often involved in campaigns to promote their interests, such as the 'freedom to roam', it is a concern for the preservation of other species, normally referred to as 'conservation' in the UK, that has been a more important stimulus for birders, as well as mountaineers with a concern for wildlife, to participate in the growing ranks of an environmental movement. This next section examines the process by which birding and other wildlife interests have evolved into a general conservation sense of place whose presence is felt in the Cairngorms region as in the rest of the world.

BIRDING, THE LOVE OF NATURE AND 'CONSERVATION'

Birding has created an intense passion and an appreciation of the natural world that is manifested in the way 'conservation' organisations and businesses have increased in membership and in political and economic influence. 'Conservation' is a particular way of relating to the environment and is one strand of the broad environment movement. It has a long history and the current organisations are part of this tradition (Pepper: 1996: 170, Morris: 1996). Morris (1996: 33) argues that some of the first conservationists were naturalists. Darwin had showed that humans were also

part of these life-processes and in fact had emerged out of them. Humans were just one species, linked by a web of life. A number of scientists were thus becoming critical of the traditional anthropocentric world-view of nature as something to be exploited and dominated. Instead, it was something to be studied and understood as well as loved and respected. Naturalists did not develop their views in a vacuum but as a result of both new ideas in science (Darwin) and their own experiences and by observing what was going on around them. And it was the work of these naturalists, both professional and amateurs, who contributed to the first 'conservation' legislation.

> It was from those who studied birds for recreation or curiosity that the pressure for conservation would arise; and it was the naturalists who pushed through a series of Acts, which from 1869 onwards, gave an increasing degree of statutory protection to wild birds. This was the culmination of several hundred years of mounting interest in the natural world (Thomas: 1983: 280-81).

I now examine the various organisational forms that have emerged in Badenoch and Strathspey as a result of people's knowledge and love of nature (Milton: 2002).

I came across organised conservation in several forms, from small informal groups to large organisations such as the RSPB, with international influence. In this section I explore the way in which the individual's experience of birding both influences and is influenced by this social environment. In other words, I show how one moves from the existence of people who go birding, to a public 'conservation' approach to land use. Within this wider context, many tensions are revealed that are not so apparent during the moment when the birder is engaged in the activity itself. Though birders, and others interested in protecting various species of flora and fauna, agree on the intrinsic value of non-human species, there is disagreement about how to go about the protection of those species as well as about which species are priorities. As argued above, learning to perceive and appreciate something like a bird, also involves a closing down of perceptions such that other aspects of the environment are not seen. This forms the basis for potential conflict with other approaches to land use that are examined later in the thesis.

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RSPB member

Everyone I met through birding was a member of the RSPB. Andrew, a London-based birder is an example. He doesn't normally join organisations but joined the RSPB because of his passion for birds. By joining, he feels he is doing something to protect birds. He is typical of many members because he has little understanding of land management. He is a vegan and doesn't want any animals killed. He was horrified by my stories of the building of rabbit traps and the employment of farmers to shoot rabbits at Insh Marshes. Birds, especially rare ones, must be the focus of all conservation efforts on the RSPB reserves. The following extract from my field notes illustrates his attitudes:

Andrew and I had left the Osprey Centre and were driving out of Boat of Garten. We passed a large pond where we had observed a nesting grebe earlier. There was a helicopter hovering over it, with a large container being lowered to scoop up water. Someone was on the ground, helping manoeuvre the container. Andrew insisted upon stopping because the nesting grebe was being disturbed. We climbed over the fence and approached the man on the ground. Andrew told him that his actions were disturbing the bird and that they should stop whatever they were doing. The man was more than a little annoyed and said that there was a fire in Abernethy forest and this was the nearest water source. Andrew was taken aback a bit but still asked whether the man couldn't find another water source. When we got back he asked me to phone the RSPB and tell them. I phoned Tom at Insh Marshes but he was more sympathetic to the fact that there was a fire. He told me to tell Andrew that he didn't think the bird would be too disturbed by the commotion. Andrew still wasn't convinced (but I wasn't willing to pursue the matter any further).

Members such as Andrew's overarching concern for birds is reflected in the policies of the management of RSPB reserves. According to Smout (1992: 13), the focus

on a particular species that is protected in human-free zones, is a legacy of an English approach to conservation. Whether there is such an approach may be open to question, but the RSPB is very much an English organisation in terms of membership. Though it has many properties in Scotland, only 70,000 of its over one million members are in Scotland, with few of these in the Highlands itself. The vast majority of wardens and volunteers are of English origin, the only exception from my observations being Ross at Insh Marshes. The RSPB aims to protect birds through strategically buying up key properties that are significant for certain species that they have targeted for protection. In my fieldwork area, the RSPB manages two reserves. One is the very high profile Abernethy reserve, site of the reintroduction of the Osprey and covering hundreds of acres from native pine forests, the home of capercaillie and blackcock, to the tops of the hills near Cairngorm. The other is the much smaller Insh Marshes, which is very important for its flood plain habitat, attracting a number of species including the whooper swan.

Tom, the warden at Insh Marshes, has become increasingly dissatisfied with the exclusive focus on birds. When I first met him he was very excited about a visit from some specialists who were coming to examine the aspen trees on the reserve because they are one of the few places where a particular species of fly can breed. One of the jobs the volunteers undertook was building a rabbit fence to protect these trees. Tom sees himself as a deviant within the RSPB, saying 'the members do not pay for him to be spending his time protecting insects.' He later left the RSPB to work for a Butterfly conservation organisation.

Tom feels that the RSPB reserve at Abernethy focused 'too much on a few high profile' bird species. Their publicity material supports this claim. In the 1999 Abernethy Newsletter, despite acknowledging the importance of other species on the reserve, the only ones given detailed reports are the osprey, black grouse and capercaillie. The Osprey Centre, a 'national promotion site' (Management Rationale, Aims and Policies) has become a major tourist attraction, and the introduction of 'video viewing' of the capercaillie has been very successful. The nearest village to the reserve, Boat of Garten, calls itself the 'Osprey Village'. Whether or not it is true that

the reserve mangers neglect other species, the *outward impression* is that they are prioritising only a few. There is of course debate about whether they spend 'too much' time on these species. As stated in 'RSPB in Scotland', 'resources are limited, making it essential that we prioritise our work.'

Local Conservation Groups

Tom's broadening of perception has led him to form a local naturalist group. He is concerned to make links between different specialists working in conservation of other species apart from birds, as well as including the many interested amateurs. He is well aware that most of these people are English 'incomers' (recently moved to the area), but he thinks that by forming a group, with fieldtrips, he can include a wider variety of people. He also wants to extend his own interest in birds to other species and by bringing together lichen, moss, plant, mushroom and butterfly and moth specialists he hoped for some 'cross-pollination'. Instead of just birders or botanists or lichenologists, he hopes to create a broader 'front' of people who all share a conviction of the importance of enhancing biodiversity. The first outing was an example of opening of perceptions.

From my field notes:

> I thought I was going birding but I was given a magnifying glass and most of the day was spent looking at mushrooms, lichen and moss. Looking through the magnifying glass made all the difference. Les, a lichen expert, said that it is a different world and he is right. There was so much to see, the little bumps were so intricate and detailed. One lichen had little bumps that looked like mushrooms through the glass.

Figure 22. Les showing people some lichen.

Many people on the field trip share Tom's concerns and want to extend their knowledge beyond their own area of interest. Viv, a local ranger for the Highland Council and botanist, said she enjoys learning about species that are not really her speciality. As a ranger, she wants to expand her knowledge of all the flora and fauna in the area. Tessa, also a ranger, had a breadth of knowledge that she had accumulated as part of her role in taking children on environmental field trips. However, some of the others only focused on 'their' species. Tom went off on his own to pursue his newly discovered interest in butterflies, the mushroom specialists, a retired English couple, looked at mushrooms, and the lichen specialist at lichen. The use of the magnifying glass opened up a whole new world, but even more than with birds, closed off many others. We were all in the same place, yet there were many different senses of place within one square yard.

This was only the first trip of the group and Tom hopes that future trips will see more opportunities for sharing, though he has an uphill struggle, considering how some of the group seemed reluctant to expand their sense of place to include others.

Despite their differences, however, they all have a common interest in maintaining habitats for the various species that they care about. The forest that we visited for our field trip has recently come under threat from developers. A campaign to save a forest, home to birds, plants, lichen, moss and mushrooms, can therefore unite everyone in the common aim of 'conservation'. Threats from developers were the impetus for the formation of the Badenoch and Strathyspey Conservation Group. This group takes public stands on a variety of general 'conservation' issues, including the need to take down deer fences to protect capercaillie, opposition to planning applications on a rare butterfly breeding site, campaigns to stop housing developments in forests where the capercaillie breed, and general promotion of native tree regeneration. From a collection of individuals with a knowledge and love of various species, they have created a conservation 'interest group' in Badenoch and Strathspey.

Wildlife Tourism

Another manifestation of the increased interest in observing wild creatures is the success of wildlife holidays. In the Badenoch and Strathspey area, there are many such operations, including Speyside Wildlife and Heatherlea Birding. I had my main contact with Speyside Wildlife whose owner, Sally, arranged for me to go out with Pete and his group. Sally herself has no particular interest in birds but formed the company together with her partner, a keen English birder. They were able to sell property in the south and use the money to set themselves in business in Strathspey. The business has been very successful. Almost all the clients are English and so are most of the guides. The clients stay in a stedding out in Glen Feshie that had been converted into comfortable accommodation. The guests see little apart from this stedding and the places where they go to watch birds. The success of the business depends on whether or not the clients see what they have come to see, the species that are specifically Scottish such as crossbills, sea eagles, dotterels and corncrakes. Therefore, the

interest of the business is to maintain the natural habitats in which these species are found. Sally may not have a personal interest but she certainly has a professional interest in 'conservation'. Though these types of businesses are relatively new, the impact of their success is beginning to be felt within the business community. Sally was Vice-chair of the Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce and has since then become a member of the new National Park Board. This has only happened because of the way interest in birds and other wildlife has become a valued pastime for so many people.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown how birding is a 'situated activity'. Though the birds themselves are affordances provided by the physical environment, a person learns to be a birder as part of a social process. The various ways of seeing, the role of binoculars, the hierarchy of seeing, the birding list, the act of naming and the acquisition of skill are all part of a social environment. This then creates a particular sense of place in which the bird is the central feature of all perception. By becoming 'tuned in' to birds, one has learned to perceive in new ways and, as a result, to care about the objects of this new awareness (Milton: 2002: 62). However, because of the intensity of the experience, which is both intellectual and emotional, there is a tendency for people to 'see' and value only birds, to the exclusion of all else. This process is not confined to birding but can equally be applied to interest in other species, whether butterflies, lichen, mushrooms or moss. This has repercussions in the wider economic and political context, creating a public approach to land use, which has become known as 'conservation'. Within this approach, there are differences in priorities because of people's tendency to value the particular species that they most know about. However, there are a number of areas of overlapping concern and in these cases, when there appears to be a threat to a habitat, people come together to form groups or join larger organisations, which then increase their power in the public arena. The general increase in interest in wildlife has also led to greater economic power as conservation

organisations become landowners and wildlife businesses become key members of local business associations.

However, as there is disagreement amongst those who might come under the broad heading of conservationist, there is even more potential for disagreement with those whose experience of the land is as a place to work. The next chapter is based on those who work on the land, showing how a very different context, work rather than leisure, can lead to a very different sense of place.

CHAPTER FIVE

SENSE OF PLACE AND LIVELIHOOD

Producing, Cultivating, Nurturing, Looking, Feeding, Counting, Stalking, Beating, Driving, Shooting, Culling, Mending, Managing, Spotting, Organising, Transforming, Entertaining

INTRODUCTION

The gamekeeper looked around him, pointing out particular hills and burns, saying, 'This is my garden'.

The gamekeeper's comment epitomises the livelihood approach to land that will be examined in this chapter. The 'garden' stands in opposition to 'wilderness' or 'wild land'. Whereas mountaineering and conservation senses of place both value land that has minimal signs of human impact, those who work on the land, such as farmers and sporting estate workers, assign a value to land that has been tended and cultivated, transformed from wilderness into a garden that produces something for human use. In this we can see a comparable contrast made by anthropologists between hunter-gatherers and agriculturalists. 'Farmers assume a right to enter the world, tame it and reshape it, farm it' (Brody: 2001: 101). On the other hand, hunter-gatherers 'do not make any intensive efforts to reshape their environment. They rely, instead, on knowing what to find, use and sustain what is already there' (p. 89).

Palsson (1996) identifies a similar contrast between hunter-gatherer and western approaches to land. He characterises hunter-gatherers as having a 'communal' relationship with the land because they live *within* the natural world, as part of it. He uses the term 'orientalism' to refer to an approach whose aim is to exploit the land for human use. Farmers and the sporting estate workers are examples of this 'orientalism'. Their sense of place is developed out of a day-to-day engagement with the land that

has the express purpose of transforming nature into something that can be exploited to provide a livelihood for human beings.

In this chapter I will use my detailed ethnographic research with land workers to show *how* a livelihood-based sense of place is constructed in practice. The contrast between orientalism and communalism is not merely an abstract concept or theoretical tool, nor is it confined to discussions of contrasts between non-western and western societies. Though the contrast between 'western' and hunter-gatherer societies made by Brody and Palsson may be over generalised (Milton: 1998: 86), taking a critical and ethnographic approach that does not gloss over the importance of the individual (Rapport in Amit and Rapport: 2002), it is still a useful contrast that can be seen clearly in the everyday lives of people and their relationships with the land in the Scottish Highlands.

As with mountaineers and conservationists, the activities engaged with by farmers, gamekeepers and stalkers give rise to distinct perceptions and ways of relating to the land, their sense of place. However, in this chapter I will argue that it is the overarching *purpose* of transforming the land into a garden that provides the backdrop for people's activities. As a result, the sense of place is linked to land use goals that will often be in conflict with other land uses.

THE PEOPLE AND PLACES: HEFTED TO THE LAND

Kinveachy sporting estate is run by a team of people who have a large degree of autonomy from the owner and his factor. Frank is the overall manager and under him are the head keeper, John, who looks after the grouse side, and the head stalker, David, who is in charge of organising the deer stalking and culling operations. Allan and Ian are the other keepers and Alistair and Peter work with David. However, there is a large degree of overlap. Everyone is involved in the grouse drives and the keepers will sometimes assist the stalkers if they have extra guests to take out. The farm of Mary and Jimmy Yule consists of their own land and land leased from Kinveachy. Gordon had his own beef farm, which he has just recently sold, and Douglas, a good friend of

Gordon, has been the sole employee of a beef farm nearby for 20 years. His father is a farm manager on a sporting estate near Kincraig near Glen Feshie. There is a certain intermingling of the two groups. I was introduced to the farmers Mary and Jimmy Yule by John. Their farm backs onto a grouse moor and there are friendly exchanges when their animals sometimes stray into grouse and stag territory. In Badenoch and Strathspey as a whole there is a tendency for farmers and estate workers to see themselves as part of the same social group. Douglas differentiates 'land workers' from 'villagers' and says there is little mixing. Many sporting estates have 'farm managers' who know other local farmers. Some farmers let keepers onto their land to shoot rabbits and other 'vermin' since the keepers are usually not allowed to keep their 'kill' on the estates they work.

Often farmers can trace back their roots in the area for more than one or two generations. Mary Yule inherited the farm from her father who originally came to this farm from another a few miles away. Gordon lived and worked on the farm he grew up on. Even in retirement he lives on a part of that land, having kept a large plot for his house and his wife's horses. The keepers and stalkers cannot normally claim such a lineage but their link with the land comes from the long hours spent working in all conditions over a period of many years, as well as from the fact that they live where they work, in tied cottages provided by the estate. All the Kinveachy Estate workers come from outside or 'outwith' the area. However, they see themselves as carrying on a tradition that has been in place on this estate for over a hundred years. In addition, they have been trained by those who worked the land before them, ensuring a continuation of knowledge and practices. The expression I often heard, both from these workers themselves and others referring to them, is that they are 'hefted to the land'. This term is also used to refer to deer that have particular parts of the hills to which they seem attached. To say someone is 'hefted to the land' implies long-term commitment and extensive knowledge that carries with it the 'right to belong'.

Such a relationship can be characterised as 'historical ecological' (Balee: 1998, Crumley: 1994). These land workers have a history of intervention in their environment. They can visibly trace the effects of that intervention and know that their current

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work will contribute to the future of that landscape. Farmers and estate workers are aware of how their lives and the land are bound together, each impacting on the other. It is this dialectical interaction that has created the present landscape. It is not a question of achieving some kind of stable equilibrium but of constant intervention to deal with new problems as they arise, all within the context of achieving a particular end or purpose. For John, David and the others on the sporting estate this means maintaining a healthy population of deer and grouse. For Mary and Jimmy Yule, Gordon and Douglas on their farms, it is to raise good quality cattle and sheep. According to the historical ecological perspective:

> Individual and group interests may drive specific initiatives that create environmental impacts, these in turn, are part of processes leading to ongoing problems, options and pressures that rebound on individual and group interests (Henderson: 1998: 355).

Other land users such as mountaineers will also have an impact on the land, which will 'rebound' on their future activity, for example path erosion. However, it is the land workers who have continual contact with the land and whose stated purpose is to have environmental impacts. It is in this way that land workers can be described as hefted to the land as part of an historical ecology.

There is at present a great fear that this 'hefted history' is coming to an end. Both farming and the sporting estate are undergoing considerable upheaval. In order to understand the sense of place of farmers and estate workers, and the challenges and issues they are now facing, it is necessary to examine the 'historical ecology' of the area. In other words, the current relationship with the land and the kind of activities farmers and sporting estate workers undertake, are the direct result of how humans and nature have interacted previously. The way humans have intervened to transform the land, the land management practices, have created the conditions in which they are now working. However, these practices must also be seen not just as technical, natural history or ecological questions, but as products of particular social, economic and political contexts (Balee: 1998).

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Farms and the Sporting Estate: History of Land and People

As in other parts of Scotland, agriculture was the mainstay of the economy up until the 19th century. Prior to the 17th century, farms were largely subsistence farms, based on arable crops, cattle and goats. During the 18th century, demand for cattle increased, stimulated by the need to feed the British armies, and the Highlands was increasingly drawn into the wider market (McCarthy: 1998). Farming was assisted by the introduction of the turnip in the 18th century, which meant cattle could be kept through the winter. Up until the early 18th century this economic activity was part of particular set of social and political relations in which families were part of a clan, headed by a clan chief, relatively independent of any national state structure. However, with the increased commercialisation of farming and the decline of the clan system after the defeat at Culloden in 1746, the Highlands were more firmly brought into the market and state structure dominated by the rising capitalist class based both in England and in the Lowlands of Scotland. The clan chiefs were incorporated into this hierarchical system, taking on a role of private landowner. Commercial pressures, the Industrial Revolution and the related agricultural changes, transformed the nature of farming, and therefore every other aspect of life, in the Highlands (MacAskill: 1999).

The biggest change came with the surge in demand for sheep to supply wool to the new industry. The turning over of the land to sheep and the subsequent 'clearing' of the land of people is now notorious, with debate still raging about the extent to which the 'Clearances' were simply a by-product of economic development or the imposition of an imported system of profit-driven landlordism (Prebble: 1969, Hunter: 1996, McCarthy: 1998, MacAskill: 1999, Wigan: 1998, Bayer: 2004). In Badenoch and Strathspey, the impact of the clearances was not as marked as in other parts of the Highlands, though in Badenoch, returning army officers in the early 1800s cleared the land and put it to sheep, much like in other parts of Scotland (Glen: 2002: 72). In Strathspey, on the other hand, sheep were never introduced on a mass scale. Cattle farming may have become less widespread, but it was still the main type of farming. The reason for this lack of interest in sheep may have been due to the fact that forestry was still a more

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financially attractive option for the landowners. Grant of Rothiemurchus 'did not approve of sheep farms' (Glen: 2002: 57) and concentrated more on developing his timber operations. It was certainly at this time that the area became an important producer of timber with many areas of hillside given over to new imported trees in addition to the native species (Glen: 2002). Though sheep did not replace cattle in other parts of Strathspey, they were still an important addition to the farmers' livestock that has important consequences for today.

The introduction of commercial shooting on the estates in the late 1800s had serious repercussions for farming in the area. As the hillsides were increasingly transformed into grouse moors and deer preserves, farming was confined to a narrow strip of the 'strath' (valley). The origins of killing animals as a form of recreation lie with the ruling class (Shoard: 1997: 19). The sport goes back at least to Norman times. William the Conqueror was a keen hunter and whole areas of the country were cordoned off and called 'Deer Forests' (often with no actual forest) and were the special preserve of the King and his entourage of knights and nobles (Shoard: 1997: 19-22). Heavy punishments were given, including hanging and transportation, to anyone who dared poach a deer or even a rabbit. In Scotland, sport shooting began to reach the Highlands in the early 19th century, made possible by the pattern of private landownership in which large tracts of land were owned by the ruling elites of both England and Scotland (Shroad: 1999: 124-127). Queen Victoria gave an added impetus to the sport when she and her hunting consort began their tradition of taking up residence in Balmoral, in Deeside, for the 'season', a practice still maintained enthusiastically by the current Royals (Richards: 2004: 10). The grouse season begins on the Glorious 12th (of August) and extends into December. The stalking season overlaps with this, beginning in July and finishing in October. Hind shooting can go on until February. Balmoral became the model for the Highland 'sporting estate' which then proliferated all over the Highlands, impacting on both the landscape and the economy (Richards: 2004).

In Strathspey, already in the 1830s and '40s prior to Queen Victoria's influence, what became the Seafield Estate started making changes that would severely alter

farming practices (Glen: 2002: 107-108). Lord Seafield made the transition to sporting estate by clearing the forest of cattle and sheep, thought to be in competition with deer for food. Therefore, farmers faced restrictions on where they could graze their stock. As both deer stalking and grouse shooting increased in financial significance in the next decades, both the forests and the open hillside were increasingly off limits to graziers. The practice of grazing animals on upland lands on sheilings in the summer came to an end.

The impact of these changes can be seen today. Farms are still there, but only about 250, all of 100 or less hectares. These have been consolidated between fewer owners and, like most upland farms in Britain, are heavily dependent on subsidies. It is still an important sector, employing 7% of the local population, while the Scottish average is 3% (interview with FWAG representative). Many of the farms are scattered between Carrbridge and Grantown, along the Spey and Dulnain rivers. Farmers still raise cattle and sheep but the grazing land is even more restricted to the strath. Mary Yule uses both her family's farm, and pastures leased from Kinveachy. This means that she has to drive from one to another. One tract is adjacent to the grouse moor of Kinveachy and there is frequent good-natured banter about whether her livestock are causing any problems for John's grouse. The smaller amount of land available for farming means that less is given over to crops. Mary Grant, now in her 90s, remembers that on the farm where she grew up they had many more fields of oats and neeps (swedes) as fodder for the livestock. Now farmers tend to buy in feed from elsewhere. Ruins of former sheilings can be seen adjacent to the Burma Road in the Dulnain valley on Kinveachy and Mary Yule's sheep graze amongst ruined farm buildings.

Frustration at this decline is widespread amongst farming people. Seamus Grant, the son of a railway worker who lives near farmers on Rothiemurchus Estate and now a lecturer in Gaelic Studies, singles out the decline of agriculture as a major problem for the well-being of Scotland. The glens, once inhabited and used by people are now empty. Robbie Burns, one of the earliest 'Munroists' would often stay with a family living in a remote glen on his explorations (Allan: 1995). No walker would be able to do this today. The decline of farming has also meant the decline of Gaelic culture. Seamus emphasises

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the concept of 'duthchas' in Gaelic that means 'derived from the land' and refers to one aspect of people's identity. Seamus believes that with the loss of the connection to the land people have lost part of themselves. This is because people's identity is seen as tied up with a sense of purpose, a reason for being on the land.

Fear of losing one's purpose for being on the land was a major theme of a National Union of Scottish Farmers Conference held in Aviemore in March 2000. The President stressed that farmers 'should not have to defend getting support'. They have 'environmental, social and economic reasons for being there.' Many farmers expressed anger that they had to have environmental reasons for being on the land. A dairy farmer from Argyll insisted that they are economically viable but that government policies have increased costs and supermarkets do not pay fair prices. 'I sell milk for seventeen and a half pence a pint to a co-operative by arrangement; this is then sold to be processed. But the supermarkets double that price.' He thought that people in Glasgow 'don't give a fuck about buying Scottish' and that this lack of identity with Scottish farmers is causing them problems. This farmer's opinion is that people in the cities do not see a link between the food they buy and the people producing the food.

Farming has come further under pressure after foot and mouth disease. This could mean the disappearance of farming altogether from the area. Gordon sold up the family farm. Many others wonder why they should continue. Mary and Jimmy Yule do not want to give up farming, but they do not want their son to go into farming, 'There is no future'. With the inclusion of the area in the Cairngorms National Park and the development of the area as a 'commuter-belt' for fast-growing Inverness, many farmers will be tempted to sell their land at a premium for housing developments. The farmer Douglas works for already has built a number of holiday homes on his land and this can bring in more money, and take more of the farmers' attention, than looking after the cattle.

Despite all the problems, for many of these people, farming forms part of their identity and they wouldn't know what to do if they didn't farm. Even Gordon is back farming, this time helping out Mary and Jimmy during a difficult time. Mary and Jimmy Yule are bewildered by how their occupation is now considered to be economically

unviable. They are aware that they are dependent on subsidies but they do not see these as 'handouts' but as the only way they can make a living in what is an unfair system. They work hard. Mary and Jimmy rarely have a holiday and regularly work 12 hour days, longer in the lambing season. And, they *produce* something. They can actually see the physical outcome of their labour. They share the confusion of many other workers who have witnessed the disappearance of their jobs, as the primary and secondary industries become an increasingly small share of the economy. Douglas, for example, berates the fact that so much food is imported. If food was produced and consumed locally then there wouldn't be any talk of 'over supply', he reasons.

Survival of farming, according to several speakers at the Scottish Farmers' Conference, including the president and the Rural Affairs Minister Ross Finnie, depends on 'diversification', which is now being encouraged by government initiatives as a way of preparing the way for the removal of subsidies and to halt the decline of farm incomes. Some farmers, like Alistair MacLennan, have done this very successfully, taking full advantage of money available for this purpose. His farm is a showcase of the 'environmentally friendly' farm. He has a bed and breakfast business and a holiday home on his land and talks of how he can take advantage of the newly opened long distance walkers' route, the Speyside Way, to expand his income from tourism. He is doing a Masters in Environmental Studies and he sits on the new National Park Board. He has visited France to study how farmers there have promoted 'farm tourism'. In many ways, his purpose has remained the same, making a living out of the land. However, the focus has changed somewhat. Instead of having a physical output, he is providing a service, looking after the land and enabling other people to enjoy it. However, farmers like Mary and Jimmy Yule find such changes a threat to the very core of what farming is about. Jimmy says, 'I don't want to be a hobby farmer'. To Jimmy, what Alistair is doing with his farm is not really farming. The farm is more of an object of consumption (Urry: 1995), a spectacle for the tourist, than a place of production so therefore it is not 'authentic' farming but 'hobby' farming (Boyle: 2003, Shepherd: 1995). The skills that Mary and Jimmy have in abundance, raising and looking after animals, are not the same ones needed for running what is much more a service industry business than a

productive farm. The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) was set up to help such farms take advantage of the many environmental initiatives, but Mary found it difficult to get on with the university-educated 'expert', 'half her age', who came to advise her. She says that she, and farmers like her, will have difficulties making the kind of changes the government requires.

Economic and political realities clearly structure the relationship farmers have with the land. The decline in production-based industries and the increase in the tertiary sector in Britain and in other western economies has transformed their labour into something that has use value and no exchange value (Fine: 1975) and is therefore superfluous to the economic system. A number of farmers from the Scottish farmers' conference echoed the concerns of Mary and Jimmy, that they are a 'dying breed'. However, farming will not disappear without a fight as can be seen by the determination of Mary and Jimmy to continue farming in the traditional way and by Alistair MacLennan's efforts to adapt to these new realities. The sense of place of farmers is constructed within this ecological, economic, political and social history. Their current practices and the choices they make now about how to respond to their situation will determine the future of this land (Balee: 1998: 22).

The sporting estate, one of the key factors in the decline of farming, ironically shares many common problems. Owning a shooting estate in Scotland is a sign of status, a place to invite friends and family for a 'shooting holiday'. Though it started as the preserve of the aristocracy, the sporting estate soon became popular for the new capitalist class. There are 3.5 million hectares of land managed for shooting (Shroad: 1999: 337), the largest single use of land in Scotland after forestry (McCarthy: 1998: 99) with 2, 171 full-time jobs directly dependent on sport shooting (British Association of Shooting and Conservation: 2000). Keepers are responsible for managing the grouse moors and organising the 'shoots' for the guests. They also co-ordinate the work of a team of 'beaters', who are grouped into military-like formations in order to 'drive' the grouse to the 'guns' (guests). The stalkers manage the deer population, carrying out 'culls' (killing the least healthy deer to reduce numbers and preserve a quality herd), and ensuring that the deer have food through the winter months. Then, during the

'season', they entertain paying guests, talking them 'deer stalking' and providing them with a 'traditional' Scottish experience in the shooting lodges.

Shooting on a sporting estate is a form of recreation that symbolises belonging to an elite. According to John and David, food is not the objective of the shoot. They export most of their venison. What matters is the size of the 'bag' of grouse or the quality of the antlers. A twelve or fourteen 'pointer' is the most sought after 'trophy' for the mantelpiece. One of the grouse beaters (the seasonal workers who 'drive' the grouse towards the guests), derided the paying guests on Kinveachy because they never come near to matching the skill of the Royal shooting party, who has been known to kill almost 600 grouse in a day. The animal or bird is thus seen as a symbol of one's skill.

Recently, the nature of the sporting estate has changed. Estate owners usually earned their wealth outside and the estate was a form of conspicuous consumption. Now, for many, there is some pressure to make the estate pay, or at least reduce the losses. Shooting has become more commercial. Whole companies, such as Holland and Holland, exist in order to market 'Shooting Holidays in Scotland'. The 'guests' come mostly from abroad. There are many reasons why the rich of the world choose Scotland. The main prey is grouse and red deer stags. Some people come to shoot roe deer or hares but they tend to be less well off, often working class people from Germany, Holland or Italy, because this type of shooting does not have the same status. In these countries, with a larger rural population and fewer restrictions from landowners, there has been more of a tradition of shooting small animals for the 'pot'. Hares are an expensive delicacy in Italy and a trip to Scotland with a rented refrigerated van can make a tidy profit. Despite shooting's popularity, the costs of organising the shoots are quite high and many estates are still losing money. However, the owners are reluctant to abandon this tradition, as it is still an important part of elite culture. As a result, many people's livelihoods and the whole pattern of land use in the Highlands is linked to the continued existence of these estates.
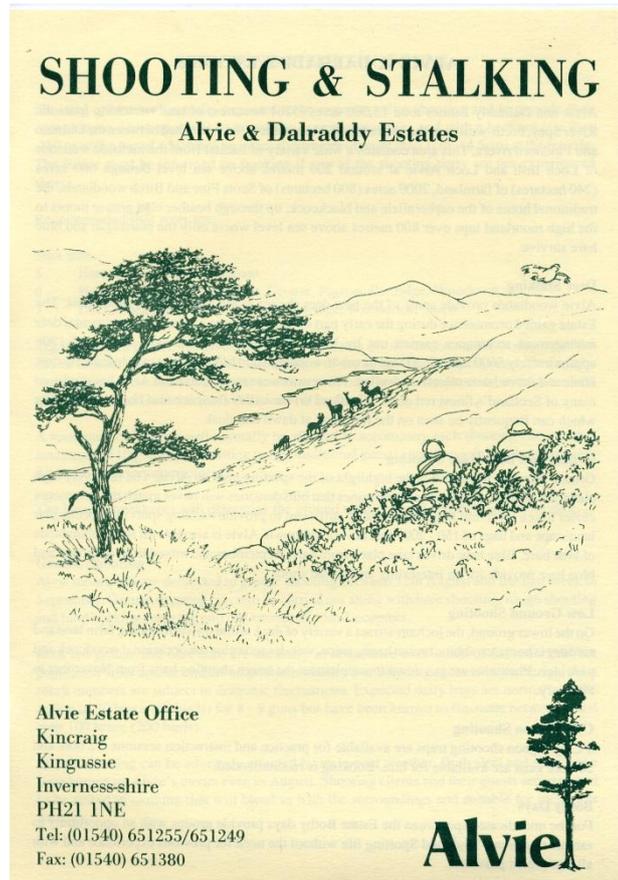
Figure 23. Alvie Estate advertises for business in local tourist office.

In Badenoch and Strathspey, the sporting estate is still an important feature of the landscape. According to David, the Holland and Holland representative in this part of the Highlands, Kinveachy and Glen Feshie have an international reputation for good shooting and are promoted by his company. However, there is a sense that this is under threat. One indication of this is that Holland and Holland's bookings are on the decline. There are also signs that landowners are themselves changing. A Dutch owner on a neighbouring estate to Kinveachy has banned commercial shooting altogether as she is against shooting animals. Hector MacClean, taking over the family estate in Angus, introduced the idea of wildlife safaris rather than shooting holidays. He is acutely aware of the antagonism from society in general concerning shooting animals as sport. David, from Holland and Holland, thinks that the image of shooting is too exclusive and this gives it a bad reputation. Sporting estates are also under pressure from the Deer

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Commission and conservation organisations such as the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), to reduce deer numbers. This stems largely from the widely accepted discourse that Scotland needs to encourage native tree regeneration and that deer are a major obstacle to this (SNH: 1994, Cramb: 1998). Landowners are offered financial incentives to reduce deer numbers on their estates. As the tradition of the shooting estate becomes less important, owners will consider where their economic advantage lies and this is now often in obtaining grants for trees rather than offering commercial shooting holidays. Like farmers, gamekeepers and stalkers construct their sense of place within a landscape that has a complex history. Though the methods they use to carry out their work have changed over the years (e.g. all-terrain vehicles called Argocats and land rovers are used rather than ponies to transport the deer), the activities they are engaged in, and their purpose, have remained largely the same for the past 100 years. This purpose is bound up with a cultural tradition that emerged, partly as a result of a very specific combination of economic and historical circumstances in Scotland. Though the land provides certain affordances that create the possibility for grouse and deer shooting, the continued presence of the sporting estate in the Highlands is due to cultural traditions rather than what the land is 'naturally' suited for or what is economically viable. This issue is discussed more fully in Chapter Six. I will now examine the ways in which this purpose shapes the sense of place of farmers and estate workers.

COMMON PURPOSE: THE LAND AS A PRODUCTIVE GARDEN

The historic ecology of the area has united farmers and the sporting estate against what they see as a common threat, the end to a particular way of life that shares a common purpose of transforming the land so that it yields a product for human consumption. For farmers, it is raising animals to be consumed as food, for the keepers and stalkers it is managing the land in such a way as to produce animals that can be consumed as part of people's recreational activities. Even though they work in quite distinct economic sectors (agricultural and the tourist industry), both farmers

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and estate workers go about their work and engage in activities in ways that create a very similar relationship with the land, which can be contrasted with that of others who live in the area or come as visitors. Though many of the activities are similar to the mountaineers and conservationists such as walking over the land, observing and managing the flora and fauna, appreciating the views and having epics, there are some crucial differences. It is not enough just to consider *what* people do on the land, what activities people are engaged in, but also to take into account *why* they are there.

Farmers and estate workers move through the land, notice particular features and construct a sense of place in a way that reflects this different purpose, which can be characterised by using the metaphor of the garden, to make the earth bear fruit. By stressing the importance of production over consumption, they give particular value to their work. They legitimise their purpose by defining what is acceptable activity in a rural environment (Evans: 2003). The increase in recreation activities in the countryside and the emphasis on what Williams (1973) calls the aesthetic as opposed to the practical side of our view of the countryside has brought the contrast from the realm of the abstract and is now manifested clearly 'on the ground'. Jimmy Yule highlighted this point with his comment about not wanting to be a 'hobby farmer'. He doesn't want to be a provider of holiday homes and guesthouses and the 'farm experience' to urban dwellers. McCarthy (1995) in his study of the Wise Use Movement in the western United States found a similar reaction. The fight of the working class primary producers to maintain productive, extractive activities as a fundamental part of rural land use was directed against attempts to turn them into 'service providers' for urbanites.

The stalkers and keepers on the sporting estates also see themselves primarily as producers rather than service providers. The stalkers at Mar Lodge on the southern side of the Cairngorms bitterly resented being asked to change from being 'stalkers' to wildlife 'rangers' when the estate was taken over by the National Trust for Scotland. This may seem odd given that they are on the land to provide a service to tourists who have come to consume. The Scottish representative of the British Association of Shooting and Conservation calls this pastime 'consumptive recreation'. Scotland is the

only country in the world where red deer are so numerous. The guests do not have to go on big wilderness treks to get their 'trophy'. The deer are on open ground so that they can be stalked with minimum effort. All of this, together with the romantic image of the Highlands, makes Scotland a much sought-after venue. It is the stalker's job to ensure that the guest gets his or her trophy of antlers. So in many ways their role could be compared to that of a mountain guide or a birding tour leader. However, they see it differently and this is illustrated in the nature of their work and in their attitude towards their shooting guests. My research shows how estate workers have chosen to define their work as part of the productive sector rather than the service sector. They do this by generally playing down the aspect of their work that involves looking after the guests. Instead, they stress their land management role, tending the garden, where they manage the land to 'produce' a healthy population of deer and grouse.

The conflict between the consumption aims of the guests and the productive purposes of the stalkers and keepers emerged in a number of ways in the course of my research. The season only lasts from July to the end of December at the latest, with occasional winter shoots for hares or forest deer, but there is nevertheless a tendency to see 'guests' as an inconvenience. Ian said that Kinveachy management made them spend too much time taking people out shooting, leaving them not enough time to do their 'work'. Grouse and deer may be technically wild animals but on the sporting estate there is significant human intervention, in many ways similar to the raising of livestock. Ian and the other keepers need to maintain fences to keep rabbits out of the grouse areas, do the heather burning to create new shoots for the young grouse chicks, and give anti-worm tablets to the grouse. The stalkers may help with this work but their work primarily consists of undertaking the deer cull. They do this as part of government policy, administered by the Deer Commission, to reduce deer numbers, but also because they need to keep numbers at an optimal number for the carrying capacity of the land.

A day on the estate spent deer stalking with some American guests is indicative of the conflict between those who work the land and those who consume its product.

Stuart is a CEO from an American steel company. He has been shooting all his life, everything from bears to deer with bow and arrow. He invited two other top executives to come on a Scottish shooting holiday. They came in couples, the men shooting whilst the women shopped in the tourist shops of Grantown or Inverness. In addition the shooting holiday was a form of corporate bonding amongst the executives. On a worldwide level, these wealthy businessmen often belong to the 'Safari Club', an exclusive group of the most prestigious hunters, who travel around the world to get 'trophies'. This is the basis of the conflict between production and consumption. Peter and the other stalkers manage the deer population carefully. They have to ensure that the gene pool is maintained and that the healthiest stags need to be kept for breeding purposes. The size of the antler is thought to be one of the signs of good breeding potential. Therefore, they do not allow guests to shoot a '12- pointer' or a 'royal'. The guests, on the other hand, are looking for a big trophy, so the bigger the antler the better. As we drove around in the land rover looking for a potential target for Stuart, he badgered Peter in a half-joking manner, asking why he couldn't shoot a 12-pointer, offering him more and more money. Peter was not going to give in and later told me that he had been quite angry that this sort of thing happened regularly; the guests just didn't understand what they are trying to do on the estate. He said that the situation got even more tense when Allan, normally a keeper, took one of the other steel executives on what was for Allan his first stalk with a guest. They had to drive up the hill a fair distance to spot a suitable deer. Allan thought he had one but they had to trek for some time before they could get close enough to shoot. But when Allan got the stag in his sights, he realised that it was a 12-pointer and couldn't be shot. Allan had to tell the guest and by the time he joined us towards the end of the day, they still had not managed to get a stag. The guest was angry and the stalkers were annoyed by his lack of understanding.

This example shows how the interests of 'production' take priority over the interests of providing a service to the guests. It is as if the guests are privileged in being allowed to help them in their normal work of culling the deer population. Alistair's goal is for the guests to shoot the least healthy deer. He has instituted a special award

called the 'Donald' Award (named after a particularly ugly deer who had been a 'pet' of Frank, the sporting manager). This goes to the guest who shoots a deer that the stalkers are most keen to cull. This was a strategy to encourage the guests to see themselves as part of the production process rather than as being consumers of a service.

Figure 24. Stuart shows off antlers that won him the Donald Award with his stalker Peter.

The keepers and loaders exhibited similar attitudes to those guests coming to shoot grouse. They found a group of French champagne executives particularly exasperating. In each butt there is a 'loader', someone who loads the gun and passes it to the guest. However, in this case, the loader had to do more. One loader said, 'We have to hold their guns for them!' The 'bag' (number of grouse killed) was particularly low this time, 38 birds for 3000 shots. Ian compared this with the Royal family who, according to Ian, get four birds for every 5 shots. One beater commented that the guests must be 'Animal Liberationists' because they gave the birds so many 'chances to

get away'. The guests themselves didn't mind- they were enjoying themselves, with crates of champagne opened for lunch. But the keepers felt that all the work they had put in over the year, to ensure that there were plenty of birds for guests to shoot, had not been taken full advantage of. Later in the year, they told me that the poor shooting of the guests had caused problems for the health of the population. Normally, the guests shoot a lot of the older and weaker birds, and this had not happened sufficiently this year because the guests had been such bad shots.

The attitude towards the shooting guests is in many ways similar to the keepers' views towards recreation in the hills in general. 'Real' shooting to them is 'walked-up' shooting where you go out on the hill with a gun and shoot grouse or rabbits for the pot or shoot 'vermin'. One loader told me, 'I couldn't imagine going out on the hill without a gun'. Allan said he couldn't see the point of going into the hills 'just for fun'. They thought it a strange idea and laughed when Isobel, one of the beaters and a member of the Strathspey Mountain Club, told them of her plans for the weekend. Mary Yule had a similar attitude, laughing at me when I asked her if she had ever been up walking in the Cairngorms. Their walking was more legitimate, since it had a purpose. Allan and David had done a survival course at the outdoor centre, Glenmore Lodge. They bragged to me that they had out-walked the instructor, indicating that this showed who the real outdoor people were.

The work of farmers and estate workers can also be contrasted with the goals of the conservation sense of place. Instead of managing wildlife as an end in itself, for the abstract ideal of 'biodiversity' (Milton: 2000: 235-36), there needs to be a productive purpose; the land needs to be changed in some way. They see their activities as an integral part of the land, not as something that is alien. It is this basic disagreement about what the natural environment is *for* that is at the root of conflicts between different land users. Walkers, climbers and conservationists, like many hunter-gatherers (Brody: 2001 and Palsson: 1996), aim to have minimum impact on the land. The walker's motto is 'take nothing but photos and leave nothing but footprints'. The conservationists aim to recreate areas of wild land, free of human intervention in natural processes (Milton: 2000: 240-41). By contrast, farmers and estate workers aim

to have an impact and exploit the land for human use. They want to move about the land and see signs that they have been there, the proof that they have fulfilled their purpose. To succeed in one's purpose, it is important that one can see the result of one's efforts.

Making a mark on the land

The Zafimaniry (Bloch: 1995) in Madagascar in their admiration of the 'clarity of the view' showed similarities with mountaineers. But this is not all they noticed. They also scanned the view for signs of human habitation. Bloch quotes one woman who seemed to be appreciating the aesthetic beauty of the forest. When probed about why she appreciated it, she surprised Bloch by saying 'because you can cut it down' (p. 65). He concludes:

> The Zafiminary's concern with the environment is not with how not to damage it but with how to succeed in making a mark on it (p. 65).

Farmers and estate workers look upon the land in a similar way. 'Making a mark' can take a number of forms. One of the most crucial indications of making a successful mark for both farmers and estate workers is the number and health of their animals. The lambing season is the critical period. Lambs are usually born when it is still cold in Scotland. Mary Yule would be up all night in very bad conditions, providing shelter for the new lambs. She says if one dies it is 'like a pet dying'. Douglas does everything in his power to ensure the survival of all the calves and admits to getting 'upset' if one dies.

The grouse, despite being wild birds, have a similar amount of attention given to them. There have been serious problems with worms in recent years and the keepers spend considerable time in the winter going out and finding grouse in order to feed them their 'medicine'. They count the birds every spring both before and after the new chicks have been born to check on numbers. John keeps records of all these counts and can trace the success of his own management. Four years have been selected and he looks at the pairs, the chicks and 'the bag'. He is convinced, and the statistics certainly

support him, that his intervention in the land has been a major contributing factor in the increase in grouse numbers, which would later provide a sizeable 'bag'.

Figure 25. Kinveachy Estate workers show off their 'bag' from the staff 'shoot' – first ever such event on the estate.

Once the grouse season is over, the keepers move on to the work of ensuring the success of next year's shoot. A key part of this is creating conditions conducive to the survival of the new generation of grouse. These activities are instrumental in creating the landscape that is the grouse moor (Richards: 2004). One of the most important activities is heather burning. Keepers devote many days at the end of the season in October/November to this work. It is necessary because it clears patches on which new heather shoots will sprout in the spring, important food for the young grouse. It is vital that the patches are just the right shape and size. If they are too small, then there are not enough new shoots, but if they are too wide, the young grouse will not be able to escape back into the cover of the longer heather if a bird of prey should threaten. We spent the day setting fire to patches of heather and then using large, flat beaters, like giant fly swatters, we would control the course of the fire until it

created a vague rectangle up the side of the hill. It was incredibly hard work but exciting. Allan admits that he really likes doing the heather burning, 'How often do you get to set big fires legally'? It all has to be done just right. John is scathing about other estates where they do not have the skill and let the fires get out of control. He was very pleased with our efforts, training up Ian and Allan, as well as giving his young son a chance to get involved.

Figure 26. Ian and John relax while Allan keeps an eye on the burning heather.

The significance of what we'd done became more apparent as we drove away after the end of a full day of burning. We parked the land rover on a knoll and looked back at the hillside where we had been working. John was clearly extremely pleased with the 'mark' we had made. 'It's beautiful, look what you have been part of'. His appreciation of the 'view' was based, as for the Zafimaniry, on the fact that we had made our 'mark'. I found myself picking out the patches that I had been instrumental in determining the shape of. And for months after, any time I drove up the A9 and saw that hillside, I would show anyone who was with me what I had done. I could understand why John said

heather burning is a part of the job he takes most satisfaction in. His aesthetic appreciation is firmly rooted in the sense of a job being skilfully executed.

This meaning of being in the hills can be contrasted with that of many who walk or climb. Instead of the focus being on how what you have done might have changed you, the stress in the case of farmers and keepers is on producing and creating, with the land forming the material that you are working with. Durman's (2000) study of conflicts over trees between developers and protesters stresses that there are conflicts between land as a 'resource' and land as 'an object of subjective response.' Those who work the land, as in Peiolta's study of the Ukraine (2000) emphasise the importance of human labour and its contribution to the land.

> The historical/ideological foundation for the land-labour conjunction is animated and enlivened by the real, practical, physical engagement of body and soil on the household plot for 40 hours each week, 52 weeks a year - an engagement which produces food and a future (p. 173).

This does not mean that there is not any aesthetic appreciation or subjective response. The beauty lies in its usefulness and to what extent the work has been done with skill, very similar to Aristotle's virtue ethics in that making your mark is a moral activity. Everything in the world is designed with a purpose and virtuous action is that which fulfils that purpose with excellence. We had done a job that fulfilled an identified purpose and we had done it with excellence. Therefore, the act had meaning.

Knowing the Land

Ellen and Harris (2000) describe a distinction between knowledge that comes from books and knowledge that comes from real life experiences and argue that knowledge has become a body of thought held in institutions. They cite many cases from non-western societies, in which local people struggle to maintain the validity of their own knowledge practices in the face of powerful outside interests, usually from western-dominated organisations. Similarly, Hobart (1993) distinguishes between 'world-

ordering knowledge', or scientific knowledge and localised, context-specific knowledge. Scientific knowledge is seen as a body of knowledge that is constituted prior to practice, applicable everywhere. On the other hand, local knowledge is 'a practical-situated activity, constituted by a past, but changing, history of practices' (Hobart: 1993: 17). Such debates surrounding what constitutes knowledge are also significant in the context of my research. Farmers and estate workers believe their definition of knowledge is at odds with the dominant one held by society. They feel that their knowledge is not respected and, in some cases, are told that their practices are harming the land. They deeply resent what they see as being the prevalent attitude; the knowledge of university-educated 'experts', who 'come in' to give them advice on how to manage their land and the animals, is more valued than their own, practically-based knowledge.

The RSPB Abernethy reserve, adjacent to Kinveachy, is an example of an estate managed that has a reputation for being run by university-educated conservationists who have been brought in from the outside, mostly from England. As discussed in the last chapter they receive considerable publicity for their work on fostering the osprey population in Scotland. I encountered many examples of resentment of the attention and respect given to the knowledge of these 'official' conservationists. One of the first things Mary Yule pointed out to me was an osprey nest on her land. She took pride in informing me that no one knew about this nest but her, unlike the one on the RSPB reserve that is known world-wide. She pointed out various birds to me in the course of the day, stressing that she and other farmers know more about the wildlife on the land than the conservationists. Alistair also feels irritated by the fact that conservationists seem to dismiss his knowledge. He says he knows exactly what has happened to the bird life on his farm over the past ten years and asked why they do not consult him rather than doing their own survey. His knowledge, as is Mary's, is thus based in a 'history of practices' (Hobart: 1993).

Similar attitudes are expressed on the sporting estate. When I showed John an article in the local paper about how to burn heather correctly, written by one of the land managers on the RSPB reserve, he agreed with what was written but was annoyed

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that the RSPB person had been asked to write it. He said, 'they hardly ever do heather burning so why was he asked to write the article rather than me?' This just reinforced his view that there are certain people whose knowledge is more respected because it comes with a university degree. For John, on the other hand, this knowledge was less valuable because it need not emerge out of practical use. When John does the heather burning it is 'a performance in time and space, not a rehearsal' (Hobart: 1993: 19).

The difference between the 'world-ordering' of the RSPB and the considerable store of practical knowledge held by the farmers and estate workers is illustrated in the contrasting experience of capercaillie, a native Scottish bird that is on the endangered list. The RSPB wardens put in much effort to ensure that conditions are conducive for their breeding. To see a 'caper' is considered very rare and the RSPB do a similar viewing of capercaillie as they do for the osprey. They set up special video link so that people can observe from afar. Therefore, when I actually saw several capercaillie whilst 'deer beating' in the forest of Kinveachy I was taken by surprise. They assured me that they saw them quite often. They appreciated the fact that they saw them but it was a fairly common occurrence. This 'sighting' of wildlife is contrasted with the incredible effort that birders go to in order to see different species. For Mary Yule and the stalkers and keepers at Kinveachy, seeing animals occurs as a matter of course and their knowledge comes from this day-to-day experience. As one of the stalkers told me, ' I see a lot of birds every day, it's one of the reasons I like the job, but I don't deliberately set out to see them. It just happens'.

Those working in conservation, however, could equally feel aggrieved that their knowledge is not respected by many land workers. People like Gus Jones, of the Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group, have spent years researching the capercaillie and the wardens of Abernethy have a vast knowledge of the osprey. Farmers and estate workers may resent these people because they represent 'expert' knowledge, but Tom of Insh Marshes thinks that the problem is more complicated. It is not so much where the knowledge comes from but 'what the knowledge is used *for'.* Because conservationists and land workers have different purposes, they also clash over what counts as knowledge.

The place of animals on the land is another source of dispute. When the RSPB bought the Abernethy estate, they threw the sheep off the land, arguing that sheep made tree regeneration impossible. Farmers and shepherds argue, to the contrary, that grazing is compatible with forest regeneration. They base their claim on years of experience. There may well be other ideological reasons why this knowledge has been constructed in such a way as to cast grazing animals as the enemy. I have already noted how landowners cleared the forest of grazing animals to make way for deer. In other parts of the world, shepherds have been equally demonised, often as part of the process of turning an area into a national park. In Baviskar's (2000) study of conflict in the setting up of the Great Himalayan National Park, powerful conservation experts from the west used their power-knowledge to impose restrictions on grazing.

Stalkers make similar arguments. Alistair agrees that the red deer cause problems for tree generation but feels that the amount they cull every year is sufficient. To cull more would, in his view, have serious repercussions for their livelihood. In 2004, with encouragement from conservation agencies, the Deer Commission undertook a massive out-of-season cull of deer on Glen Feshie Estate. This provoked a protest demonstration on the estate from stalkers and keepers. A key aspect of this concerns what counts as legitimate knowledge. The estate workers believe that their years of experience on the land have given them the knowledge to ensure the regeneration of trees and the maintenance of a large deer population. They argue that the conservationist agenda is based on book knowledge, mobilised by political forces that want to see the end of stalking. Chapter Six discusses this conflict between deer and trees in much more detail.

Farmers and estate workers acquire and use knowledge of the land in a distinctive way. Within the recreation sense of place, maps are a crucial way of knowing where to go and identifying features of the land. Farmers and estate workers do not use maps. At first I found this very disconcerting. When grouse beating, we would start at one point and then just move in a more or less straight line to a line of butts. Then we would continue for the next one or sometimes we would be driven. In the evening I would get out my map and try and figure out where we were. I could never do it. Alan Hunt, a

long-standing local mountain guide, was doing his first ever grouse beating on Glen Feshie. He expressed the same concern that I had, 'Where are we? I'm not used to being out without my map!' So how do they find their way? The grouse drives were established patterns, routes taken that would sweep the grouse towards the butts. However, the heather-covered landscape looked so similar all over the estate that I do not know what landmarks they could be using. Burns were crossed between hills but they all looked very similar. The keepers knew the land so well that they could organise the beaters into lines according to fitness. The fittest ones would be given the point in the line that would require the greatest descent and ascent. The skill that must be involved came to the fore one day when visibility was nil. Alistair was in charge of the drive and we moved through the hills for several miles without seeing anything, yet we arrived exactly where we were meant to. Alistair laughed when I asked him if he ever needed a map. Being on the land, day in and day out, gives them this intimate knowledge, something quite alien to the mountaineer who, even if they visit the area regularly, will never obtain the same level of knowledge and will therefore remain outsiders.

According to Gell (1985: 275-76), the 'experienced native' bases way-finding on images reinforced by habit and familiarity. When travelling with his Inuit companion for several weeks in order to reach a distant settlement, Brody (2001: 54) asked him how he had managed to find his way over the seemingly featureless terrain. He assumed that the man had been there recently. It turned out that he had not been there since the 1930s when he was a boy! He explained that once was enough. It seems as if being on the land, in a particular type of terrain, trains the senses such that one is much more able to remember and use features for navigating that many people would either not notice or not remember. David, the head stalker on Kinveachy, says he gets 'a better feel for the whole estate' through the stalking. Instead of just looking at your feet or just in front of you at the next steep hill to go up, you use the binoculars to scan for deer. You then locate the deer in relation to particular places, Vince's knoll, the rabbit knoll, the Dell, Eil burn. These were places that are not on any printed map. Once a deer is shot, then you have to say where it was shot for the records, so this practice necessitated the giving of names to any key features. Gradually I built up a

reasonable knowledge of where things were on the estate and I could point out features and remember if I had been somewhere before. My knowledge built up through the months I spent out with the keepers and stalkers. A crucial part of building up a picture, however, is that events 'took place'. Finding one's way more resembles storytelling than map reading (Ingold: 2000: 219). Native maps are not so much representations as condensed histories. In other words, because things happened in particular places, the name of the place would be referred to and my overall picture of the estate was built up through these stories. I remembered clearly Eil burn because that was where I saw my first stag being shot and where Alistair and I went with the Argot cat to pick it up. The stalkers and keepers would similarly relate place to stories such that you could create a map out of these stories.

The contrast between knowledge held prior to experience and knowledge arising out of experience is relevant here. Though mountaineers develop their skill through practice, they use maps as a way of bringing prior knowledge with them to the experience. The estate workers, on the other hand, have no knowledge until they gain it through their work. However, the way farmers and estate workers learn about the land is not completely different from that of mountaineers in other respects. Both are looking for affordances. However, because their purposes are different, they notice different features or they see the same features in different ways. When walking, the wind is an enemy. The best place to have it is at your back. When organising a grouse shoot, a wind is an asset. The drive is organised so that the grouse fly into the wind that prevents the grouse flying too fast over the butts. Slower flying birds are easier to shoot. Alan Hunt, the mountain guide, pointed out flat, grassy spots that would make an overnight camp as we were grouse beating. Mary Yule would have judged the same patch of grass for its grazing potential whilst the keepers wouldn't have noticed it at all, except maybe as a place to park the Land Rover. A walker might choose to stop for lunch at a particular flat and scenic spot along the Speyside Way, but Alistair MacLennan would look at this piece of ground as an ideal location to build his bunkhouse.

In all cases, the people are acquiring knowledge through their activities, building up a store of information that could be useful, contributing to their overall knowledge of

the land and improving their skill in relating to the land. But with those who work on the land, this is always done, not for aesthetic beauty or pleasure, but for the contribution this knowledge will make for its productive potential. Their knowledge has the characteristics of what Ellen (2000) calls 'indigenous' knowledge or IK. Like non-western IK, this is often devalued in the face of institutionally-produced knowledge, which is used to implement agendas of powerful agencies, both government and private (Ellen: 2000, Baskar: 2000). This lack of recognition of their knowledge contributes significantly to their feelings of marginalisation, expressed by farmers such as Mary Yule, and helps to fuel the conflicts that are discussed in later chapters.

Animals

One of the main ways to distinguish the livelihood approach to land from others is the way they relate to animals. One key difference I noted is the way land workers can raise animals to be killed, yet still care for these same animals. This relationship with animals can be incomprehensible to those not raised in this environment. Andrew, the London-based RSPB member in the last chapter, is against killing any animal. He criticises the RSPB reserves in Strathspey for shooting rabbits. He says it is a 'contradiction' for an organisation to kill animals when it is supposed to be protecting them.

Mary has 900 sheep and 60 cattle. She has a name for every cow and can distinguish many of the sheep as well. As I joined her in her daily round to check on her animals, she greeted every cow by name and remembered any problem they might have had from the day before. One of the tasks we had was to find a lamb she had seen the day before who looked like it had pneumonia. We eventually found it and gave it a shot. She prefers not to think about what will happen to her animals when they go off to slaughter; the focus is on caring for them now. As Douglas says, 'I don't get sentimental when they go off to be slaughtered but when they're in my company they

are *my* calves'. This is a characteristic of modern farming. Killing is no longer done in the same place as the animals have been raised.

> Specialists emerged to cart animals to the slaughterhouse and thus separate the farmer from complicity in killing. Husbandry was a wholesome, caring, nurturing industry to be insulated from the stain of death and slaughter (Franklin: 1999: 41).

Figure 27. Mary Yule with one of her cows.

Keepers and stalkers, however, also do the killing as well as the raising of the animals and they still have the ability to separate out the two tasks. I found it disconcerting the first time I saw a stag being shot. As it lay on the ground, Alistair commented with satisfaction on its health and David, admired the quality of his 'first stag'; a stag only moments before, they had been admiring alive. I found that it was remarkably easy to attain a calm disinterest. When asked to reach in and pull out the intestines after Alistair had slit open the belly, I did it with an objective detachment. Later in the larder I helped weigh the stag and cut it up for storage, making sure that

the penis and backs of the ankles got put into the right bucket for export to Asia, without batting an eyelid. To me at that moment, the living animal was just an object.

Figure 28. Alistair helps David drag his 'first stag' into the larder.

Stuart, the mountaineer, when grouse beating, was taken aback by what he thought was Ian's callousness as he wrung the neck of a hare that had been injured by one of the dogs. However, there is no contradiction if one keeps in mind that they are operating according to their purpose, with the moral 'boundaries drawn in different ways, depending on how it suits' them (Ellen: 2000: 27).

Keepers and stalkers have a job to do and lines are drawn according to whatever aspect of that job they are engaged in at any given moment. They do not consider shooting animals as cruel. The stalkers go to considerable lengths to ensure that stags are shot 'clean'. If a guest does not kill the stag outright, then the stalker takes over and finishes off the job. When one of the steel executives only injured the stag, we approached the stag, now on its knees. The animal was dispatched in silence, Allan

clearly affected by having to look the animal in the eye. David said they want to kill the stag without it knowing what is coming; this situation was not how they wanted it to be.

Their anti-cruelty sentiments came through even more strongly in the 'driven' deer shoots. This involves walking through the forest in a line, driving any deer towards towers where the guns would be waiting. Afterwards, David told me how 'distasteful' he found it. He said this was because it is difficult to shoot a moving deer so the guns often just injured the deer and the stalkers would have to find the deer in the forest. He said once he followed a trail of blood for two hours before finding the deer. 'The deer shouldn't have to suffer like that', he told me.

The fact that animals can be cared for, yet killed can be partially explained by the way they fit into different categories. Leach (1964), outlines the different categories that the British adopt for their animals including wild animals, foxes, game, farm animals, pets and vermin. On Kinveachy Estate, the same species of animal could fit into a number of different categories all at the same time, depending on the context. When David is off work he often watches the deer for no particular reason except he likes watching them. Or he will admire birds of prey, usually seen as enemies of the keepers because they prey on the grouse. Frank, the sporting estate manager, had a pet stag that would frequently come 'visit' him at his house. When Alistair accidentally killed 'Donald' as part of his cull when he was a new stalker, he seriously feared for his job. He managed to save the situation by writing a poem, 'Ode to Donald', and presenting the poem and a box with Donald's antlers to Frank for his birthday. Young Alistair, son of John Brownlee, was very proud to show me his pet rabbits, Topsy and Cottontail, whilst at the same time having a pet ferret that killed rabbits regularly. They also had a pet pheasant, again odd for people on an estate where they raised pheasants for game. And juxtaposed in the yard were the corpses of dead rabbits that had been recently shot. The boy did not seem to find this at all disturbing.

Animals are classified according to their use value rather than their structural characteristics. Or rather, individual animals are classified according to their role at any one particular time as defined in the purpose of the work. Even pets are kept mainly for their contribution to the tasks being carried out. They become very close to

their dogs in particular. This closeness comes from the fact that human and animal work together on a day-to-day basis and the humans develop enormous respect for the skill of the animal. Billy was brought over from Northern Ireland regularly to help train the dogs. He himself has over 20 'bird' dogs. He said they stopped him from marrying until recently (he is in his 60s) because he preferred the company of his dogs to humans. He spends hours training them and this time spent means that he gets to know all their characteristics. After an afternoon spent with Billy and three of his dogs I could see how this could be the case. You learn things like how each one moves and whether or not they are cautious or rush into things. Even the way each one points is distinctive.

Animals may also be classified as 'vermin'. These animals undermine the very basis of the work being done on the land. According to Knight (2000: 3), this is an anthropomorphic, utilitarian term that arises when wild animals somehow threaten or undermine the resources that humans are trying to use for their own purposes. Rabbits are one of the main problems, and achieve the category of 'pest'. A large part of the keeper's time is spent shooting rabbits and building rabbit fences to keep them away from the grouse breeding areas. Shooting vermin is one the main objectives of walking in the hills with a gun. It is your purpose for being out. A rabbit can go from being a family pet to vermin, in the space of a few hundred meters, depending on the point at which the rabbit becomes a threat to the work of the keeper. Similarly with birds of prey. Though many admire them, estate workers bitterly resent their presence and have been known to kill them. This has been a major source of conflict with the neighbouring RSPB-owned Abernethy. Ian is convinced that their pro-birds of prey policies are responsible for killing young grouse on his 'patch'.

Hill walkers may enjoy the sight of the different forms of wildlife from stags to grouse to mountain hares, as do the keepers and stalkers. But for the latter, this enjoyment takes place firmly in the context of the land's purpose. Animals are part of the historical ecology of place. The sporting estate workers are aware of their own role in managing this ecology and have a greater knowledge of the history of that land. Creating the conditions for life, as well as taking life, are aspects of the same managed

ecology. Those who work on conservation reserves are also involved in this human-managed ecology. Wardens at Abernethy have a regular deer cull and Tom employed local farmers to shoot rabbits. Ian was building a rabbit fence on his patch at the same time as John and Ross were building one at Insh Marshes. In this respect conservationists who work on the land, unlike those who go birding as a hobby, have much in common with the keepers and stalkers on the sporting estates. However, it is their different purposes that distinguish them. Keepers and stalkers are raising animals to be killed and conservation managers have different objectives, thus creating different values.

CONCLUSION

The sense of place that emerges out of a livelihood-based relationship to the land has been shown to be distinctive in many respects from those of mountaineering and conservation. Whereas the latter's aim is to keep impact to a minimum, the land workers' reason for being on the land is to transform it into a garden, to 'make a mark', as the means to achieving their purpose of production. The term 'wild land' is used as an ideal to be pursued by both recreation and conservation organisations. For example, the Scottish Wild Land Group was formed 'in order to raise public awareness of the main threats posed to the wild character of Scotland's natural heritage' (SWLG: 2002). 'Wild land' is defined by the National Trust for Scotland as being 'relatively remote and inaccessible, not noticeably affected by contemporary human activity' (NTS: 2002). Though recognising that all land has been changed to some extent by humans, the goal is to let the flora and fauna on the land take its own course, as far as possible, without human intervention (Milton: 2000). Such a view is echoed in the work of some anthropologists and others writing in the field of human-environment relations. Seeing the earth as a human garden is thought to be the foundation for the anthropocentric values and practices that are thought to be the source of current environmental ills (White: 1967, Brody: 2001). This is juxtaposed with the hunter-gatherer cultures which, rather than trying to transform and subdue, are portrayed as living within

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nature as it is found, having minimum impact. Some anthropologists have tended to idealise the hunter-gatherer communities, stressing how people in non-western societies, unlike their counterparts in the West, see themselves as inseparable from nature. This can be seen in the work of Palsson (1996: 76-77) with his critique of 'orientalism' and his support for 'communalism', an approach to land in which people do not see the land just as an economic resource but as nothing less than life itself. My research in the Scottish Highlands shows that the setting up of these distinct paradigms (Palsson: 1996: 64, 76, 77) and assigning values to each, hunter-gatherers/communalism = good, agriculturalists/orientalism = bad, is an oversimplification of human intervention on the land. The land workers whose everyday work is a constant struggle to manage and guide nature for particular ends, would argue, like historical ecologists, that the mutual influence of people and non-human nature is an inevitable part of the ecology of the planet. And, rather than damaging the environment, they are actually enhancing it. What they do could be called 'resource management which, according to Balee (1998), is 'the human manipulation of inorganic and organic components of the environment that brings about a net environmental diversity greater than that of the so-called pristine conditions with no human presence' (p. 19).

The farmers and sporting estate workers would be able to identify with the historical ecology approach in that they would question whether it is human intervention as such which is at the root of environmental ills. Balee (1998: 14) argues that humans have always intervened in their environment, transforming it to suit their needs. Therefore, to set up an ideal of untouched, pristine nature is futile. The Scottish Highlands have been worked over for centuries and to rid the land of grouse and deer, as is sometimes recommended, in order to achieve some kind of imagined wilderness is strongly opposed by the stalkers and keepers I encountered in my research. Balee (1998: 19) also argues that to assume that humans are biologically pre-disposed to either destructive or harmonious relations with the environment is ill founded. Human beings have done both. This contention would be supported by estate workers and farmers who feel that by adopting the correct land management practices, their work

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enhances the quality of the environment. They take issue with the conservation ideal of 'wild land', existing separately from humans. Instead, the land workers' view is that the life of the land is part of a carefully balanced process of human interaction and intervention. They do not believe that they are guilty of damaging the environment. Rather, they would argue that they have contributed to biodiversity and the health of the land. This supports the findings of historical ecologists who argue, in opposition to the arguments of anthropologists such as Palsson (1996), Brody (2001) and Croll and Parkin (1993: 3,8,28), that non-western peoples have indeed contributed to biodiversity, not because they had minimum impact but because they *did* intervene (Balee: 1998).

However, farmers and sporting estate workers are in many ways seen as 'out of 'sync' with current environmental discourses, as well as with current economic, political, and ecological realities. According to Moran (2000) in his study of the Amazon, individuals operate in a history of past resource use and the customs relating to that environment may or may not reflect current conditions. According to those coming from a recreation and conservation approach, this is indeed the case for farmers, keepers and stalkers. This possibility, that the land workers have 'got it wrong', together with their very different sense of place, carries within it the seeds of potential conflict. In the following chapter I will examine how these conflicts have unfolded in the context of the Cairngorms.

CHAPTER SIX

DISPUTES

INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters have outlined how, through practical, active and embodied engagement with the land, people construct a sense of place. This process takes place at the level of the individual but it is also crucially a social process. The individual learns the activity through doing it with other people. This apprenticeship involves both an 'opening out' as the individual's perceptions are tuned in to previously unnoticed affordances in the environment, and a 'closing off' of other perceptions as the individual is disciplined to give attention only to that which is relevant to the chosen activity. In addition, the activities take place within a historical ecological context, influencing the meaning and interpretation given to the activities. The result of these processes is a tendency for people to have a particular approach to land use, which can be marked off from others. In other words, the experiences people have within a particular physical and social environment create both a sense of place and a sense of who they are in relation to others. This then allows for the possibility of establishing boundaries between groups (Barth: 2000: 21). According to Lund (nd):

> It is thus knowledge gained through moving through different spatial/temporal environments, which determine how they place nature and themselves in it. It is evident that people not only place themselves in nature but also situate other people in relation to it, which establishes the boundaries between the groups (p. 9).

Just as the individual becomes part of the group, so the group is part of a wider social, economic and political context, structuring how the groups relate to each other. These groups may, in certain circumstances, become more than loose identities and form into 'interest groups' that have the potential to come into conflict with each

other. In this way, relations with the natural environment provide the basis for which wider social and political identities are formed (Bender: 1993). As Braun and Castree (1998) argue, nature is always more than just nature but also a 'focal point for a nexus of political-economic relations, social identities, cultural orderings and political aspirations of all kinds' (p. 5). However, these identities are fluid, 'contingent on the circumstances and relative positions of significant others' (Cohen: 2000: 3). This chapter examines what 'circumstances' contribute to the formation of these bounded groups with self-identified 'interests' that are opposed to each other, by considering two disputes in order to illustrate, on a micro level, this process of moving from a sense of place to being part of an interest group. These micro conflicts then provide the grounding for examining, in Chapter Seven, a much larger conflict between two polarised sides, local livelihood versus outside conservation/recreation interests. The two disputes concern the use of the river by anglers and canoeists and the conflict between conservationists and land workers over deer numbers.

'THE SPEY AIN'T BIG ENOUGH FOR THE BOTH OF US': CONFLICT BETWEEN ANGLERS AND CANOEISTS

> They were all waiting for the moment when the fish would catch. This moment was described by Chris, the consultant physician, as 'electric'. Lionel, the head ghillie from Kinveachy, said it was 'magical' and told stories of casting his line and the fish leaping out of the water, 'an amazing experience that makes it all worthwhile'. You have to let the fish run, and then slowly draw it in. It is at this point that they have a relationship with the fish and the adrenaline surges. They don't seem to mind the fact that they have to wait a long time for that moment. Chris says he enjoys just being in the river, in such a beautiful spot, seeing the bird life, totally immersed in the activity.

Figure 29. A fishing tenant enjoys a peaceful moment on the Spey.

I first thought that paddling on white water was just sitting tight. But on the Findhorn we got a real taste of the sport. All the practice of manoeuvring the canoe had to be in earnest. I kept worrying about what was around the corner. Shaun, the Glenmore Lodge instructor, just kept saying 'it gets better'. The first 'better' rapid involved a manoeuvre around various boulders and then a sharp left, through a narrow gorge. There was this wall coming at me that I just managed to avoid, my paddle touching the wall. It was exhilarating! And then there was the relief as I break out into the eddy. I thought the worst was over but I was wrong. The next 'better' rapid looked ok from the top with just a few shallow boulders and slowish waters, but as I got closer, the speed picked up and the boulders got bigger. I was heading for a narrow gap between two boulders, worrying about the waterfall further ahead. I missed the gap, ended up on top of one of the boulders, teetered and capsized. Next thing I knew I emerged from the water to see that I had gone upside down right over the waterfall! I decided to have another go, took my boat out of the water and dragged it back up to the top of the rapids. I sat in the kayak feeling terrified but determined. I headed off,

came close to that left boulder again but just glanced off it. I was now in the pool below and heading on course for the water chute. I knew I would make it now and just relaxed and enjoyed the ride.

Figure 30. Shaun negotiates the rapids.

From the above accounts, it is difficult to see that the two activities are taking place on the same river. One is mostly quiet and sedate, a scene of peace and tranquillity, with the only interruption being the occasional appearance of a fish. The other is one of rushing rapids, intense effort and speed, with the moments of calm and relaxation the exception. In fact, each activity values different parts of the river. Rapids are sought out by the canoeists. The entire length of the river is divided up into graded segments according to the difficulty of the rapids. The fishers, on the other hand, look for quiet pools where the fish will lurk. These activities should take place in separate locations. However, canoeists cannot go from one set of rapids to another; theirs is a river journey that encompasses all parts of the river. In addition, pools or eddies are needed for rest. It is here where the conflict lies. The ghillies and their

fishing guests argue that the canoeists scare off the fish. The canoeists argue that the fishers are rude and hostile, sometimes throwing things at them.

An even greater issue is the raft trips that are organised for groups by the outdoor centres. We were sitting quietly on the bank, getting ready to 'put in', watching some tenants fishing on the Spey, when four minibuses pulled up. They unloaded their excited teenagers immediately behind a woman fishing. The anticipation of the adventure they were about to have made them extremely noisy and contrasted sharply with the calm of a few minutes earlier. Eventually the woman moved and I could just imagine what she would be reporting back to the ghillie, further fuelling the already hostile relations between the two groups.

Because the canoeists and anglers are both in the same space, the individuals involved are more likely to see themselves as a group in contrast to another group. And, because their respective sports not only engage with the river differently but have contrasting ways of behaving whilst on and around the river, this leads to the perception that they are fundamentally incompatible. Particular incidents reinforce this group identity. However, these interactions have shaped and been shaped by the wider context. As isolated disputes become part of a generalised debate on use of the rivers, both groups mobilise discourses that become part of particular encounters between canoeists and anglers. These more self-conscious interactions, in which individuals see themselves as one group in conflict with another group, further fuel the process of interest group formation. I will now use my data to illustrate how particular events are intertwined with discourses on land ownership, such that individual disputes on the river are drawn into the public arena, becoming conflicts between two 'interest groups' rather than just two different senses of place.

Genealogy of Dispute

One aspect of the dispute concerns the 'facts'. The anglers believe that objectively, canoeists are disturbing the fish. Canoeists argue that these facts are

'wrong'. Disagreement over facts takes on such significance because of the wider context in which the dispute is unfolding. The salmon population in many Scottish rivers has reached a critically low level. The reasons behind this were the topic of conversation over lunch on the day I was out with the ghillies and their tenants. They could not reach agreement as to the main cause but they include factors such as seal numbers, fishing trawlers in the North Sea and fish farms. The problem was only too obvious to this group of tenants. Ten of them had been there almost a week and had only managed to catch three salmon. The ghillies were very sensitive, understandably, to the disappointed mood of the tenants. Would they continue to come back if they had had no success this year? One man said he had caught nothing for five years but kept coming back. Others, however, may not be so committed. One man said that Alaska is becoming a popular destination because they would be guaranteed a good catch.

It is within this context, then, that we must understand the antagonism to canoeists. As with other conflicts over wildlife (Knight: 2000: 20), it is the people at the 'margins', those whose position is precarious, who are most hostile to the presence of 'predators'. Ghillies may not threaten to shoot canoeists as predators but the situation is similar. If the fish were plentiful, then a canoeist doing turns in a pool wouldn't be seen as such a problem, but in a situation in which the tenants may not have caught a fish all week, then that canoeist may be disturbing the one fish waiting to be caught.

Disputes between canoeists and anglers have their roots in the wider historical context. The key issue is illustrated by the following comment from Lionel:

> The agreement is supposed to be that canoeists have navigational rights one way, downstream, and that they need to get permission for doing these turns from the ghillie because they involve more than just going one way. But he (the canoeist) acted like he had a God-given right to be there. The river can be for both but it is the canoeists who must ask permission from the ghillies.

This illustrates the fundamental divide; the ghillies believe that they and their tenants have more 'right' to be there because they are the ones who are part of the

estate, the legal landowner. The ghillies, like the stalkers and gamekeepers, have a 'livelihood' sense of place. They see themselves as belonging to the land because of their role in managing and looking after their 'garden'. Lionel lives on the riverbank on his 'beat'. The tenants are on the river as paying guests of the landowner. The canoeists are only there under sufferance. As a result of this particular legal and social position, the ghillies and their guests have adopted certain discourses, part of the more generalised ideology of private property, in order to legitimise their being on the river. It is the group identity of a 'producing, income-generating local', together with the belief in the sanctity of private property, which justifies fishing. On the other hand, the canoeists have mobilised their own discourses. They really do think that they have a 'God-given right'. As I heard from many canoeists, similar to mountaineers, 'how can anyone 'own' a river?' There is a very real and immediate dispute, but to understand the basis of the day-to-day antagonism, it is necessary to examine the contrasting discourses on land ownership as expressed within the institutional and historical framework (Mels: 1999) in Scotland.

Figure 31. Lionel gives his tenants some advice.

Owning the River

Land ownership in Scotland is the most highly concentrated in Europe and more concentrated than even Brazil (Cramb: 1996, Callender: 1998, Wightman: 1997, 1999). 'In a country of 19 million acres and 5 million people, a mere 1252 landowners (0.025 percent of the population) own two-thirds of the privately-owned rural land' (Wightman: 1999: 29). And in the Highlands, 'fully half of the private land, over 3.6 million acres, is owned by fewer than 100 landowners and three-quarters of it owned by around 300' (1999: 30). And, much of this land has been bought by the rich in order to pursue particular leisure interests associated with their social class, namely shooting and fishing. This is the legacy of the economic and social transformations outlined in the last chapter. 'This country has become a haven for the rich because it has been emptied of people' (Short: 1991: 75).

The Seafield estate, within which lies Kinveachy, is typical of the Highland estate. The current Lord Seafield, the 13th to hold the title (Cramb: 1996: 177), owns the land and has absolute power over it. For the ghillies and their tenants, this ownership is not something they question. However, it is not just this 'jural' aspect of the land (Abramson: 2000) that underlies the passion that the ghillies and tenants feel about their 'right' to be there. Instead, it is what Abramson calls 'mythic' land, which refers more to the symbolic aspect of land, in which people associating the land with particular meanings and values. In the case of the Scottish Highlands, landowners present themselves as part of Highland tradition. It is a form of what Hobsbawm (1983) calls 'invented tradition' which 'seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past' (p. 1). This was seen in the last chapter with Queen Victoria's popularisation of the sporting estate. Short (1991) calls this the making of the 'Highland myth'. Ghillies, as do the stalkers and keepers, see themselves as keepers of this tradition.

The ghillies' claim to belong on the land is the result of both their activities on the land and the cultural context. Their everyday work of looking after the land and managing it for a productive purpose is embedded in tradition. In their view, canoeists

do not have the right to be on the river to the same extent that they do for several reasons. Firstly, from the jural perspective, the canoeists do not own the land and therefore do not have the same legitimacy as they who have expressly been put there by the legal owner. Secondly, they are involved in a traditional activity that has mythic significance for the Highlands and Scottish identity, whereas the canoeists are not. In other words, they have the legitimacy of history behind them. However, the use of the word 'mythic' could be misleading. It is not that these land workers just see their being there as having symbolic importance. As was seen in the previous chapter, they believe that their traditional activities bring material benefits to the land. The stalker Alistair criticises walkers and mountain bikers for wanting to have access but put 'nothing back', whilst he and the other estate workers maintain the tracks and paths. Similarly Lionel argues that he lives and works on the river so it is his 'responsibility'. The canoeists come for a 'one-off' trip, showing no long-term commitment and giving nothing back to the river.

Freedom to Roam

The canoeing instructors, Shaun and Claire, say that the conflict with anglers is a regular feature of a canoeing trip. They make a point of moving to the other side of the river and asking the ghillie the best way to move past. But sometimes, the river is so narrow that there is no choice but to ask the fishers to take their lines in. This provokes much hostility. Shaun has had rocks thrown at him in the past. Claire says both groups are using the river and should be able to get along, but the problem is that landowners think that the sport they do should have 'first option'. Shaun is willing to give in to the ghillies up to a point. He said 'if they give a good reason why I can't go down a stretch of river, like salmon spawning, then I won't go down. But if they are just being bloody-minded, then I'll insist on passing.' An instructor from an outdoor centre told me of all the access problems he had on the rivers, saying the ghillies have 'Victorian values'.

The resentment felt by canoeists such as Claire and Shaun is the basis for the public debates over river access at a public level. In other words, the personal 'history' of Claire and Shaun is linked to wider struggles (Holland and Lave: 2001: 9). Canoeing organisations have challenged the landowners' 'right' to refuse passage by mobilising the discourse of 'freedom to roam' that walkers and climbers have used so effectively in their campaigns to expand access. They have recently been motivated to step up their campaign because of the new access rights given over land. 'There are 300 Welsh rivers and only six have some kind of access agreement. We want to paddle these rivers just the way ramblers can walk in the countryside' (BBC Countryside Files: January 16th, 2005).

At the public level, the dispute between fishing and canoeing is represented as being a conflict between different attitudes towards land ownership and access. This has a long history in Scotland, often related directly back to the Clearances (Chenevix-Trench and Philip: 2001). Whereas landowners mobilise the myth of tradition and their role as guardians of the land, those campaigning for wider access state that 'the land belongs to the people'. This can be seen in many of the arguments for land reform in Scotland.

> Culturally, land and its ownership and use have shaped the outlook of the people of Scotland. Contemporary debates about land ownership are a clear expression of a deep-seated feeling, unaffected by two centuries of urbanisation, for the land. Whether expressed as national pride in landscape and wildlife or anger at abuses to land, the concerns are real and widely expressed in poems, books, music and plays' (Wightman: 1999: 1).

The fight against anglers can be interpreted as part of the general struggle to reclaim the land in the name of the people. In the views of canoeists, though the fishers are paying clients in the same way people pay Glenmore Lodge instructors, the difference lies in the fact that salmon fishing is an upper class sport, fostered and protected by the landowners. According to Robbie Nichol in an article supporting the canoeist position, the fact that access has to be negotiated with landowners 'masks an extraordinary absence of the natural heritage which each one of us is born with' (1999:

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13). In this way, canoeists can also use the discourse of 'tradition' to legitimate their claims.

Though there is an element of 'imagination' (McCrone: 1992, Macdonald: 1997) in the way tradition is used, the different claims are based on material and class differences. Shaun legitimises his claim for the right to be on the river by stressing how in terms of history, kayaking is very old. He mentions the Inuit and Rob Roy. This could be seen as romanticising kayaking and therefore part of the 'landscape of the mind' (McCrone: 1992: 16), but at the same time, there have been very real conflicts over land ownership between Highlanders and the new landowners who imposed new regulations on the use of land by ordinary people. The Spey itself was the object of a court case in which Clive Freshwater, one of the first canoeing instructors in the area, took landowners all the way to the House of Lords in order to establish that historically there had been a 'right' to navigate the Spey. Such historic rights have also been used by the Scottish Rights of Way society to establish routes that had been used historically by local people to travel from one place to another.

The two groups therefore mobilise different mythic views of land in their conflict over access to the river. These views can be seen in the actual encounters on the river, but only becoming fully articulated at the public level as part of a general debate (Holland and Lave: 2001). Until recently, the landowners' view of land has been predominant. However, with the changes that have taken place in the economy and politically, those who argue for the freedom to roam have gained a power base and are now in a position to challenge the dominant ideology. Power relations determine which myths become part of the national identity (Daniels: 1993) and because there is currently a power struggle, both myths are co-existing as part of Scottish identity.

The conflict is further complicated by the social origins of the people making the claims to tradition and rights. Both sides make claims to these rights on the basis of 'belonging'. Landowners and their employees stress that many of those using the river or the hills for recreation are 'outsiders' and therefore don't belong. This is reinforced by the fact that the land workers live and work on the land, unlike the canoeists and mountaineers, who come as visitors, 'consuming' the river, and then leaving. The

canoeists, on the other hand, as well as land reform campaigners, point to the fact that landowners originally took the land from the local people and that it is the descendants of these Clearance victims who are coming back from the urban areas to enjoy what should be their land. Moreover, they can also use the number of foreign and absentee landowners to strengthen their case.

However, the issue is further complicated by the increasing number of instructors, who work on the river in the same way as ghillies. Instructors, both in the river and on the hills, argue that they have as much right to make a living out of the land as the ghillies. What delegitimises their claim in the eyes of the ghillies and other estate workers, is that outdoor instructors are not working for the landowner. They are using the river but not contributing to its upkeep. In addition, outdoor instructors are largely 'incomers', new to the area and therefore do not 'belong' in the same way as the ghillies do. The guests of the ghillies may be visitors just like the canoeists, but they are *invited guests*, of the legitimate owner of the land. The fact that these 'guests' are wealthy and part of the same class as the landowners reinforces their legitimacy. As discussed in Chapter Five, the sporting estate originally was a place for the owner and his friends to enjoy shooting and fishing. Only recently have estates opened their doors to wealthy guests who pay.

A similar analysis can be made with reference to disputes between hill walkers and keepers and stalkers who also occupy the same space, but on opposites 'sides' of the ownership divide. A number of walkers commented on problems they had on certain estates in the area. These individual incidents form part of the general conflict at a national level over access legislation. The arguments are very similar to the ones made by ghillies and canoeists. Hill walkers demand the 'right' to roam and estate workers insist that the hills are a place of work, such that deer stalking and grouse shooting take precedent over leisure activities. At a national level, a hill phone system has been established in the stalking season so that walkers can phone to find out what areas to avoid. However, many walkers resent that their activities have to take second place to the activities sponsored by the landowners. Kevin, a regular visitor to the area from Fife, recounted an incident in which he was out in the remote hills on a backpacking trip

with his children. They had been swimming in a stream when 'two posh English women' came up to them and told them, 'you are disturbing our fish which we have paid for'. Kevin's children told them to 'go back to their own country' and then wrote the incident up in the events book in the mountain bothy where they stayed that night. Kevin's story illustrates how issues of who 'belongs' are used in both 'sides' of the debate, furthering the construction of distinct interest groups.

The dispute between canoeists and ghillies and their fishing tenants, as with hill walkers and stalkers, has its origins in their different senses of place, arising out of different activities. The fact that they are using the same space in different ways may cause one activity to interfere with the other. However, this problem over space need not necessarily take the form of an on-going dispute over land use. Skiers and mountaineers also inhabit the same space on Cairngorm and in the Aonoch Mor ski area near Fort William. Mountaineers walk through the area on the way to climbs. There is a potential for a dispute because walking on the runs can ruin the pisting. However, though ski operators may reprimand walkers, there is no dispute on the level seen with canoeists and anglers. There is no sense of one group having more of a right to be there than others. However, with the canoeists and ghillies, as with hill walkers and stalkers, the two senses of place clash because of differing perceptions on land ownership and tradition. It is a dispute about who has the 'right' to be on the river or on the hill.

The canoeists from Glenmore Lodge generally accepted the 'rules' of the ghillies, asking for permission. This led to a smooth passage down the river. The rafting group from the outdoor centre did not and have potentially fuelled future conflict. The fact that private land ownership is being challenged by the canoeists and hill walkers, who advocate a 'freedom to roam and to paddle' and mobilise a discourse of 'land to the people', has caused a disagreement between two activities to become a more generalised conflict that is increasingly manifested in the wider public arena. Hill walkers campaigned for years for access legislation and now canoeists have done the same (BBC: Countryside Files: January 16th, 2005). The results of their efforts in Scotland (not in England and Wales) has been the inclusion of 'inland' water' into the general access legislation that came into effect on March 2005. This issue of who has

the 'right' to be on the land, in other words who 'belongs', wrapped up with struggles over tradition, will become a crucial feature of the conflict to be examined in the next chapter.

DEER VERSUS TREES: WHO BELONGS?

In the same way as the activities of fishing and canoeing give rise to tensions between individuals and groups with contrasting ideas about the land, arguments about deer numbers and native tree regeneration highlight antagonisms between individuals and groups that can be understood in terms of the contrasting priorities created by conservation and livelihood senses of place.

Walking for the first time with Alan and George of the Strathspey Mounatain Club, we were ascending a hill in Glen Affric and Alan stopped to point out the fence that was running parallel to us up the hillside. He said that this marked the boundary between land owned by a conservation body and a sporting estate. He said it represented two types of land management. The sporting estate owner had put the fences up to stop deer getting into any new tree areas, without having to reduce deer numbers. The conservation body didn't believe in fences; they just reduced the deer numbers. This was the first of many conversations over the next months concerning what to do about deer.

As I have shown in previous chapters, it is possible to distinguish between conservation and livelihood senses of place. This difference in perception and attitudes toward the land lies behind the conflict over red deer. It is not only a question of different groups having different *representations* of deer (Lorimer: 2004: 4). Rather, I have stressed that is how people *live* their relationship with the environment that is most significant (Walley: 2004: 141-142). It is this lived practice that can, in certain circumstances, give rise to distinct representations and discourse. Therefore, though

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the source of the dispute lies in these different senses of place, the dispute itself, occurring at a public level, has created distinct discourses and representations of nature that have become associated with identifiable interest groups. These discourses are then in turn taken up by individuals and used to argue for a particular perspective. In this section I show how individuals, who have come to identify themselves as 'conservationists', have publicly clashed with other individuals who have also developed a public identity in opposition. I will show how the public conflict reinforces identity as a particular interest group and also how this disagreement begins to take the form of an outsider versus local conflict.
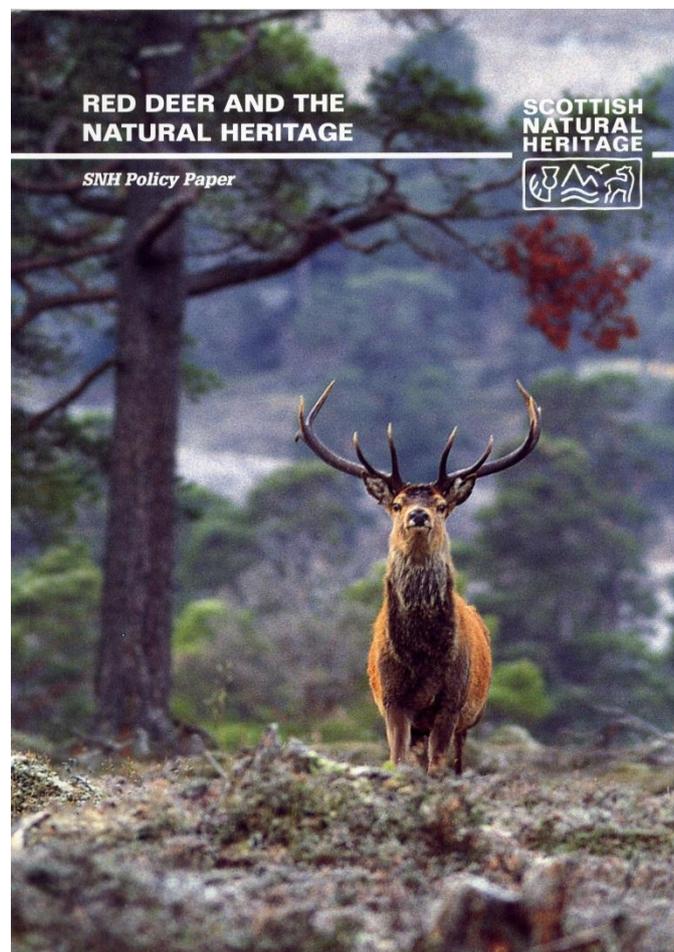
Figure 32. Scottish Natural Heritage asks whether the red deer are compatible with native tree regeneration.

The dispute over red deer emerged in both my face-to-face fieldwork encounters and in public debates and documents. George and Alan talked extensively about the 'problem' of deer on the week-end in Glen Affric that I described above. Their interest was prompted by the fact that conservation organisations are trying to encourage native tree regeneration in the area. This is accomplished by dramatically reducing deer numbers as overgrazing is thought to be the cause of deforestation. Sporting estate mangers do not want to reduce the numbers to the same extent and therefore prefer to put up fences rather than kill so many deer. George said that Scotland had once been covered with trees and that the current state of Glen Affric was not 'natural'. He said that conifer plantations are also not natural and that native tree regeneration would not mean rows and rows of trees but that the trees would be more 'randomly dispersed' with 'open spaces' between the trees.

George is assigning a particular value to native trees by calling them 'natural'. This view accords with the 'wild land' ethic I discussed in the preceding chapter. This wild land has intrinsic value. Roy Turnbull, a member of the local conservation group and the John Muir Trust, regularly voiced this opinion at meetings. He attacked those who use an argument based upon 'preserving for the next generation'. He says, 'we need to care for the land for its own sake'. These arguments are part of an eco-centric environmental discourse, which blames environmental destruction on human intervention and domination (Pepper: 1996, Peterson: 2001, Hay: 2002). A key part of creating wild land is to restore the land to its pre-human state as much as is possible.

> What gives the distinction between human and non-human processes a greater importance for conservationists is the fact that 'naturalness', in the sense of freedom from human interference, is seen as a quality worth conserving in itself (Milton: 2000: 240-41).

George and Roy's views contrast with the land ethos of the livelihood sense of place. At a meeting with the local landowner Jamie Williamson, Roy asked him why he did not just set aside one patch of land and just let it be, not do anything *to* it. This

was an alien concept to the landowner who, like the workers in the previous chapter, conceives of the land as a garden, there to be cultivated and used to produce something. He could not understand why he would possibly not want to make productive use out of his land. For him and other land workers, the land has extrinsic value, based on its output. Speaking at an educational conference designed to teach 'townies' about the countryside, he said:

> For most of our population, our countryside is seen as a place for recreation, relaxation and dumping litter. Or somewhere to be preserved like an artefact in a museum. Or even restored to some romantic past. Relatively few seem to appreciate the link between making our living in primary production and the landscape we have today (Maxwell: 2000).

The foundation for the conflict between deer and trees lies in these contrasting views of the land's purpose. For the conservation sense of place, trees represent what the land would have been without human interference and therefore they need to be restored as a point of principle. For those working on the sporting estates, deer have been put there by humans for a purpose and now also belong, enhancing the land as a place of production. The land workers in this case have the unknowing support of many walkers and climbers who enjoy seeing deer. This corresponds to their own particular sense of place where they notice and appreciate what enhances their own personal experience on the land.

Land Workers versus Conservationists in Glen Feshie

In the spring of 2004 stalkers and gamekeepers came from around Scotland to Glen Feshie in order to protest against what they saw as a 'barbaric' cull of deer, including pregnant hinds. They presented their case as an animal welfare issue, but their reasons for protesting are much broader and have their origin in an ongoing battle with both local and national conservationists who want to dramatically reduce the number of deer in Glen Feshie, targeted because it contains remnants of the native

Scots Pine forest. Many groups would like to expand the pockets of trees to cover a much larger part of the glen. However, Glen Feshie is also home to many deer, which often stray into the glen from neighbouring estates. The estate itself has seen a variety of owners, most recently Danish, who have bought the estate for the purposes of maintaining it as a sporting estate and therefore do not necessarily want to reduce the number of deer. However, government money is available for taking measures to encourage regeneration. Until the recent extensive cull, the preferred option had been to put up deer fences to protect the areas where regeneration was to be encouraged. This option, however, has always met with hostility from many conservationists who argue that the fences are a menace to the capercaillie, another native species that is endangered.

This conflict takes place largely between those with a conservation sense of place and those who work on the land. Those who come to the Highlands for recreation have mixed views depending on how influenced they are by conservation discourses. The conflict over what to do about deer numbers and whether to take down fences is played out in the public arena, as well as in informal private conversations. It encapsulates many important concerns of environmental anthropology, including what counts as knowledge, the relationship between 'facts' and 'values', and debates around what is defined as 'natural' and the relationship between social and cultural factors in the construction and mobilisation of these definitions.

Knowledge: Battle over Facts

In Chapter Five, I showed how stalkers, keepers and farmers resent the accusations, made by some conservationists, that their practices cause harm to the environment. In this case, they oppose the proposition that the deer are a problem. They agree that some culling is necessary but that fences are adequate to deal with the problem of deer eating the young shoots. They do not believe that the fences do any harm to capercaillie. Moreover, they argue that taking down fences has caused a

number of problems. In a letter to the local paper the landowner Jamie Williamson writes:

> Climate change, a reduction in sheep numbers and the removal or lack of maintenance of deer fences has resulted in red deer expanding their range and increasing their reproductive potential. In Glen Feshie, damage of farm groups and deer competing with winter feed for cattle is also an issue. The problem has been created by the Forestry Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage removing or failing to maintain deer fencing. As a result deer have moved onto farmland (Strathspey and Badenoch Herald: April 15, 2004).

On the other hand, conservationists, many of whom have extensive knowledge of the capercaillie are adamant that these fences are a major cause of deaths for both capercaillie and blackcock and therefore have to be removed and the deer culled instead. The Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group (BSCG) published the findings of what they call 'a leading authority on capercaillie in Scotland'.

> There are two main reasons for the decline of capercaillie. First, the bird is rearing fewer young than in the 1970s. Second, the adult birds' main single cause of death is flying into forest fences. The scientific evidence shows that, with no deaths from fences, the decline could be reversed (Moss: 2000).

This difference in interpretation of the 'facts' is illustrated by the visit of the BSCG and the local John Muir Trust group to Mar Lodge Estate on the southern side of the Cairngorms. This estate is unusual in that it is a former traditional sporting estate that has been taken over by the National Trust for Scotland and is being managed for conservation objectives, including native tree regeneration. However, for various pragmatic reasons, according to the head ranger, they have continued with guest stalking rather than just culling the deer all themselves. He admits that they could cull more deer if they just went and shot them without the guests, but that for both financial and political reasons, such as maintaining the support of the original staff, they have carried on with the traditional practices. Because they have not managed to get deer numbers significantly low, deer fences have had to remain in order to protect

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the new trees. This was going to be an issue for debate as we went on our walk around the estate as we had with us Dick Balharry, current chair of the John Muir Trust and one of the most vocal opponents of deer fencing, and Gus Jones of the BSCG who has been monitoring the situation with capercaillie for many years. Both are passionate about the importance of preserving native species. Gus has studied everything from butterflies to ants and led a major campaign to stop building on land that was home to several species of rare butterflies. Dick is a former gamekeeper who left his job after an incident with the head keeper. Dick had a reputation for rescuing injured birds such as crows when he was supposed to shoot them as pests. One day, his favourite 'pet' crow escaped and flew through a window into the house where the head keeper was having tea with the vicar. Chaos ensued and Dick was sacked. Since then he metamorphosed into a 'conservationist' (though he himself refuses to label himself) and has devoted his life to what he calls 'restoring the land'. Both Gus and Dick are convinced that deer fences are not the way forward to protect the trees because of the threat they represent to capercaillie. On our walk around the estate we soon crossed our first deer fence. Gus was aghast. He would not accept the explanations put forward by the ranger and just said, 'How many capercaillie have to die before the fences come down?' For Gus and Dick, there is no room for compromise. The capercaillie are an endangered species and are native to Scotland. Therefore they must be preserved at all costs. Dick argued with the ranger's interpretation of the facts. He said that research done by checking 'hits' on the fence is an underestimate of the number of casualties and that many will not show up. The rest of the group supported Dick and Gus, another example of how a particular discourse becomes established and disciplines the way the group perceives the environment. This became apparent when I dropped back from the group with Robert. He is a retired vet and though very informed on conservation issues is not employed in that capacity. He admitted that he disagreed with the majority and thought that deer fences were the only way or it would take too long to regenerate. He said, 'It's not ideal but there are so many problems with taking them down. Of course I wouldn't say this in front of Dick Balharry!' Robert's views are not necessarily incompatible with having a conservation sense of place. For example,

Justin Dillon, Chair of London Wildlife Trust writes, 'As protectors of biodiversity we should ask if there is a scientific reason why "non-native" means bad' (LWT Journal: Spring: 2004). However, in this case, his comment mirrors that of the estate workers themselves rather than the conservation group he belongs to. In this sense he is somewhat of an anomaly, something that will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Eight.

Figure 33. Dick asks Peter from Mar Lodge why they still have deer fences.

I let the others continue on their walk and went to find one of the workers who had worked on the estate before the change of ownership to the National Trust. My conversation with Robbie, who had worked on the estate for over 30 years, presented a very different view of the 'facts'. He talked as authoritatively as did Gus and Dick about why deer fences had to remain. He said that the only way they could get deer numbers down is to make a big effort and have no guests at all. It would still be a huge operation as deer numbers are high due to mild winters. Also, they are in places that are difficult to get to. He says, 'The deer are just too resilient'.

Both sides are convinced of their 'facts'. The problem is exacerbated by the different social positions of the two groups and the sources of their knowledge. As in disputes in other parts of the world (see for example Bashivar: 2000 and Walley: 2004), locals like Robbie resent being told by perceived 'outside experts', such as Gus

and Dick, that practices they have traditionally pursued are damaging the environment. And, the conservationists who have devoted years to studying and learning about particular species do not understand how these local land workers can be so unwilling to listen to the them. As one member of the conversation group, who happens to be an English 'incomer', said during the visit, 'people like Dick and Gus are needed to educate people that just don't understand.'

Land workers expect this kind of comment from incomers. As I discussed in Chapter Five, the knowledge they have, based on over 30 years of experience in the case of Robbie on Mar Lodge, is thought not to be valued by those who work professionally in the field of conservation. Such resentment can be seen in the following quote from the local paper (known as 'the Strathy') letters page concerning whether or not sheep and deer 'overgraze'. This is just one example of the many exchanges between these two protagonists. Gus Jones had written in to the paper, outlining the arguments of various studies that had found overgrazing to be a problem for tree regeneration. The following letter was written response from a shepherd who has been living and working in Glen Feshie for decades, arguing that it is the mismanagement of conservationists, not sheep, which have led to the environment being 'ruined'.

> When I first noticed the name of Mr. Gus Jones, he was writing about trees in the Strathy. In fact he was writing about the lack of them in what he called treeless Badenoch and Strathspey. I immediately thought what a ridiculous statement from an obviously ignorant incomer/would-be conservationist.
>
> The truth, whether Mr. Jones and his ilk like it or not, is that the greatest disaster for all bird life, wildlife and hill life has been the arrival and misunderstanding of conservationists.
>
> D.W. Ross, Leault Farm, Kincraig
> Badenoch and Strathspey Herald: December 16th, 2004

The debate over the facts is entangled with *who* presents *which* facts. Roy, Gus and Dick, coming from a naturalist or conservation approach, use scientific discourses as a way of presenting the facts, what Ellen (2000) calls 'expert knowledge'. This knowledge gets defined as such because of the way it is presented, citing studies and research, but also because of who says it. Because Roy and Gus in particular are English, their knowledge gets categorised in a particular way, as 'outside experts' knowledge. Once this has been done, then this knowledge can be dismissed. Local knowledge is also categorised in a particular way by conservationists. Local knowledge cannot be objective because it is bound up with particular groups' vested interests, in this case, the maintenance of a particular occupation and way of life. Therefore, this knowledge cannot be trusted. Letters to the Editor, because they are public, and are motivated by opposition to something, play an important role in creating entrenched positions and defining interest groups. And, by linking the differences in opinion to particular social positions, local or incomer, the letters create a particular framework for the debate. These issues will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Native and Natural: What Belongs?

> Nature conservationists, by definition, conserve what is natural and without an understanding of what is natural and what is not, they would have no basis for taking decisions about what issues to become involved in (Milton: 2000: 240).

A key feature of the conflict over facts is the question of what is 'natural'. One of the main ways of defining what is natural in this context is to include all species that are deemed 'native' (Milton: 2000: 240-241). Such reasoning involves a value judgement. To say a species is native is to say 'we should encourage its growth'; to say a species is alien, means 'it must be eradicated'. This is a form of boundary maintenance. Native species contribute to the purity and therefore health of the land,

whereas alien species 'pollute' (Milton: 2000: 237-239). The argument for native tree regeneration is based on this belief, that native means natural and that natural is good. The debate also involves questioning the role of human intervention. To what extent can humans change their environment without affecting its ability to support human life. Sheep and deer have been introduced by humans, so they are in some respects both domestic animals. Domesticated animals have a different status than wild animals (Lien: 2004) and therefore there is disagreement about their effect on the 'natural' ecology of the land. Some, like the shepherd from Glen Feshie or the landowner Jamie Williamson, argue that these animals have contributed to the well-being of the land and people. Gus and Dick, coming from a conservation sense of place, see this particular intervention as destructive, making it difficult for what is 'natural' to flourish. Each side also holds different criteria for evaluating the presence of these animals. As shown in the previous chapter, the livelihood sense of place stresses the importance of the land in providing for human needs.

When I was out walking with Alan, we discussed the landscape around us. We could see nothing but grouse moors and bare hills. I was explaining to him how John on Kinveachy saw these moors as beautiful, especially when he could see evidence of heather

burning. Alan could not understand this. His perception is different. He says:

> When many visitors come to the Scottish Highlands and look at the vast expanse of treeless hills, they see wilderness. When I look, I see desolation.

Figure 34. Alan and Robert on the edge of Abernethy Forest. Alan would like to see more forests like these rather than the 'barren' grouse moors behind.

Alan's views are echoed in the literature from conservation organisations. Frazer Darling, one of the first naturalists to write about the Highlands is often quoted:

> We are apt to view with pleasure a rugged Highland landscape and think we are here away from the works of the mind and the hand of man, that here is wild nature. But more often than not we are looking at a man-made desert (Natural History in the Highlands and Islands: 1947, quoted in Cramb: 1998: 1)

The transformation of the Scottish Highlands into a 'man-made desert' was a slow process over the centuries, largely due to agricultural practices. However, by the 18th century, the degradation of the land had been slowed and a certain balance had been achieved. According to Lister-Kaye (1994:10), this was due to the expansion in cattle, which are considered to contribute to the quality of the soil as well as to tree regeneration. However, by the 19th century, with the change in political and economic structures (as described in the preceding chapter), sheep were introduced, spelling disaster for tree regeneration. Up to this period, poaching pressures and lack of

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economic value kept deer numbers low. This changed dramatically as landowners moved from sheep to sporting estates. The new estates embarked on a major campaign to rid the land of any predators of deer and grouse. The result was a major transformation of the wildlife in the Highlands. From relatively low numbers before the 19th century with only 6 deer forests, by 1912 over 3.6 million acres were dedicated deer 'forests' (this meant forests of deer not of trees). The number of deer is thought to be around 350,000 (Cramb: 1998: 5), with 8,232 in the Cairngorm and Speyside Deer Management Group area (Williamson: 2004). However, estimates are sketchy. In addition, according to Williamson (2004), comparisons cannot be made with previous years because the counting method changed in 2000. The problem with the deer, according to conservationists, is not so much that they are not native to Scotland but that they have been introduced in unnatural numbers, whereas other native species, such as the Scots Pine and the capercaillie, are severely under threat. The aim is to restore the balance. According to many from a livelihood sense of place, like Williamson, the conservationist view is 'romantic', one of a timeless, transcendental landscape (Hirsch and O'Hanlon: 1995: 1). In Scotland, many writers refer to an idealised past which must be 'restored' or 'revived'. Lister-Kaye (1994), writing on behalf of Scottish Natural Heritage, looks to the past as a model for the future:

> A fast-forward history of land-use in the Highlands should be accompanied by a pibroch lament. Ten thousand years ago man arrived to find a pristine wilderness of rich climax vegetation: Scots Pine, sessile oak and downy birch, willow, hazel and alder, rowan and gean, with a patchwork of heather clearings and slopes, mountain grasslands and sphagnum-rich bogs. Open forest and blanket bog covered the whole of the hinterland from sea-level to upwards of two thousand feet with arctic-Alpine scrub rising to stony, moss and tundra-lichen summits. There were altogether some five million acres of upland through which moose, reindeer, red deer and roe deer, wild ox, brown bear, wolves, lynx, beaver and wild boar roamed, each according to its ecological niche, side by side with the familiar wildlife we know today (p. 8).

Such an attempt to 'restore and revive' was made on Creag Meagaidh National Nature reserve between 1986-1996 under the leadership of Dick Balharry. He talked about his work at a public meeting, arguing that the criterion for any land management policy must be the 'health of the land'. In his view, the choice between deer or trees is not a matter of aesthetics or personal preference for one kind of activity or another. Instead, land policies must be based on an objective assessment of what is good for the land, with 'good' defined as what is *historically* natural. Dick was keen to provide me with a copy of the publication that documented his work on Creag Meagaidh. He hopes that the policies implemented there will be adopted more widely across the Highlands. The goals are set out in the summary:

> When it was acquired by the Nature Conservancy Council, now Scottish Natural Heritage, the land in the old forests of Aberarder and Moy had been grazed for centuries by deer, sheep, goats and cattle. These uses of the land had created a wet moorland in which trees were scarce, the situation prevailing in much of the Highlands. When the land was acquired by the NCC, the aim became to restore the ecological health of the land. This was to be achieved by reducing grazing pressure to enable native trees to grow tall, where previously they had been checked by browsing, and to enable the plant life of the corries to flourish (Ramsey: 1996: 7).

One of the main ways conservationists present their case is by mobilising discourses of native and national identity in which the nation is seen as synonymous with particular native species (Short: 1991, Bender: 1993). The Glenmore Forest Visitor Centre run by the Forestry Commission has a major display devoted to the importance of restoring the native forests. I came across the following quote on one of the posters:

> The change of name of the Nature Conservancy Council to Scottish Natural Heritage is significant. Instead of conserving nature, their task is to 'secure the conservation and enhancement of Scotland's unique and precious natural heritage- the wildlife, habitats and landscapes through the long partnership between people and nature.

In this way 'nature' is given even more of a timeless, transcendent quality as it is linked to what is timeless about the nation.

Land workers reject the conservation view that the land has inherently natural or native characteristics. Their view in some respects resembles the arguments of the social constructionists in anthropology and geography (see for example Castree's account: 2001). They accept that the red deer have been introduced and see nothing wrong with this. The existence of the red deer provides them with a livelihood. From the conservation perspective, nature is not just a social construction, but is a set of real laws and processes that cannot be ignored. The livelihood approach on the other hand, sees human intervention as of value in itself. The historical practice of locals is not irrelevant, as the conservationists would argue (Mels: 1999), but is what the land actually *is*, not some idealised vision of what it *should* be. Conservationists are seen as outsiders who bring in an idealised, unhistorical vision of the natural landscape (Hobart: 1993, Walley: 2004).

Land workers, like many anthropologists, are very aware that their arguments and interpretation of the 'facts' are based on their own subjective opinions and interests. Alistair had been a stalker at Craeg Meagaidh before the takeover by the Nature Conservancy Council. He says that the council had a 'particular agenda' that he 'can understand'. However, he says, 'They need to recognise that this is not my point of view. My job is under threat. There are many agendas.' He, unlike Dick and Gus, agrees with the view that there are 'many natures to save' (Proctor: 1995: 273). And, like the shepherd Donnie Ross, Alistair is aware that the battle is about more than a particular species, but about a way of life. The deer are defended, not because of some scientific definition of natural or native, but because the deer have meaning in relation to the group's goals (Entriken, quoted in Proctor: 1995: 275). And, the goals have to do with maintaining livelihood and a way of life that is also identified with the nation, though a different nation and a different heritage from conservation and recreation perspectives.

Conservationists argue that there cannot be many perspectives; the facts speak for themselves. Theirs is a scientific approach to knowledge; science can be used to

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discover the facts and then policies will flow automatically from those facts. Many critiques of social constructionism or deconstructionism have come to the defence of the conservation argument. Soule, a conservation biologist, is vicious in his attack, 'Deconstruction is an ideological tool used as part of the assault on nature' (1995: 137). He is supported by social scientists (Soper: 1995, Hayle: 1995, Peterson: 2002) who argue that if there are no facts to be discovered about eco-systems, and humans relations to them, then the implication is that it does not matter what we do. By denying that anything is 'natural', then everything becomes arbitrary (Soper: 1995: 138-145).

> If this is true, and there is no real nature- no nature not constituted by human interpretation or intervention- then we are left with no grounds on which to evaluate one environment as better or worse or to resist some forms of intervention and support others (Peterson: 2002: 64).

Dick Balharry and others would strongly support his view. The consequences of refusing to accept that trees are important for the health of the land are not just theoretical but could have devastating effects. Anthropologists have queried conservationists' and other scientists' belief in the existence of objective 'facts' (Berglund: 1998). However, in this case, both sides believe they have the 'facts'. Whether these facts are really facts is not the central issue in this conflict. The problem arises in the deer versus trees debate because different forms of knowledge lead to different 'facts'. When confronted with two versions of the 'facts' the debate then centres around whose facts count. It is not that people are making up or socially constructing facts about a non-existent natural world, but rather that they are selecting observations of the world that fit with their values and interests, what they want Glen Feshie to be used *for*. Worster (1995) explains the problem:

> If nature is nothing but a bewildering panorama of changes, many of them induced by human beings, going back to ancient hunters setting fire to the bush, and if our attitudes towards nature are themselves demonstrably in a state of constant flux, so that yesterday we hated wolves, now we love them, then what should conservation mean?' (p. 67-68).

A similar dilemma arises with the question of what Glen Feshie should *look* like. In Chapter Five, I discussed how a livelihood-based sense of place sees beauty in a landscape where a 'mark' has been made. In the case of the deer debate, estate workers do not see deer fences as an aesthetic problem. The fences have a purpose to fulfil in the work of the estate. They also do not see trees as any more aesthetically pleasing than deer. By contrast, the mountaineering and conservation senses of place are more likely to appreciate the qualities of 'wild land'. However, in the case of deer or trees, the divisions are complicated by the fact that hill walkers have a variety of views depending on the group they belong to. Those from outside the area tend to have a view of Scotland as empty wilderness and the appeal is in this emptiness. The hills that are the most valued are those that are bare. John could not understand why there was such a dispute about reforestation. He identifies forests with the conifer plantations, which to him are aesthetically displeasing. He wants the feeling of space. MA, a local, also agrees. After a John Muir Trust meeting, at which Glen Feshie had been discussed, MA confessed to me that she had not dared say anything at the meeting, but that she thinks that the 'openness of the glen, with just a few stands of scattered trees is attractive'. This corresponds to what many environmental psychologists have found; humans prefer open savannahs to forests, perhaps the result of our ancestors' very real fear of the dangers of the forest (Cave: 1998).

In addition, for many people, a highlight of walking in the Highlands is seeing the red deer. It is deer, not trees, which are associated with the Scottish hills. As a stalker told me:

> Deer are now part of the Scottish hills. They are a source of
> income from shooting and most visitors like seeing deer on the
> hills.

His view was confirmed to me in the many times the people I was walking with stopped to watch the deer, pointing them out excitedly. One woman, recently moved to the area, described to me one of her most memorable walking experiences.

> I saw a reddish-brown spot on the hillside that turned out to
> be a herd of deer, over 200 of them. Then they moved,

running en mass down the hillside. It was one of the high
points of my life. I have never seen anything like it.

Tree-supporters also try to mobilise the aesthetic discourse. They point to the ugliness of the deer fences. It would enhance the beauty of the landscape if the fences were taken down and the deer culled instead. Some local walkers, such as Alan and George, concur and constantly pointed out fences to me in a negative way, attempting to 'educate' me. However, walkers and climbers from outside the area are not so familiar with the various arguments. Dick Balharry believes that their kind of attitude is the result of ignorance. He says, 'People do not really see. When they walk through Glen Feshie, they are not aware that it is like walking through an old people's home with 99-year-old humans. This is not healthy.' 'Health' can be related to both 'beauty' and 'heritage'. In a Forestry Commission publication on native tree species, I found the following comment:

> Our native tree species, trees natural to this country, have been linked with Scottish culture and society throughout history. They are pleasing to the eye. They seem to belong (1998: 2).

CONCLUSION

The positions adopted in both disputes discussed in this chapter come about through the blending of a complex mixture of factors that make up their senses of place. It is impossible to separate out the activity one is involved in, and the appreciation it gives of certain aspects of the land, from the perceptions of what are the facts and what should be done. This chapter has also shown that the sense of place based on activity is infused with views on wider cultural issues such as debates about knowledge, aesthetics, rights, tradition and heritage.

One's sense of place underlies particular positions on the deer versus trees and the canoeists versus anglers debate. However, a particular sense of place does not necessarily lead to the individual becoming part of an identifiable group in contrast to

another. For this to happen, there need to be circumstances in which the groups come into contact with each other as groups, accompanied by specific discourses and supported by institutional frameworks. Different positions don't exist in the abstract as contested 'natures' (Macnaghton and Urry: 1998, Proctor: 1995). They emerge out of particular situations in which choices have to be made. As disagreements move from individual encounters to the public arena, relations between groups become more codified and structured, with discourses and institutions playing a much more dominant role and clearly defined positions of 'interest groups' emerging.

As we move further into the public arena, the issues themselves are transformed. As shown in the letter exchange between Gus Jones and the shepherd Donnie Ross, the discussion incorporates a different set of issues concerning who belongs and who should be making decisions about the land. As I have shown in previous chapters, these wider contexts are also there, but they are not so prevalent in the everyday activities of the various individuals I have described. However, in certain circumstances, as outlined in this chapter, they become increasingly important. My findings are supported by an interview with Roy Dennis, a leading conservationist, who is also married to a crofter.

> I think what you're picking up as well is that a lot of it is nothing to do with nature conservation; it's to do with power. In the recent debate about beaver in Scotland, if you were able to really check it through you would find that a lot of people who are against it or for it know very little about beaver. Some of the views as to why they want it or don't want it are not based on the ecology of the animal, they're thinking if SNH want it then I don't. If this group don't want it, then I'm for it. So I think that any of these discussions, whether in Strathspey or the rest of the world are based on these relationships and power and who thinks they should be in charge. It's very wrong to think it's only to do conservation.

The dispute between anglers and canoeists and the debate about deer and trees, are infused with power relations. There may be real differences of interest, arising out of their sense of place and the activities they value, but power struggles obscure and

complicate the situation. We have seen in the two conflicts studied in this chapter that the groups differed not just in terms of their sense of place but in their social position. Canoeists resented the power of the landowners and ghillies were defensive of their precarious economic position vis-à-vis the recreation industry. Land workers are also worried about their future in an age that is turning against the sporting estate as the conservation organisations grow in influence. Conservationists are frustrated by the power of the traditional landowners who resist their efforts to restore the 'natural heritage'. Permeating all the debates is the question of who should have power to decide, often portrayed as a choice between the 'local community' and 'outside interests'. Commenting on who will make the decisions in the new Cairngorm National Park, the local MP Fergus Ewing writes:

> Will it be the board members with the strong local input which they encompass? Or will it be the powerful special interest groups and outside quangos who seem to exert an ever growing and unconstrained power and influence on rural life? (The Strathspey and Badenoch Herald: August 21, 2003)

The next chapter will unravel the ways in which the distinction between 'locals' and 'outsiders' and struggles over who 'decides' are entwined with conflicts between different senses of place.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONFLICT AND POWER

The local people can never be trusted to run a National Park. Anyone who would build a railway up a mountain can't care very much about the environment. They're just greedy. (Conservationist living in the area)

We don't want all those conservationists parachuting in from down South and telling us what we can and can't do. They don't realise that we have to make a living. (Employee of ski shop)

The locals don't value what they have. They never go out in the hills to see what's there. (Hill walker visiting the area)

The conservationists just want us to gaze at the land from the outside, assomething pristine and pure. They don't want us to get active enjoyment from it. (Cairngorm Partnership Recreation Forum member)

An international spotlight was focused on the Cairngorms from 1994 when the Cairngorm Chairlift Company (CCC) put forward a proposal to upgrade the skiing facilities by building a funicular railway. Not only was the chair lift considered to be out of date, it could not operate in the typical high winds. Unable to get skiers up to the main slopes on many days, much business was lost. It was also argued that the funicular would serve as a summer visitor attraction, more appealing to tourists, including the disabled, than the old chair lift. People could take the funicular up to the

top, and then walk up to the top of Cairngorm or over to Ben Macdhui, both 4000 feet peaks. This is where the problem lay, however. By attracting more summer visitors, others argued that it would cause severe damage to the fragile plateau environment that lies between the top of the funicular and Ben Macdhui. They did not want the area to be made any more accessible than it already was. During the next six years, a conflict ensued between supporters and opponents of the plan.

THE FUNICULAR CONFLICT IN THE WIDER POLITICAL CONTEXT

International

European Union: Directives and Court

National

UK Government

Scotland: National

Scottish Parliament/Scottish Executive (1999)

(formerly Scottish Office, which initially approved funicular funding)

Cairngorm Partnership　　　　　　**Scottish National Heritage**

(set up in Badenoch and Strathspey by　　　**(advisory to Scottish**　　**Scottish Office in 1994)**
Parliament)

Regional

Highland Council

Moray and Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise (MBSE)　　**Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE),**
owner of ski area

(appointed by Highland Council to promote economic development)

Local

Aviemore Partnership (part of MBSE)　　　**Community Councils (no statutory powers)**

Figure 35. Diagram to show the structure of political institutions.

The funicular debate, and the subsequent discussions surrounding the National Park, which are examined at a local level, took place within a complex web of political institutions, government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The diagram above illustrates the context within which the conflicts discussed in this chapter are interactively embedded.

The first layer of local government is the Community Councils, which are found in each town or village in the area. However, their power is symbolic rather than legal. Members of the councils are elected by the community but these elections have been almost always uncontested, with low voter turn-out. Nevertheless, they are taken to be the 'representatives' of the community in the local paper and in consultations by outside political agencies. Also present at a local level are organisations and agencies that originate in the wider political context. Highlands and Islands Enterprises (HIE), who own the land for the ski area and funicular, are an agency responsible for economic development in the Highlands and report to the Highlands Council. Other players tied to the Highlands Council are the four local councillors (not community councillors) and Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise (MBSE), that is represented in the area by the Aviemore Partnership. This agency is responsible for overseeing the redevelopment of Aviemore.

The Highland Council is a powerful institutional player. Though it can be overridden by the Scottish Parliament, the legacy of the Clearances and the perceived need of special economic assistance for the Highlands, has meant that the Scottish Parliament is reluctant to impose anything that is opposed by the Highland Council. Together with its agency the HIE, they have played a key role in the conflicts in Badenoch and Strathspey itself.

The Scottish Office and now the Scottish Parliament has both a national and local role. The approval of the funicular and the legislation for the Cairngorms National Park rest ultimately in the hands of the Scottish national government. However, national representatives in the locality have had considerable impact on more than a mouthpiece for the government. The Cairngorms Partnership was established first by the Scottish Office in 1994 as a way of managing the different interest groups in the area. The

other main local/national body is Scottish Natural Heritage. It exists on the national level as the environmental advisor to the Scottish Parliament but it has a local office and representatives who live and work in the Cairngorm region.

Other political actors include various Scottish NGOs such as the John Muir Trust, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, the Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Snowsports, the Scottish Landowners Federation, the Cairngorms Campaign and the National Trust for Scotland. All of these have some local presence as well as national political influence as lobbying groups.

The UK government has had a minimal role in these debates, especially since devolution. However, a number of NGOs have a UK-wide base even though they might have, in some cases, a Scottish section. These include the RSPB, World Wildlife Fund, Ramblers Association and the British Mountaineering Council.

The European Union has a more important political position vis-a-vis these debates than the UK government, impinging on local politics through its 'Directives' and its power to provide or withhold funding for projects. The funicular project depended ultimately on EU money. If it had decided to withhold this money then the funicular project would have been stillborn. EU Directives on the environment constrain local political policies and the European Court has the power to enforce these directives at the local level.

Though the locality is a critical locus of the conflicts, and the focus of this thesis, international and national bodies are implicated both directly and indirectly. MacKinnon (2001: 823) argues that there is considerable variation in the way the local interacts with other layers of governance and regulation. Local institutions and cultural practices interact dialectically with the broader regulatory landscape to produce a localised political dynamic. How the local manifestation of conflict is interwoven with broader institutions and structures is the subject of this chapter.

The legacy of the funicular debate is still felt strongly today, both in ongoing arguments about the success of the funicular and in the new National Park where 'all the old tensions between conservation, development and recreation are still evident' (Magnusson: 2001: xvii). As discussed in Chapter One, this conflict mirrors many other

conflicts around the world. According to Lambert (2001), disagreements over land use were evident as far back as the late 18th century when visitors first began to come to the area. The funicular debate and then the discussions surrounding the creation of Scotland's second National Park mean that 'the Cairngorms now represent the most public and bitter manifestation of these conflicts in the UK '(Lambert: 2001: 1).

The previous chapter has shown how conflicts ensue when groups with different senses of place find themselves involved with the same land. Groups that co-exist in most circumstances find themselves at odds with each other when situations arise in which a choice must be made about how that common space is to be used. The conflict over the building of the funicular brings together all of these players on an international stage, drawing in other players, including individuals, institutions and structures. Small-scale, informal disagreements over other issues, such as deer numbers, metamorphose into formal positions, which are then exaggerated and solidified into 'interest' groups. The battle lines are drawn between two distinct sides - local development interests against outside conservation and recreation. This chapter builds on the analysis developed in the previous chapters in order to understand the genealogy of this conflict.

Figure 36. Funicular, now called the mountain railway, opened for the ski season in 2001.

The construction of the funicular or mountain railway had just begun when I arrived in the area in late summer 1999. Though it had been approved and was going ahead, it was still a source of controversy, and remains so to this day. I encountered anti-funicular views on day one of my fieldwork. The source of opposition was two walkers from the Dundee Mountaineering Club. I walked with them down from Cairngorm, through the beginnings of the work on the funicular. They gave me a range of reasons why the funicular should not be built, arguments that were echoed by many others who engage in the activities of hill walking and climbing. I showed in Chapter Three how the mountaineering sense of place involves perceptions of land as the location of adventurous activities and as a means of escaping from normal life in the urban areas. This perception has lead to a particular position on the funicular for many mountaineers. Richard typifies this approach. He is a walker and climber from Sheffield who often visits the Scottish Highlands. In 1994, he had just returned to

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Aviemore, after a multi-day backpack trip in the Cairngorms, when he heard the announcement that the Chairlift Company, supported by their landowner, Highland and Islands Enterprise, was proposing to replace the chairlift with a funicular railway. He said he was so angry that when he got home he immediately joined the John Muir Trust, a conservation organisation who he thought would campaign against the funicular, and wrote countless letters of protest. Mike Dales, the Conservation and Access Officer for the Mountaineering Council of Scotland said in an interview that skiing is 'inappropriate' for the Scottish Highlands and that the funicular would just 'prolong it'. Another visitor referred to it as representing the 'Disneyfication' of the Scottish hills. A frequently stated view is that a mountain railway does not fit in with what they expect to see, it doesn't' belong'; it is 'matter out of place' in the same way as conservationists see certain species as not belonging. A mountain railway does not fit with a sense of place that is attuned to 'views', and the appreciation of adventure unfettered by human technology.

Conservationists have similar but different arguments arising out of their sense of place. One expert on the dotterel was worried that the plateau, as a major breeding ground, would be made more accessible to tourists, increasing the chance of disturbances. Other scientists in the area told me of their concern for rare moss and lichen, supposedly protected by various directives. They want the Cairngorm Plateau to be free from human disturbance, not made more open to that disturbance.

I also came across pro-funicular views on my first day. These were expressed typically by the shop assistant in the gift shop of the ski area. However, I heard these views repeated by many others whose livelihood depends on the tourist industry. There are an estimated 1.2 million visitors to the area every year who spend £240 million. The majority of the 2, 075 businesses in the area depend either directly or indirectly on these visitors (Strathspey and Badenoch Herald: November 4, 2003). In the thesis so far I have elaborated on the sense of place of those who have some direct engagement with the land through activity. These represent significant, but not all, the possible outlooks of those who make a living in the area. I also met many other people who are characterised not so much by how they interact with the land as by the fact that they

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are *not* engaged in activities that cause them to come in direct contact with any aspect of the hill environment. They therefore have a sense of place that is defined by an awareness of the 'low ground', the area in the villages and the immediate surroundings.

The divide between those who experience the high ground and those whose lives are led in the low ground came sharply into focus when I took a job in a local restaurant. I was still staying 'up' at the Glenmore Campsite with its Cairngorms view, and drove 'down' the 'ski road' to the restaurant in Aviemore. The local teenagers who I worked with have never been up to the ski area, much less the top of the plateau. One weekend, they were very excited about the Harley Davidson festival but knew nothing about the Glenmore Lodge 'open day' that was also taking place offering free 'taster' sessions. Fourteen-year-old Craig, son of a taxi driver and child-minder, has never been up to the ski area. His parents work long hours and he works every weekend so there is no time. He said he 'resents' the skiers and others who seem to 'take over' the town, despite being aware of being dependent on these tourists for his own livelihood in the restaurant. Going into the hills is something tourists do, not him. When the snow fell for the first time, one local customer said that she finds it 'inconvenient but at least it will bring in the tourists'. I heard similar views expressed in the course of my daily errands around town. The hairdresser told me that for her, the hills are just something 'in the background' that she would miss if they weren't there but isn't usually aware of.

Local Services *continued*

PERSONAL SERVICES
Forsyth & Co
Chartered Accountants, 45 Birch Grove, Boat of Garten. Tel: 01479 831457 Accountancy Services.

CLEANING SERVICES
Stainbusters
Main Street, Newtonmore. Tel: 01540 673455 or 0800 137772.

HAIRDRESSING/BEAUTY SERVICES
The Wright Style
King Street, Kingussie Tel: 01540 661375 Open 0800 - 1800 Mon to Sat.

PRINTING SERVICES
Pleasureprint Limited
36 Connaught Place, Edinburgh Tel/Fax: 0131 551 2027 Publishers of What's On Aviemore Badenoch & Strathspey; Fort William & Lochaber.

Eating Out *in the area*

The area is well served by a variety of restaurants, pubs, bistros and cafes serving a la carte, table d'hote to light snacks, including Scottish, French, Chinese, Indian or Italian menus. We can also lay claim to the highest café/snack bar in Britain, at 3,600 feet on Cairngorm Mountain.

AVIEMORE
HAMBLETT's
72 Grampian Road, Aviemore Tel: 01479 810678 Opening 1999. Exciting new Scottish restaurant.

HARKAI's FISH RESTAURANT
Grampian Road, Aviemore Tel: 01479 810430 Licensed family operated restaurant and takeway, serving good food for breakfast, lunch & dinner at reasonable prices. No Smoking. Open: Dec to Apr. June to October.

THE OLD BRIDGE INN
Dalfaber Road, Aviemore Tel: 01479 811137 Restaurant & Bar serving fresh innovative meals, fine wine, cask beers and plenty of malts. Speciality Evenings & Menus for all occasions. Open all year. Daily.

THE SMIDDY COFFEE SHOP See Page 30
Rothiemurchus Visitor Centre, Aviemore Tel: 01479 812334 Tea, coffee, Cold Drinks, brunch, lunch, suppers. Scrumptious home baking all served in a friendly relaxed atmosphere. Open: Daily 0900 - 1800.

BOAT OF GARTEN
LISI's RESTAURANT
Kinveachy, Boat of Garten Tel: 01479 831339 Log cabin restaurant. Friendly relaxed atmosphere, good food. Open: Summer Noon - 2200 Tues to Sun. Times vary in Winter.

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Figure 37. Local services and restaurants advertising in a monthly magazine published by the Tourist Board.

These local residents see the surrounding natural environment as something that provides them with an income. According to one local councillor, the Cairngorms are 'an economic asset'. However, though this sense of place is based on perceiving the land as a source of livelihood, it is different from that of farmers and estate workers. The general perspective may be the same, but, as mentioned in Chapter Five, people from the farms and estates tend to not mix with 'villagers' and therefore were not involved to the same extent with the debates surrounding the funicular. Mary Yule, for example, was not against development on the mountain but did not even know that it was a funicular that was being proposed. The sense of place is also different because many of those working in the tourist industry have no direct knowledge or contact with the land.

They know the hills are there and that they are the reason for tourists, and therefore themselves, living in the area, but it is the tourists' domain, not theirs. Even many of those who worked in the ski area have not ventured further. I met one local lad working in the restaurant at mid-station. He saw from my clothes and ice axes that I had been 'out in the hills' and he asked me about it; he said he'd never been and wondered what it was like. He has never had anyone to go with.

Support for the funicular, therefore, was most often expressed by those working in and around the tourist industry. The area had been going into decline since the demise of the Aviemore Centre. It was this that most locals brought to my attention as the major issue. In the 1960s, Aviemore had been a 'boom town', with visitors coming all year round, both for the skiing and for general entertainment e.g. stag weekends and hen parties. The Centre had many attractions such as an ice rink and a cinema. People remember those days with fondness. Not only was business good, but there was a lot for locals to do. Now, the Centre is derelict and its future unknown. Some plan would come close to being adopted then it would fall through. Waiting to see what would happen was something of a local joke. The redevelopment of the Centre is considered crucial for the future of Aviemore, hoping to return to a 'Golden Age'. And the funicular is supposedly the key. The head of the local Tourist Board said it is 'vital' for the future of Aviemore and a waiter in a popular restaurant said he is 'in favour of anything that would attract people to the area.' A shop assistant in an outdoor shop said he did not understand all the arguments but that at least it meant change. Something needed to happen to counter the demise of the Aviemore Centre. Other arguments stressed the extra income generated directly and indirectly from the increase in tourist business as reasons to support the funicular. Owners of attractions such as Waltzing Waters (described on its website as 'The world's most elaborate water, light and music production.'), thought that the funicular would attract more coach parties, who might then add their attraction to the list of things to see. Locals were also hoping more jobs would be created, and many did obtain jobs in both the construction and the follow up maintenance.

Those who were pro-funicular expressed their resentment of those who campaigned against the funicular in terms of 'outsiders' versus 'locals'. Seamus Grant, the Gaelic scholar from Rothiemurchus, saw the conflict as being typical of the 'Southern oppression of the Highlands', not wanting the region to develop but to remain as a kind of backwater for their own enjoyment and benefit. Meanwhile, those against the funicular explained the conflict in terms of the same dichotomy; the locals 'can't be trusted' to look after their environment.

Therefore, the conflict arose because different senses of place value different aspects of the land and have different views on how the land should be used. It would appear that the positions were so entrenched and represent such real differences in opinion, that the conflict could only be resolved by having a winner and a loser. Walkers have an interest in maintaining the sense of wildness in the Cairngorms. Conservationists have an interest in preserving the habitat of the dotterel. Those in the local tourist industry have an interest in developing the area to attract tourists. It seems to follow logically from this that they will then hold distinct positions on issues such as the funicular, the National Park or development of land for housing. However, by looking at conflicts as a complex process of interactions between individuals and groups, within institutional, discursive and structural contexts (Mels: 1999) my data will reveal that conflicts between locals and conservation and recreation senses of place are by no means inevitable. Conflicts are often about more than a choice between two options. There is no inevitability about one sense of place leading to particular material interests or any particular interpretation of what may serve those material interests. Groups form into interest groups and come into conflict with each other because of particular circumstances that involve relations of power at a number of levels (Wolf: 1999: 4-7).

Making of Interests Groups

It was taken for granted amongst many in the mountaineering 'community' that climbers would be against the funicular. Rosie, an instructor at Glenmore Lodge,

originally from England, has little contact with anyone outside that milieu. She spends all her time either working or socialising with the other instructors. When she asked me to find some 'guinea pigs' to practice for her Mountain Instructor Award assessment, I invited Anne and George from the Strathspey Mountain Club to assist. The subject of the funicular came up and when Rosie expressed her opposition, she was shocked to hear that they are in favour. She told me later that she has never heard this before, especially from people she sees as fellow mountaineers. One's identity as a mountaineer comes from associating with others, learning through apprenticeships. And it is not only the skills that you learn, but the attitudes that go with it. The pressure to conform is not the result of one-dimensional or 'revealed power' (Lukes: 1986: 9), but much more insidious as the individual comes to internalise the value system of the group. This can be seen clearly in the formation of many pagan groups in which part of belonging to the group is learning and internalising the world-view of the group (Luhrman: 1989). The activities of mountaineering and birding share many similarities with ritual. The process of becoming 'initiated' into the activity involves a major shift in perceptions and worldview. The emotional power of the experience changes the person such that, depending on the intensity of their response to the activity, a bond to the group is formed. In groups as dispersed as walkers/climbers and conservationists, national organisations (e.g. Ramblers Association and Mountaineering Council of Scotland), together with magazines and websites, help to create a 'community of interests'. Because of their position as representatives and spokespeople for this 'community', they play a formative role in group identity and worldview. In the case of the funicular, climbers and hill walkers are presented with an unashamedly anti-funicular position. The Mountaineering Council of Scotland published 'Proposed Cairn Gorm Funicular Update' in 1999. Its position is unambiguous:

> The Mountaineering Council of Scotland will continue to:
> - Oppose the funicular option
> - Press for a sensible alternative
> - Inform our members of the latest developments in the case
> - Highlight the disastrous consequences of pursuing the funicular option

Magazines have taken a similarly bold approach. For example, a major national magazine for walkers published an article called 'The Runaway Train'. The opening paragraph reads:

> The Cairngorms –the highest, wildest, the most untouched mountain range in Britain. Seven hundred and fifty square miles of subartic slopes, deep corries and rare, fragile, natural history. And a spanking new train, ferrying 100,000 tourists a year to a large building 3, 600 ft. up the mountain for a bite to eat, a quick potter around the souvenir shop and a gawp at the view. Welcome to the future - it's pretty ugly (Schofield: 2000).

The *Angry Corrie* (1999) referred to the funicular as 'the carbuncle on Cairn Gorm' and 'a white elephant'.
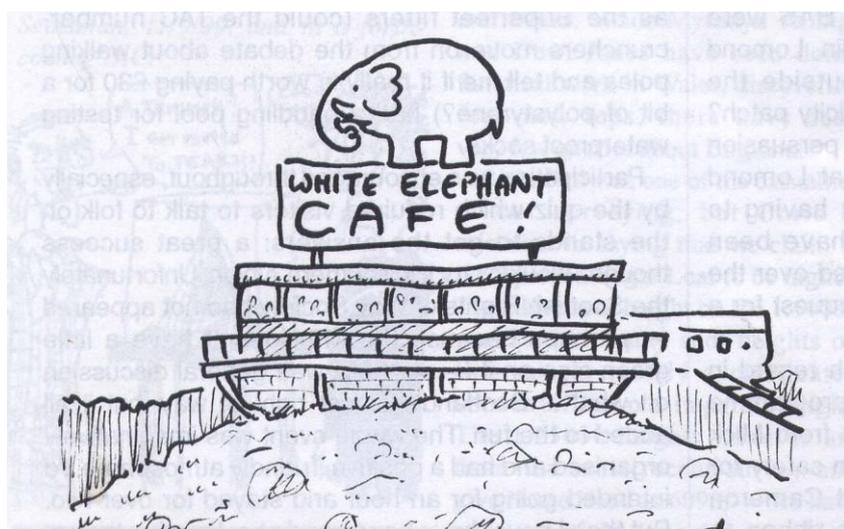
Figure 38. Cartoon in *Angry Corrie.*

Such writers act as opinion leaders, presenting particular perspectives that become accepted by others in the group. It is not a case of the 'hypodermic syringe' in which readers are 'injected' with a view, which they automatically accept; rather the readership already shares many of the same values and sensibilities. The author is seen as an authority on the subject and writes about the funicular in such a way that the reader comes to associate his/her sense of place with being anti-funicular. A local Bed

and Breakfast owner might pick up the same article and remain unconvinced, no matter what 'facts' may be presented. Both the Scottish and British Mountaineering Councils published strongly negative comments in their publications. The comment made about 'Disneyfication of the Cairngorms' had been a phrase from a mountaineering council magazine. Being part of a group means that certain views are encouraged and reinforced.

Birders and others with a conservation sense of place developed their anti-funicular views through a similar process. They are surrounded by a similar 'community', brought together through membership of organisations such as the World Wildlife Fund and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), and by various media forms (RSPB's 'Bird' Magazine, 'nature' programmes on TV) that shape and influence their views. In addition, like with the mountaineers, they are unlikely to come into contact with people who have opposing views. Though not as extreme as Goffman's 'total institution', both the mountaineering and conservation communities can be very insular, especially during their stay in the mountain regions. Those attending Glenmore Lodge courses have little contact with local people. Only one of the instructors is originally from the area and though many of the others have lived here longer, they tend to mix with others like them, as in the case of Rosie. Those who come on birding holidays stay in especially designed accommodation in order to maximise their time talking and learning about birds. There are no local instructors working for Speyside Wildlife. At a Scottish Natural Heritage conference, a conservationist presented the research he was doing in the Kincraig area of Strathspey. Even other conservationists from Strathspey at the conference said they didn't know about his project and he admitted that he does not have any contact with people in the local area. It is not as if people are deliberately kept away from or are not interested in other views. Rather it is the nature of the activity and the context within which it operates that closes the group off from alternative perspectives.

As a result of the processes described above, aspects of one's sense of place, that have been only vaguely articulated, form into more precise discourses. Certain vocabularies, views and opinions become solidified within the group context. In the case

of mountaineers and birders, discourses include the importance of wilderness or wild land, biodiversity, freedom to roam, and the intrinsic value of nature. It is through these discourses that the group comes to define the world. This is the same process at work in the witches' covens described by Luhrman (1989: 7). People accept the discourses of magic and reinterpret their understanding of the world accordingly. In the case of the funicular, many people who identify themselves as hill walkers or climbers, birders or conservationists, through contact with 'authoritative' magazines, documents, websites and individuals, adopt an anti-funicular discourse.

It is not random that certain discourses are more accepted than others (Wolf: 1999, Foucault: 1986). Magazine editors will call upon those that they see as 'experts' to write on certain topics. These people tend to have full-time positions that give them the opportunity to research and write. Mike Dales, the Access and Conservation Officer for the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MC of S) devotes considerable time to researching the problems with the funicular. He works closely with Bill Wright of the Cairngorms Campaign, which was set up and funded by organisations such as the MC of S and the World Wildlife Fund as part of a strategy to influence debates on the funicular and the National Park. Bill writes articulate and well-researched articles, including a regular column for the popular *Climber* magazine. It is through such writing that the anti-funicular position became 'hegemonic' within the mountaineering community. The situation is similar for those in the broad environmental movement. The WWF and the RSPB have millions of members and their official anti-funicular position cannot help but have an effect on the views of their members. The power of both group identity and ideas have contributed to the way the conflict evolved.

However, we need to also examine the process by which certain ideas and organisations reach a position in which they can then influence others. This requires us to take a step back from individuals in order to examine the workings of structural and institutional power (Wolf: 1999). Many of those who favoured the funicular, commented on the power of the 'unelected institutions' that 'interfere' with local issues. One of the main targets is the RSPB. As it is one of the biggest landowners in Scotland, it can determine what happens within its territories. As discussed in previous chapters, the

RSPB owns Abernethy Reserve and has made itself extremely unpopular with locals. I was repeatedly told that they 'discourage' locals from walking on their property and others expressed outrage that all the sheep were expelled when the RSPB took over, thereby affecting local livelihood. In addition, being such a large organisation gives them the ability to lobby politicians and influence policy (Chenevix-Trench and Philip: 2001: 143). The RSPB represents over a million people but there is no sense in which the members control policy. Members are not asked or consulted about their views on land management, which is left to full-time employees and local reserve wardens. The RSPB's emergence as a major player illustrates how the balance of power is shifting away from traditional institutions (Rose: 1999: 2). This has ramifications for local politics. The financial and political power of these organisations means that they are able to participate as equals alongside private landowners, politicians and local business associations and are therefore included in any 'consultations'.

Figure 39. RSPB's Scottish properties.

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MC of S), together with the British Mountaineering Council south of the border, may not have the same financial and political power, but together with the Ramblers Association (RA), they represent a very large section of society. The RA has over 140,000 members in Britain and the MC of S is supported by over 100 affiliated clubs. As a result they are able to employ full-time staff to research and make representations to government on issues such as Access, the National Park and wind farm or hydroelectric developments. One of the main points they stress is the importance of recreation to local economies (see Chapter Six). With the ever-increasing participation in outdoor recreation, organisations that set themselves up to speak on behalf of these people will continue to gain influence in the corridors of government.

Parts of the state had also been instrumental in supporting an anti-funicular position. Scottish National Heritage is the government agency given the task of safeguarding the nation's 'natural heritage'. It is the main body undertaking research on the environment and produces a number of papers on the impact of development on the Scottish uplands. They have the authority to create 'facts'. Many conservationists work for or with the SNH. Therefore, the SNH will reflect the views of those they employ which then will further reinforce similar views in others.

We have to step back even further, looking at changes in capitalism itself, in order to understand why groups like the RSPB and SNH have so much political influence. As society has moved increasingly to one based on services, coupled with the increase in income and education, leisure has become a major industry manifested in the amount of people taking up activities like birding and mountaineering. As they become involved in their hobby, many people begin to join relevant organisations and read associated publications. Therefore, the political power of organisations such as the RSPB, the WWF and the Mountaineering Councils rests on economic changes that have strengthened them financially. There are parallels to draw with a general Marxist analysis of the rise of the bourgeoisie relative to the landed aristocracy. The SNH represents what some have called an 'eco-cracy'. However, a straightforward Marxist analysis is not appropriate because there is no productive economic basis for their

power. Rather, it is the growth in general concern about ecological issues that has forced the state to incorporate such organisations under its wing. Such organisations have by no means replaced other capitalist institutions but within capitalism and the state there are continual struggles between different sections of the ruling class as well as challenges made by other groups. The rise in the power of environmental groups is an example of an 'outside' group that has in certain guises, with the discourse of sustainable development, been incorporated into the system (Poncelot: 2001). The above analysis shows the role power played in the creation of the distinct anti-funicular position. It works on a number of levels, reinforcing each other such that the anti-funicular position becomes entrenched and solidified as a discourse that individuals have internalised (Foucault: 1986: 233-234). This same process was at work with the pro-funicular position.

The local community is made up of a variety of individuals, arguably more disparate in their social make-up than the anti-funicular group. However, the need to make a living creates certain common aspects to their sense of place. They do this in diverse ways but a discourse of social and economic development is common to many. This leaves people open to supporting projects that are presented as being economically beneficial. I will examine how support for the funicular came to be linked in the minds of many with the economic future of the area.

As mentioned above, the economic argument was popular. At the time of my fieldwork, many argued that the funicular would provide jobs in construction and maintenance. Though it was recognised that in the long-term few direct jobs would be provided, the local paper continued to stress the number of jobs that are 'underpinned' by the funicular or mountain railway.
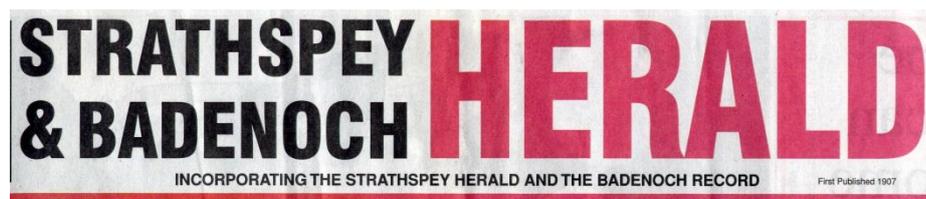
Figure 40. Masthead of local paper.

For example, when work started on the funicular it wrote an article with the headline, 'Mountain Staff Take on New Jobs'. The first paragraph reads:

> Some Cairn Gorm Mountain staff whose seasonal work on the hill would now have come to an end have switched to working on the funicular railway. The new jobs for winter workers is just one on the spin-offs the local economy is reaping from the £14.8 million project which restarted last week (Strathspey and Badenoch Herald: April, 26, 2001).

The owners of the construction companies have benefited most from the building of the funicular but it was hoped that there would still be jobs for others, many of who were unemployed. This turned out to be the case for some. Anne and George have two sons who have been employed full-time for the mountain railway company since 2000. Previously, they had only been able to get odd jobs. Now they are in a financial position to buy houses, providing further economic benefits as they spend money on their new houses. In addition, the money to pay for the funicular came from the state, giving the impression that there was nothing to lose and much to gain. The range of comments supporting the funicular showed a lack of understanding of the debate about the ski area and surrounding hills, unlike those who were against the funicular. In other words, mountaineers and conservationists who argued against the funicular focused on what the funicular would do to the high ground on the mountain itself and were not familiar with the political and economic issues facing the low ground. Meanwhile, pro-funicular locals stressed the financial benefit to the low ground, where people live and work. This difference can be traced to the different senses of place, with a livelihood sense of place having an awareness that seems to end at the ski area car park, where 'place' *begins* for others. As pointed out previously, many visitors remain within their own worlds. As one mountaineering visitor said, 'The only time I had any contact with local people was when I made my one trip to Tesco's to stock upon food for the week'. Similarly, locals tend not to go beyond the areas surrounding the villages. Therefore, people whom I met who were pro-funicular tended to know little about the debates

surrounding the Cairngorm Plateau itself. Rather, they were concerned about the knock-on effects on local businesses.

Other arguments for the funicular come from the ski industry itself. The funicular had been proposed by the Chairlift Company because it seemed an excellent solution to the problem of getting people to the best skiing at the top of the mountain in windy weather. Similar to other activities, skiing gives rise to a sense of place, one in which technology in the forms of lifts, buildings and snow fences is part of their perception of what belongs on the hill. Peter Ord of Ski Scotland told me that at one time many in organisations like SNH would have been happy to see skiing disappear altogether. But he maintained that, 'skiing is now accepted as an important part of the tourist industry'. The ski industry has a cherished history in the eyes of many locals. It was the development of skiing that attracted many current residents to the area, some to take up posts as instructors and others to work in the tourist infrastructure that supported the skiing. It was an exciting time and many would like to see this recreated. They hoped the funicular would do this.

MA, a member of the Strathspey Mountain Club, came up here from Edinburgh in 1963. 'I had long wanted to be a ski instructor. I got a job at the youth hostel in Loch Morlich, working as a ski instructor for them. It was a great time. We had to walk up to the Sheiling and then ski from there (*half-way up the current ski area*). There was a rope tow from there. We used to keep the tows open until 7 pm in April. There was a great atmosphere, all the people attracted to Aviemore by the skiing in winter with folk singers playing at Glenmore Lodge and in the hotels. Tom Patey (*famous Scottish mountaineer*) came down with his accordion. The 'lifties' would all have been people we knew, many of them Creag Dubh climbers from Glasgow. It was all very informal and there was a lot of socialising. It was a time of optimism.'

THE UNFOLDING OF THE CONFLICT: THE TWO SIDES DO BATTLE

Each side in the debate believed that they had a 'discourse of truth' (Foucault: 1986: 229). This powerful belief held them in its grip, making it difficult for those most tightly 'held', to see or understand any perspective outside it. These interest groups had self-identified members who were active in campaigning as well as passive members who tended to identify with one side or the other. In Badenoch and Strathspey, two interest groups emerged out of the conflict over the funicular and have carried on a public existence in the debates about the National Park and most recently over the spread of housing developments in the newly created Park. The sides can still be delineated by their contrasting senses of place - 'local' livelihood versus 'outside' conservation and recreation. 'Outside' refers here not just to those who live outside the area but to those new to the area, defined as 'incomers'.

In the conflicts between these two groups, there appear to be incompatible positions. I will first examine how the funicular conflict unfolded, and then go on to consider how the debates around the National Park both resembled and differed from this. I focus on the ways in which each group attempts to achieve their aims. In both cases, it appears that the local livelihood interests 'won'. The funicular has been built and is being claimed a success, even by many who originally had reservations. The National Park was established in 2003, with planning powers in the hands of only two local councils, Aberdeenshire and Highlands. Perthshire has not been included in the Park, a source of resentment by the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and Bill Wright of the Cairngorms Campaign. Their view is that this was done in order to remove any potential 'southern' influence on decision-making, which is now under sole control of the Highland Council. The vast majority of board members are local rather than the feared outsiders. How did this happen? Why do conservation and recreation organisations feel they were side-lined and their views ignored?

In 1986 conservationists used the power of the courts to oppose the extension of the ski area into Lurchers' Gully. A similar strategy was followed in the case of the

funicular. Armed with directives from the EU about the need to protect the environment, appeals were made to SNH to refuse the funicular proposal. The Cairngorms Campaign was set up by the WWF and others to lobby politicians and civil servants.
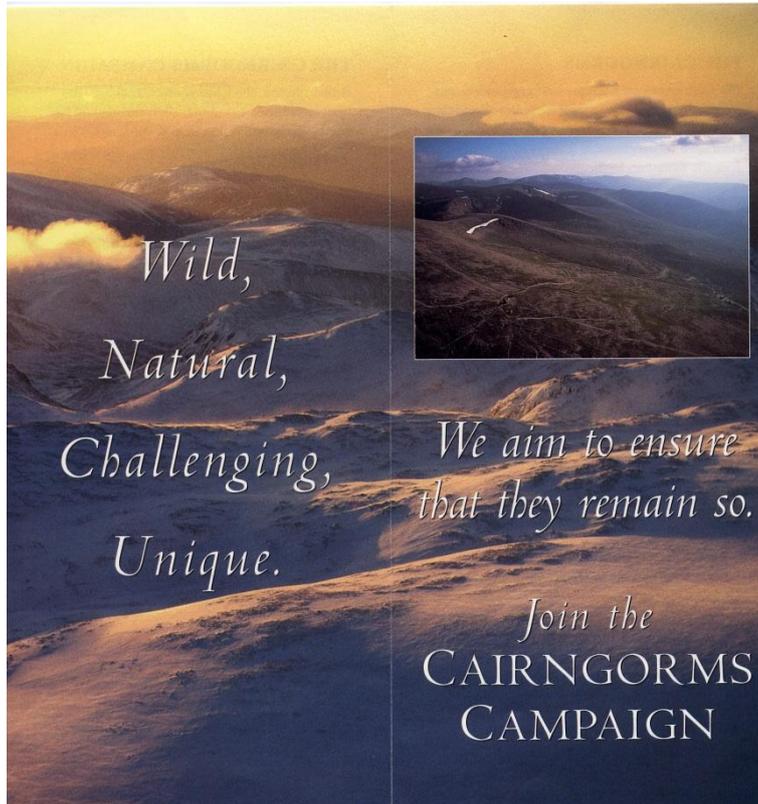
Figure 41. Leaflet to enlist support for the Cairngorms campaign.

The Mountaineering Councils used their networks to encourage people to write letters opposing the funicular. General public opinion seemed to be against it on a national level. It was thought that the SNH would surely refuse to support it. They had the power to do it and they are officially a conservation organisation. But the Chairlift Company cleverly got around the objections of the SNH by changing their proposal to include a 'closed system'. This meant that those using the funicular would not be allowed out at the top so that the funicular would not mean increased numbers on the adjacent fragile environment. The SNH withdrew its objections. Others held out. The RSPB

considered taking the whole issue to the European Court but changed its mind, realising the difficulty of arguing the case.

The campaign relied to a large extent on state institutions. As mentioned above, Seamus Grant argues that outsiders have been imposing their vision of the Highlands on Highlanders for centuries and the anti-funicular lobby is just the most recent example. Seamus also stresses the cultural power of those who come to the area for walking and climbing. He is particular concerned that they 'have even taken over the names of the local hills'. Glenmore Lodge instructors pronounce the names of the mountains and corries in particular ways and these have now become the norm amongst walkers and climbers in general. Seamus is also very critical of conservation organisations. Their expertise gives them the 'power to declare how the land should be and who should have access to it'. He described at length the history of the glens and the factors that led to them being devoid of people today. According to Seamus, there is something amiss when walkers find only ruined buildings and 'emptiness' rather than people living and working in the glens (see Chapter Five). For him, the funicular is just a modern version of Highlanders making a living out of the land. His view is confirmed to a certain extent in the way many funicular opponents present their arguments, phrased in a language that implies that they know what is 'natural' for the land. A funicular is 'inappropriate', will damage the 'proposed world heritage site' or 'does not belong' on a mountain. Such discourses have been very powerful in mobilising national opinion against the funicular.

Some, working either in outdoor recreation or in conservation, attempted to win people over through local initiatives. Others spoke out on the radio or wrote letters to the local paper. They tended to use similar arguments to those mentioned above - claims to knowledge about what was appropriate and the importance of keeping people away from 'fragile' habitats. Roy Turnbull and Gus Jones of the Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group wrote articulate, well-researched, persuasive letters. They were supported by the research work of Bill Wright of the *Cairngorm Campaign* and Mike Dales of the *Mountaineering Council of Scotland* who used economic arguments about how the funicular would be extremely costly as well as distributing any benefits unequally. They favoured a counter proposal, later put forward by a

consortium of organisations, including the RSPB and WWF, for a gondola up to the ski area from the valley and then a high-speed chairlift to the top (Save the Cairngorms Campaign and Scottish Wildlife and Countryside Link: 1996). They argued that this would be a lower cost solution to the upgrading of the ski area, leaving money available for other investment. The snowboard shop owner told me that the gondola would bring in more money to the valley itself. People would have to come into Aviemore to start their journey and therefore be more likely to spend money in the town. I asked him why this option had not been taken up. He replied that 'they had already made up their minds' and 'people didn't want to support anything that the RSPB proposed'. Other opponents even resorted to a protest demonstration. Shaun and Julian from Glenmore Lodge, together with other instructors in the area, set up a group to just 'seek more information' which they felt was being hidden from them by the Chairlift Company. At one point they even held a protest at the ski area. Similar activities were advocated by some outside the area. A boycott of Aviemore was called for in the pages of a mountaineering 'hillzine', *The Angry Corrie*.

> Let's look at this thing and attack the opposition where it is going to cause them the most damage. We can hurt them now, but their unwanted white elephant isn't going to make them any money for another two years. By then the local economy could be in ruins. So, boycott everything and everyone that has anything to do with supporting or building the funicular. The Aviemore Chamber of Commerce is behind the thing, so don't buy anything from Aviemore.
>
> Jimmy the Gael
> War on HIE (Highlands and Islands Enterprise)
> (Jan-Feb. 2000)

Though not officially supported by the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, they unofficially made it clear that they supported initiatives that showed the potential power of the mountaineering 'pound', something they felt in general was being ignored by the local tourist industry.

Opponents used a number of strategies in their struggle including state and international institutions, e.g. the law, the courts, politicians, the mass media, as well as

expert knowledge and rational argument. However, it was not enough. The 'local livelihood' strategy, relying on the power of local political institutions and their own economic power, proved very effective. The business establishment was a central supporter of the funicular proposal. A number of local Highland developers, such as Morrison's construction, stood to gain from a funicular contract. A key member of the Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the body that approved the funicular, later left to join Morrison's construction. Support for the funicular was channelled through the various chambers of commerce. This strategy corresponded to the general government policy at the time, which was to include more business interests in the governance of the Highlands (MacKinnon: 2001). The argument was that the funicular would mean increased investment and therefore more business, and that what is good for business is good for everyone. These chambers of commerce were supported by local landowners. John and Philippa Grant, owners of Rothiemurchus, are key players in the local business associations. People told me that the Aviemore Chamber of Commerce is dominated by Rothiemurchus and the Chairlift Company. Certain individuals were able to use their economic influence, setting themselves up through the local business associations as representatives of the local community in general.

However, it is their use of the discourse of local versus outsider that proved to be one of the single most powerful weapons at the disposal of funicular supporters. I showed how this discourse came into play on a small-scale in Chapter Six. In the funicular debate, it played a pivotal role in determining the outcome. By associating opponents of the funicular with 'outside' interests, supporters effectively discredited their arguments. Many of the people who spoke out publicly against the funicular were vilified. A local councillor told a Glenmore Lodge instructor that he did not have the 'right to speak' on the issue as he was an incomer. A ranger told me that he was against the funicular but did not dare 'put his head above the parapet', a phrase also used by many including a business owner who told me that she had been against the funicular but didn't want anyone to know. One man told me of the 'Aviemore Mafia', which consists of certain local developers and landowners who 'run everything.' 'They make it impossible to speak out, especially if you are English.' Bill Wright, when taking up his

post as head of the Cairngorms Campaign, decided to live in Perthshire rather than Badenoch and Strathspey out of fear of 'harassment' for his family. Mike Dales backed these findings in a later interview. I asked him why the anti-funicular group had not made more of an effort to win the arguments amongst the locals themselves. He replied that:

> we did not get the active, vocal support of local people because of the Highland/Inverness Mafia. One councillor told me that they had been put under pressure by Strathspey councillors to vote for the funicular development or else they wouldn't ever support development in his area. The same in Aviemore. The Highland and Islands Enterprise and allies put pressure on people within the Chamber of Commerce not to dissent or they will be made to feel anti-business, anti-local. They whip up anti-conservationist, anti-birds, anti-Central belt, anti-English feeling amongst locals when there is no need.

Despite the considerable economic and political power of the opponents, as well as their well-researched arguments, they lost the battle. Their voice had been made to seem illegitimate. Local opponents of the funicular were labelled 'incomers' and therefore associated with 'outside' interests. Even the ability to be articulate was questioned as the local livelihood interests accused them of being 'know-it-alls', thinking they were above the locals. The legacy of this conflict was felt in the debates about the National Park as the two sides prepared to do battle again, this time the local livelihood group fresh from victory and the recreation and conservationists on the defensive, having to rethink their strategy.

NATIONAL PARK

The National Park debate, taking place in the aftermath of the funicular conflict, reflects similar divisions and discourses. The key differentiating issue became whether or not planning powers should remain with the Highland Council or be transferred to the new Park Board. Supporters of the status quo worry that the Park Board would stifle economic development whereas others argue that the council would not

adequately protect that 'natural heritage'. The basic disagreement concerns the purpose of the Park, which include promoting local social and economic development, protecting the natural environment or facilitating quiet outdoor recreation. All three aims are contained in the remit of the Park, thus creating fertile ground for conflict.
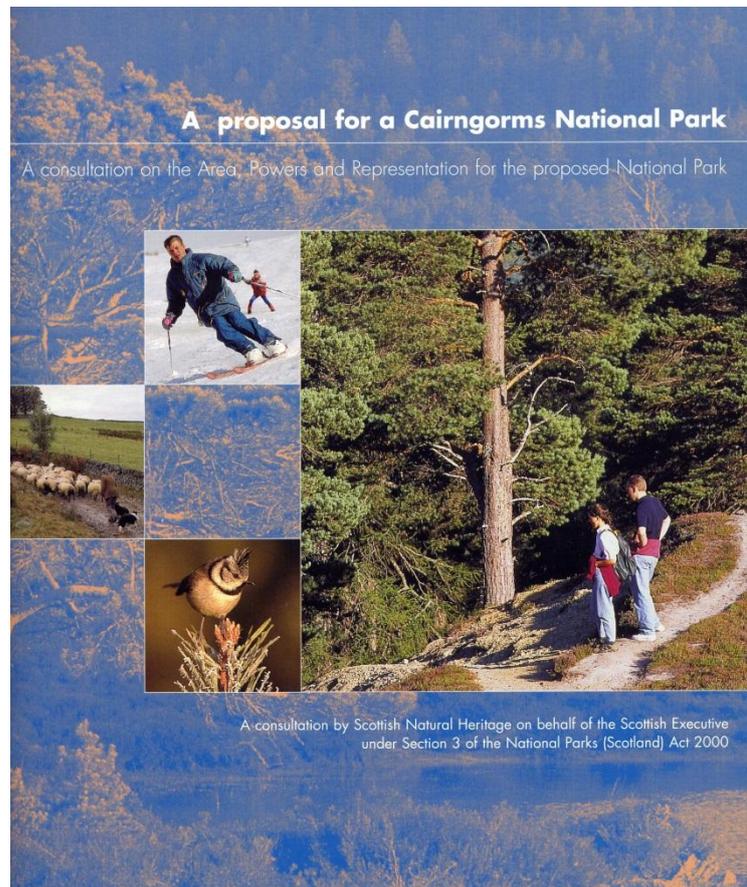
Figure 42. Document setting out the consultation procedure for the National Park.

Towards the beginning of 2000, the build-up to the Cairngorms becoming Scotland's second National Park began. In October 2003, the Park was officially opened. During the 'consultation' process, different interest groups busily manoeuvred for influence. I attended a number of meetings, in addition to conducting interviews, and this section will document how different groups, broadly similar to those around the funicular debate, sought to make their priorities the priorities of the National Park. Though there are many similarities with the funicular conflict, the National Park

debate did not reach the same level of antagonism. This is partly because the areas for disagreement were less clear-cut and because of the way the consultation process was 'managed' by the Cairngorms Partnership. This organisation was initially set up by the Conservatives as an alternative to a National Park. Following devolution, its brief became to pave the way for the Cairngorms to become Scotland's second National Park. Many different 'stakeholder' groups were formed, including business, landowners, farmers, local community and recreation, based on the idea that these stakeholders would represent different 'interests' in the area and thus ensure that all views were taken into consideration. The consultation process was therefore largely orchestrated by this body with the aim of avoiding the acrimony of the funicular.
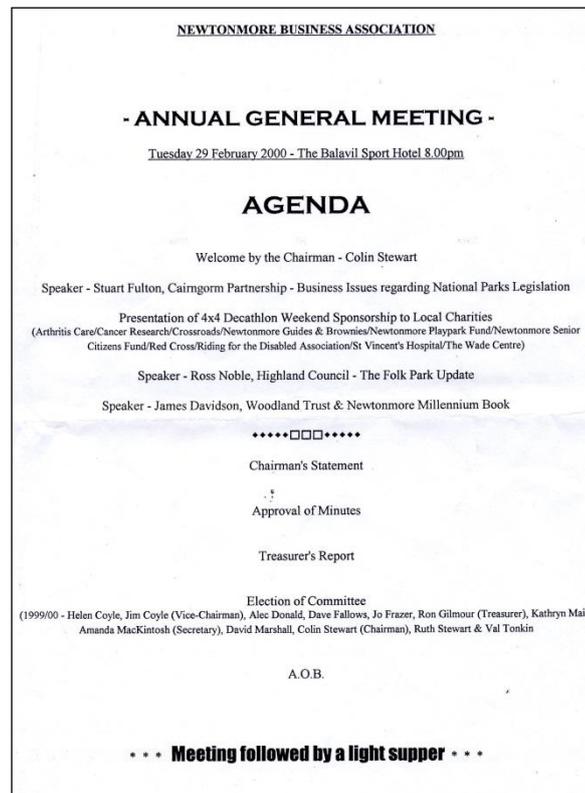
Figure 43. Agenda for Newtonmore Business Association Agenda.

I initially had difficulty finding any signs of the 'public' consultation. Neither the Cairngorms Partnership nor the local paper advertised any meetings. I finally tracked

down a meeting, of the Newtonmore Business Association, through word of mouth. This meeting reveals the various discourses and alliances that formed in course of the build-up to the National Park. The meeting was opened by the Vice President of the newly formed Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce. This turned out to be, surprisingly, Sally, the English owner of Speyside Wildlife (see Chapter Four). The new chamber of commerce is supposed to represent businesses in the entire area, rather than having different villages all giving their views separately. She was accompanied by another member of the chamber of commerce, an employee of Rothiemurchus. Sally's role in this meeting was indicative of certain changes that have emerged post-funicular. Her husband is a passionate birder and had opposed the funicular. Her presence at this meeting, with the representative of a prominent landowner, suggests that 'green' tourism is beginning to challenge the predominance of the traditional tourist business interests.

The meeting opened with a presentation by Stewart Fulton of the Cairngorm Partnership. Stewart is a civil service appointee. As a representative of the Scottish government, the tone of his presentation was surprising. He was very critical of the legislation. He stressed that the bill would 'exclude Community Councils' and that 'only 50% of the Board would be regional councillors'. 'Local people may not be a majority on the Park Board.' He also said, 'another worrying feature would be that in any conflict, nature conservation would take precedent over other interests, even in the development zone'.

Such an introduction provoked strong reactions in his audience. Some questioned why there should be a National Park at all, asking, 'what is in it for us?' One person said it was just 'jobs for civil servants'. Another said it was the 'price to be paid' to attract business, but someone else said that control over 'their ability to develop jobs, homes, businesses, careers would run rampant' in the hands of the Park Board. Several expressed great concern that the park would not be 'community-led' and that most of the people on the board could be 'conservationists from outwith the area'. References were made to National Parks 'south of the border' where 'communities felt they had no control'. 'We don't want another quango'. One of the most impassioned interventions was

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made by the owner of Waltzing Waters, a popular attraction for coach parties. He said 'we don't want all those conservationists parachuting in from down south and telling us what to do'. Stewart Fulton, himself a civil servant representing one of these hated quangos, was then asked advice about what the association could do. He compared the situation to the funicular. 'Local business wanted it but many national bodies were opposed. But local people were vociferous and it succeeded'. Someone said that all people dependent on tourism in the valley were in favour of the funicular but with the National Park 'we don't know what we are fighting for'. He told them to campaign for representation on the Park Board. This was to be the main aim - to keep 'outsiders', especially conservationists from having too much power. In this exchange, the arguments resembled those of the funicular supporters. However, the fact that Sally and Stewart are now included in this 'locals' group is a significant change. Both of these 'outsiders' are arguing the case of the 'local community' against 'outside conservation and recreation' interests.

The meeting then went on to discuss the new Wildcat Centre for walkers and the Woodlands Trust. The speaker was an incomer to the area and had not contributed to the debate on the National Park. Given the projects he was discussing, he might clearly fit into the category of incomer who is allied with recreation and conservation interests. He couched his argument in terms of economic value of these two projects to the local community. Also present at the meeting was Dick Balharry (see Chapter Six). I knew that he did not agree with the sentiments expressed but he too did not contribute to the debate. The fact that these two people, both very active in the community, did not give dissenting views at this meeting suggests that the local versus incomer discourse is still very powerful.

This meeting turned out to be one of the only public meetings held at this stage of the consultation. The main representation to the Scottish Executive was then made through the Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce. The fact that the business community had become the main forum for the local 'community' to express its views was resented by Dick and others I knew in the John Muir Trust and Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group. The domination of the business interest became increasingly

apparent as the different phases of the consultation progressed. What was new, however, is that the composition of this business interest was changing.

One of the main areas to be affected by Park status is Glenmore, often referred to as the Glenmore 'corridor' because it is the main route of access into the core area of the Park. The 'Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Community Association' was set up in order to ensure that they were an organised voice. I attended the inaugural meeting, which aimed to establish the organisational structure. A debate took place around the relative positions of residents and business. Someone pointed out that people might have a business in the area but not live here, arguing for businesses to be included. A resident then complained that it is the residents, not businesses that are not represented. This opinion was echoed several days later by a resident who said that he hadn't even been informed of the meeting. He said last year there were bigger meetings but now it seems 'they are doing things without consulting people, or consulting only *some* people.' He said that 'they (the business community) have it all sewn up'.

John and Philippa Grant of Rothiemurchus were significantly present. John Grant made his views clearly known. 'There is a job to do that has never been done before, actually represent people who live and work in the area, untainted by those from the outside'. I asked MA, a resident and member of the Strathspey Mountain Club, what she thought and she said this was his way of saying that he did not want any of the conservation organisations having any say in what went on. Another resident, Alan, a member of both the local mountain club and the John Muir Trust, later told me that John Grant is used to 'getting his way' in the area. Rothiemurchus is a major estate, and he is worried that he will not be able to develop his estate as he wants if the National Park Board has planning powers. He has several plans in the pipeline for major housing developments on his land. According to one Rothiemurchus resident whose mother had almost been evicted by Grant , 'He says he is all in favour of keeping locals in the area but then he sells his houses at prices that are only affordable to incomers.' MA told me that the issue of these housing developments is the main issue for residents who are worried about increased traffic and the change in character of the

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area. This was not raised at all at the meeting. She said she had not 'dared raise it'. So at this meeting, Grant portrays himself not as a powerful landowner who employs many of the people in the room or owns the houses where they live, but as just another local who wants to keep these outside organisations from interfering in their lives and work. His comment is a thinly veiled reference to the funicular debate in which 'outsiders' were accused of wanting to 'stop people making a living'. A management committee was elected and will be the main locus of power. Two of the committee members are Rothiemurchus employees. Alan told me afterwards, when we reported on the meeting, that it looks like the Committee will be 'dominated by Rothiemurchus'. He was hoping for more of a residents' committee. But of course he did not attend the meeting; he thinks he is 'no good' at putting his point across at meetings. If 'outside' conservation organisations were involved in the 'corridor', then people like Alan would have an ally because they would also be opposed to new housing developments in the National Park.
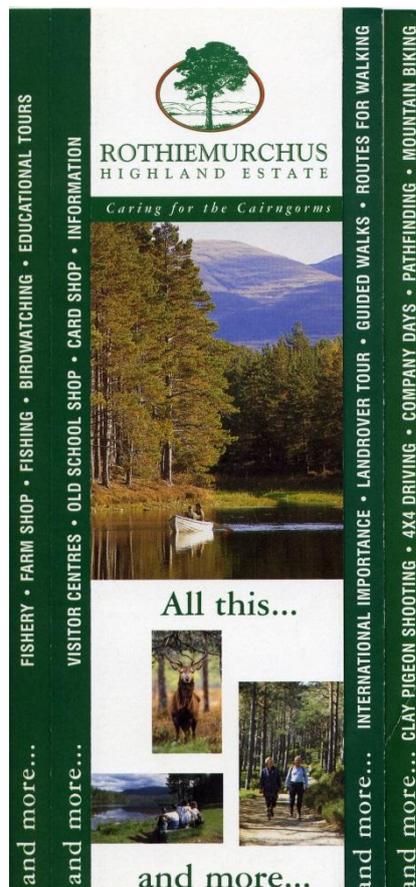
Figure 44. John Grant's many money-making ventures.

The Highland Council meeting on March 2nd had a special item on the agenda to discuss the National Park Bill. Similar concerns were expressed by the councillors as were in the local meetings about the lack of local representation. Most comments supported the proposal for '50%, plus one', for local representation on the Park Board. One of the Strathspey councillors said this was the feeling of all the meetings he attended. Using the now very common discourse I had been hearing, he queried where the government appointees on the board would come from, 'Would they be parachuted in from the South of England?' Another councillor went even further, arguing against the whole concept of a National Park saying, 'too much bureaucracy, central government should be excluded'. Instead, he would like to have people who live and work in the area run things, and 'stop the Highlands becoming the recreational area for our cousins in the Central Belt'. I talked to another councillor afterwards and he reiterated some of the points that came out in the meeting. He is worried that turning the Highlands into a National Park would make it difficult for Highlanders to 'pursue their local development goals'. He doesn't want the Highlands to become 'a playground for outsiders, heedless of the needs of the local community who live and work there.' Basil Dunlop, however, a Strathspey councillor, was not so scathing about 'outsiders'. He recognised that it is the 'natural beauty of the Cairngorms that drives the economy'. But he continued to argue that the local community was quite capable of 'safeguarding', as well as making the most of that 'economic asset'. It seemed that the Highland Council was unanimous in their views. But given what Mike Dales had told me about the funicular vote I couldn't know for sure whether all were in agreement with the general views expressed publicly or whether they felt pressurised to identify with Highland 'development'.

The local livelihood side of the debate has the power of the local State and business interests. They have also managed to make their views hegemonic as the idea of the Highlands being dominated by outside interests is very unpopular, especially given its history. The fight to control the National Parks is presented as yet another example of Highlanders having to struggle against the oppression of 'Southerners'. This side of the debate also had the power of organisation. The Cairngorm Chamber of Commerce put together a detailed document stating their views as part of the

consultation. And, the Highland Council had their usual lobbying connections with central government.

Later on in this stage of the consultation, the recreation and conservation interests became more prominent in the discussions. Outside organisations continued to argue for a National Park that had planning powers. The Mountaineering Council of Scotland, the RSPB and the WWF put the power of their institutions to work in the same way as they had in the funicular debate. In fact, the funicular was used as an example to show why the local communities should *not* have planning powers - 'they cannot be trusted'. One member of the local conservation group said that 'people like those in Newtonmore could not see past their own noses to the wider issues'. Bill Wright from the Cairngorms Campaign, criticising the Scottish Executive's inclusion of 'sustainable development' in the context of the National Park, writes in *Climber:*

> Witness past and recent so-called 'sustainable developments' that planning authorities and environment agencies have allowed across the Scottish Highlands. Bull-dozed roads that scrape, scratch, and scar; deer, sheep and forest management practices that have spread across surface of mountains like cancer across skin; out of place tourist developments like tumours (*i.e. the funicular);* and starving footpath maintenance work. (April, 2000: 96).

However, this time, local recreation and conservation interests decided that they could not rely on winning from 'outside', using the power of the State. Several people told me that they were not going to make the 'mistakes' of the anti-funicular campaign. Their cause has been helped to a certain extent by the existence of the Cairngorm Partnership, which encouraged the involvement of 'stakeholders'. Recreation interests had already been organised into the 'Recreation Forum'. The loose association of self-identified conservationists in the local area decided that if they were to have any influence, they also needed to have such a group. They asked Stewart Fulton, the Cairngorm Partnership representative who had so effectively stirred up anti-conservationist sentiment at the Newtonmore Business Association meeting, to organise a meeting of the conservation 'interests' at the Cairngorm Partnership offices.

I attended this meeting as well as the meeting of the Recreation Forum held to debate the National Park. Both meetings give insights into how each group mobilised power for their cause.

Meeting of Conservation Group

This meeting was attended by Dick Balharry, Alan and George, members of the John Muir Trust group and the Strathspey Mountain Club, the Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group, some hoteliers who advertise as part of 'green tourism', an owner of a cycle business and Bill Wright from the Cairngorm Campaign. Stewart Fulton opened the meeting by giving a less partisan presentation of the background to the National Park debate. He told them how many others in the community feel, worried about being controlled by outsiders. He said Sarah Boyack herself, the minister in charge, was also concerned to make sure that the National Park would be 'inclusive'. He reminded the group of the problems over the funicular and how the community had been polarised. He stressed that 'everyone needs to go forward together' and work through the community councils.

Stewart's position was challenged. The point of disagreement revolves around what the priorities of the Park should be. Dick raised a criticism of the Cairngorm Partnership (CP). He argued that the CP work was originally more environmental but 'I get the idea that now the economic and social is driving the whole thing, perhaps because of the funicular'. Two others raised the question of how representative community councils are. Roy has lived in Nethy Bridge for twenty-eight years and there has never been an election. Laura, an organiser of a recycling network, agreed and said that people don't come forward with their views because 'they are afraid of putting their head above the parapet'. She resents the fact that the 'business interests are seen as more important' than any other views. She pointed out that only a small proportion of the community is in the chambers of commerce. The general feeling was that certain interests have more power to have their voice heard by the Cairngorm

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Partnership, the SNH and the government. They feel that the funicular conflict had made people wary of challenging the local development discourse. It is interesting to note how their perspective of who has power is very different from those who fear the 'interference' of 'powerful outside conservation' interests. Roy brought up the issue of *who* should decide what the aims of the Park should be. He said that the point of having a National Park is that 'it is there for the nation' whose priorities are 'nature conservation and landscape enhancement'. He said 'Benefits to the local community will come from this. The national interest should prevail.' Stewart replied that this argument would be 'unpopular' and advised thinking of other arguments.

The rest of the meeting focused on developing a strategy. They are well aware that it is the 'local livelihood versus outsider discourse' that they need to challenge if their views are to be heard. Stewart Fulton suggested that they needed to address the concerns of people about whether business would 'flourish' in a National Park context. This idea was taken up by Adam, a member of the local conservation group and also the owner of the cycle hire business. He said that 'recreation brings in invisible earnings, people are not aware of how much'. Bill Wright said that there is a need to commission some work on the benefits of recreation to the economy, saying, 'The fundamental issue is about the values expressed by John Muir. But the debate has lost sight of this. People may not be interested in snow bunting, lichen or moss but they do talk about transport, something made possible to finance because of those who come here for recreation'. Roy agreed, 'There is the value of recreation to B and Bs and then the value to people nationally, to people in the urban areas. It keeps them sane. So there are two values - people from outwith the area who need wild areas and people from the communities who manage to hang on because of the people who come here.'

The meeting contributed to the creation of a counter-hegemonic discourse, stressing the value of 'the natural heritage' as the basis of local livelihood. The message is to be 'Environmental protection and nature conservation are good for business'. Adam said he has joined the Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce which he said does not generally represent 'people like us even though we are in business', to ensure that this alternative discourse is heard. At the moment it is dominated by 'Aviemore

interests that push development, development!' Roy was encouraged to get involved in the Community Council.

Adam summarised the final outcome of the meeting for me the next day.

We agreed to have a meeting, first with the conservation groups and then with the landowners, community councils and business groups. There will be a few arguments, even violent ones, but there could be some common ground so that Stewart Fulton could take something through to the National Park consultation. Environmentalists need to have their voice heard and they haven't really done this before. I am joining the chamber of commerce to do this. There are a lot of people and businesses who bring money into the area but who are invisible. These people need to be heard because they are bringing in the conservation or environmental tourists. It is businesses like Sally's (*Vice Chair of Chamber of Commerce- Speyside Wildlife*) that are the way forward. These aspects of the community need to be heard. The landowners are a problem. In Norway things are more community-run, but here the landowners are out to get things for themselves. Johnny Grant is like this - how can he get the most money for himself. A lot of the business community is like that as well. They just think of their own profits.

This meeting illustrates the process by which the conservation sense of place is beginning to form themselves more coherently into an organised interest group at the local level. Instead of relying on outside institutions and structures, they have managed to become identified to some extent as 'stakeholders'. They have been able to do this because of wider structural changes. As the head of the local tourist board said in an interview, 'we never used to have *these* groups before.' But, as Adam says, 'green tourism' is becoming important economically. More local businesses rely on walkers, climbers and mountain bikers than skiers. This is also the result of changing leisure and consumption patterns. The ski industry has been severely affected by the growth in

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skiing holidays abroad, as well as by global warming. A key person in the development agency for Aviemore told me that despite popular conceptions, the area could easily 'survive the demise of the ski industry', it is no longer important. It is going to be green tourism that will be the basis of any regeneration. These economic changes mean that local conservationists and recreationists, who had been afraid to speak out before, are now feeling more confident. And many of these people have considerable cultural capital to draw upon. They are for the most part university educated, articulate and astute. Dick has national connections, together with a reputation for being extremely knowledgeable. And, he cannot be accused of being 'an outsider' as he is Scottish and gained his experience by training as a stalker and gamekeeper. He has lived in the area for many years. Sally from Speyside Wildlife has shown what can be done by using the dominant discourses of local livelihood and by daring to enter the domain of the anti-outsiders. She has been amazingly successful considering that she is English and owns a company that depends on 'conservation' tourists. She and her husband were able to set up in business because of the large differential in house prices, providing another example of how the wider economic structure affects the way power operates in a local conflict. However, her hard-working and competent approach, together with the fact that she stresses what she has in common with the others (a need to have a successful business), has been so effective in gaining respect that she was appointed to be on the new National Park Board. The result of the National Park debate has been the creation of a rival power group to the power of the ski industry, coach party tourism and development interests. According to Kathy Rettie, who did research around the National Park consultation process, this group is now referred to as the Green Mafia, an obvious reference to the rival power of the Aviemore Mafia.

Meeting of the Recreation Forum

The meeting was attended by some people from the local area whom I had already met, including Nigel Williams from Glenmore Lodge, a canoeist from Lagganlia and Dick

Balharry (now with his Ramblers' hat on). Others were representatives of national organisations, including Alan Blackshaw (noted mountaineer and expert on land law and access issues), Colin, a representative from the British Association of Shooting and Conservation, and Bill Wright (representing in this case the Mountaineering Council of Scotland). Peter Ord, a factor at Balmoral Estate, came as the representative of the national organisation Ski Scotland. A representative of the Hang gliding Association was also present.

It was at this meeting that the differences between the recreation and conservation interests became more explicit. In the funicular debate, they had been allies, but in the National Park discussions cracks in the alliance began to appear. Within this forum, people who had been at loggerheads over other issues (walkers versus shooting, skiing versus mountaineering), joined together to make common cause. This time it was Murray Ferguson of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) who presented to the group. The conservation group thought that SNH favoured the economic development side whereas this group accused the SNH of putting too much stress on 'conservation of the natural heritage' and ignoring the recreation interest. The SNH uses the phrase 'enjoying and understanding' in their policy documents. The group took issue with this wording. Nigel Williams pointed out that this is not what recreation is about. He says the purpose of recreation is 'to recreate' yourself and this 'implies engagement with the hills'. The representative of the hang gliding association agreed. He repeatedly used the term 'antiseptic' to refer to the SNH and general conservation approach, which he associated with the view that the hills are something to be 'gazed at from the outside' and not used.

The outcome of the meeting was that, like the conservation group, they planned to lobby politicians to make sure that recreation was included as the one of the main aims of the Park. Even though they seemed to see themselves as distinct from the conservation group, they shared two members and also stressed the importance of showing how central the outdoor industry is for the local economy. However, within this group the focus was not so much on how they could win the argument with the local

community as with how they could use their power to influence events on a national level.

CONCLUSION

The conflict between the local livelihood and conservation/recreation shows how groups are formed not only into interest groups, as in the last chapter, but into 'sides' that mask the variety of views and positions within them. People become pigeonholed into either local livelihood or outside conservation/recreation. Once formed, the discourse of local versus outsider reinforces the divisions and even locals are divided between those who 'belong' and 'incomers' who don't. Boundaries have been created, partly as a result of one's lived experience (Barth: 2000) and sense of place, causing people to have particular values, but also because of the way in which the conflict itself unfolded. Once people have acquired a particular identity in these conflict situations, they 'invest huge values' (Cohen: 2000: 5) in the resulting boundaries that come in between these identities. The stakeholder model reinforces this tendency for people to identify themselves in a particular way. It is this model that was used by the Cairngorm Partnership (CP), which had been instrumental in shaping how the debates were conducted. In an interview with an employee of the CP, I was told that their remit was to 'facilitate communication between interest groups'. In their literature, 'stakeholder' is the common way to refer to these interest groups. This model can only operate when clear-cut interest groups are established that are defined by having distinct aims from other stakeholders. The mere identification of the groups serves to reinforce their identity and views. This was seen in the way the people, whilst meeting under the banner of Recreation Forum, seemed to distance themselves from the conservation group even though two of them were members of both groups.

The model then works on the idea that there will be some attempt to compromise on the entrenched positions. However, there are other levels of power that have been

hidden. Who decides who the stakeholders are? There are of course many different groups in society with different senses of place as this thesis has shown. But to move from having a sense of place to being part of an interest group, which is then recognised as a 'stakeholder', is not straight forward. Not only are certain interest groups chosen above others, some are taken more seriously than others. In September 2004, I asked Alan Blackshaw, the former Chairman of the Recreation Forum, about his feelings regarding the first year of the Park. He was very angry that after all the build up and the lengthy consultation process there is no one from outdoor recreation on the Park Board. The local conservation interest had only been belatedly recognised as a stakeholder in the local area, but through their newfound identity as part of the business community and income-generator, they have increased their power to the point that they can be considered a stakeholder to some extent. At first the conservation group did not count but because of a conscious strategy and efforts to organise themselves, they now have more influence. This can be seen just in the increase in the number of articles in the local paper about things like the RSPB ospreys and local initiatives, the Recycling and Composting Network. The paper regularly quotes the local conservation group as opposed to just printing letters.

Though the conservation and recreation interests feel themselves marginalised, others are excluded altogether from decision-making. One person told me that the Cairngorm Partnership is 'consulting the people who count.' This view is reinforced by an interview with a CP employee. He said that in the next consultation period the SNH 'only plan on consulting *key* interest groups'. He said he was concerned about the groups that are excluded, 'young people and women with children at home'. The stakeholder model confers varying degrees of power on certain groups and, within those groups, on certain people who are selected as being representative. In the Cairngorms, new clusters have influence as a result of the role they played in the National Park debate. All had some link with the Cairngorm Partnership.

Another problem with the stakeholder model is that it may resolve conflicts, but in many ways it actually causes the conflicts to begin with and ensures that conflicts unfold in a predictable manner. As Roy Dennis said in Chapter Six, the conflict is not

about the beaver but about who has the power to decide. This was confirmed by the CP employee, 'The funicular debate got very entrenched; it was difficult for there to be any communication. But in fact, both the pros and the antis had a variety of positions. The conflict was more about, 'It's my right to make this decision!'

Meanwhile the conflicts continue to take place, over different but nevertheless similar issues. Since the setting up of the National Park, major debates have emerged around the building of housing estates. One 'side' argues that there is a need for housing for 'local' people and that the conservationists put 'butterflies and trees' before people. The local conservation group argues that the new developments are not 'suitable' within a National Park. They are then accused of being anti-development incomers. The sides are still the same and most people continue to be excluded. Letters in the local paper continue to be abusive towards conservationists and incomers. Local conservationists continue to portray the locals as ignorant of the obvious facts. Groups continue to police their own boundaries and cling to certain discourses of truth, fighting to assert their 'interests' over others within the framework established for consultations. Other options need to be considered. If the veil is lifted on these power games then the identity of people may become less rigid and fixed interest groups may disappear. And where they do exist, the boundaries will be less distinct and the respective aims less clear such that a fresh eye may be cast on the whole situation. Conflicts will inevitably occur, but they may then take place in a more creative and productive framework rather than unfolding as a battle between two entrenched, polarised sides. The next chapter will examine what possibilities exist for creating these spaces.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RESHUFFLING THE CARDS: FINDING COMMON GROUND

INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter I examined how conflict situations produce identifiable interest groups. I showed how these groups come to form 'sides' on particular land use issues, mobilising various forms of power (Lukes: 1986) at different levels (Wolf: 1999: 4-5) in order to 'win'. Though their origin lies, to some extent, in the contrasting senses of place, these conflicts have developed as the result of a complex process, which takes place in particular circumstances and are manifested in the public domain.

The stakeholder model of decision-making both helps to create and reinforce any tendency for the existence of these sides. In this model, different social groups, who have been identified with specific material and ideological interests, are said to have fixed positions, e.g. pro or anti-funicular. In this case it is land, both as a physical entity and an ideological sign (Volosinov: 1986: 50-53), which is being contested. Different groups use particular discourses and representations of 'land', and people's relation to it, to argue their case. One of the key features of this power struggle is the 'local versus outsider/incomer' discourse in which people's position on issues such as the funicular or the National Park are linked to their relationship to place. Many of the views discussed in the preceding two chapters were expressed either in the public arena, in letters, in interviews, or in circumstances which counterpoised two positions. In other words, certain circumstances encourage people to create boundaries between themselves and others (Barth: 2000: 19-20). Recognising that these boundaries and identities, 'are contingent on the circumstances and relative positions of significant others' (Cohen: 2000: 3), this chapter will return to the individual and the private in order to explore circumstances in which these boundaries are either blurred or non-existent. Societies can be seen as collections of social groups or communities. However, these communities and interest groups are not homogenous. Though at times they may

act as one or be represented as a unity, they do so only in particular contexts (Amit and Rapport: 2002: 64). I have shown how the context of public conflict brings out this tendency to form bounded communities of interest. This aspect of my research has much in common with the findings of others who have studied environmental conflict (see Chapters One and Two). However, in this chapter I show how my research has unearthed other layers of these conflicts. By examining the data gathered more informally, in the context of doing activities, interviewing people on unrelated matters or in casual conversation, the boundaries between positions are less clear. As my fieldwork progressed and I became more immersed in the area and got to know more people in many different contexts, the complexity of views was increasingly revealed. From this anthropological vantage point, the cards are reshuffled and people are no longer 'holding the same hand.'

Complexity is revealed in a variety of ways. Firstly, what may appear to be a hegemonic discourse is interpreted by people in different ways. People may seem to hold particular positions, but these are held only in specific contexts and are temporary (Hall: 1996: 3-6, Mageo: 2002: 3). This is illustrated by the following extract from my field notes describing an incident from the Newtonmore Business Association meeting (discussed in the previous chapter).

A man from a local tourist attraction had launched into a torrent of abuse against those who would be 'parachuted in from the South to dominate the Park Board.' The main enemy were conservationists from organisations like the RSPB and the WWF. Many others had similar comments but he was the most vehement. I was sitting next to him and when the meeting was over, I took the opportunity of asking for clarification on his views. We chatted awhile and then he pointed out someone well known for his interest in conservation and opposition to the funicular. He spoke favourably about him, saying how much he had done for the area. I pointed out what I saw was a contradiction in his views. I thought you didn't like conservationists. He had a ready explanation - this man was OK, as was the RSPB Warden at Insh Marshes. They were different. They cared about the local community.

In the above case, though the man appeared in the context of the public meeting to be a perpetuator and prisoner of the discourse of local livelihood against conservationist, when speaking privately and informally he wasn't really anti-conservationist or anti-incomer. His position was in fact much more nuanced. The issue for him was the person's relationship and commitment to the community. The question is why in certain circumstances, and not others, people choose to express only one aspect of their views.

Secondly, the dominant discourse is not as widely shared as appears in the public domain. In opposition to the 'centralising force', there is the force of heteroglossia, which fragments into multiple views of the world (Mageo: 2002: 6, Morris: 1994: 15-16, Bakhtin: 1981 in Morris: 1994). The following extract is based on a conversation I had with a man who was cleaning up the village hall.

He is third generation Aviemore. His grandfather was a timber man, his father worked for a hotel and now he works for the railway. He did work for the Chairlift Company. He thinks the ski area is badly run and is totally opposed to the funicular. He says a lot of people who work for the Chairlift Company are against it. 'It is a real disaster'. He said Aviemore was 'brilliant' when he was a kid. A lot of times they made their own entertainment but there was also swimming clubs at the pool and he played ice hockey. Now these things are gone. 'Developers are just interested in making money. They build stuff and don't maintain it. They are just greedy. Local people have become lethargic and apathetic.' He berates them for not getting involved, not wanting to do anything, but at the same time he understands because 'their voice has not been listened to for so long that they have given up'. But he still loves it here and would not want to live anywhere else. 'I went down to London and couldn't orientate myself, there were no hills, no natural points of reference. It was difficult to tell which way the sun was going.'

It is only certain voices that are heard in public, the voices of those with the power to make themselves heard. But there are many more voices, similar to Bakhtin's analysis of Dostoevsky:

> He heard both the loud, recognised, reigning voices of the epoch, that is the reigning dominant ideas (official and unofficial), as well as voices still weak, ideas not yet fully emerged, latent ideas heard as yet by no one but himself, and ideas which were just beginning to ripen, embryos of future world views (Bakhtin: 1984 in Morris: 1994: 100).

It is the task of the anthropologist to make these other voices and ideas as widely heard as the 'reigning ideas'. The man quoted above does not accept the 'reigning ideas'. His local 'credentials' are impeccable yet, he does not support the funicular and is suspicious of those advocating development. He also appreciates the natural beauty of the area. His is a voice that was not heard in the public discussions.

Thirdly, there are a number of people who appear as anomalies, who exist in 'creative border zones' (Morris: 1994: 4-5, Bakhtin, quoted in Morris: 1994: 18) of innovation (Mageo: 2002: 8) where new senses of place are being created. Ross, the trainee warden at RSPB Insh Marshes, and the son of a farm manager on Jamie Williamson's Alvie Estate is an example of such an anomaly. He explained to me the problems this creates:

> My father wouldn't speak to me for months when I said I was going to take the position with the RSPB. When I drive the RSPB Land Rover to the estate after work, I get dirty looks from the landowner. The work I do for the RSPB is similar to what they do on the sporting estate but my father doesn't realise this.

The existence of alternative voices opens up the possibility for new creative ways of approaching conflicts over land use. The key is to somehow free people from the dominant discourse that sees every conflict in terms of local livelihood against outside conservation/recreation. According to Bakhtin (1981) this will happen when 'a variety of alien voices enter into the struggle for influence with an individual's consciousness (just

as they struggle with one another in surrounding social reality)' (in Morris: 1994: 70). Once people are aware of the relativistic nature of particular positions, it opens them up to new ways of perceiving.

What circumstances are most likely to give rise to such an awareness? It can only come as a result of social interaction (Cohen: 2002, Mageo: 2002:3-4). Bakhtin (1984) stresses the interaction between different ideas in the form of language and signs, but in my research context, different interactions with the land itself are also significant. In other words, a person will begin to understand the partiality of his/her position by engaging in different activities in both physical and socio-cultural environments. As a result of these interactions new meanings can be created (Morris: 1994, Mageo: 2002: 8). There may be centralising forces at work to reinforce the status quo, but there are also forces at work in every interaction for the possibility of change. However, some interactions are more fertile than others and these are the 'creative border zones' (Morris: 1994: 18), contexts in which different ideas and experiences meet.

There are a number of individuals in the Cairngorms who evoke these border zones. Though it could be argued that everyone has the potential to be part of these zones, certain individuals stand out as being particularly conscious of their anomalous position. They are aware that they do not fit neatly to any group but instead carry within their consciousness the ideas and experiences of all three approaches to the environment. This makes them more aware of the variety of possible positions and opens them up to creating ways of thinking and acting. Ross is such an example. His experience of many different ideas and activities made him an anomaly, such that he was able to free himself from the dominant discourses and become a creator of new ways of thinking about land, something he is acutely conscious of. 'I know I'm different. I wear many hats. I like hill walking, was raised on a sporting estate and work for the RSPB'. In addition, the existence of a conflict situation, which can lead to the entrenchment of views, paradoxically can also provide the context of interaction that could lead to greater awareness of different ideas. Ross told me that he became more aware of the different positions because of the public nature of the debates.

Whether new ideas, meanings, and worldviews are created is not just a matter of subjective experience. The particular historical conditions are also significant in affecting whether someone will be able to come across new ideas and be open to them (Lave and Holland: 2001: 5). In the specific historical context of Badenoch and Strathspey, a number of socio-cultural changes had been taken place. The fact that conservation organisations are in a financial situation to buy land, created the conditions for Ross to obtain a training post at Insh Marshes. I will now elaborate on these three points, showing in detail:

- how hegemonic discourses are contested

- the multitude of resistant voices

- the factors that create the possibilities for new senses of place to emerge, moments in which the cards have been reshuffled such that no one holds the same suite or number.

DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF DOMINANT DISCOURSES

I'm not a conservationist, but…..

Walley (2004) found in her study of the Marine Park in East Africa that locals did not express a concern for 'nature' as an abstract concept. The label 'conservationist' is reserved for the World Wildlife Fund representatives. However, in the course of their day-to-day lives, she discovered many examples of people appreciating things like wildlife and views. This is similar to what I found in the Cairngorms. John, head keeper at Kinveachy, would regularly denounce 'conservationists' and he himself would be denounced for being anti-conservation. As I discussed in previous chapters, those who see land as productive and those who see land as something to be conserved for its own sake express different values that have the potential to clash. However, what does this mean in practice? Ross believes that what he does for the RSPB in terms of every day land management is very similar to the work down on the sporting estate. My time spent on both the RSPB reserve at Insh Marshes and on Kinveachy supported this. When out

with John and the other stalkers and keepers on Knveachy, there seemed little difference in their knowledge and appreciation of the natural world. What distinguished them were the outward trappings, the tweeds they wore as a symbol of their belonging to a particular landowner. On the day I spent heather burning with John, I wrote in my field notes:

He showed me where they had burned the heather yesterday and explained to me what they were trying to achieve. The grouse moor needs to be a 'patchwork' of different stages of heather, old, youngish and new. The old heather provides the cover from predators and the new, young, post-burned bits offer new shoots to eat. He showed me how a variety of plant forms exist, different grasses, mosses, berries and the three types of heather. He said, 'I'm not a botanist so I don't know the name for everything but I know which ones the grouse eat.'

I later showed him an article in the local paper about how to burn heather correctly. It had been written by one of the RSPB wardens at Abernethy. The practice of heatherburning was not necessarily condemned by official conservationists. John concurred with the advice given, but as I discussed in Chapter Six, the fact that it was the RSPB warden, rather than he who was asked to write the article for the official 'conservation' column, further reinforced for him the boundary between himself and 'conservationists'.

When I was volunteering on Insh Marshes I was surprised at the kind of tasks I was assigned. I spent less time viewing wildlife than on Kinveachy, where I had seen deer and grouse of course, but also birds of prey and capercaillie. At Insh Marshes I chased escaped Highland cattle off the road and back into their field, I spent days building a fence to protect the aspen trees from rabbits, and did bird counts in the same way as the estate workers at Kinveachy do grouse and deer counts. At Insh Marshes I also met a trainee gamekeeper who had chosen to do his work experience for the RSPB. He said he notices little difference in the kind of work done at Insh

compared to the sporting estate aspects of his training. The only difference is that he says he enjoys the part of the job that involved shooting 'pests', such as rabbits, as much a menace on an RSPB 'reserve' as on a sporting 'estate'. Ross and the volunteer John agree that it is part of their job as 'land managers', but prefer to enlist the services of a local farmer. Tom, the warden at Insh Marshes, confirmed my impressions. He stressed to me the importance of the grazing animals to the maintenance of the ecological system on the marshes. He said, 'When you actually get involved in working on a reserve you realise that you can't just let nature take its course. You have certain aims and to achieve these aims it needs to be managed'.

The conclusion to be drawn from this data is that the difference between livelihood and conservation in this case has been much exaggerated and is more to do with general debates about land ownership, what counts as knowledge and what the overall purpose of the land should be. The dominant discourse, which highlights the differences rather than the similarities between those working on sporting estates and conservation reserves, is not only misleading but creates hostility, further fuelled by assigning them to distinct stakeholder positions.

The image of locals put forward by some non-residents (see previous chapter), that they 'don't appreciate what they have', is also an oversimplification. Though very few locals may claim to be conservationists, and many are quick to express 'anti-conservationist views', there is more to this picture. As Bill Wilkie, a retired railway worker told me:

> Though they may not know a lot about conservation issues,
> they don't like it destroyed. There was a tremendous outcry
> when trees were cut down in front of the Aviemore Hotel.

Locals are concerned about livelihood issues but this does not mean they are not sensitive to environmental issues. However, their interest manifests itself in different ways that are not often revealed at the public level. I have already noted that locals are less likely to have been on the 'high ground' such as the Cairngorm Plateau. Therefore, their environmental consciousness is exhibited in 'low ground' issues like

the cutting down of trees in the village rather than in concern for moss at 3000 ft. There is a nature reserve just behind the village of Aviemore. I was told about it many times by locals as a good place to go walking. Whenever I went walking there I encountered locals with families or with the dog. In the spring, the reserve was a favourite destination for locals for other reasons. I first heard about the breeding frogs from a conversation between a woman working at the supermarket checkout and a local customer. She had seen the frogs and was letting the other woman know that this was the time to go and see them. I was later told about the frogs from a number of other locals including a restaurant owner who had expressed very vehement anti-conservation and pro-funicular views in a previous conversation.

Since leaving the field, there have been a number of campaigns initiated by a cross-section of locals that could be characterised as 'environmental'. These include stopping mobile phone masts, rejecting new housing developments and organising a community buy-out of a local wood to stop it being cut down. Letters to the paper on these issues have come from both the conservation group and locals who had taken up different positions on the funicular and the National Park. This indicates that many people who would be identified as locals rather than incomers are not necessarily unappreciative of the natural world or unconcerned about the state of their environment. However, the focus of their concerns lies closer to home. The existence of different *types* of environmentalism has been noted in the research of Guha and Martinez (1997). They argue that it is not that people in the South, compared with those in the North, aren't concerned about environmental issues but rather that they have a distinct form of environmentalism that is more integrated with their everyday lives. My research shows that such an environmentalism also exists in the North itself and not just amongst the 'poor' or 'subaltern' groups (Pulido: 1996). Recently in the local paper, two letters were published supporting Cameron McNeish's (a local resident as well as President of the Scottish Ramblers Association and well-known for his 'anti-development' views) critique of large-scale wind farms. These letters were written by two people who normally took 'anti-conservation' and 'anti-McNeish' stances. What makes this case different is that, in the opinion of the writers, large-scale wind farms

would not only be an eyesore, but they would jeopardise the source of their livelihoods i.e. tourism. Similarly, the campaigns to save the local wood are relevant to everyone, whether they go there to at moss and lichen or to walk the dog.

Aviemore Centre, not the funicular

The Strathspey and Badenoch Herald

LETTERS TO THE ED

Rise and fall of Aviemore

Sir, – Aviemore 1900-2000: The Rise and Fall. I may not be the person to write about Aviemore and its ups and downs. I admit that, like 90 per cent of those who write about Aviemore, I am a white settler, but a very early one at that – 1935 to be exact.

It has been 65 years since I first foraged into Aviemore to work as a message boy at the Cash Grocers owned by a Mr McDonald, who actually worked in the Gold Rush of 1849.

But enough of what I was doing, what was Aviemore like in the early 30s?

In 1900, at the start of the century, Aviemore was a very busy rail junction, a new station was built, and there was a large shed to house the locomotives to work the many trains that worked from Aviemore. A row of houses was built to house the workers – Railway Terrace.

Indeed, Aviemore was a busy village. We had all the shops we needed and the area had that feeling that it could only get better. But did it?

The war started and Aviemore became more important as a rail centre and that continued until the war was over and well beyond those years. No unemployment – not until the road haulage began to bite, then a gradual slow-down of rail traffic.

But a light shone for the village in the early 50s: the Cairngorms were to be opened up to the public and the hills would become a ski area where the snow would create jobs and bring in visitors to enhance the economy of the place.

The demise of our rail network came in 1965 and Aviemore now became reliant on others, or white settlers, to bring life back to the village, which it did to some extent, but when your livelihood depends on the weather, things can get a bit sticky.

But things were not all gloom. In the early 60s we were to see the building of new hotels. The first was Coylumbridge, followed by the Aviemore Centre. Work was to be created and Aviemore would become the mecca of sport for the entire valley.

Swimming pool, ice rink, dry ski slope and, of course, the Cairngorms. What more could Aviemore want apart from well paid jobs?

But alas it did not last long. The centre and indeed the village was starved of cash to keep the sports mecca alive.

Aviemore was now in a very bad way, the village had only one reasonable sized shop to buy your daily food. The railway jobs were gone. How could Aviemore come alive again?

And yet again the cavalry arrived to start to make Aviemore the envy of the valley. Dykes were built where none were needed and the Dell of Spey, the showpiece of the village, was built – the result looks like a tidied up quarry.

What a difference it has made to the people of Aviemore, they're so happy about it all.

So happy that they have to write to the press and express their views and sometimes those views are not what the cavalry want to hear.

Aviemore at the moment is down, but who knows what schemes are in the pipeline that will make some put pen to paper to extol or to accuse? Yours etc, –
W. WILKIE
22 Cairngorm Avenue,
Aviemore.

Figure 45. A letter from Bill Wilkie, a retired railway worker, writing in response to yet another failed attempt at redeveloping the Aviemore Centre. I had interviewed him earlier in the year, and he never mentioned the funicular.

New hats thrown in the ring for Aviemore Centre

28/06/01

Figure 46. Hopes are raised again, a year later.

Alternative conceptions of the livelihood approach also arose in discussions of the Aviemore Centre, which seemed of greater interest to local people than the funicular. I did not deliberately seek out people who could be identified with a particular position nor did I raise the issue of the funicular. In this way I allowed people to raise issues that were important to them. In many cases, the funicular was not even mentioned as a concern. For example, in the many months I spent with the stalkers and keepers on Kinveachy, and later with farmers, the funicular was not mentioned once. The main issue that was raised again and again was the question of the redevelopment of the Aviemore Centre. The Centre has been left to run down for many years. In the year of my research, apart from some tourist accommodation, everything had been closed including the ice rink, Santa Claus Land and the cinema. Promises had been made for years about the redevelopment of the centre. There were even people employed to oversee and negotiate this redevelopment. But every time something seemed to be happening, it would fall through. The number of conversations I had and the number of articles in the local paper, testify to the importance of this issue to local people. The redevelopment of the Aviemore Centre, more than anything, including the funicular, is seen as the key to the success of the area, not only because it will draw in tourists, but because the locals themselves want better facilities for their families. The closing of the ice rink in particular was resented as it was used by many local children.

Many pro-funicular views were articulated not so much in terms of the funicular itself, but the impact this investment would have on the Aviemore Centre. For example, one local business owner said, 'Now that the funicular issue is settled, investment will

be attracted to the redevelopment of the Aviemore Centre'. Other sources confirmed that the main aim is the redevelopment of the centre and the funicular was supported because it would lead to the achievement of the primary goal. These comments lead me to believe that if the locals had been given the choice between £14 million investment in the funicular and the same in the Aviemore Centre, that they would have wholeheartedly supported the latter. However, they were not given this option. And, if the proposal had been for the redevelopment of the Centre, there would have been no opposition. Visitors and the outdoor recreation organisations have consistently argued for more 'wet weather' facilities available for all to use. My research suggests that the general concerns and fears of locals, both long-term residents and incomers, over the decline in tourism and the effects on livelihood, were transformed, in the mouths of those engaged in the public debate, into univocal and unmitigated support for the funicular, when in fact, the hegemonic discourse was being interpreted very differently. As Roseberry (1994) puts it in the case of Mexican peasants in their relationship to state discourses:

> Each case reveals ways in which the state, which never stops talking, has no audience, or rather has a number of audiences who hear different things, and who in repeating what the state says to still other audiences, change the words, tones, inflections and meanings. Hardly, it would seem a common discursive framework (p.365).

The other part of the discourse, the anti-incomer and anti-outsider sentiments, are equally problematic and do not represent 'a common discursive framework' or the complexity of local feelings. I did come across many 'anti-Southern' and 'anti-incomer' sentiments. However, as the quote at the beginning of this chapter indicates, these views get considerably modified in practice, outside the public arena. It is not that people resent conservationists or incomers as such. There is more of a concern as to the way in which they relate to the community. As the man quoted above from the Newtonmore Business Association meeting says, 'They're alright, they care about the community'. Tom, the English warden of Insh Marshes confirms this. He said he has

had much more success in relating to locals because he made a point of trying to integrate his work on Insh Marshes with the community. He has initiated a special project in local schools in which pupils built boxes for the 'golden eye' (a rare bird) to nest in. He works closely with local farmers on the birds and grain project, which gives financial encouragement to farmers to plant more grain, considered to be good for birds. The farmer Alistair MacLennan, though a slightly atypical farmer (see Chapter Five) who has worked closely with Tom told me, 'I couldn't believe how well we got on. He came over for dinner - a conservationist and a vegetarian! But we got on great. I have a lot of respect for him.' Tom said he has had considerably more success in being accepted by the local community than the wardens at Abernethy Reserve because they tend to 'cut themselves off from the community and only focus on the reserve itself'. They thus have gained a reputation for being 'aloof'. I heard similar views expressed from a wide variety of people. This reputation came as a shock to one Abernethy warden, when I informed him of what many people had said to me about his reserve. He had not experienced this resentment in his own life. His children go to the local school and his wife is a teacher. So even within conservation circles public reputations are not always realised in practice. As noted by researchers into the English experience in Scotland:

> There was thus often a tension and interplay between the English-in-general - and the English-as-individuals - a distinction commonly made in relation to black minority groups (McIntosh, Sim, and Robertson: 2004: 49-50).

This is equally true for conservationists-in-general and conservationists-in-particular. In day-to-day life, it is not the origin of the person or their occupation, but their perceived commitment to the local community.

This point was reinforced for me by the main proponent of the preservation of the local Gaelic heritage, Johnny Campbell. He had moved up to the area from Lanarkshire, but was quick to point out that he was a 'native' by origin. Being a 'native' carries even more weight than being a 'local'. It is difficult to give an exact definition of being a 'local'. It is not strictly related to the length of time one has lived in the area. The

category can be applied to different people at different times, depending on the context (Edwards: 1998: 154, 157-158). For example, Sally of Speyside Wildlife not only had not been long in the area, but was also English. Yet, she was 'allowed' to prepare the response to the National Park consultation because she had the 'right' views. But for Johnny, the status of native could not be acquired; you had to be born to it, preferably over many generations. Though he had been born elsewhere, his grandmother had lived her whole life on a local estate and Johnny had spent many summers with her. It was from her that he learned Gaelic and got his passionate interest in Gaelic history and culture. He is very much part of what others have identified as a 'Gaelic renaissance' (see McCrone: 1992 and Macdonald: 1997), in which people are consciously rediscovering their identity. Johnny's views on a range of issues are expressed in terms of the common Highlanders' oppression by outsiders, whether Lowland Scots or the English. I had many discussions with him about what is wrong with the English and how Highlanders are different. He said that Highlanders are reluctant to put themselves forward on committees and public consultations. This means that it is often English incomers who get involved in the public arena. His views are confirmed by the letters in the local paper and membership of various community and business associations. One woman told me that she had to act as mediator in her local church because of the problems created by what was perceived to be an 'incomers' takeover' of the church. Someone else, though of Scottish origin herself, said that it was mainly the incomers who had the 'drive and ideas to participate in community affairs.'

However, it soon transpired that it is not the English themselves who Johnny is against, nor does he support all Highlanders without reservation. He hates the local landowners for their domination of the area even though some of them have 'pure' Highland backgrounds. And, he has many English friends. This last fact became apparent on a day I spent with Johnny. I had originally met him when I was working as a waitress in the café. He came in regularly for the £1.99 breakfast special. He had long been berating me about my lack of contact with 'real' locals. I finally took up his offer and we arranged a day to drive around the area and 'meet the natives'. The first visit was to a 90-year-old woman in a rest home in Nethy Bridge. She was one of the few

remaining Gaelic speakers in the area. Hearing her stories of going down to London in 'service' and then coming back to marry a keeper on the original Abernethy Estate was fascinating and certainly opened up another angle on the area. The stories of Seamus Grant had been similar, memories of an area that once had a Gaelic-speaking, rural population, with every aspect of their lives controlled by English and lowland Scots landowners. There are not many of these people left in Badenoch and Strathspey and those that claim to be local today have only been in the area since the sixties and the tourist boom caused by the opening up of the ski area. As mentioned in Chapter Five, it is mainly the farming community, and some left from the railway and timber days, who can claim to have been in the area for more than one generation. However, it soon became apparent that Johnny's hostility to 'Southerners' is due to the role they played in Scottish history, and is based more on their social class than on national identity. This impression was vindicated when we made our next visit. It was dark by now. Johnny had got lost driving around the forests surrounding Nethy Bridge. I caught a glimpse of many lovely houses through the forest, each with their own substantial grounds, giving an impression of idyllic rural living. Johnny told me that this is where a lot of incomers live, pointing out the house of Roy Turnbull, vocal member of the local conservation group. I was surprised when we turned into one of these properties, the residence of Keith and Shirley, two members of his Gaelic language group. I was even more surprised to discover that they were English. They had come to the area 20 years ago for the usual reasons, to escape the urban life and make a living out of their favourite pastime, skiing. They now had a successful skiing business that had managed to survive despite the downturn in skiing. Johnny and Keith communicated briefly in Gaelic but it was soon obvious that Keith was still a relative beginner. I had already heard of his wife Shirley because I listened to her programme on the local radio station. They were in many ways the classic incomer couple; they have come to the area with money from the south of England, established a business, own a lovely forest house in Nethy Bridge and are active in local affairs. They also have been critical of the funicular despite their association with the ski industry. So why did Johnny introduce me to them as the locals I needed to meet? When I asked him afterwards he

said that Shirley in particular was 'Scottish at heart'. She had the 'sensibilities of a Highlander'. So despite the anti-incomer and anti-English discourse that Johnny had been espousing to me for the past six months, these categories are filled flexibly in his everyday life. Again, what matters, is the fact that this couple have demonstrated in practice that they are committed and care about the community. And what matters to Johnny is that they are interested in the history and heritage of the area. When I asked him about the other members of the Gaelic language group, he admitted that they are also incomers, mostly English. Therefore the discourse of anti-incomer or outsider that is used around public debates such as the funicular and the National Park does not encompass Johnny's approach. He is only 'anti-outsider' when they use their education, confidence and money to dominate and impose their way of doing things. But if the incomers are, in his eyes, genuinely committed to the area, show an interest in the history and culture and integrate sensitively into the public life of the community, they have effectively been redefined as a 'Highlander'. Conversely, those who may be local by origin lose their claim to Highland identity if they are landowners or developers who only care about making money out of the area. Johnny himself believes strongly that private land owning should be abolished in the Scottish Highlands. What counts for Johnny is not so much national origin, but one's social class relationship to the community. His attitude towards landowners was shared by many other long-term residents over the course of my research. The example of Johnny illustrates how a variety of concerns may be concealed by a particular discourse. Only by spending time with people in the fieldwork context can such discrepancies be revealed. What first appeared to be a straightforward anti-incomer position, eventually emerged as a very complex and nuanced position.

My research has shown how in many different ways, the hegemonic discourse of 'local livelihood versus outside conservation and recreation' hides a complexity of interpretations. Though hostility towards incomers is not a myth, such a discourse oversimplifies a variety of positions held locally. It hides the fact that people are not really anti-conservationist at all but only against those who appear powerful and unconcerned with the community. It also hides the fact that people have as much

resentment against powerful locals who are pursuing their own interests at the expense of the community, such as landowners and developers, as they do against the large conservation organisations. In addition, the impression is given that people are more divided than they actually are, leading to stakeholder models of conflict resolution that are inappropriate. Dominant discourses may reveal themselves in the language because certain groups have the power to be heard, but the meanings are modified to correspond to people's actual experience.

RESISTANCE TO THE HEGEMONIC DISCOURSES

I have described a number of examples in which people share a great deal in common with the hegemonic positions reified by stakeholder models of conflict resolution. In this section I show that there is a significant minority of people who not only did not share the discourse but express views that challenge that discourse. They can be differentiated, however, from those in the previous chapter who took a more organised anti-funicular stand and whose views echoed quite closely that of the national conservation and recreation organisations. These voices are based firmly in a local perspective and tend to share many criticisms that the pro-funicular people had made of outside organisations. This discourse of resistance is also not 'unitary' (Bakhtin: 1981 in Morris: 1994: 74-77) and takes different forms depending on the experiential and social context of the person. However, these other discourses are often not heard because of factors that muffle these voices.

I had already encountered strongly pro-funicular views amongst those associated with the ski industry. However, as I got to know more people and spoke to them in different contexts I came to understand that these views are not unanimous. Though these people want to improve the ski area, many did not think the funicular was the answer. One long-term lift operator of the ski area told me that he was against the funicular but was not allowed to say anything. The main argument in favour of a funicular is that it can transport people to the top even in high winds. In reply to this argument the lift operator said, 'I don't understand why anyone would want to go up to

the top in high winds'. An owner of a skiing business said that the funicular plan is 'flawed.' 'It won't underpin many jobs, the expertise will come from abroad, replacement parts will be expensive and there is potential for access to be restricted.' A snowboarding shop owner was extremely anti-funicular. He supported the ski lift operator's doubt that people would want to go up to the top in high winds. He had been in favour of a gondola up from Aviemore that would stop at the base of the mountain. In his view this would attract more visitors to Aviemore itself, rather than driving 'straight past Aviemore up to the car park'. He said, 'The Chairlift Company is very self-centred and they don't know what they are doing.' Another local skier thought, 'The only people in favour of it are the Chairlift Company'. Such views were confirmed by other local residents. One person said, 'The ski area is very badly managed. I'm against the funicular and so are a lot of people who work for the Chairlift Company. It is a disaster. There will be deaths because people will go up to the top in bad conditions and they won't be able to cope. Anyone can say they're experienced and just go up.'

These voices belong to a variety of people. Some might be described as incomers, but in most cases they have been in the area for ten years or more, have businesses and families, and are committed to stay in the area. Others would count as locals in even the strictest definition, having grown up in the area. All of them remained unheard or at least unacknowledged in the public arena. Though many people had expressed pro-funicular views, when I met people in less public contexts, it became apparent that the local community was divided on the issue. But instead of having a full debate on the issue, only one side had been heard, the side that corresponded to the one with the most political and economic power. In the previous chapter, I argued that the pro-funicular group had 'won' because they had managed to mobilise the power of the outsider vs. local hegemonic discourse. Those who had opposed the funicular publicly were either national conservation and recreation organisations or locals who were identified as incomers. However, the picture is actually more complicated because there were many locals who could never be accused of being incomers, in addition to people associated with the skiing industry itself, who had not supported the funicular. So why didn't they speak out? Why weren't their voices heard?

One major reason, as one person told me, is that people were too 'scared'. As one employee of the Chairlift Company said, 'It is very difficult to be publicly against the funicular. Letters in the local paper that were against it got so slated that people don't dare say anything.' The main reason they are 'slated' is because they would be accused of being 'anti-local community'. Though many people may consider themselves local, the definition of local varies according to the context. The vast majority of people in the area are in fact incomers. As one outdoor instructor said, 'So many people come from outside anyway. Just because they've lived here 10 years, they start excluding people.' Conversely, a 90-year-old who had come to the area in his twenties said that he still was not a native. But people get branded as incomers if they express views that do not fit the dominant discourse of those in power. This can be seen in a number of contexts. The Danish landowner of Glen Feshie is supported by other Scottish landowners as long as he maintains the tradition of the sporting estate. Another foreign landowner, on the other hand, has been criticised by others because she is against killing animals and doesn't want to have a sporting estate. With the funicular debate, anyone whose pedigree was in doubt could be publicly vilified. The owner of the snowboard business had been in the area 11 years and has a business that contributes to the community. He himself sees himself as a local, indicated to me the way he criticised 'outsiders' like the RSPB and Magnus Magnusson for not understanding the local situation. But when he went on local radio to question the funicular, he became a target. 'I am now seen as the enemy'.

Two outdoor instructors, who have been in the area for many years and plan to stay, found out what could happen if they dared get involved. They were all in favour of modernising the ski area and were critical of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and the Cairngorms Campaign because the individuals involved 'don't know the area very well' and 'don't sit down and talk to people here'. But they had major criticisms about how they felt the funicular had been pushed through and how they were treated for raising any doubts. Julian said that there had been no general meeting to discuss what could be done for the ski area and they had just been 'presented with the funicular by

the Chairlift Company, so they deliberately polarised people into pro-funicular and jobs/money in the local area and those who were against.'

Shaun told me what happened when a few of them went to a meeting called by the Chairlift Company because they had heard that a protest was planned at the ski area:

> We were faced with 17 people; it was all very formal. All the local councillors appeared to listen but then one made a comment about me being English, the implication being that if you were a local then you would be in favour of the funicular because it meant jobs.

Shaun and Julian soon became reluctant to speak out, as did the owner of the snowboard business, largely because of the way were treated as anti-local English incomers. There were others who had said nothing at all for this reason. One English business owner deliberately made no public statement though he had been personally against it. He therefore escaped the vilification and has survived to become a leading participant in community politics, well regarded by even the most anti-incomer advocate. This shows how being an incomer as such is not a problem as long as one does not challenge the power structure. This is similar to Johnny Campbell's relationship with incomers. People could be accepted as belonging if they fit in with his worldview. Achieving the status of 'local' and therefore 'belonging' has particular significance because this status confers the 'right' to participate in decision-making (Edwards: 1998:161). People like Shaun and Julian, as outdoor instructors, would not have suffered financially as a result of their stand. But others, like business owners and those employed by the Chairlift Company, faced potential financial implications if they were seen to be publicly against. Therefore, there are a number of pressures on people to conform.

The case of the funicular reveals significant points about who 'belongs' in the sense of having a 'right' to decide, showing why some voices are not heard. Many locals, both long-term and more recent, would not even consider speaking out because they do not feel part of the decision-making structure. The more recently arrived locals are afraid of being branded as 'anti-community incomers' and the longer-term locals, like

the lift operator, are afraid for their jobs or else do not have the confidence to speak out in the public arena. I suggested in the preceding chapter that the stakeholder model excludes the majority of people from public life. This is further supported in this chapter by the existence of different interpretations and outright resistance to the dominant discourse on the part of many people who do not fit conveniently into any of the categories for consultation. Anti-funicular views were invariably linked to a critique of the economic and political power relations. The owner of the snowboarding business said, 'The local area is politically and economically controlled by five people who own all the land.' A local teenager told me:

> The councillors are always consulting but never acting upon it, like with the funicular. That is a total waste of money. Money should be spent on things like a leisure centre. The Chairlift Company doesn't pay any attention to what the locals want.

But it is these people, the landowners, leading business owners, politicians and other 'community representatives' who are called upon to speak for the local community. The way that consultation operated in the run-up to the National Park, illustrates the problem of lack of involvement of most people in decision-making. The Cairngorm Partnership (CP) is typical of the 'partnership' approach to 'managing' potential conflict over environmental issues and land use. In this model, key 'interest groups' and their representatives are brought together in order to try and reach agreement. Such partnerships tend to be dominated by organisations and institutions that already have a certain degree of power and influence (Poncelet: 2001: 289). In the Cairngorms, the CP set up a number of 'forums' as a means of organising the preparation for the National Park. The purpose had been to gather together, according to Ross, 'the people who matter', so that the transfer to National Park status could proceed with a minimum of conflict. Forums included Highland Councillors, landowners, farmers, recreation and Community Councils. Some of the forums are built around existing power structures but the existence of a recreation, farming and Community Council forum should theoretically allow for participation of a much wider variety of local opinion. However, even these proved to be problematic in their representation. The recreation forum

consisted largely of national representatives of different sports, not local representatives. So, for example, the representative for skiing and snowboarding is the head of Snowsports Scotland. He is a skier of long-standing, a supporter of the funicular and also happens to be the factor (overall manager) of Balmoral Estate. When I mentioned this to the snowboard shop owner he said that he couldn't see this man representing 'the views of the young snowboarders who hang around outside Chevy's (a pub in Aviemore)'. The farming 'stakeholders' included a Highland Councillor and Alistair MacLennan (mentioned in Chapter Five), who was a controversial figure amongst the other farmers I had met.

In theory, the Community Councils should be the most likely then to represent the local community. However, despite the dedicated and hard-working people involved, their claim to speak for the entire community is open to question. One of the reasons for this is because of the diverse nature of the community as I have already discussed (Amit and Rapport: 2002). There is no one community view so that gathering one representative for each community across the Cairngorm area could not be expected to be able to communicate such diversity. But there are other reasons, largely to do with political, economic and social inequalities, that mean that such a group could never be relied on to speak for the community. Community Councils are local organisations that consist largely of volunteers because there are never enough candidates to warrant an election. The kind of people who volunteer to represent the community therefore tends to be those who have at least some spare time and have a certain amount of 'cultural capital' and who possibly see being on the council as furthering their economic or political ambition. Most Community Councillors will therefore be those who already have a certain amount of social standing in the community. The representative for the southern Cairngorms was the factor from Invercauld Estate. Others owned businesses. The problems with using the Community Councils as stakeholders are illustrated in my experience with Aviemore Community Council. My encounter with the local 'democratic' process is described in my field notes:

Prior to the period of consultation for the National Park, I heard no discussions about the Community Council and what they were doing, except for the occasional reference in the local paper. No one I had met ever referred to them. When I learned from the paper that there were to be consultations about the National Park, I tried to find some local meetings to go to. As I had never been to a Community Council meeting, I needed to find out where and when they met. I started my search by contacting Highland Council offices but they couldn't tell me anything. I looked again through the local papers, to no avail. In the end, someone mentioned someone that they thought was on the council and I found her phone number and asked when the next meeting was. When I went to the meeting, which was an AGM, there were only seven people there, including the reporter from the paper. No one asked me who I was or welcomed me in any way. If I had been a 'genuine local' I would not have felt very encouraged; no one seemed to care whether I was there or not. At no point at the meeting was there any indication that anyone had asked for anyone else's opinion on an issue. Views were expressed that just represented the people speaking. There was a short presentation from the new person in charge of the Glenmore Corridor but there was no discussion of the National Park, which I thought was to have been the main point of the meeting. Most of the discussion was spent on the problem with the flower boxes on the high street. I came away extremely frustrated. I certainly didn't feel that I had learned anything about what locals thought. The meeting was held in the village hall and next door there were at least three times as many people taking part in a keep fit class. As I was packing up my things to leave, a man came in to do the tidying up. I started talking to him and didn't get home for another hour and a half! That conversation proved to be one of the most interesting I had (*the source of the second quote at the beginning of this chapter*). I was clearly talking to someone with an immense knowledge and concern of the area. Yet, here he was cleaning up the village hall after the 'representatives' of the community had had the major meeting of the year as if it was a complete irrelevancy. Yet, one of these Community Councillors I would later meet at a Cairngorms Partnership meeting of the 'community representatives'. Their views were

then presented to the government as being the views of the locals together with the business owners, Highland councillors, farmers and landowners.

The dominant discourse of outside recreation/conservation versus local livelihood has been exploited by certain groups to further their own interests. It is very difficult for this discourse to be challenged through the normal political channels especially when a deliberate attempt is made, using the stakeholder model, to consult local opinion. The stakeholder model makes use of the existing power structures and therefore can only reproduce and therefore reinforce them.

ANOMALIES AND SIGNS OF CHANGE

Changes in the economic, political and social structure of the area may be creating a space for new interactions between 'contradictory and differing voices' (Morris: 1994: 15), opening up opportunities for redefining what it means to be local and blurring distinctions between outside and inside. The effects of structural changes in global capitalism as well as cultural and demographic changes (see Chapter One) have impacted on the economy and the social composition of the area, resulting in an influx of new people. This has led to 'social and ideological contradictions' resulting in the area becoming to a certain extent 'a creative borderzone between historical consciousnesses'(Morris: 1994: 18). This new wave of incomers has largely come because of an interest in the natural environment and has brought with it a variety of different experiences, views and practices. These 'alien voices enter into the struggle for influence with an individual's consciousness (just as they struggle with one another in surrounding social reality)' (Bahktin: 1981: 79). The regular letters from Gus Jones and Roy Turnbull have exposed many people to alternative views. As a representative of the Aviemore Tourist Board said to me in an interview, 'We didn't use to have these people here', when speaking of the Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group. The increased economic importance of recreation, walking, climbing, and birding, and the

decline of skiing, has had a major impact on the socio-economic composition of the area. An increasing number of businesses are based on these tourists rather than the skier or the coach party, making people more positively disposed to interests that they might not share themselves. For example, Speyside Wildlife bought up a stedding near the estate of Glen Feshie. Pete, the birding guide, told me that when they employed a local building firm to do the renovations, the workers couldn't believe that anyone could make any money out of bird watching. Jamie Williamson expressed a widely held view when he said, 'The only business that can make money out of bird watching is Raymond Revue's Bar in Soho'. But when the firm then got a contract from the RSPB to work on the new Osprey Centre as a result of recommendations from Speyside Wildlife, they began to take the money-making potential of wildlife tourism more seriously. Pete thought that this would play a part in changing attitudes towards people he described as 'conservationists'.

Newcomers have also had an impact on many locals in terms of what activities they engage in and what interests they have. When exposed to different experiences and people, to new senses of place, they open themselves up to change. This process of transformation, through practical interaction, has been found elsewhere by anthropologists. Writing about conflicts over land use in Australia, Strang (2000) notes:

> Battles over land, though invariably contentious and unequal, involve the explication and exchange of values, providing all parties with exposure to alternative conceptual frames and qualitatively different environmental relations (p. 93).

In the course of my research I came across several such people who were 'local' in that they were born in and grew up in the area but challenge the stereotype of what it means to be 'local' and cannot be associated simply with a 'livelihood' sense of place. As a result of coming into contact with new experiences, they have developed interests in conservation and/or walking/climbing. In addition, there are incomers who may once have felt antipathy to the livelihood/development interests but have now integrated their interest in conservation and/or recreation into a concern for the material well

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being of the area. Instead of being satisfied with a 'hand of one suit', these people hold various combinations of 'cards', and their existence stands as testimony to the limitations of the stakeholder model. As someone said to me when I was explaining my research and how I had classified activities into livelihood, conservation and recreation, 'There is another category of people, those who do *everything*.' These people are not distinguished necessarily by their personal qualities. What sets them apart is the fact that they are involved in a range of activities and have had a variety of different experiences with the land. Examining the process by which these people integrate a number of senses of place provides insights into how conflicts between conservation, recreation and livelihood might be reduced or avoided.

Ross

Ross's story shows how exposure to new people and experiences can cause someone to breakout of the particular sense of place that they were raised in. He told me about one of his earliest memories that he claims had a big impact on him. He saw Dick Balharry on TV, talking about how he rescued a Golden Eagle, nursed it and let it back into the wild, 'I don't remember my exact reaction but my parents said I cried.' As Dick lives locally, Ross was later to meet him at his school when Dick came to give a talk. Having such contact provided him with a new perspective on birds of prey, very different from his father and others on the sporting estate where he lived.

Ross also developed an interest in hill walking. As few local children have been up to the ski car park, much less the top of the Cairngorm Plateau, Ross is again unusual. He said he had been on the hills on the estate with his father and that got him a taste for it but it was the Duke of Edinburgh programme at the school that got him going out 'for fun' into the hills. The teachers who set up this programme were technically 'incomers' who had sought jobs in the area because of their own love of the outdoors. Ross now goes hill walking with his binoculars. He likes the hills of Drumochter, south of the Cairngorms, because they are not that popular with many hill walkers but they have

a wealth of wildlife. He spent two years as a trainee warden at RSPB Insh Marshes and then got a job 'down South' in Norfolk and then in Dorset. But after a year he was very happy to come back to Scotland and the hills. He is now a warden at Abernethy, the RSPB reserve that has invoked so much hostility from locals. This is where he has always wanted to work. He was chosen to represent the area for the Youth Parliament and as he grows older I suspect that he will have a leadership role in the community.

Ailsa

Ailsa is the daughter of a local English teacher. She recently finished a degree in zoology at Aberdeen University. She had worked as volunteer at the Osprey Centre. She was about to go off to Australia for a year to do some volunteer work on different nature reserves. She told me that she wanted to come back to this area. She had a lot of ideas about what she would like to do. One of them was to take kids from the city and show them the hills and about the flora and fauna. She thought local people were very narrow-minded and that it did her a lot of good to go to Aberdeen where she met new people. But still she wanted to come back. She has so many memories of drunken nights in bothies (basic huts out in the hills) and getting lost in the nearby forest on her mountain bike. Despite her conservation interests, she was very sympathetic to the concerns of keepers and stalkers and was very critical of Abernethy RSPB. She said that she felt different from most people because she was 'in between'. Ailsa got a job when she came back from Australia in Nethy Bridge as a ranger at the 'Interpretive centre'. Hopefully, this is the beginning of her career, the local woman sharing her appreciation and knowledge of the environment with visitors.

Eric

Eric is an instructor at Glenmore Lodge. He is one of the few Scottish instructors and the only one born in the area. He got his start in the hills, like Ross, through the

Duke of Edinburgh programme. He and some friends decided to take it further and formed an informal club in which they would go out and do more serious hill walking. He also was one of the locals who learned to ski and that is his first love, though he now prefers ski touring because it combines skiing with getting out into the hills. He went away to college to train as an engineer but came back after finishing because of the family's electrician's business. He is glad he did because he needs to be near the hills, but he thinks it is good for youngsters to leave the area because it helps them to appreciate what they have. This is a good example of Bahktin's argument that by 'relativisng' your experience, you can see things in different ways. He took the first step on the road to becoming an instructor with the Mountain Rescue Team. He was taken on as an apprentice and says it is a good way to get to know the hills and all the skills you need. The Mountain Rescue Team was largely made up of incomers who had come to the area as ski instructors or mountaineering instructors. He continued to work as an electrician but gradually worked his way through the mountaineering instructor qualifications, spending more time with the local mountaineering community. Eric stood out amongst the Glenmore Lodge instructors. I found that the range of things he could talk about was much wider than any of the other instructors. I recorded my observations of Eric in my field notes:

> Eric got all excited today because we saw a couple of mountain hares. He didn't want to eat lunch near them because we would disturb them. However, he says he has no qualms about shooting rabbits. There are just too many of them and they end up dying of melatosis. Also, he will shoot a hare or pheasant if it is 'for the pot'. He admitted to poaching before but now he owns his own land and also a farmer he knows lets him shoot on his land. 'It's something you do when you are brought up around here.' But he's not into shooting for the sake of it. He doesn't understand how people can do it for sport or raise animals to be shot. He was horrified when I told him about the mass shooting of hares on Kinveachy. He says that the kids from the estates he went to school with didn't tend to follow their fathers' footsteps - their parents want

them to get 'better jobs'. But he didn't think estate jobs should be seen as 'inferior jobs'.

Eric's knowledge of the world of the sporting estate contrasts sharply with people like Alan Hunt whom I had met grousebeating (see Chapter Five). He had lived in the area for over 30 years and never been on an estate, whereas Eric has grown up with the sons and daughters of keepers and stalkers. This gives him a greater understanding of the issues and also enables him to empathise with the situation of sporting estate employees. He clearly has an interest and love of wildlife but this is balanced with an understanding of how it fits in to people's livelihoods. In addition to shooting, he has considerable knowledge of the local mountain legends, likes taking his fishing rod with him into the hills and plays in a local folk band. Eric is spoken of with great respect by his fellow instructors and someone said he would make an excellent future head of Glenmore Lodge. The implications for the perceived role of the Lodge in the community, which now has a reputation for aloofness and being isolated from the rest of the community, of having a local as head could be considerable in terms of how outdoor recreation is viewed by a new generation of children.

Strathspey Mountain Club: Douglas and Isobel

Figure 47. Douglas having his dinner before sleeping out on the Cuillin Ridge in Skye.

Douglas, mentioned in Chapter Five, works as an employee on a cattle farm. His father was also a farmer from Aberdeenshire but came to this area to work as farm manager on a local estate. Douglas and his friend Gordon, also a farmer, are two of the main members of the local hill walking club. Alan, one of the founding members of the club said about this, 'We must be the only club in Scotland to have hill walking farmers.' Douglas is well aware that he is an oddity. He is now on his third round of Munros and has recently developed an interest in rock and ice climbing and mountain biking. I asked Douglas what caused him to take an interest in these pursuits. He said he had been a 'typical local', did his job and then spent his evenings and the few week-ends when he was free, smoking and drinking down the pub. He then met Gordon at a Young Farmers meet. Gordon invited him to go out walking with him to Creag Meagaidh,

a major Munro down towards Fort William. Douglas said, 'It was something new, so I went'. Douglas recalls that it was a beautiful day and said this might have had something to do with it, but the end result was that he got 'hooked'. His interest was reinforced by an incomer, Ann Wakeling. They used to go away regularly to remote and challenging places like Skye and Knoydart. Once he had his first taste, he never looked back. Once the experience was had, that transformed his life. Now he spends every free weekend in the hills. His family think he is 'mad' and 'just don't understand it'. He remarked while sleeping out on the top of the Cuillin Ridge in Skye, 'My family couldn't comprehend what I am doing this for'. He gets a certain satisfaction from his non-conformity.

Douglas is also knowledgeable about birds and is a keen photographer. I once came across him when I was with my birding friend, Andrew. We were watching an osprey nest and Douglas drove up in his car. He brought out his camera and tripod. He had just finished work and had come to photograph the osprey. Douglas's interest in hill walking and wildlife doesn't contradict at all with his devotion to farming. He speaks equally passionately about the importance of maintaining a healthy farming industry. When I suggested that with his extensive local knowledge he could set up a tourist business, taking visitors out walking, he was aghast. He knows that other farmers aren't like him. The farmer he works 'wouldn't think of going hill walking'. But then, unlike Douglas, most farmers have never tried it. Mary Yule told me that she would like to go sometime, but then she says that she doesn't know anyone to take her and she is so busy with the farm. This case shows that experiences and can transform perspectives, broadening a sense of place. Perspectives are merged to create something new.

Isobel, the daughter of a local farmer, tells a similar story. Her first experience was when she and some of her friends decided to do a sponsored hill walk for the Mountain Rescue Team through the Lairig Ghru from Glenmore to Braemar in the southern Cairngorms. This kindled her interest, which was then further fuelled by Anne Wakeling, who took her up onto the Cairngorm Plateau. Isobel particularly remembers looking down on Loch Avon, from the furthest side of the plateau, a view only a few locals will ever have seen. Like Douglas, she uses the word 'hooked' to describe her

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reaction to the experience. She is now one of the main members of the walking club and gets out every free weekend.

Both Douglas and Isobel have friends from a variety of backgrounds, combining long-term residents, even 'natives' with incomers. The Strathspey Mountain Club includes former ski instructors, hotel and catering workers, a secretary in a local tourist attraction, self-employed business people, doctors and retired people. Douglas is also now a member of a new mountain bike club that contains an equal variety of people, brought together by an interest in outdoor activities. Douglas and Isobel follow in the tradition of a number of other Highlanders who went to the hills 'for fun'. The climbing partnership of the crofter John MacKenzie and the London chemistry professor Norman Collie is legendary. Together they explored the Cuillin Ridge on Skye, making first ascents of remote and challenging peaks. They now lie buried together in a church yard in a Skye village (Mill: 1987). Other mountaineering Highlanders are documented in Mitchell's (1988) detailed study of mountaineering before it 'officially' began. Therefore, there is no cultural barrier preventing Highlanders from appreciating hill walking and climbing as a form of recreation. It is more a question of experience and opportunity. In other words, some people have had particular interactions with both the social and physical environment that have caused them to break out of the mould (Bakhtin: 1981, Mageo: 2002).

Tom

It is not only locals who have been affected by 'outside' influences. People coming into the area, motivated by their interest in the natural environment, have also found themselves changing as they become more involved in the community. Tom is the warden at the RSPB at Insh Marshes. He has an engineering background but soon left that line of work to pursue a career in his favourite past time, birding. Before coming to Strathspey, he worked up in the Orkneys on the Isle of Hoy. He is one RSPB member that many normally hostile locals speak about favourably. After spending many months

on Insh Marshes and talking to Tom, I could see why. He said he had learned on Hoy how important it was to be seen as part of the community. He would go out of his way to make sure he got to know people. He told me that the most important thing he does for RSPB local relations is when he picks his children up after school. He is friendly with the local farmers and is constantly talking about how land management was a joint effort between farmers and conservationists. He has initiated the projects with the local schools and he also set up a local naturalist group that he hoped would gradually expand from its incomer core. He has recently become interested in moths and butterflies and thinks that many RSPB people are too narrow in their focus. Tom's reputation is of someone who is a dedicated conservationist but who is also 'concerned about the local community'. His integration of a livelihood sense of place into his conservation one, has endeared him to many traditional locals and this fact has helped him to spread his conservation ideas.

Working with Young People

• **Gergask Primary School**
At Gergask the focus this spring is on a local bird survey. The children will also be putting up nest boxes around the village for house martins and tawny owls.
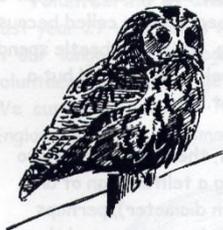
Not only will they be providing practical help for these birds but this very visible project will also raise awareness about local wildlife.

• **Newtonmore Primary School**
Thanks to the children's energy and enthusiasm, Newtonmore is well on the way to completing a bilingual leaflet (English and Gaelic) for visitors to the Wildcat Trail.

• **Kingussie High School**
The Technology classes are building specialised boxes for two of Badenoch & Strathspey's rarest birds: goldeneye and barn owl. The goldeneye boxes will be set-up on the reserve, and then checked by the pupils during May.
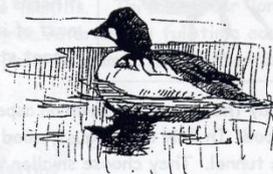
In co-operation with landowners, the barn owl boxes will be set-up in appropriate buildings with the hope of encouraging the small number of wintering owls to stay on and breed. To date, there has only been one confirmed record of a barn owl nesting in Badenoch & Strathspey. This was in 1996 in Victoria Hall in Kingussie.

Our education work in Badenoch and Strathspey is part-funded by BP. To find out more about our schools programme, please contact Chris Donald (tel: 01540 661518).

Figure 48. Insh Marsh's school projects.

Others had similar experiences. Anne and George became pro-funicular after watching their sons' struggle with unemployment, Eddie became more sympathetic to the plight of farmers after meeting Douglas and visiting places in the Highlands that have been completely turned over to tourism. He says, 'Without farming, all you would have is souvenir shops. There has to be some other way of making a living apart from tourism'. An English woman who came to the area because of her interest in the outdoors says, 'You have to live up here. It's just education; you learn more about the different uses of the land. It's all part of the area.'

Conclusion

All of the above cases illustrate what happens when people do not identify with one particular sense of place. For these people, the discourse of outside recreation/conservation versus local livelihood holds no fixed or shared meaning. This

opens the possibility for new ways of approaching debates about land use. These debates will not miraculously disappear because some people are now aware of more than one perspective, but they could take place within a framework that doesn't polarise people to the same extent. A representative of one of the Community Councils in the southern Cairngorms was particularly interested in the conclusions of my research. He agreed that the biggest problem for the area was that 'people could not put themselves in other people's shoes'. Change depends on reshuffling perspectives, groups and identities. The next section discusses the possibilities for such change, suggested by my research findings.

'BEYOND LIVELIHOOD, CONSERVATION AND RECREATION'.

The existence of alternative voices opens the possibility of going 'beyond' the distinct categories of livelihood, recreation and conservation. In my research some of the alternative voices were expressed in various initiatives, which provide the potential for overcoming or at least reducing the intensity of conflicts.

Broadening the Sense of Place

Though one's position on environmental issues cannot be reduced to one's sense of place, as I have shown, there is still a relationship between the two. As one person said to me, 'no one has an overview, they just see their bit'. It is this narrowness of perception that is one of the reasons for conflict. However, there are those who have a broad sense of place, because of the range of activities they are engaged in. They do not identify strongly with any particular group and therefore are able to have more of an overview, seeing the issues from a number of different perspectives. A key issue is therefore how to broaden people's sense of place. Though, many locals use the land for recreation, this is largely confined to the low ground, stimulating some people and organisations to initiate projects to develop an appreciation of the high hill

environment. Caroline Sterritt of the Sports Development Unit is very concerned that local young people have so little contact with the outdoor environment. She has started a programme to provide the opportunity for primary school children to take skiing lessons. She has also instituted a summer programme that includes a range of activities such as walking, mountain biking and kayaking. She says that the key to getting the locals to value what they have in the high hill environment is to 'get them out in it'.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award has served as a vehicle for young people to get some experience of the outdoors. The teachers involved in the programme are committed to giving young people positive experiences and, as in the case of Ross and Eric, this could be their first step to taking a more long-term interest. There are limitations with the Duke of Edinburgh Award, however. Many people told me the programme tended to attract more middle class young people who had been encouraged by their parents. I met several young people from working class backgrounds who said they had not felt comfortable at the meetings and had dropped out. However, Pauline, a youth worker, recently moved to the area from Liverpool, has been employed to try and extend the programme to young people who may not fit in so well with the school environment or who have left school. Will Carey, a resident of Laggan who also works at the Highland Wildlife Park, has been working for several years with the John Muir Award (similar to the Duke of Edinburgh Award but with a focus on conservation). His goal is also to get the more disaffected young people involved. His approach is to get them interested via 'exciting' outdoor activities such as kayaking and mountain biking. He then can integrate conservation activities. Glenmore Lodge, despite their reputation for aloofness, has also taken initiatives to introduce local young people to the outdoors. They are involved in the schools programme and one instructor has set up a climbing club for local youths. Nigel Williams told me of their efforts to overcome some of the hostility between anglers and kayakers. He invited local ghillies to come kayaking for the day so they could see for themselves that kayaking, if done sensitively, need not pose any threats to fishing.

The existence of local walking clubs like the Strathspey Mountain Club also provides the opportunity for people to further cultivate and extend any hill walking

interest. Isobel, who became interested as a result of being taken out by Anne Wakeling and going on the sponsored walk for the Mountain Rescue Team, joined the club and completed all the Munros. Douglas and Gordon also joined the club after their interest had been kindled elsewhere. Douglas is now doing his Munros for the third time and has also taken up climbing through contacts he made in the club. Because of its unique combination of long-term residents and more recent arrivals, it is attractive to a wide variety of people.

There have also been steps taken by conservationists to foster an appreciation of the flora and fauna of the area. As I have argued, it is not that local people have no appreciation, but that it is limited because of the narrow range of their experiences. Tessa Jones (wife of Gus Jones) is a ranger who works closely with local schools. She takes children out to explore and get to know their natural environment. She says the sons and daughters of gamekeepers, stalkers and farmers are especially knowledgeable and appreciative. She tries to encourage this and build bridges between people like herself who are labelled conservationists and those who see themselves as being on a different 'side'. She says one of the most popular activities with the children is using the magnifying glass to look at lichen and moss. If she can succeed in encouraging this interest, then it will be less likely to hear the comment I heard from one local, 'Why is one piece of moss more important than thousands of people's enjoyment' (see Chapter Seven).

Tom Prescott at RSPB Insh Marshes has also sought to involve people in conservation activities. He has a school liaison officer who works with the local schools on projects. One project is to build nesting boxes for goldeneyes and then place them on farms so that farmers can monitor them. He does regular open days and has set up a local naturalist group that he is hoping will attract others apart from those working in the conservation field. Ross developed his interest in conservation when volunteering at Insh Marshes for his Duke of Edinburgh Award. The impact of this work is difficult to quantify but can only help to broaden a person's sense of place and foster greater appreciation of the environment from multiple perspectives.

As discussed in previous chapters, the Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group take every opportunity to highlight conservation issues, often provoking hostile reactions. This continues over debates around housing issues. However, over the years since my fieldwork, I have noticed that they have begun to make use of the local paper as a means of forging common ground with those whom they often are in conflict with. They have done this by publicising other initiatives that are aimed at developing an appreciation of both the intrinsic and extrinsic value of flora and fauna. The following article in the local paper is indicative of this.

Conservation group declares delight over orchid discovery

The surprise appearance of an unusual flower has delighted members of a local conservation group, who claim it is an example of how farming incentives can aid local biodiversity. Dr. Gus Jones of the Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group, 'Flower meadows make a colourful contribution to local biodiversity, and this success story shows how agricultural subsidies for environmentally friendly management of our farmland can make a difference.'

Strathspey and Badenoch Herald: July 3, 2003

This article manages to combine a variety of reasons for this orchid, including its beauty, its 'localness', the financial benefits to farmers as well as its value for biodiversity, thereby giving everyone a reason to 'delight'.

Most visitors to the area, because they come to enjoy the outdoor environment, do not have any sense of the place as a community where people live and work. People coming for birding holidays or to climb in the Northern Corries will have little contact with anyone but their guides or instructors (who are largely incomers) and people providing tourist services. The funicular case showed that the locals were criticised for 'not valuing what they have' and not being 'trusted to run a National Park. Others who come to work in conservation also do not see the land as an economic asset, as something that can produce an income but as something with intrinsic value that needs

to be protected from farmers, sporting estate workers and those who want to build tourist attractions like the funicular. But it is not only visitors who are hostile to local development interests. Those who work as outdoor instructors or for conservation agencies and organisations can be equally unaware of how others may perceive the land. As I have shown, learning a sense of place involves both an opening up and a closing off of perceptions. Recently an initiative to build a mountain bike course was refused because it would disturb the capercaillie in the forest, a move prompted by local conservation pressure. Abernethy has been alienating the local communities for years by its perceived 'anti-community' policies.

The Cairngorm Partnership, by organising their stakeholder groups, tried to bring people together so they could see each other's perspective. The problem, however, was that the different groups rarely met together. Each group just fed the results of their meetings directly to those working for the Cairngorm Partnership, all of whom were brought in from outside the area. My research uncovered more fruitful developments on the ground, influenced by the existence of key individuals (discussed earlier in this chapter) who combined a sensibility to all three approaches to the land.

Tom Prescott at Insh Marshes made a point of getting to know the farmers and establishing good relations with them, continually stressing the importance of the partnership between farming and conservation. His understanding and appreciation could then be fed to volunteers who came to work as well as to the public through the tourist information and the guided walks. Ross has recently been employed by Abernethy. The impact of employing a local young man, son of a sporting estate farm manager, who has grown up with an understanding of the importance of land as livelihood cannot be underestimated. He is in charge of volunteers when they come to the reserve as well as for organising guided walks. Those who visit the reserve will thus be able to meet someone who has a well-rounded knowledge of all aspects of the area, not just birds or the conservation issues of Abernethy itself.

Eric, the first local to work as an instructor at Glenmore Lodge, also has an instrumental role to play in raising the awareness of those who come for courses, almost all of whom come from outwith the area. Clients spend a lot of time with their

instructor, and on courses like the Mountain Leadership they are expected to have a broader knowledge of the hill environment Most of the instructors will know the hills very well, but Eric can also discuss other aspects of the area. This happened on the course I was on where we talked about stalking, the problem of deer fences and concerns of local farmers.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award provides a variety of possibilities for the intermingling of senses of place. One excellent example is when the Duke of Edinburgh expedition went through the land of Kinveachy estate. John, the head keeper, was there at his house to meet the young people as they passed through. He could thus get to know the kind of young person who walks into the hills 'for fun' rather than driving up the track in the land rover. Meanwhile, the youngsters can see John as a sort of 'guardian of the land'. He gave them advice about the dangers of the river, told them something of the local history of the place where they were going to camp and told me that he would be on call if I needed him for an emergency.

Outside organisations are showing an awareness of the importance of highlighting any potential for common ground by those living and working in the hill environment. For example, Bill Wright's series in *Climber:*

Mountain farmer, John Cameron

In the first of a new series contrasting the views of different individuals have intimate contact with the mountains, Bill Wright interviews John Cameron. He is the tenant farmer who looks after sheep and cattle that graze upon the first Munro that most visitors are confronted with when driving north up the A9 into the Highlands.

Climber: November 2003

By writing such an article, Bill is both helping to break down barriers between climbers and farmers. In addition, as this particular farmer took part in an alternative National Park opening ceremony, part of a protest against the official ceremony in the

restaurant at the top of the funicular, he is also building up political alliances that are not based on divisions between locals and outsiders.

All of the above initiatives are part of a developmental process that will have the effect of broadening perceptions by bringing people into contact with perspectives and experiences that are new to them, an essential ingredient for bringing about change.

Fostering Understanding or Fuelling Conflict: The Role of Structures and Institutions

My research has highlighted some of the social processes that have turned senses of place into fixed interest groups and have exacerbated environmental conflicts. My data provide considerable evidence to show the problems raised by the wider social structure.

Economic inequality hinders the process of getting locals involved in recreation and conservation activities. Caroline Sterritt and Eric, from Glenmore Lodge, both stressed the financial constraints for young people getting more involved in outdoor activities. The high level of unemployment and low wages of many jobs prohibit many families from introducing their children to skiing or hill walking, even if the children have expressed an interest. Craig (see Chapter Seven) has a father who works as a taxi driver as well as working at the Legion Bar. His mother works as a child minder. He works every weekend and every holiday at the restaurant. It would have been impossible for him to get involved in outdoor recreation. As I mentioned above, several youngsters have the impression that programmes like the Duke of Edinburgh Award were not for them. As one young man told me, 'It was for a certain kind of student'. Parents of youngsters in the programme confirmed this by saying that most tended to be from middle-class families whose parents had encouraged them. One girl on the D of E expedition that I assisted had borrowed her rucksack from the Director of Glenmore Lodge. Not many young people would have access to such 'cultural capital'. Economic inequality also prevents participation in decision-making structures. As I have shown, local political

structures involve few people and tend to be dominated either by local elites such as the landowners and business owners, or by educated incomers, often retired and who have time on their hands.

Another issue brought to my attention from several sources is the lack of fit between jobs and the qualifications of young people. An economic development officer for the area said that the priority was to create well-paid jobs that would keep people in the community. The funicular has created some jobs but most of the jobs are low paid and seasonal. Jobs in the hotels are low paid and involve long working hours. And many of the well-paid jobs in recreation and conservation seem to be filled by people from outside the area. Local young people are not being trained or educated to the level that is deemed necessary to take up those jobs that are appearing in conservation and heritage management. All the Cairngorm Partnership posts, the employees of Scottish Natural Heritage and the RSPB reserve and most of the Highland Council rangers such as Tessa and Viv (see Chapter Five) are from outside the area, many from England. Cases such as Ross, now at Abernethy, Ailsa as a local ranger, and Eric at Glenmore Lodge are the exception. Businesses in outdoor and green tourism also tend to be run by incomers. This is because they have the capital. The owners of Speyside Wildlife sold their house down South and this gave them the working capital to set up business. Their story is similar to many others.

However, economic changes are beginning to create opportunities for livelihood, recreation and conservation to come together. The growth of green tourism and outdoor recreation has meant more jobs in this area either directly or indirectly. I have discussed in this chapter how more locals are becoming aware of the importance of such tourism and if local young people could get jobs in these areas, which is happening now to a very limited extent, then the three approaches would be more integrated. There is, however, an opposing tendency. Some locals have become successful financially as a direct result of increased development of the area in opposition to conservation and recreation interests. Some farmers, rather than farming the land, are busy selling off parcels of land for housing developments, or building holiday homes for which they receive diversification grants. One farm worker told me

the farmer he works for spends more time sorting out the buildings he is going to sell or do up than he does actually helping with the cattle. A glance at the Scottish Tourist Board Website lists a number of farmers with self-catering properties to let. These include Fiona Grant, the public relations officer for the funicular, Alistair MacLennan, the farmer who is now on the board of the National Park, and Sheila Slimon, a local councillor who is a spokesperson on the problems of housing for locals. It is understandable that people seek ways of improving their financial situation. But this state of affairs highlights the problems created by the decline of farming and the sporting estate and the lack of alternative employment. Anyone who is in a position to buy a home 'to let', avails themselves of this option, sometimes renting to locals, but usually to holiday makers. The expansion of housing developments is at odds with the agenda of conservation and recreation and recently conflicts have taken place between those arguing for more housing developments, and conservationists, who stress the importance for biodiversity of maintaining woods and meadows.

The decline of farming, hastened by the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, is one of the key economic problems. Mary and Jimmy Yule do not want to become 'hobby farmers' but they are spoken of as the last of a 'dying breed'. They do not want their son to go into farming. What will happen if the farms become either sold to housing developers or turned into tourist attractions? Initiatives such as Tom Prescott's, who wants to bring farming and conservation together, will not work unless there are institutional and structural supports. At the moment, economic and political policies are creating a situation in which there is more of an incentive for farmers to build houses than there is for them to develop environmentally-friendly farming. The advent of the National Park has aggravated economic inequality. There has been a rush to buy properties in the area, often by speculators who have not even seen the property, because prices are predicted to rise. This is what has in fact happened and those who bought a second or even third property have become very well off. Meanwhile, the majority of locals, not having been in a financial position to take advantage of this opportunity, are finding themselves struggling to pay rents or to buy a house for themselves when their families expand. Many local shops have had to close in Aviemore,

replaced by chain stores, when the developer, a local man, put the rent up. There is much rhetoric about the need for affordable housing but most of the housing has been far from affordable. John Grant, the owner of Rothiemurchus, was recently criticised for a housing development that ended up being very expensive, sold to incomers, despite previous promises that some of the houses would be 'affordable' housing for locals. Douglas, a farm worker living in a tied cottage, is one of many I met who say they will never be able to afford to buy a house. Meanwhile, they are surrounded by holiday properties, many of which are actually owned by the better-off locals. The debate over housing is going to be a major obstacle to any rapprochement between the livelihood, conservation and recreation approach. But as my thesis has argued throughout, it is only certain locals who benefit from development. However, they are the ones who have the political power to dominate decision-making and to maintain the anti-conservation/anti-incomer discourse. They can carry on their discourse despite making their money from the very people they are criticising. It is also ironic that many incomers who are moving to the area for the natural environment are in fact contributing to its demise by buying one of the many new houses. Locals remark on how well-off these incomers are and the effect their presence is having on the price of houses, and are even less likely to listen to them when they argue for saving a local wood.

Political constraints are also national and global, but evident in the locality. Ross's experience with the gamekeeping students illustrates the problem. He gives talks to these students at Abernethy in order to encourage them to understand the RSPB perspective. But those students will not be open to what he is saying if their course is dominated by anti-conservationist discourses of the landowners who will be their eventual employers. At a national level, political organisations like the Countryside Alliance, People Too and the Scottish Landowners Federation are trying to ensure that the tradition of the Scottish sporting estate is maintained. The growth in land ownership by conservation organisations is a challenge to their power. Similarly, conservation organisations are mobilising their power, buying up land, using the legal system and EU directives and portraying keepers and stalkers as anti-environment

because of their deer management policies (see Chapters Six and Seven). Such political conflicts have left most people on the sidelines and will only hamper attempts to base political decision-making about land use on a broader basis.

One of the key problems that emerged from my research, similar to the findings of anthropologists working in developing countries, is the issue of what is to count as knowledge (Walley: 2004, Ellen: 2000, Hobart: 1993). Many of the people I met lacked the confidence to speak out or get more involved in the public arena. Ross has now become a 'stakeholder', consulted by researchers and used as the 'token youth' in a variety of forums. But he is surprised by this and thinks he will not actually get very far in his career because his doesn't have a college education. He comments on how 'intelligent' the various Masters and PhD students are who come to Abernethy to do research. But at the same time he questions their knowledge. He says, 'Someone comes to Abernethy for four months to do research on the black grouse and is then considered an 'expert'. But Desmond has been studying black grouse for 30 years, but with no degree, and he is not respected in the same way'. Douglas feels the same way. He says he could never get a job other than as an ordinary farm worker, despite all the knowledge he has, because he does not have any formal qualifications. This prioritising of academic knowledge over practical, local knowledge (discussed in Chapter Five) has created much resentment of conservation organisations and is therefore a major obstacle to overcoming hostility between the livelihood and conservation approach.

However, there are some examples of mutual respect. People hostile to Abernethy have had no experience of the dedicated, long-term work RSPB wardens and volunteers have done to care for the land. Abernethy is internationally famous for their work, with many researchers coming to do projects and volunteers coming from all over the world. This is recognised by those parts of the community that have had contact with Abernethy. For example, David Hayes, owner of Landmark Heritage Centre, is full of admiration for the work they are doing. Alan and Robert from the Strathspey Mountain Club often suggest walks in Abernethy Forest because they admire and enjoy the way the forest has been for native tree generation. But the RSPB wardens have not reached out effectively to the wider community. Similarly, Glenmore Lodge, and their

intimate knowledge of the Cairngorm Plateau and climbing areas, seems like an island, unknown to most locals but attracting people from all over the country on their courses. Therefore, most locals neither have experience of the place, Abernethy or the Cairngorm Plateau, nor of the people who know and care for these places. Both groups are part of the place, but without making the necessary links, those who work in Abernethy and Glenmore Lodge, will continue to be seen as incomers, no matter how many years they have lived in the area.

## THE JOHN MUIR TRUST
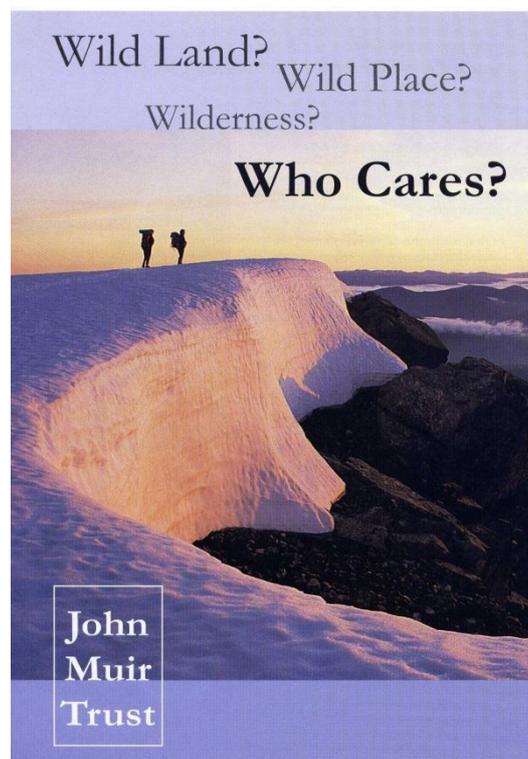
Figure 49. JMT promotional leaflet

The John Muir Trust (JMT) illustrates the possibility of integrating a livelihood, conservation and recreation approach as well as bringing together outsiders and locals into a common framework of decision-making. I found that the JMT aims to initiate change on several levels. On the one hand, the work on their properties brings together

people who both live physically in a place and those who care about a place but live elsewhere. This usually means the Trust is balancing local livelihood and community interests with conservation and recreation concerns of the wider membership. On the other hand, they are involved at a national level with issues of land reform and rural development and inequality. The John Muir Trust is not without its critics, from both outside and within. However, my research with both the local JMT group as well as around Scotland on their property in Knoydart and Skye, found that their ethos and practices addresses some of the very issues I was coming across in Badenoch and Strathspey.

John Muir Trust Journal (January 2004)

'Wild places for nature and people'

By acquiring and managing key wild areas, the Trust sets out to show that the damage inflicted on the world over the centuries can be repaired: the land can be conserved on a sustainable basis for the human, animal and plant communities which share it; and the great spiritual qualities of wilderness, of tranquillity and solitude, can be preserved for those to come (Statement of objectives).

JMT has incorporated into its statement of objectives the importance of integrating conservation, recreation and livelihood. Not only do they aim at providing a conservation model of land management that local residents can support but they have also tried to develop an interest in local culture and livelihood issues amongst those who join the Trust primarily because of its 'wild land' objectives. Implementing these aims has not been without its problems. When the JMT organised an exhibition in the new visitors centre at the top of the Cairngorm funicular, now referred to officially as the Mountain Railway, the Trust's magazine was inundated with letters expressing outrage at what appeared to be a betrayal of the Trust's basic ethos.

Internal conflicts have arisen between those who live on JMT's Skye properties and members who came from elsewhere for the occasion of the annual conference. The factor, Ian MacKinnon, told the conference that he preferred working with Ian

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Anderson (of Jethro Tull and former owner of the property). This is because Ian had substantial capital to invest and let him take charge of the day-to-day running of the estate. With the JMT he is responsible to a large organisation. Moreover, the aims of the membership do not always coincide with the interests of what is essentially still a crofting community. Members join the Trust because of its publicity that stresses its conservation role, 'conserving wild places'. However, members do not often realise that the majority of Trust properties contain entire communities that have crofting rights. This means they still have the right to graze sheep and farm the land. One member up from Newcastle for the conference was outraged that there were so many sheep on the property. He thought all the sheep should be removed in order to facilitate tree regeneration. Others were similarly critical of the policy of the forest manager who still manages non-native forests for timber. When I volunteered on Knoydart, a more remote property with no tenants, people questioned why the Trust did not just cull the deer rather than building deer fences.

However, what is noteworthy is that by inviting members to their properties, either for their national conferences or for volunteer work, they are able to let members see for themselves the problems of land management and engage them in debates about the best way forward. The man who was anti-sheep was able to hear the crofters side of the story, the anti-foreign trees people were able to discuss the economic issues with the forestry manager and the people working at Knoydart heard from the manger about the problems they still had because they did not have shooting rights and why the deer fences were not a problem because there were no grouse or capercaillie on the property to get caught, the usual reason why people are against deer fences. During both the conference and the conservation volunteer days, there was much discussion and debate. There was no clear agreement or resolution but all parties could at least try to understand the position of others. Everyone is made to feel as if it is their land. Anyone who lives on Trust land is automatically given free membership and allowed to participate in all decision-making. Local communities and JMT members who live elsewhere are, therefore, part of a common framework for managing the land. The volunteer programme encourages members from all over the

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country to come and contribute to the land. One woman had volunteered for several years on Knoydart. She arrived early this time because she wanted to check on the trees she planted in previous years were getting on. This volunteer work means that people do not just have an abstract commitment to 'wild land' but develop a more long-term interest in a particular piece of land. This can never be as intense as for those who actually live on the land but it can improve the level of understanding of land issues. And, by bringing the local people into contact with people from outwith the area, those who see the land as mainly something to make a living out of can gain an appreciation of why others appreciate the hills as a place to go walking or climbing.

The JMT is also active on a national level. They distinguish themselves from the RSPB and the SNH by stressing the way they work in partnership with communities. I was surprised by the attitude of the keepers and stalkers at Kinveachy towards the Trust. When the local JMT group suggested a visit to the estate in order to engage in a dialogue about land management issues, I heard very positive comments, very unlike what I heard about the RSPB. This was partly because it is seen as Scottish, but mainly because they have a reputation for not putting the conservation agenda above the livelihood concerns of the local people. This reputation has given them respect amongst a variety of people and they are often called upon to give their views on land issues. Though they themselves are buying properties and becoming landowners, they have initiated an internal debate about whether it should be the government that actually takes on the responsibility of managing land for the benefit of all. Several members expressed concern that perhaps the JMT was just reinforcing the concept of private property and hindering any attempts at land reform. They have also been part of debates on community buy-outs, which has been seen by some as the way forward. However, this approach tends to exclude anyone else from outside the area except through regulatory agencies like the SNH, which are then resented by the locals for interfering (MacAskill: 1999: 70-71, 147). The JMT approach involves outsiders in a less autocratic manner and seeks to build up a relationship between local and national members.

CONCLUSION

Debates surrounding land are fraught with controversy, yet finding a way out of the conflicts is critical for the future of the planet. As the JMT say we need to find a way of ensuring that the land is 'sustainable for humans, animals and plants who share it'. My research has uncovered the origins of these conflicts and the social and cultural processes that are exacerbating them. It has also suggested possible ways to go beyond the straightjacket of the categories of livelihood, recreation and conservation, and local and outsider/incomer. The Cairngorms, like everywhere else in the world, is a special place. There are many people, natives, incomers and visitors, who care very much what happens to the land. The experiences they have had and the stories they tell of epics and hard times, of joy and laughter with friends, and of wonder at the aesthetic beauty as well as the productive capacity of the land, have given them different senses of place and relationships with the land. These different senses of place, however, do not necessarily have to involve a 'struggle' between competing approaches to land use. Instead, diversity, constructively engaged, can itself be the source of new relationships between humans and their environment, relationships that are compatible with both environmentalism and social justice. This is not, however, a straight forward task, as there will continue to be competing interpretations of both environmentalism and social justice. Nevertheless, it is a goal worth pursuing.

Towards the end of my stay in the Cairngorms I attended a summer play written, produced and performed by the staff, parents, friends and pupils of the Carrbridge Primary School. It was performed in the open air and I attended with my friends Anne, George and Robert from the Strathspey Mountain Club and who live in Carrbridge. I was surprised by how many people I recognised in the audience and helping with the production. The livelihood sense of place was well represented by many of the staff from Kinveachy. The keepers John and Ian were there to watch their children perform. John's wife was active behind the scenes. Frank, the estate's sporting manager was helping his wife, a teacher at the school. David, the stalker was also there, keen to see the costumes and set design that his girlfriend, the daughter of a local electrician, had

helped the children design. In addition to the Strathspey Mountain Club, I also noticed several ski instructors as well as people from the cycling group based in Carrbridge. And, I saw the 'conservationists', Gus and Tessa Jones, also attending the event because their children were performing. There were also some visitors as the event had been advertised in the area's tourist offices. The message of the play itself is significant. It stressed the importance of maintaining a link to the past and the livelihood tradition, but also valuing and preserving the area's natural beauty and biodiversity. In addition, it promoted a new discourse, pitting this broader definition of local community against developers (who in this case are local), which is an important change from the local versus outside conservation/recreation discourse.

Bridge to the Future

Summer

The story starts in the present day with the gently flowing water, the kids playing in the river and summer tourists passing by.

Autumn

It's autumn and with the leaves swirling from the trees the clock turns back to the past and the crofting communities when children had to walk several miles to get to school.

It was a hard life in the days of land clearances and threats of cattle raiders bravely fought off by the legendry John MacAndrew with his bow and arrow.

Winter

Still in the past and the soldiers march in to complete the building of Wades Road. Shiver through this frosty scene of the freezing river waters chilled by winter ice.

Bridge to the Future

Spring

It's spring. The river runs at full spate with the symbolic carrying of the coffins over the old packhorse bridge to bury the dead.

Summer

The clock turns full circle and we're back to the future of Carrbridge. But what does the 21st century hold in store?
The developers are poised to move in but the villagers are determined that the local forest and wildlife is preserved. They stand up to fight for the preservation of the environment and survival of the local community into the future.

Figure 50. Storyline of 'Bridge to the Future'.

Seeing all these people together, watching the new generation perform such a play about the future, was a fitting end to my research year, and a symbol of what *could* be.

CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSION: BEYOND CONFLICT

Anthropology contributes in a multitude of ways to an understanding of the human condition. Fieldwork takes place all over the world, from remote tribes to the centres of economic and political power in the west. It is this global aspect that provides the basis for understanding both the immense diversity as well the commonality of humanity. However, this global picture is not based on sweeping generalities but grounded in the concrete experience of individual human beings. The local provides the important detail that is vital for making sense of the wider picture. Such a combination of detailed ethnography, analysed with reference to global structures and processes, provides a firm basis for anthropology to enter the realm of policy, not just on a governmental level, but as an aid to anyone who seeks ideas and strategies for intervening positively and creatively in the world (e.g. Milton: 2002: 3).

My thesis follows in this tradition. By studying a particular location, attentive to how this location links to wider cultural processes, social structures and the global economy, my thesis contributes to the work of finding solutions to the critical situation humans are now facing in their relationship to their environment. I have shown how this task in the Cairngorms has been hampered by the polarisation of conflicts between economic development and environmentalism in the form of both conservation and recreation, similar to elsewhere in the world. Such antagonisms mean that little progress can be made in realigning humanity's relationship with the planet in such a way that both people and the rest of the planet can survive. Instead of looking for ways of ensuring the well-being of *all* species, discussions remain locked in polarised impasses, with the choice being *either* human well-being *or* the environment. My research, by revealing the genealogy of the opposing perspectives, documenting the process of their formation into bounded, often intransigent, interest groups, provides a basis from which to consider ways out of the impasse. In the conclusion, I summarise the main findings and discuss the possible policy implications of these insights.

IMPORTANCE OF PEOPLE'S LIVED, EMBODIED EXPERIENCE

My research has detailed the very powerful forces at work in constructing an individual's sense of place. Work on 'sense of place' has tended to focus on the cultural aspects such as how stories and history come together in a place (Basso and Feld: 1996). My research brings together the cultural influences together with the actual embodied experience (Wacqant: 1995, Ingold: 2000, 2001, Lorimer and Lund: 2003) as they merge into the practice of a particular activity (Marx and Engels: 1974, Koluzin: 1996, Lave and Wenger: 1991). The engagement of the body and mind, cognitively and emotionally, in *activity* dramatically shapes the person's perceptions, both influencing what they perceive and what they *do not* perceive. Their experiences, thus imprinted on the body/mind, will form a key part of their identity and their worldview. Wacquant (1995) has shown the importance of immersing oneself in what people actually experience in an activity, in his case boxing, in order to understand the importance of that activity for a person's identity. Such studies undertaken 'at home' reveal how extraordinary the ordinary is. By taking activities such as mountain walking or birding and applying the anthropological eye, we can see the infinite complexity, as well as the power and intensity, of humans' interaction with their social and physical environment. My work elaborates on the work of those who argue against a nature/culture dualism (Ingold: 2000, Ellen: 1996, Descola and Palsson: 1996) by showing ethnographically *how* humans' relationship with their environment is an active, developmental process that integrates dynamically and dialectically their subjective perspective (culture) with an objective physical environment (nature). We may separate these two aspects of any activity conceptually, but in practice they merge into one. This was seen clearly in the data on mountaineering. People bring to the hills various preconceptions, dreams and ambitions, but then engage in an activity which is inherently embedded in the physical hill environment, with its affordances and constraints. In the course of the activity, it is only possible to be aware of doing, when the subjective and the objective, the culture and the nature, become part of the same process.

My research goes beyond this work to show how people's embodied experience is influenced by and reflected in society outside the activity itself, significantly contributing to the position from which they interact with others in discussions and debates on issues that impact on land use. I have shown how structural forces (power of landowners, economic inequalities), discourses (local versus incomer, tradition), cultural practices (climbing magazines, the process of apprenticeship), and history (patterns of land use, ecological history) are interwoven with the embodied experience of the individual. The sense of place thus forms the basis for the development of conflict situations. If there were not different perspectives, arising out of different lived experiences, then conflicts would not occur. However, conflicts cannot be reduced to these different senses of place. The existence of different senses of place does not necessarily have to lead to conflict. After all, individuals each have their own sense of place and this usually does not lead to conflict. My thesis builds on the understanding of how senses of place are formed to then show how, and under what particular circumstances, certain senses of place become formalised into interest groups, which then clash. My thesis has explored the links between these different levels, the individual's particular relationship with the environment, which I call the 'sense of place', and the public conflict that could be observed between 'local' livelihood and 'outside' conservation and recreation interests.

This approach, beginning with the individual experience, but with an awareness of how that individual experience is embedded in social groups, structures and processes as well as a physical environment and history (historical ecology) is essential for understanding what is happening at a wider social level. Too often people are studied first as groups or communities, creating misleading generalisations. There are centralising forces at work within society that create such classes, social groups, identities and institutions but at the same time there is heteroglossia, in which each individual has their own subjective experience and way of giving meaning to those centralising forces (Bakhtin: 1981). The difficulty of relating structure with agency has been one that anthropologists have been particularly aware of because of their special relationship to the individual and the local. Much work on human relations with the

environment has tended to produce generalisations about communities such as hunter-gatherers. They have been characterised as seeing themselves as part of nature. This has then been contrasted with the 'western' relationship, which is supposedly to see nature as something outside of culture. This dichotomy is also contained in the writings of environmentalists who use terms like 'eco-centric' and 'anthropo-centric' and go on to characterise different social groups and cultures as exhibiting one or other tendency. My research is important because it provides ethnographic support for those who argue that these are overgeneralisations, and contributes to the growing body of ethnography that reveals the complex relationships and alliances within environmental conflicts (e.g. Walley: 2004, Brosius: 2001). Communities are characterised by diversity and people's views change.

This does not mean generalisations cannot be made. Groups are formed through common experiences and practices. People relate to the land in particular ways through their work and leisure and this creates a tendency for them to form a common approach (Marx and Engels: 1974: 43, 47). By understanding the process at work beneath the surface, one becomes aware of the temporary nature of these groups that appear so fixed at the level of society. To understand how tendencies become entrenched positions is vitally important for learning how to deal with all conflict situations, not only the conflicts over land use discussed in this thesis.

SENSES OF PLACE, INTEREST GROUPS, POWER AND CONFLICT

Before going to the field, I had heard of the Cairngorms because of the debate surrounding the funicular. I had read reports in climbing magazines and had discussed the issue with representatives of Scottish Natural Heritage and the Cairngorms Partnership at a conference in Oxford. I was advised to go to the Cairngorms for the very reason that there was so much conflict. It was thought that people's feelings and attitudes towards the environment would be more readily apparent to the outside observer. At this stage, the conflict was portrayed in stark terms, locals were in favour of it because it would bring in money and jobs and recreation, and conservation

organisations were against it as the funicular would increase the use of the fragile Cairngorm Plateau and be a general eyesore that did not belong on a mountain.

In the first stages of fieldwork I did not intend to look for signs of this conflict. My main aim was to get a feel for how different people interacted with the environment, in other words, to see how the activities in which they were engaged contributed to their sense of place. It soon became apparent that there were two contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, different activities seemed to foster different *approaches* to land use, as predicted by my pre-fieldwork encounters, debates at the political level, and other literature on the subject. These could be broadly grouped into the livelihood, conservation and recreation approach to land use. The livelihood approach sees land, either directly or indirectly, as productive. The conservation approach aims to actually intervene to create wild land, valuing species for their own intrinsic value. The recreation approach wants to ensure that land is available for them to pursue whatever leisure activity they participate in. These categories were not just my imposition. The people themselves would identify themselves with a particular approach, often in contrast to another approach (Lund: nd: 9). Stalkers and keepers made it clear they did not like the 'conservationists' and also thought those who went 'walking for fun' were quite mad. Strong anti-conservationist views were expressed by a wide range of people who depended on the area as a source of livelihood. Meanwhile, I heard negative remarks about farmers and sporting estate workers from those working in conservation (see Chapters Five and Six). In addition, skiers would criticise walkers and vice versa, anglers are at odds with canoeists and walkers criticise conservationists for wanting to keep the land 'pristine', inaccessible to human enjoyment. It was obvious how these different approaches could lead to conflict over issues like the funicular.

On the other hand, these approaches remained unarticulated. When I merely noted what people actually did and spoke about whilst doing the activity, I began to notice the overlapping of supposed distinct approaches. When out with the stalkers and keepers early on in my fieldwork I was struck by their enjoyment of physical movement, skill in moving around the hills and appreciation of views and wildlife. At one stage I was

alternating between going out with the stalkers and keepers on Kinveachy and volunteering at Insh Marshes, the RSPB reserve. My experiences were the same – they were just called something different. Ross, raised on a sporting estate, said that for him it was all 'land management' and he tries to explain this to his family but they are unable to separate the actual work he does from the label of 'conservation'. The same with many locals who would never label themselves conservationists or walkers, yet they take their dogs for long walks, often up into the hills, make an effort to find the breeding frogs and say they would miss the background of the hills if they ever left. In addition, to this overlap of approaches in practice, I also started coming across people who consciously did not identify with any approach (as in Chapter Eight). Their experiences were so diverse that they integrated all three approaches in a variety of ways.

As I began to focus more on the public arena, going to meetings, reading the local paper, interviewing 'key' people, I was once again faced with the articulation of distinct approaches, much more pronounced than in my encounters with people in the course of their actual doing of their work or leisure activity. At this level, I also became more aware that not only were there distinct approaches to land use, but the approaches were distinguished as being either 'locals' or 'outsiders/incomers'. But those people who articulated such views in public, often toned down the rhetoric in private. My research thus also explores the process by which the tendency to have a particular approach to land use manifests itself as a fixed, entrenched position, in particular circumstances, that then leads to acute conflict between the different 'sides' in the public arena. I found that whether one develops a broad approach into a fixed 'position' on the environment depends on a number of factors. An individual may tend to favour one approach, but most people will be engaged in a number of activities or the activities that they are engaged in will have a number of facets, such that they cannot be pinned down. Those that have the broadest range of experiences (such as the anomalous cases discussed in Chapter Eight) will be impossible to fit into a general scheme, or even broadly into one approach. Depending on the intensity of involvement and the material

stake one has with that particular approach to land use, a person will be more or less attached to one position.

These 'tendencies' are brought into existence as 'positions' as a result of the social, economic and political context. Particular situations and events in the wider culture, social structure and in the physical environment itself will put people in situations in which they are forced into taking a position (Balee: 1998, Lave and Holland: 2001). The increased use of the river by recreational canoeists (itself the result of a number of developments in the wider society) has precipitated anglers into a fixed position vis-à-vis what they see as a threat to their sport. And they themselves are reacting this way because of the problems with salmon fishing and the lack of fish, the product of an interaction between a particular physical environment and set of economic practices.

When conflict becomes particularly acute such as during the funicular debate, structural and discursive practices of dominant groups mould these temporary positions into fixed interest groups who then do battle with each other as opposing 'sides'. The anti-conservationist and anti-incomer discourses arose partially out of people's experience, but my data show that this discourse appeared most predominantly at the public level, spoken by those with power in the community. As one informant said, 'These debates have nothing to do with conservation; they have to do with who has the power to decide'. The people who expressed anti-conservation views did not have any direct experience of conservationists. I only heard stories or rumours of what the RSPB had done or not done. And when probed, as I show in Chapter Eight, many of these statements are qualified and retracted. Ross experienced the effect of these discourses first hand when he was sent on a one-week stalking course at a college in Thurso, a college known for training sons of stalkers and keepers to follow in their fathers' footsteps. At first he got on fine, they were like him, doing similar work and there to learn about deer stalking, but as soon as they found out he was from the RSPB, the trouble began. He said it was 'bullying' that he experienced, constant remarks and taunts. The worst was the last night when an outside speaker came and spent a large part of his talk 'telling lies' about RSPB Abernethy where Ross works. A Colonel from a 'countryside' organisation that was involved in the course pointed out

Ross to the speaker and called on Ross to defend Abernethy. Ross did not want to get involved in a debate with such a hostile audience. The Colonel used this as a pretext to argue that the speaker must have been right because Ross could not reply. The same process is at work on the 'other side'. Many conservationists are scathing about keepers and stalkers, branding them as killers who have no interest in the environment. Similar criticism is directed towards farmers with their pesticides and sheep. These two groups, according to some, are uniquely responsible for the environmental devastation of the Highlands because keeping deer and sheep on the land is preventing tree regeneration.

From these examples, it is clear how people internalise certain discourses that are not actually based on any experience. These can only help either landowners in their power struggle with those who think the sporting estate is doing untold damage to the hill environment, or conservation organisations, also very powerful, in their fight for new regimes of land management. Since these discourses do not necessarily fit in with people's experiences, they will not always be present in everyday life, but are articulated in times of conflict when issues are being discussed in the public arena.

The genealogy of a conflict over land use is thus extremely complex. It stems from the fact that people are engaged in different activities with the land and therefore develop certain approaches to what they think the land should be used for. In certain contexts, their sense of place becomes a *conscious* position. The more intense and public the conflict, the greater the intervention of dominant groups, the more these approaches will develop into interest groups. This happens at the public level where power relations come into play. This is because to 'win' one's position, each side needs to mobilise power. This process is most developed with only some people, those that participate in debates in the public arena. Most people have not transformed their sense of place into a fixed position because this would require them to become part of an organised group and for various social and economic reasons this does not happen. Most do not have the social, economic or cultural capital to do so. Others, for various reasons outlined in Chapter Eight, do not 'buy into' the terms of the dominant discourse. Therefore, most people remain outside or on the periphery of the debates.

The stakeholder model reinforces this tendency for only certain people and groups to engage in the public debates. Ross is now often chosen to be a stakeholder. He says he is the 'token youth' but he admits that he can't really speak for all youth; he just happens to be the 'youth who always says yes'. He has recently joined what he calls 'the usual suspects - the Dick Balharryies, the Jamie Williamsons' - who are always called upon to speak on behalf of one section of the community. Such stakeholder panels encourage people to speak according to a fixed position and exaggerate differences.

The conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that though there may be different approaches to how land should be used, depending on the activities that one is involved in and one's embodied lived experience, these only lead to conflict in certain contexts. And, these conflicts are fuelled and exacerbated by economic, social and therefore political inequality, which gives power to the discourses of the dominant groups. These discourses, in the case of my research the local livelihood versus outside conservation/recreation discourse, create a polarised situation that makes it difficult to deal with constructively. The stakeholder model then reinforces this tendency by taking the different constructed interest groups as a reflection of the views of the 'community' as a whole.

What can be done? My research shows that there are two tendencies at work. Firstly, there is the tendency for particular senses of place to differentiate into different approaches and, potentially, interest groups. Secondly, there exists the tendency for overlap and the creation of anomalies, a multitude of voices that are difficult to categorise (Bakhtin: 1984), in which there is only the activity and the perceptions, not the label given to it. As Nietzsche pointed out in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1999), oppositions (such as livelihood, conservation and recreation in the case of my thesis) are human creations, 'logical fictions', which we mobilise at different times to serve different purposes. If we look at people's lived experience we find that these opposites are not so obvious. However, structural power and discursive practices ensure that these 'fictions' continue to exist.

MOVING BEYOND CONFLICT

The premise of my thesis is that it is important to find a way to reconcile apparently conflicting land uses, including conservation of wild places for habitat and their intrinsic value, recreational activities for humans' personal enjoyment and fulfilment, and the meeting of people's economic needs. My research suggests possibilities for how this process of reconciliation can be facilitated, as well as identifying potential resistance to change. Because of my anthropological focus on a particular area, these possibilities have revealed themselves at the local level in the interactions, experiences and initiatives of individuals and groups. However, as I have argued, local events and practices are embedded in a wider network of institutions, structures and discourses. Therefore, the implications of my research need to be examined in terms of what they suggest for change at the level of the locality/community *and* the wider society.

Distinct senses of place have been identified as contributing to conflict situations in particular contexts. Therefore, it is important to consider how to broaden out people's sense of place so that they begin to value a wider range of aspects of their environment. Such fundamental changes in perception require long-term work and education, especially of young people. My research has stressed the importance of activity and practical engagement with the environment; thus, an educational programme would be more successful in broadening people's sense of place if it was based on a variety of active learning experiences in a wide range of locations. Such a programme would be important for both introducing those who live in the area to new environmental experiences but also for those from urban areas who may not appreciate the economic and social aspects of the areas they come to visit.

Such a long-term programme necessarily requires the co-operation between 'local' and 'outsider' and will therefore require appropriate structures and forums within which initiatives to develop. The Cairngorms Partnership, despite certain limitations

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discussed in this thesis, was such a forum in that a range of people were brought together in order to foster a broad appreciation of the area. National organisations have a vital role to play in this project. The John Muir Trust and British Mountaineering Council have already introduced various initiatives through their members' magazines and local/visitors forums in some areas. Projects that involve a variety of people with different senses of place, reflecting the wide range of views amongst locals, visitors and national organisations, will also contribute to the undermining of the destructive local vs. incomer/outsider discourse. Such projects and initiatives could contribute to the creation of a new perspective on 'who belongs' and who has the 'right' to decide about the future of a given area.

My research shows the power of the local versus incomer discourse in fuelling the conflict between different approaches. In the case of the funicular, those who spoke out against the funicular were categorised as incomers who did not have the right to speak because they were anti-local development. Incomers are associated with outside organisations, which are portrayed as not being concerned about the local community and its future. This division makes it very difficult for people to participate in the public arena and will ensure the exclusion of many voices and the continued polarisation of the different approaches to land use. Though there has been a problem across Scotland of incomers who, with their economic and cultural capital, antagonise the locals (Jedrej and Nuttall: 1996, Macdonald: 1997), my research has demonstrated that this resentment has been exacerbated by the activities of certain groups, operating within a particular decision making structure, and is not necessarily inevitable. Incomers are welcomed if they appear to commit themselves to the well-being of the community and integrate themselves sensitively into that community. My research shows how activity and friendship groups mixes people from a variety of origins e.g. the Gaelic language group and the Strathspey Mountain Club. Even those who indulge in anti-incomer rhetoric retract many of their more extreme statements when spoken to outside the public arena. Moreover, my research has shown that the concept of one local community is a myth. Some incomers integrate very well with some parts of the community and not others. Certain groups feel threatened by the influence of these

newcomers because they challenge their dominant role in decision-making, for example, certain business and landowners feel threatened by those who advocate a conservation perspective.

This raises the difficult question of who belongs in a community. Though my research was not explicitly about this question, it supports the idea that communities are invented. In other words, there is no natural community but rather a community that is continually evolving and changing (Lovell: 1998, Edwards: 1998, Cohen: 2000, Barth: 2000, Amit and Rapport: 2002). As people become more involved in the life of a place, they become part of that community. And even for those who would like to argue for a genetic link to place, such as Johnny Campbell, it is not so much where people come from but whether they seem to care about the community that carries weight. Those who participate and contribute, even if they are seen as different, like Tom Prescott of Insh Marshes, will be accepted. The reason for some of the hostility is because of the underlying differences in what aspects of the place people appreciate and value. And to have a broad appreciation requires knowledge of how other people perceive place, which in turn requires frameworks and structures in which interaction can take place.

Though hostility to incomers is whipped up by local elites, it is not completely an invented problem. Douglas mixes well with a range of people in the local walking club and the mountain biking group. Many of these people are incomers. But he does not feel comfortable with everyone. His view typifies others who do not usually buy into the anti-incomer discourse. As I discussed previously, Johnny Campbell, the local Gaelic heritage proponent is quite happy to work with English incomers in the Gaelic Language Group. But he also feels that incomers tend to 'take over' because they are educated and confident. He said 'Highlanders are reticent; they do not like to push themselves forward'. Since incomers tend to be associated with an interest in recreation and/or conservation, such strained relations are an impediment to building bridges between the different approaches to land use and provide fuel to the anti-incomer discourse used in the public debates. Therefore, those coming into the area need to be more sensitive to how they go about integrating into their new home.

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Another related issue raised by my research is the role of 'visitors' and outside organisations in making decisions about land use. People from organisations like RSPB and the Mountaineering Council for Scotland see the land in a national and even global context. Roy Dennis (see Chapter Six), who has been part of programmes to reintroduce birds to Scotland, questions the 'localist' mentality. 'Why shouldn't I have a right to participate in decisions made about land on the other side of the world? If biodiversity is being threatened then it is everyone's business'. He is challenging the idea of seeing land as belonging to one group of people who either happen to own it or live in proximity to it. The discussions about the National Park reflect the reluctance of many locals to give up control to what they see as 'outsiders', whereas others argue that the Cairngorms should belong to the 'nation', after all, that is the ethos behind a National Park. The RSPB are managing their property primarily for the end of preserving birds, capercaillie, osprey and back grouse, but also for helping forest regeneration. This is why they do not feel beholden to local views. The same can be said of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and the Ramblers. These organisations argue that the Cairngorms should not be a place that belongs to locals for their own economic benefit. After all, it is argued, many locals do not know anything about the Cairngorm hill environment as they never go there. It should be there for the nation, as a place for people to enjoy 'quiet recreation'. This viewpoint was argued strongly by those campaigning against the sale of the Cuillin in Skye. The local laird wanted to sell the Cuillin Ridge in order to raise money for his new castle roof. The Cuillin Ridge is the domain of the serious mountaineer. Uninhabitable, it is known only by the mountaineers who have explored it over the years. As one mountaineer said, 'The Cuillin Ridge, if it belongs to anyone, belongs to those who have risked their lives on it'. Similarly, however, some locals resent people having a say in their area because as one person said, 'Just because they have ruined where they live, they want us to remain undeveloped'. This view has been echoed elsewhere in the world where the creation of National Parks has been criticised as creating playgrounds for the rich (see, for example, Olwig: 1977, 1980, Neumann: 1998).

The different senses of place not only relate to *how* the land should be used but *who* should be involved in making decisions about it. The conflicts have been fuelled by the local development side wanting to exclude outsiders, and the conservation and recreation approach considering it legitimate for 'national' and 'global' interests to be part of the decision-making process. This is a difficult issue to resolve but given the interconnectedness of not only the ecological system but of society as well, it is difficult to see how anyone can continue to argue that one piece of the world is theirs exclusively (Kuehls: 1996). This is conspicuously true for the Badenoch and Strathspey area. As one resident pointed out, those who want to exclude outsiders from decision-making are also those who are making their living from those same outsiders in the form of tourism. An economic development officer told me that they had to careful not to have another situation like the funicular because those who opposed it from outside the area are the very people whom the area is trying to attract, the recreation and conservation visitor.

My research is thus a starting point for discussions about how to redefine community as a 'community of interests' in which everyone who in some way is part of a place, no matter where they happen to live, can participate without at the same time completely drowning out those who physically live there. This issue is relevant for all areas of the world where local interests appear to conflict with global interests (for example Amazonia). The case of the Cairngorms also illustrates that neither global nor local interests are monolithic and that divisions may not only exist between locals and outsiders.

Overcoming the social and cultural divisions amongst this 'community of interests' will not be an easy task. Education, broadening people's senses of place, national/local initiatives that encourage different groups to work together, and challenging cultural assumptions about 'who belongs' and 'who decides' can only go so far within the current economic and political context. Despite very positive moves, there are a number of factors that are making it difficult to bring together the various approaches to land use. My research shows that change needs to come both through individual initiatives and changes in economic, political and social structures and institutions. This is also the

conclusion reached by those who work around environmental justice issues (Guha and Martinez-Alier: 1997, Harvey: 1996, Pulido: 1996). They have found that many people are concerned about and appreciate the environment but that it is often expressed in ways that do not always concur with more dominant ideas. They have also found that the goals and discourses of traditional environmentalists are alien to many people struggling to survive. Their approach, though discussed mainly with reference to very poor groups in North America or the developing world, is relevant, if adapted, to the situation in the Scottish Highlands. The key is that environmentalism cannot be divorced from economic, political and social issues (Harvey: 1996, Pulido: 1996, Anderson and Berglund: 2003, Brechin et. al.: 2003). Economic, political and social inequalities make it very difficult for people to not only have the experiences that will give them a broader, more integrated sense of place in the first instance, they also prevent people from participating and having their voice heard once they have developed this new sense of place because it directly challenges the elites who benefit from the continued divisions.

As I have shown, despite their image to the contrary, many locals *do* value the environment, but in different ways. If they are to develop a more all-encompassing appreciation, extending their attention to the high ground, then they have to be in an economic position to do so. Similar findings have been made in other parts of the world. Nygren (2003) found, in her study of rain forest conflicts in Central America, that those who were chopping down trees and coming into conflict with conservationists had come to the area because they had been forced off their land elsewhere. Those who are struggling economically in Badenoch and Strathspey are similarly the victims of economic 'restructuring' in other parts of Scotland.

Economic factors also underlie much of the resentment towards incomers. Many people coming into the area have both economic and cultural capital. They have money to start up a business or buy a house as well as the time and confidence to become involved in community politics. Therefore, initiatives like the Cairngorm Partnership, which seek to bring different groups together, will have limited effect because of the economic and social barriers to the involvement of many of the long-term locals who are

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less well-off. Therefore, as has been argued for other parts of the world, addressing both economic and social inequalities is vital, something that will need both a local and national perspective. Some of the issues I have raised in this thesis include the housing problem, low-paid jobs and what counts as knowledge.

These economic and social inequalities have a direct bearing on the process of decision-making. I have shown how politics is dominated by certain elites, consisting of landowners, developers, certain business owners and politicians who benefit directly from the livelihood discourse. They are being challenged by a new elite, consisting of mainly better-off incomers to the area, supported by conservation organisations such as the RSPB, which is also a major landowner. As I have argued, most people have been left on the periphery of these political struggles, but many locals will tend to side with the local elite rather than what they consider to be an 'outside elite'. However, many are so busy or so disenchanted that they do not get involved at all. Those doing two jobs or single mothers tied to the house will not have the time to get involved in local politics. The correspondence in the local paper illustrates this, with debates going on for weeks between the same people. Community councils and stakeholder panels are not representative of this very diverse local community. This point is a key contribution of my research. Too often policy makers treat the local community as either monolithic or consisting of a few distinct stakeholder groups. They can then claim to have consulted the local community when in fact they have barely scratched the surface, remaining ignorant of the alternative voices. Many anthropologists have done the same, often because of the difficulty of gaining access to the less powerful groups in a society. It has often been noted that women are not included in studies, not because the anthropologist doesn't think they are important but because women are not permitted to talk to the researchers. Even my research, based as it was on living as an ordinary person and working in a restaurant used by locals, did not reach those that are so marginalised, such as unemployed single mothers who are unlikely to frequent public places. All cultures will have some degree of inequality and this has been a weakness of much research on environmental conflict. Conflicts have been portrayed as being between the 'local community' and 'western environmentalists'. My research shows the

importance of focusing on the 'unheard voices' in order to gain a picture of the diversity of views. I have tended to focus on the diversity of views within the community where I lived, but the time spent with visitors also shows a diversity of perspectives. Similarly, not all western environmentalists can be studied as a monolithic entity. Some research on environmental conflict in developing countries is now stressing the diversity of views, recognising the importance of one's social and economic position (Walley: 2004, Nygren: 2003 and Ellen: 2000). My research reinforces the tendency to question the validity of the concept of 'local community' (Amit and Rapport: 2002).

Changing this political culture will be extremely difficult. Firstly, as noted above, it is based on economic and social inequality. Secondly, it is in the interests of the local elite to retain control of decision-making, in particular the planning process. This is why such a big campaign was waged to retain planning powers with the Highland Council rather than with the new National Park Board. However, there are more complex reasons why opening up the political process at the local level will be difficult. The local elites are supported through a network of regional and national interests. As noted by MacKinnon (2001), organisations such as the Highlands and Islands Enterprise were set up by the Conservatives in the 1990s in order to include more business interests in local decision-making. This has been shown to be the case in Badenoch and Strathspey with the way business associations, such as the Newtonmore Business Association and the Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce, are used as representatives of the local community as a whole. The landowners are part of a national network that includes the Scottish Landowners Federation and other political organisations such as People Too and the Conservative Party, which seek to limit the current trend towards land reform and access rights. These networks are less visible to local people than the national networks with which local mountaineers or conservationists might be involved such as the Ramblers Association or the RSPB. Therefore, these organisations become targets for the local vs. outsider discourse, even though the 'local' development lobby is equally tied in with outside national interests. If the political process is going to extend to a wider section of the community, then issues of land reform and the power of business interests over other interests will need to be addressed.

The National Park Board is an organisation that seeks to be an alternative to the traditional political elites by involving a wider variety of people, both from the local community and from outside. However, the stakeholder model is still used in that 'key' individuals are elevated to positions as representatives of groups that have a variety of different views. In addition, only certain groups are included. I have shown how new groups are gaining access to the decision-making process. However, if these groups and organisations, such as the RSPB, Mountaineering Council of Scotland, or the Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group, merely get incorporated into the current model of democracy then it will only reinforce the conflict model of environmental decision-making. The 'alternative voices', who have emerged outside the traditional political structure of Business Associations, stakeholder forums, community councils and regional government, will still be excluded.

Anthropology, based as it is on the study of the locality, may appear to be ill-equipped to 'pronounce' on the organisation of society as a whole. However, my research shows how the local and the individual are implicated in wider structures, institutions and discourses and how the interaction between the local and the 'global' work to bring about environmental conflict. Therefore, it has raised issues to do with economic and social justice on a much wider level. Still, it is at the level of the locality that anthropology can reveal the concrete steps individuals can take to bring about social and political change. My research has uncovered numerous individuals and groups who are bringing about change through their activities, interactions with other people, projects and initiatives. Those who are working for the reconciliation of people and planet on a national or global level need to appreciate the importance of working in close co-operation with the locality. Legislation and directives have a contribution to make in changing humans' relationship with the planet, but it is what happens between people and environment in actual places where the future will be decided.

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