Saving the wild, wilding the nation: the politics of species and spaces in Scottish conservation

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Abstract:

This thesis aims to understand discursive and material connections between wild nature and Scottish nationhood through an analysis of contemporary conservation. Drawing on theories of biopolitics, necropolitics and affect, I investigate four key case studies – the species conservation of pandas and wildcats, the culling of deer to protect native woodland, and the proposed reintroduction of the wolf – through readings of a wide range of media and literary texts. Focusing on the period before and after the 2014 independence referendum, I argue that wild nature is not simply constructed by or incorporated into Scottish nationalism, but is a site of contestation between different national identities and political positionalities, as well as a space of nonhuman agency where animal others are both active participants in and disruptors of conservation practices. I track conflicts, contradictions and tensions in conservation discourse and practice, excavating resonances and dissonances between the wild and the domestic, nature and the nation, the modern and the primitive, and examining the gendered, racialized, and class-based histories that inflect these dichotomies. In particular, I show how the Highlands as a space of (post)colonial "wildness" has been involved in competing nationalisms and claims for power, as well as conflicting ideas about what a healthy national nature should look like. I argue that the wild is mobilized in three different registers, often overlapping and intermingling: the wild as a modern project of progress, rationalism and independent nation-building; the wild as an expression of authentic heritage, purity, and continuity across time; and the wild as a disruptive, unpredictable, feral force for radical change.

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1. The Wild and the Nation

Introduction

Each year, the tourist agency Visit Scotland runs a themed marketing campaign that promotes a particular mode of national identity. 2013 was the Year of Natural Scotland, celebrating the country's "great outdoors," its "surprising wildlife" and its "outstanding natural beauty" ('Scotland's Themed Years'). Promotional clips featured panning shots of dramatic landscapes, time-lapse footage of shifting skies, and close-ups of oblivious animals. The campaign's audiovisual centrepiece was an eight-minute film titled 'Wild Scotland', which puts forth a narrative appropriate to this time that we are calling the Anthropocene – a time when the status of the human within and against our environment becomes ever more fraught and ever more urgent. The film takes up the increasingly ubiquitous refrain that people are "not separate from nature, but part of nature," and its voiceover articulates a shifting, multi-layered set of relations between people, animals and land. Nature is introduced as a provider of "free services" – the forest an "air conditioner," the mountains a "workout zone," the sea a "larder," the peat bog a "history classroom." It is a "bank" to be invested in, an economic asset, as well as something to be treasured for its own sake. And it is invoked as "our home," a shared space of multispecies belonging and mutual care: "we all need to care for Scotland's nature, to allow Scotland's nature to care for us." The project of restoring ecologies, the film emphasises, is "not only about protecting a rare bird or a threatened wetland", but about "us" – about "protecting our future."

2013 was also the year that the Scottish National Party announced a referendum on Scotland's independence, and the question of who counts as "us", what "our future" means, became a matter of intense and wide-ranging public debate. "Scotland's nature is on the march," announces the video, and although independence is never mentioned it simmers under its surface, a whisper of a suggestion that Scotland's people, too, are on the march, that nature and nation are on a shared trajectory of change. Ursula Heise writes that conservation efforts "become part of the stories that human communities tell themselves: stories about their origins, their development, their identity, and their future horizons" (5), and in Scotland in 2013 those stories were in a state of flux, its politics infused with a simultaneous sense of intense excitement and deep anxiety. This thesis asks: what is the relation between "wild" and "Scotland"? What material and discursive connections are woven between these two poles of meaning – nature and the nation, the wild and the domestic – in conservation projects that claim to act in the name of an undomesticated other? How does the signifier *wild* negotiate shifting relationships between human and nonhuman, between meaning and affect, between identity and community, between the deep inaccessible past and the infinitely imagined future? And what can the anxieties of endangerment, extinction and restoration tell us about the anxieties of modernity, as part of its ongoing projects of progress, knowledge and human mastery? I answer these questions by tracking tensions, contradictions,

slippages and excesses, unarticulated histories and reworked narratives, that structure the practices and politics of conservation in Scotland today.

The Year of Natural Scotland video, according to its YouTube description, "conveys the Scottish Government's vision for Scotland's natural heritage" and its "forward thinking approach to nature conservation." This is one mode of wildness that I will explore: the protection and production of the wild as part of official nation-building strategy, a marker of progress, modernity and change as well as heritage, continuity and restoration. This wildness is involved with biopolitical strategies of governing both human and nonhuman bodies, making-live at the level of population and ecosystem ("Healthy nature equals healthy people," the film's voiceover tells us). It is also involved with a less-publicised necropolitics in which killing becomes an integral part of saving, and the threat of death is part of valued landscapes. Many forms of life are at stake here, but I build my arguments by following a motley collection of what the video calls "wildlife superstars" – iconic species around which the affective force of the wild tends to coalesce. They are animals that participate in both preservation and restoration conservation projects, traditional species-centred campaigns and ecologically-oriented proposals to "rewild" landscapes. Mammals are not the only locus of wildness or the only target of conservation in the case studies I analyse, but they remain central to the narratives, affects and identities that are mobilized in making the wild matter, and they will help guide and anchor my arguments in tangible bodies.

Animals, as Nicole Shukin observes, often function as "a tool of affective governance […] in a project of national identity building and unity," symbolising the nation's body as an organic "life form that is born rather than made" (3). Critiquing this biopolitical naturalisation of the nation, and its attendant processes of gendering, racialization and class conflict, will be an important part of my analysis. But I also argue that such a straightforward mapping of nationalism onto nature only tells part of the story. In a place where the historical meaning and political status of the "nation" is far from self-evident, constantly being unsettled and renegotiated, I am interested in the conflicts, contradictions and anxieties that structure what counts as national, what counts as natural, and what counts as wild. Scotland has a complex relation to the history of empire, a culture characterised by contested claims to postcoloniality, caught between the roles of coloniser and colonised; in this context, questions of ownership and sovereign power over land shape the kinds of wilds that are possible for people and animals alike. And in contemporary national discourses of independence and integration, change and continuity, hope and fear, I find resonances and intertwinings with ecological discourses of autonomy and restoration, destruction and abundance, anxiety and desire. The wild is mobilized for an explicitly modern project of progress, hope and independent nation-building, a space of potentially radical politics that is fraught with risks; but the wild is still haunted by its associations with colonialism, bordering and nostalgia for a purified past. Debates about what a new Scottish state and a restored Scottish wild might look like do not always coincide, but I will argue that they often overlap and intermingle,

borrowing each other's terms; at other times they clash and collide, problematising each other's assumptions. This is an argument that does not posit a straightforward causal relationship or concurrence between the wild and the nation, but rather excavates resonances and dissonances between two unsettled and contested spheres coexisting in a many-layered space – a wild-in-progress and a nation-in-progress.

My four animal collaborators help me tell these stories as both symbolic icons and material lives, knots of what Donna Haraway calls natureculture, where multispecies kinships are made and unmade, and I bring them together in two pairs that embody the tensions I want to explore. The pair of Chinese pandas residing in Edinburgh zoo and the handful of Scottish wildcats roaming the Highlands have both enjoyed extensive media coverage, adoring fans and tourist capital, but the modes of conservation they represent – captive and wild, *in situ* and *ex situ*, foreign and native – have become sites of conflict and contention, subjected to competing discourses of identity and regimes of reproduction. They are both endangered species that we are entreated to "save," but what it means to save a species is not as self-evident as it might seem. The red deer that proliferate across the country and the grey wolves that haunt its imagined futures, meanwhile, are caught in webs of life and death, predator and prey; one is excessively present, the other forebodingly absent, and both are deeply involved in the question of who the land belongs to – a question both material and philosophical, about wealth and title deeds, about identity, animality and power. I focus primarily on materials that concern these animals in the years preceding and following the 2014 referendum, as a potent affective moment in Scotland's self-making, a moment that is still resonating in the nation's psyche and structuring the trajectory of its politics.

Scotland is my site of study for practical and personal reasons. It is the patch of land where my knowledge runs deepest: navigating the politics of its competing nationalisms has shaped my understandings of identity, place, representation, and (post)coloniality; living in its cities and visiting its mountains has informed my ever-shifting feelings about nature, wildness, and the alterity of the nonhuman. But in a twist of history, this tiny country at the edge of Europe is also an oddly appropriate site for reflecting upon the questions of the Anthropocene. It was here, in the Cairngorm mountains and the crags of Edinburgh, on the Isle of Arran and in the borders, that James Hutton developed the intimate knowledge of rock that would form the foundation of modern geology – a revolutionary understanding of deep time that made the concept of the Anthropocene possible. At the risk of buying into a certain strain of nationalist exceptionalism, one might be tempted to say that the Earth as we know it was born in Scotland. It is an appropriate site, too, for reflecting on the meanings, consequences and contestations of modernity: Hutton and his theories were part of the Scottish Enlightenment, a key intellectual node of the British Empire, and the development of geological deep time models has been inextricably

involved in shaping understandings of history, progress and the meaning of the human, as well as materially implicated in the development of industrial modernity.[1]

With this in mind, my project has three interrelated aims. Firstly, I want to tell a story about the material-discursive space of Scotland, about the production of Scottishness and Britishness and the nationalisms that today structure UK politics as they are routed through wildness and animality. Secondly, I take Scotland as a node and a microcosm of a wider story about modernity, Enlightenment rationalism, and colonialism – about how structures of sameness and difference, belonging and exclusion, progress and power have been mediated through particular (political, economic, aesthetic, affective) understandings of non-human nature. Finally, both of these stories prompt me to ask how we might represent, interact with, and account for the non-human world in ways that do justice to its alterity. How might the wild be politically productive? This project is a contribution to intense and ongoing scholarly debates about relations between humans and nonhumans in the Anthropocene, about modes of relating to the material world and responding to environmental crisis. It is also an intervention in the politics of Scotland's national identity, which remains restless and lively in the wake of a Brexit referendum which has thrown the "settled will of the people"[2] back into uncertainty. And it is a timely engagement with real and aspirational conservation projects that continue to capture the public imagination. In the final weeks of writing this thesis, my news alerts were alight with the excitement of four newborn and two rescued wildcat kittens; with fraught comments sections debating the merits and dangers of rewilding; with anxious new statistics about the rapid extinction of British wildlife. The wild and the nation continue to inflect and disrupt one another in trajectories whose destination remains to be seen.

In this introductory chapter, I begin with a brief review of debates around the Anthropocene that have been shaped by feminist work on nature, culture, and difference. Next, I flesh out the socio-political background of the context I am working in, the national(ist) and (post)colonial politics of the United Kingdom today. Finally, I reflect on the methodological processes and theoretical tools that drive my analysis.

[1] For a recent exploration of "deep time" in 19th-century British science and its centrality to shifting understandings of the "human", see Sera-Shriar. On geology and industrial modernity, Jesse Oak Taylor argues that James Watt's steam engine – also a product of Scotland – "modelled principles of heat and energy that both drew on and helped inspire James Hutton's conception of geology […] The steam engine thus becomes a model for the conception of the earth that it is in the process of transforming" (36).

[2] This phrase was coined by Labour leader John Smith in reference to Scottish devolution, and has been much quoted and modified in reference to recent events.

Into the wild: ways of seeing the Anthropocene

The seeds of my interest in the wild were planted in 2013, the Year of Natural Scotland, the year before the referendum. My father had recently started working for the John Muir Trust, a wild land conservation charity named after the Scottish-American 'father of wilderness' famous for founding the US National Park system. As well as acquiring and managing large areas of land, the organisation is involved in lobbying and policy-making, and one of their major projects had involved producing a map of Scotland's "wildest" spaces and campaigning for these areas to be legally protected from development. In July of 2013, *Bella Caledonia* – a popular online magazine that hosted much of the independence movement's political and cultural debate – published an article by geographer Fraser McDonald, critiquing the conceptual underpinnings of the campaign. Drawing on the work of William Cronon, whose essay 'The Trouble with Wilderness' traces the history of an idea that "hides its unnaturalness behind a mask that is all the more beguiling because it seems so natural" (69), McDonald argues that "wild spaces" are more aesthetic fantasy than ecological reality, that all of Scotland's landscapes bear deep traces of human intervention, and that the idea of "wildness" itself deserves critical attention:

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

To those of us immersed in gender studies and other fields that tend towards a constructivist view of nature, this is a familiar argument; in 2013, fresh out of an English Literature department and well-trained in poststructuralist theory, I certainly found it convincing. A few days later, my father – employed by the JMT as a communications editor, but writing "in a strictly personal capacity, as a pro-independence socialist" – penned a response to McDonald in the same magazine, titled 'For Scottish Wildness.' While conceding that no part of Scotland can be called a "wilderness" in the classical sense of the word,[3] he nonetheless defends wildness as a real, material quality of certain spaces:

> The Cairngorm plateau, the Cuillin mountains and Knoydart peninsula may not be wildernesses – but neither are they [city parks] Kelvingrove Park, Hyde Park or the Meadows. Anyone who

[3] "Wilderness" in this sense implies a landscape completely unaltered and uninhabited by humans. In 'The Trouble with Wilderness,' Cronon famously traces the history of the term and critiques its colonial implications. In the contemporary Scottish context, the term "wilderness" is rarely used, as there is broad awareness that the landscape has been inhabited, cultivated and altered over millennia; the term "wild" is understood to encode similar aesthetic and ecological values without necessarily projecting a pristine, untouched history (see Deary and Warren 2017). I will return to these points throughout the thesis, particularly in my analysis of "rewilding".

> believes otherwise should try to venture through these landscapes in a January snowstorm, or even spend a few days in the summer wandering through these areas without map and compass. (McCombes)

Against the power of discourse to shape the world, the irrefutable force of a snowstorm; against the social construction of the landscape, the capacity of that landscape to thwart human agency. Against abstract theorising, this paragraph insists: go out into the wild and see for yourself. The wild is what you feel as a human body cast into a landscape that exceeds you, without the accoutrements of modernity to keep you safe.

This small, localised debate is illustrative of larger theoretical questions that underpin critical approaches to climate crisis, environmental degradation, and the status of the nonhuman world. There are, broadly speaking, three approaches to the relation between "humans" and "nature" in the Anthropocene. The first might be called, after Bill McKibben's 1989 book, the "end of nature" hypothesis. "We have deprived nature of its independence, and that is fatal to its meaning," writes McKibben. "Nature's independence is its meaning; without it, there is nothing but us" (54). In this story, "nature" is something that exists outside of and autonomous from "us", and is defined by that autonomy, but human activity has gradually colonised it, and soon there will be nothing left: the Anthropocene as the obliteration of the nonhuman other, the Anthropos as a purely destructive force. The second approach might be called the "nonexistence of nature" hypothesis, in which nature itself (and all its corresponding concepts, like the wild and the pristine) is not a pre-existing sphere that exists before or beyond the human, but an idea that is discursively produced and must be actively managed: the Anthropocene as a time of human power and human responsibility, the Anthropos as the central agent and caretaker of the Earth. The third approach might be named by terms like entanglement, interdependence, or "intra-action" (Barad). After posthumanisms, new materialisms and the ontological turn, the separability of terms like human and nonhuman, culture and nature, discourse and matter have come to seem increasingly untenable: the Anthropocene as the age of inextricable enmeshment, and the Anthropos as one part of a dynamic, agential ecology of beings and matters.[4]

All of these modes of understanding nature have been key sites where gender is made and unmade, and sites of important feminist interventions. The literature on relations between "woman" and "nature" is too vast to delve into here, long predating the explosion of Anthropocene theory, and the significance of the nature question to feminist and queer politics is hard to overstate.[5] The direction of this thesis has been deeply shaped by these debates; but to avoid getting lost in the vast overgrown forests of critical thought about "nature" as such – which encompasses everything from the human body

[4] Key texts for this approach include Haraway's *Staying with the Trouble*, Alaimo's *Bodily Natures*, and Morton's *Ecology without Nature*, among many others.
[5] Key feminist texts that engage specifically with ecology and ecofeminism include Merchant's *The Death of Nature* and Plumwood's *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*.

to the laws of physics, from pet dogs to deep-sea creatures – I deliberately anchor my analysis in the idea of the "wild" instead. The wild is a concept that is narrower and more specific than "nature", but also in certain ways more expansive, more uncertain, more unexpected. The wild encodes a series of contradictions: it is "a pristine exterior, the touchstone of an original nature" (Whatmore 9) associated with beauty and abundance, but at the same time it is barren, lifeless, a "waste" in need of cultivation (Cronon 70). It is a place of nourishment, renewal and peace (as John Muir's writing epitomises), and at the same time it is a chaotic, unpredictable site of danger. The wild is threatening, and it is threatened. This doubleness emerges, too, in the gendering of the wild. Femininity has been associated in western philosophy with a kind of chaotic formlessness, a wildness that must be tamed and civilized, but as Val Plumwood notes:

> [t]he dominant and ancient traditions connecting men with culture and women with nature are also overlain by some more recent and conflicting ones in which unchangeable 'male' essence ('virility') is connected to a nature no longer viewed as reproductive and providing but as 'wild', violent, competitive and sexual (as in the ideas of Victorianism, Darwinism and recent sociobiology), and 'the female' is viewed in contrasting terms as insipid, domestic, asexual and civilising. (20)

This oscillation of femininity and masculinity between nature and culture, wildness and domesticity, will emerge repeatedly throughout my analysis, and their structures of meaning are also inextricably involved with colonial discourses of wilderness, savagery and civilization. Scotland's relation to colonialism is a fraught political and historical question; in the next section I introduce how Scottish nationhood has been constructed both within and against the British state and empire, and how the tensions of this history are entangled with the contradictions of the Scottish wild.

Making the nation: narratives of (post)coloniality, difference and democracy

In an article exploring attitudes to rewilding in Scotland, Deary and Warren note a certain resistance to the idea of wilderness:

> in the Highlands especially, the word 'wilderness' does not have the positive ideological resonance that it does in the USA. On the contrary, it has strongly negative connotations, evoking the 19th century Highland Clearances when long-inhabited and extensively modified glens were forcibly 'cleared', creating today's misleading sense of 'unspoiled nature' […] Some local people

> felt that using the label 'wild' for land on which generations of their ancestors had lived and worked was tantamount to airbrushing human history out of the picture. (213)[6]

The dramatic wild scenery that appears in tourist brochures and in Visit Scotland's videos, the scenery that won Scotland the prestige of being voted "most beautiful country in the world" last year (Ross), is seen by many as an ecologically degraded and forcibly depopulated wasteland. The founder of conservation charity Trees for Life, quoted in George Monbiot's *Feral* (which I will discuss at length in chapter three), describes his astonishment at witnessing a small corner of the ancient forest that once covered the country: "I had never known that anything like this existed in Scotland. It looks like Canada or the western US. I had thought heather-covered hills and empty glens were natural" (98). The aesthetic of wild Scotland, then, has been subject to critique from two opposite positions: one sees it as a degraded fragment of an older, wilder landscape, and instead of preservation advocates "rewilding" to bring back ancient forest ecologies; the other sees the preservation of wildness as a marginalization of Highland communities, emphasises a history of human habitation, and sometimes advocates "repeopling".[7]

It is this second view that I will dwell on here, as a way into thinking about Scotland and colonialism. The idea of wildness, now a selling point for the mountains, was once a crucial means of justifying forced modernisation and dispossession of land. Long before the Clearances, Highlanders were represented as "a savage and untamed nation", "wild Scots" (as opposed to the "householding [ie domesticated] Scots," as "not domesticated (like hens), but wild (like foxes)" (quoted in Davidson 64). They were "disordered subjects" prone to "barbarous cruelties" and "godless oppressions", a racialization deployed in order to "establish feudal authority" over the land (quoted in Wightman 'The Poor had no Lawyers' 43). For a long time, the wild was not something to be preserved but to be subdued and put to work. Historian Neil Davidson writes that this "'lack of civility' was often put down to the Highland environment," and he quotes from Samuel Johnston visiting the area in the seventeenth century: "Mountainous regions are so remote from the seat of government, and so difficult to access, that they are very little under the influence of the sovereign, or within the reach of national justice" (quoted in Davidson 65). The wild, in this tradition, is a space outside the rule of law, a threat to sovereign power by its very physicality, spatially and symbolically distanced from the developments of modernity. But it was also seen as a space of potential for those developments, a site of knowledge production and experimental practice. Environmental historian Fredrik Albritton Jonsson argues that

[6] This observation, however, fails to register that a history of clearance also marks many American wildernesses, and that its "positive ideological resonance" is itself a product of colonialism and of "airbrushing human history out of the picture". See Cronon for an analysis of wilderness as a colonial construct in the US context.

[7] These positions, although seemingly antagonistic, are not necessarily always mutually exclusive. The CEO of Trees for Life, one of the country's most vocal proponents for rewilding and predator reintroduction, insists that the two go hand in hand: "People might think that rewilding means creating a wilderness where people don't go, but that's not the case. We believe we would have more people living in the Highlands if we did this, not less, and we'd have more jobs, not less, because people would want to see and experience it" (Weldon).

"the mountains and peat mosses of Scotland became a laboratory for the Enlightenment" (2), a testing ground for emerging environmental and economic theories that would become integral to the management of the British Empire. The Highlands was alternately "a 'New World' at the edge of the nation, brimming with natural abundance" and "cornucopian potential" (3-4), or it was a site of early "anxieties about environmental degradation and resource scarcity" (4), a threateningly barren space that had to be carefully managed to maximise its productivity. Wildness, as Hyaesin Yoon writes, has a long history of attaching to groups of people "as the object of both colonialist intervention and institutional preservation" (137), and the attachment of wildness to the Highland landscape and its people has been one of the processes by which Scotland is interpreted as a postcolonial space. But the status of the Highlands in relation to Scotland and Britain, and the nation's status in relation to the British Empire, remains a sharply contested question.

Sassi and Heijnsbergen suggest that Scotland can be read as "a 'theoretical borderland' in relation to Empire and postcoloniality" (10). Much modern Scottish writing, they note, articulates "a nationalist discourse largely based upon a concept of 'resistance' to the imperial centre (identified either as 'England' or the British state)" (3). In some ways this is a paradoxical situation: 'England', as the only one of the UK's nations without a devolved parliament,[8] does not strictly exist as a distinct political entity, while Scotland itself is part of the 'British state'. To the extent that Britishness tends to be collapsed into Englishness, the specificity of English culture is simultaneously hegemonic and invisibilized (Gardiner 2004). Scotland, meanwhile, has been caught between a desire for national specificity and a fear of exclusion from the benefits of Britishness; caught between, on the one hand, asserting its status as an equal partner in the Union, as the seat of Enlightenment and the originator of English literature (see Crawford 1998), and, on the other, emphasising its marginality, disavowing those very associations in order to position itself against England – as Cairns Craig puts it, "performing the roles both of creator of canonical English and of guerrilla fighter dedicated to its subversion" (239). Historians have extensively explored Scottish participation in the British Empire, both materially, in terms of exploitation and profit, and ideologically, in the significant contributions of the Scottish Enlightenment and later intellectual projects to the logic of colonialism (Sassi and Heijnsbergen 4). Literary and cultural studies, on the other hand, has tended to position Scotland as a victim of English cultural and linguistic imperialism, focusing its analytical attention on Scottish marginality and mobilizing postcolonial concepts like hybridity to explain Scottish experience and identity.

The extent to which Scotland can be considered a colonised nation, and the processes by which Scotland, England and Britain came into being as national formations, has been the subject of extensive debate. Liam Connell emphasises the extent to which Lowland Scottish elites were involved in the

[8] "Devolution" is the process by which Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have established separate parliaments, with certain governing powers delegated from the central British state in Westminster.

oppression and exploitation of the Highlands, arguing that the narrative of postcolonial Scotland requires a "collapsing of the difference between Highland and Lowland cultural history" that "involves transforming a Highland/British opposition into a Scottish/English one" (260). As David Richards puts it, this transformation, and its centrality to Scottish political consciousness, "extrapolates the history of the post-Union nation in its entirety from the suppression of Gaelic culture specifically, and, by an act of wilful amnesia, it thus conflates the experiences of both victims and perpetrators into a single experience of national victimisation" (14). In this process of national memory-making, Scotland's involvement in the British Empire is submerged; emphasising a Scottish sympathy or shared oppression with colonised nations downplays the extent to which Scotland both actively participated in and materially benefited from the brutalities of British colonialism.[9] According to Connell, the process of collapsing Scottish historical experience into the Highland experience was crucial to "an early Scottish nationalist politics which, in the context of apparent cultural similarities between Scotland and England, needed to construct modes in which a fundamental cultural division between these countries could be identified" (254).

For contemporary nationalists, Scotland's difference tends to be articulated less in terms of essentialised identity or cultural homogeneity, and more along politicised lines of modernity, progress and democratic potential. Against an increasingly insular Britain, where anti-immigration sentiment and austerity politics dominate the public sphere, the SNP and the broadly left-leaning independence campaign are keen to emphasise Scotland's openness, its tolerance, and its universalist public services, framing their position as a "civic" as opposed to an "ethnic" nationalism. In the process of forging its cultural difference from England, race comes to signify not through an overtly racialised Scottishness, but through the "narrative of an absent racism in Scottish history" (Davidson et al 1). This is a narrative that can serve to obscure the ongoing operations of Scottish whiteness, as critiqued in a recent book with the telling title *No Problem Here*, which examines "the disjuncture between elite discourse on migration and the lived reality of racialised minorities in Scotland" (2). When racism is displaced as a uniquely English or British as opposed to a Scottish problem, the historical and contemporary workings of race in a specifically Scottish context are suppressed in the making of an ostensibly inclusive national identity.

As Neil Davidson argues, the rise of a "national consciousness" in Scotland has not simply been a spontaneous expression of collective identity, but is produced by the political conditions of the UK: the late twentieth century's "heightened sense of Scottishness was not an assertion of primordial being

[9] Further complicating the victim/victimiser dichotomy, it was not only Lowland Scots but also Highland "victims" who participated in colonial violence elsewhere. Highland journalist Cal Flyn, whose work I will draw on in chapter three's discussion of deer culling, wrote a book grappling with an ancestor's massacres of Aboriginal people, with a blurb that asks: "How could people who directly suffered from the brutal expulsion of the Highland Clearances re-enact this brutality in Australia?"

but a response to a particular political conjuncture" (1). At the same time as drawing attention to the progressive achievements of the devolved parliament, the Yes campaign also had to emphasise its marginality, tapping into a sense of political powerlessness to which independence could be positioned as an answer. The UK is often described as having a "democratic deficit," whereby the Scottish people lack control over who will ultimately govern them – an argument strengthened by the effects of a Conservative government in a country with only a handful of Tory MPs. The runup to the 2014 referendum, in this context, was experienced by many as a moment of radical empowerment and democratic potential, where the question of what the nation was or could be was subject to constant and wide-ranging debate. And although independence was defeated 45-55 – a far narrower margin than anyone could have predicted – the meanings and consequences of the question continue to reverberate, structuring the possibilities of Scottish politics in ways that are both radical and limiting. The SNP have governed the devolved Scottish Parliament for over ten years, and since 2015 they have represented the majority of Scottish seats in Westminster. The national question, especially post-Brexit, is clearly far from settled.

All nationalisms, as Anne McLintock points out, have complicated and contradictory relationships to modernity and temporality. Drawing on Tom Nairn, she discusses the "Janus-face" of nationalism: "one face gazing back into the primordial mists of the past, the other into an infinite future" (65). This tension, between the identity-building continuity of deep time and the impetus to make a radical break into something new, surfaces repeatedly in Scotland's ongoing attempts to make a subject of itself. Most parts of the independence campaign, including the dominant discourse of the SNP, made an effort to face forward, emphasising the modern, progressive, open, democratic (and sometimes technocratic) project of "civic nationalism", set in contrast to a Britain associated with outdated institutions, backward-looking imperial nostalgia and xenophobia that delivered Brexit. Against this politics of return to an idealised past, Scottish independence represented the infinite promise of a blank state on which the future could be written. At the same time, there has always been a quieter – but arguably equally powerful – appeal to history, mythology, and cultural continuity that is necessary to legitimate the nation *as* a nation, as a potential sovereign people whose democratic voice must be liberated. In the "primordial mists" of Scottishness, there is a lingering sense of persecution, exploitation, and disenfranchisement – associated, ironically, with the modernizing and centralizing terror of the British state, the sense that Scotland was dragged into a future it did not ask for.[10]

[10] In his 2000 book *The Origins of the Scottish Nation*, Neil Davidson argues that this sense of enduring nationhood is in fact a modern invention: "a Scottish nation did not exist in 1320, nor in 1560, nor yet in 1707 […] The Scottish nationalism which arose in Scotland during the twentieth century, particularly in the 1960s, was not therefore a revival of a pre-Union nationalism after 300 years – since no such nationalism existed – but an entirely new formation" (3-4).

McLintock maps this double temporal orientation onto a gendered dichotomy that naturalises national and familial structures of difference:

> Women are represented as the atavistic and authentic 'body' of national tradition (inert, backward-looking and natural), embodying nationalism's conservative principle of continuity. Men, by contrast, represent the progressive agent of national modernity (forward-thrusting, potent and historic), embodying nationalism's progressive or revolutionary principle of discontinuity. (66)

But today, such a linear relation between gender and temporality no longer reliably holds. In this phase of western capitalist modernity, in some ways, it might even be inverted: Scotland's claims to progress and modernity are consistently associated with women's leadership and feminist rhetoric, while its historic and mythological self-image continues to be fashioned around masculine figures like William Wallace and Robert the Bruce, wild warrior men who represent the country's fighting spirit and "righteous belligerence".[11] It is here, then, that we circle back round to the wild; this thesis will suggest that the relationship between past, present and future in making the nation is mediated not only through naturalising ideas about men, women and the family, but also by gendered and racialised ideas about nonhuman nature, routed through animals, landscapes, and environmental discourses. In this context, conservation rhetoric and practice reflects the nation's Janus-face: on the one hand, the project of protecting wild species and spaces invokes a prehistoric genealogy, appealing to a sense of natural and national continuity across deep time, where "our" indigenous creatures must be saved for the sake of the nation itself; on the other hand, conservation is promoted in the language of science, rationality and futurity, as one of many environmentalist concerns that marks Scotland as a modern, progressive, outward-looking and forward-thinking nation, a potential "nature state" (Graf von Hardenberg et al). Wildness and animality, as I will illustrate in the coming chapters, are mobilized both to naturalise and to denaturalise human political arrangements. They are implicated in forging a sense of insular, enduring and persecuted Scottishness, tangled with racial discourses of purity and indigeneity; but they are also recruited to signal the nation's open, global, and forward-thinking attitude, its aspirational place in an interconnected world.

In one of the most famous texts on nationalism, Benedict Anderson defined the nation as an "imagined community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (6). The central contradiction and the ongoing challenge of radical independence politics in Scotland is to reconcile an "open and all-encompassing" identity (Liinpää 14-15) with the "limited and sovereign" institution of

[11] This quote is taken from a recent *Guardian* article by Kevin McKenna, a prolific Scottish journalist whose hyperbolic prose will make more appearances in the following chapter. The piece makes a dubious argument for "the Scots' love of a right good fight," and recounts Scottish involvement in various uprisings and battles across the world – without ever mentioning Scottish participation in the British Empire (McKenna, 'If the Spanish want a scrap,' 2018).

nationhood, with its intrinsically "finite, if elastic, boundaries" (Anderson 7). "It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (6), writes Anderson; in similar terms, many of the nation's iconic animals will never be encountered in the flesh by most of its human inhabitants, but they are imagined nonetheless as part of a shared national heritage, a shared native habitat. If the national community, as McLintock suggests, is imagined via the model of the family, it is also built through kinships with other kinds of creatures (just as intimate familial relations are often also a multispecies formation). Haraway writes that "*Kin* is a wild category that all sorts of people do their best to domesticate," and my research follows her questions about how multispecies kinships are made and unmade: "Who lives and who dies, and how, in this kinship rather than that one? What shape is this kinship, where and whom do its lines connect and disconnect, and so what?" ('Staying with' 2).

What this project aims to do is not to situate conservation as a straightforwardly nationalist project, where animals are called upon as representatives of the nation, nor to make metaphorical analogies between the control and exclusion of human and animal groups. Rather, I aim to better understand the tensions that constitute Scotland – a nation that has never been singular – through the lens of its landscapes and wildlife, and to better understand multispecies encounters as they are shaped by those tensions, by material power relations and symbolic appropriations. I will show that nature conservation is not simply incorporated into or constructed by Scottish nationalism, but rather is a material-discursive site of contestation between different national identities and political positionalities. None of the naturecultures I analyse can be straightforwardly understood as either a Scottish or a British national project; rather, they are sites where ideas about Scottishness, Britishness, ownership and belonging are shaped, articulated, and sometimes disrupted. In the next section, I introduce the theoretical tools that will help me make sense of these processes of power and meaning.

Theoretical tools: biopolitical animals, necropolitical landscapes, affective economies

Biopolitics, in Foucault's foundational formulation, is about "the acquisition of power over man insofar as man is a living being" (239), a shift from the sovereign "right to take life or let live" to a power that can "make live and let die" (241). As well as a disciplinary, individualising power that targets the human body and a regulatory, massifying power that targets the population – managing health and illness, reproduction and morbidity – it also involves "control over relations between the human race, or human beings insofar as they are a species, insofar as they are living beings, and their environment, the milieu in which they live" (245). Although Foucault never engages in detail with this aspect of biopolitics, then, it is clear from the outset that the nonhuman world is caught up in the operations of biopolitical

governance – and as more recent theorists have made clear, it is involved not only as a background "milieu," but as a living space actively governed in its own right.

Biopolitics does not simply target human and nonhuman bodies in analogous ways; rather, it governs those bodies in relation to and through one another, producing them as sites of difference, power and responsibility. To understand this process, I draw on the work of Cary Wolfe and Nicole Shukin, who have explored how a vast multiplicity of nonhuman life is biopolitically governed and differentiated, analysing the contradictions opened up as animals are "framed at opposite extremes in relation to moral standing and legal protection, how they stand before the law" (Wolfe 11). Wolfe focuses on the philosophical, ethical and juridical status of nonhuman beings, and argues that the biopolitics of species is inseparable from the biopolitics of race, "simply because both categories – as history well shows – are so notoriously pliable and unstable, constantly bleeding into and out of each other" (43). Shukin, meanwhile, takes a Marxian approach to foreground "the nodal role of animals, ideologically and materially, in the reproduction of capital's hegemony" (7). Her mobilization of "zoopolitics" works as "a challenge to the assumption that the social flesh and 'species body' at stake in the logic of biopower is predominantly human" (9).

Much work in this vein of animal biopolitics focuses its attention, for obvious reasons, on domesticated animals: on the breeding of livestock, and particularly the violence of factory farming; on laboratory animals and genetic manipulations; on the institutions and industries of pet ownership; on biosecurity and the circulation of animal bodies in global trade networks. It focuses, in short, on animals as property. For Wolfe, the "underlying problem" in animal welfare legislation is that "[a]nimals are things and not persons under United States law – things that may or may not have legal status depending on whether or not they have a property relation to an entity designated a 'person', who thus has a legal interest in, and standing to argue on behalf of, the animal in question" (13). But wild animals, in some jurisdictions including the United Kingdom, are defined as *res nullius* – belonging to no-one, unownable until they are killed, neither persons nor property but something else that complicates and exceeds both categories. Nonetheless, wild animals are caught up, too, in complex networks of biopower, where processes of making-live and letting-die are shaped by calculations of rarity and endangerment, nativity and invasiveness, economic and ecological function, among many other categories of meaning and value. As Mathew Chrulew writes, "The closer a species to extinction […] the stronger then is the grip in which the bodies of the last remaining individual animals are held" (148-9). Chrulew focuses on the biopolitics of species conservation in the zoo, tracing how its spatial and scientific structure has shifted in function from exhibiting animals for the sake of human knowledge to preserving them for the sake of a wild species or genome, where animal reproduction becomes highly regulated in the name of saving a dispersed, fragmented population. Zoo spaces, he argues, attempt simultaneously to imitate the wild and to improve upon it, disavowing danger, disease and death to play the role of beneficent saviour. The relation between the zoo and the wild, *in situ* and *ex situ* modes of conservation, is hotly contested

among conservationists and the general public, and in the first chapter I explore this tension through the lens of the panda and the wildcat, and the reproductive interventions that are made central to their saving. As these two animals come to embody two poles of sexual threat, impotence and promiscuity, conservation is enacted as a practice of biopolitical normalization.

Biopolitics, then, is an indispensable tool for interrogating "how different modes of conservation come to shape different worlds, cutting up the flux of wildlife and performing particular ideas of what life should be saved" (12), as Jamie Lorimer puts it. But biopolitics is not only about saving: Chrulew writes that "the biopolitics of endangered species preservation [is] a form of power/knowledge devoted to making animals live, but nonetheless perilously bound up in the production of impairment and death" (141), as certain animals become "an unwanted surplus or an experimental loss" (150). This relation between saving and killing is not confined to captivity, and my third chapter will look in more detail at the operations of death in producing wild landscapes. Here I turn to necropolitics to examine how sovereignty – both in Mbembe's sense of "the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (11), and in relation to broader understandings of land and nation – shapes the naturecultures of the Scottish Highlands. In conflicts over trees, deer and land, the question of who has the right to kill which animals, when, and where becomes central to making the wild; practises of hunting and culling, I will argue, have been central to power struggles over land ownership and ecological regeneration, and death becomes not an incidental but a crucial part of restoring lively landscapes.

I have chosen to frame the two chapters of this thesis around "biopolitics" and "necropolitics" respectively, but I do not intend to suggest that these are two distinct, separable orders of governance and power, nor to imply that their frameworks can be simply transposed from human to animal populations. Biopolitics, as Foucault makes clear, is always also implicated with death. But biopolitical theory tends to emphasise the productive and regulatory aspects of power, as well as the excess of life that escapes or exceeds it. Following this emphasis, my first chapter is primarily concerned with the politics of reproduction in the making of the wild, the contested question of what counts as an endangered population and a valued life, which is conducted in the name of health and protection. 'Necropolitics,' meanwhile, is not a negation of biopolitics, and indeed Mbembe explicitly works within that theoretical framework; his project is to pay closer attention to the workings of sovereignty, death and racism that remain fundamental to the modern biopolitical order. The second chapter, then, shifts its emphasis towards the question of killing, and examines how animals are materially and symbolically implicated in competing claims for sovereignty.

The two chapters also have different emphases in terms of the different conservationist mindsets they engage with. While the panda and the wildcat are caught in a mode of species-based conservation that concerns itself with bodies and populations, the culling of deer and the reintroduction

of the wolf represent a more ecologically-oriented framework, concerned with the production of wildness at the landscape scale, where the "life" that is targeted is not located in individual bodies or species but distributed through interdependent ecologies. These two approaches both traffic in affective strategies tied, I will argue, to national, gendered, racialized identity-building projects, as well as to more radical projects that aspire to imagine the wild and the nation otherwise. As Lorimer notes, conservation is never simply a rational, disinterested science, but a "passionate practice" (9) shaped by aesthetics and affect, driven by embodied encounters and desires. He is keen to emphasise that biopolitics does not only mean "control over life", focusing instead on "the generative dimensions of securing life and the ability of life to do otherwise" (14). With echoes of Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming-animal" and Roberto Esposito's "affirmative biopolitics", this positive mobilization of affect can sometimes risk downplaying the concrete power relations involved in the biopolitical governance of human and animal bodies. Shukin argues that such approaches "arguably fetishize affect as an animal alterity that eludes rather than enters into the calculations of power" (31), and asks instead "How does animal affect function as a technology of capital?" (42). With this in mind, I also draw on Sara Ahmed's "affective economies", emphasising the circulation of affect in "relationships of difference and displacement" (119) as a function of political boundary-drawing. For Ahmed, as for Shukin, affect is not a naturalized, animalized force that escapes power; rather, in an analogy with commodity fetishism, "feelings appear in objects, or indeed *as* objects with a life of their own, only by the concealment of how they are shaped by histories, including histories of production (labor and labor time), as well as circulation and exchange" (120-1). Affective exchanges between people, animals and landscapes, I will argue, are shaped by Scotland's complicated historical relationships to nationhood and empire, as well as circulations of gender, race and class.

My use of theory in this thesis, then, does not constitute a strict and static framework into which I attempt to fit my material, nor a separate order of knowledge that is "applied" to real-world case studies. Neither do I aim to intervene decisively in broad theoretical debates, settling on one side or another. Rather, I draw on theory where I find it useful, as a set of shifting and flexible tools through which to engage with my material, illuminating connections and contradictions in the disparate stories I tell, uncovering resonances between the specific spaces I dwell in and wider political questions, and offering suggestive starting points for how such stories might be told differently. The social, the scientific, the philosophical, the cultural, the material, and the political are all imbricated here, and I have attempted to write in a way that does not reduce any of these registers of meaning to one of the others, but remains alert to their co-implication.

Methodological tools: on reading stories and telling stories

My scholarly background is in literary studies, and although this project is not primarily a literary one, I draw on the tools of close reading, textual analysis, and storytelling to build my arguments. My materials include scientific, journalistic and artistic texts (and some texts that are all three at once), and to weave my way through them I follow Haraway's expansive abbreviation "SF", which pulls together and picks apart disparate registers of knowledge and meaning-making: "science fiction, speculative fabulation, string figures, speculative feminism, science fact, so far" ('Staying with' 2). The ideas I am working with are "science fiction" in weaving together the natural, technological and imaginative in speculative narrations of what the wild has meant and what it might mean, and their fabulations often have material consequences in shaping the world. This is a meandering method that relies, to an extent, on instinct and affect – not an ordered and systematic review, to be processed into a coherent whole, but rather a sniffing and tracking of suspect phrases and framings, a burrowing into the places that seem to hide something useful, a scavenging of ideas and possibilities to sustain the energy of my argument. Haraway writes:

> SF is a method of tracing, of following a thread in the dark, in a dangerous true tale of adventure, where who lives and who dies and how might become clearer for the cultivating of multispecies justice. Second, the string figure is not the tracking, but rather the actual thing, the pattern and assembly that solicits response, the thing that is not oneself but with which one must go on. Third, string figuring is passing on and receiving, making and unmaking, picking up threads and dropping them. ('Staying with' 3)

I have picked up the beginnings of my threads in years of living, listening, and writing in Scotland: in debates with friends and colleagues about the politics of independence and national identity; in conversations with my father about the value of wildness, the economics of land and the ethics of culling, and with my geneticist sister about the science of species and the meaning of genetic preservation; in enriching and unsettling multispecies encounters at zoos and wildlife parks and in the quiet expansive places we call wild; later, in other countries, in scholarly readings and discussions about the relations between nature, culture, and the non-human, and what they mean for a feminist, anti-racist, anti-capitalist politics. I have become tangled in all of these threads and found unexpected crossings between them, knots of conflict and contradiction that sent me off in different directions. I have followed them through news articles and press releases, conversations, tweets, official websites, below-the-line comments, scientific studies, blog posts, petitions, literary texts, and scholarly work from across a multitude of disciplines – geography, history, literature, philosophy, anthropology, as well as much of the kind of work that falls between the cracks of these designations. Following Sarah Whatmore's 'hybrid geographies,' my project emerges from "a fleeting fusion of the spacetimes of empire, discipline and self" (7) and materializes as "neither a complete 'thesis' nor an assembly of 'empirical' fragments,

but rather an effort to germinate connections and openings that complicate this settlement" (6). During the period of research, I followed various conservation initiatives and organisations on social media and set up Google Alerts to track the ongoing unfolding of the debates I discuss here; several times my arguments were augmented or sent off course by new developments. Online sources are volatile and diffuse, constantly updating and rearranging themselves, which can make them difficult to fit into the fixed framework of traditional methodologies, but richly rewarding for an affective and open-ended process of storytelling and speculation.

This method involves reading stories for their latent content and putting together seemingly disparate stories to tell new ones – but it also means remaining alert to the things that escape and elude storytelling, discourse, and language itself. Call it, as Haraway does, the "actual thing […] that is not oneself" ('Staying with' 3); call it matter or ecology, or call it the wild, the feral, the untameable. Land is not only the raw material of territory, shaped by human practices of meaning-making and power, but also shared with other beings that do not abide by borders, with ecologies and geologies operating at different timescales than the nation or the human species. Even as I critique certain ideas that accrue around animal bodies and natural landscapes, I do not want to ossify these figures as symbols or displacements of other politics; even as a wildcat might be caught in webs of national discourse and struggles over the meaning of its genetic heritage, it has its own modes of agency and material existence that exceed human control. By taking this alterity seriously, maybe wildness can also be mobilized, as Jack Halberstam puts it, "as a kind of queer-eco-critical endeavour", as "a space/name/critical term for what lies beyond current logics of rule" (138).

2. The Panda and the Wildcat: Impotence, Promiscuity, and the Biopolitics of Species

Introduction

In a 2014 *Guardian* article, political journalist Kevin McKenna berated his country for its conservation priorities:

> In a pathetic little enclosure in Edinburgh Zoo, risibly done up to resemble a scrap of rural China, the suffering of the giant pandas continues. The two are not even a third of the way through a multimillion pound, 10-year stretch wrought solely for the twisted pleasure of gawping visitors stupid enough to swallow the fiction that they are somehow assisting in the conservation of these poor beasts and their kind.
>
> Perversely, 150 miles north-west of Edinburgh, one of Scotland's very few indigenous mammals and iconic of this country, struggles daily to retain a foothold on its very existence. ('Why the Scottish wildcat')

The mammal in question is the Scottish wildcat, sometimes known as the "Highland tiger," and this comparison is mobilized every time McKenna dabbles in wildlife writing: in one piece he calls the pandas a "grotesque Chinese circus act" and the wildcat "Scotland's most vivid species" ('Extinction by Stealth'); in another, the "panda freakshow" is set against the death of "a real Scottish animal" ('Lynx Effect'). This recurring juxtaposition, and the meanings that spiral from it, will frame this chapter's exploration of biopolitical relations between bodies, species and spaces in times of extinction. Pandas and wildcats, in McKenna's story, seem to be living dramatically different kinds of lives, put to work as representatives of polarized dichotomies like freedom and captivity, nationhood and foreignness, authenticity and artifice, nature and culture. But there is one respect in which they're similar: both species are threatened in part by their own sex lives. Pandas in captivity refuse to have enough sex to keep the species going, while wildcats in the Highlands have too much sex with the wrong kinds of cats, and in this failure of 'natural' reproduction each of those dichotomies begins to collapse.

In this chapter I explore how these two poles of sexual threat – impotence and promiscuity, the failure to perform sex and the failure to contain it – shape a gendered, racialized, nationalist biopolitics of conservation. Pandas and wildcats might have more in common than we imagine: in each case, extinction has come to be understood less as a problem of death than as a problem of birth, and unruly animal bodies continually frustrate and exceed human attempts to monitor, categorise and control their reproductive futures. Under these circumstances, I ask, what does it mean to "save" a species? How are different animal bodies incorporated into or cast out of the nation's imagined community, and what

spatial and temporal frameworks are used to govern their lives? How does animal agency figure in the discourses and practices of species conservation? In her discussion of the dichotomy between *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation practices – Latin terms for "in place" and "out of place," mapped onto wildness and captivity respectively – Irus Braverman "explores the codependency between, and the co-production of, in situ and ex situ conservation. Without a wild, free, and pristine nature, conservation in captivity is meaningless; and without the notion of captivity, wilderness as the very opposite of captivity cannot exist" (4). The wild is made through a juxtaposition with what it is not, and the captive is made in the name of the wild.

In what follows, I draw on a range of popular and scientific materials, but the central focus of my analysis will be a collection of media texts and online materials that address a general public readership. McKenna's prose in the *Guardian* will make several appearances, as a particularly explicit and high-profile example of how endangered species become political animals; I will also quote from below-the-line comments, a neglected online space that can offer a certain degree of access to the assumptions and affects that circulate in response to scientific and journalistic discourse. In the first section, I introduce discourses of "native," "alien" and "invasive" species that structure affective and scientific responses to wildlife across the globe, and suggest how the panda and the wildcat might complicate or contest such discourses. The following section focuses on the various ways these two animals have been incorporated into or cast out from the nation's imagined community, taking their conservation as a material-discursive site for negotiating Scotland's contradictory national identity. Next, I analyse biopolitical strategies of reproductive control and their failures, examining how improper animal sex becomes a mechanism of symbolic gendering. I go on to elaborate the epistemological and ontological dilemmas of wildcat conservation, where competing organisations clash over precisely what kind of body should be the object of saving; in the tension between visual, genetic and behavioural definitions of the wildcat, the boundaries of the species are haunted by the threat of hidden hybridity. In all of this, the wild is shaped and produced by cultural discourses and techno-scientific practices, but the wild also bites back, disrupting the categories and the spaces that try to contain it.

The native and the alien: managing migratory bodies

In 2016, New Zealand announced its plan for a "predator free" nation. By 2050, the government promises, all predatory land mammals – non-native species that did not make their own way to the island but were introduced by humans – will be eradicated, and the nation's plethora of charismatic birds will dwell once again in Edenic peace. But peace comes at a militaristic price: alongside standard techniques of fencing, trapping and shooting, the country has pioneered new methods of extermination,

like aerial drops of slow-acting poisons so that "rodents receive a toxic dose before realizing that something is amiss" (Nuwer). Back in Britain, meanwhile, a "volunteer army" roams the countryside with traps, clubs and guns to wipe out the grey squirrel, an American import whose presence threatens the native red squirrel with localised extinction (Barkham 'Kill them'). Conservation efforts targeting "alien" species have often been conducted, Charles Warren notes, in "the militaristic language of counter-insurgency campaigns" (429), and these are a few among countless examples in which such associations are more than merely linguistic; the material work of conservation often involves coordinated campaigns of violence against bodies deemed "out of place" (Fredriksen 693).

The native/alien dichotomy is one of many unstable foundations on which modern conservation has been built, and as Warren convincingly argues, debates over the status of different species in particular spaces are structured by contested definitions of "nature" and the human's place within it. Space and time are enmeshed in the establishment of "a temporal threshold separating the pristine from the altered, a date before which nature was natural" (431), which varies across local, regional, national and global scales. Migration, of course, has always been a fundamental facet of life on Earth and a driving evolutionary force; the status of a nonhuman species in any given region is determined, in theory, by whether they got there by their own volition or were transposed there by human agency. But if the human is understood in anti-anthropocentric terms as part of nature rather than master of it, as one species among many, the dichotomy begins to fall apart: as Warren puts it, "attributing either alien or native status to our own species destabilizes the alien/native framework. It can only be applied if we exclude ourselves from it" (435). If "nativeness" is determined by non-human autonomy and "alienness" by human interference, some curious agential paradoxes arise. Invasive species become an ecological problem, in fact, precisely at the moment they escape human control: aliens are welcomed into zoos, botanical gardens and other bounded spaces; it is only when they spill into the wild that they become threatening. The zoo and the wild are at odds here, as "alien" species must be eradicated from the "real" national landscape at the very same time as nations enthuse over the arrival of thrillingly exotic foreigners, like the two pandas at Edinburgh zoo. The pandas are creatures whose very survival is depicted as depending on human-assisted migration, their status and value secured by being shipped to zoos across the world. Protecting and restoring "native" ecosystems, meanwhile, involves the extensive exercise of human agency to prevent animals and plants doing what they will.

In a world of tightening borders and nationalist fervour, these ecological discourses of belonging and control echo uneasily with the language of race and nation. Even those who purport to reject this framework demonstrate the powerful grip that nations and borders hold on our imaginaries of the nonhuman world: having thoroughly critiqued the idea of "native" and "alien" species, Warren goes on to propose replacing origin with behaviour as the criteria determining which bodies have access to national space, arguing that "in ecological as in human communities, perhaps 'terrorists' (whether home-grown or foreign) deserve to be rooted out while immigrants which make a positive contribution

deserve to be welcomed as citizens" (438). Indeed, in the broader conservation community, such behavioural criteria is increasingly favoured over the simplistic native/alien binary. In identifying only "invasive" species as the problem – species that have destructive effects on native species and ecosystems, by exhausting resources or introducing diseases – many conservationists hope to circumvent the temporal, political and ontological problems with the native/alien model. But, as this chapter will demonstrate, what counts as *invasive* behaviour is far from obvious, and the value with which different animal bodies are vested is shaped by many layers of meaning beyond the exclusively ecological.

Ursula Heise traces the ethical and ideological conflicts between animal welfare and environmentalist movements over the question of invasive species. These two strands of anti-anthropocentric politics, she argues, emerge from "different traditions of resistance to modernization" that nonetheless mobilize Enlightenment "ideas of citizenship, emancipation, liberation and individual rights" (131-2). In her example, feral cats are the ecological enemy or the vulnerable victim, depending on who you ask; preying on the native birds and small mammals of Los Angeles, they are targeted for eradication by conservationists and defended by animal rights activists, all claiming to act in the name of the nonhuman. The clash is emblematic of wider questions about saving and killing in the Anthropocene, about agency and responsibility and what it means to care for the nonhuman world, and the idea of the "feral" is becoming a key figuration for theorizing these issues. Hyaesin Yoon describes "feralization" as a "border technology that marks the boundaries of both ecological and social community" (142). Feral animals are liminal creatures, bodies shaped and transported by human agency that have "exceeded and escaped the domesticated sphere" (Probyn-Rapsey 'Five Propositions' 1). They are animals that were once deliberately included in human community, as companions or workers, but now find themselves beyond its limits, subject to the violence of living outside protected categories. And as Fiona Probyn-Rapsey puts it, "all categories produce ferals" ('Five propositions' 3). Every border is constituted by illegitimate crossings.

Away from the thoroughly urban space of Los Angeles and across the Atlantic Ocean, in the sparse landscape of the Scottish Highlands, feral cats remain at the centre of ecological controversy, but the threat they pose takes a very different form. Here we find an alien that erodes native nature not by violence but by seduction, and an iconic native species facing extinction not by death but by birth. The tiny population of Scottish wildcats is said to be facing "genetic extinction"; as it reproduces and hybridises with feral and domestic cats, bred and introduced by humans, the genes of the "pure" pre-human wildcat are ever more diluted. The line between native and alien can no longer be clearly drawn between species, but becomes instead an internal division: an unstable, contested boundary within the population of wild-living cats and, even more disconcertingly, an indivisible entanglement as these antagonistic categories commingle in the body of every hybrid. This is a story that illuminates the inadequacy of Warren's ecological terrorist/citizen binary, which presumes a settled definition of what

counts as destructive. The "well-behaved citizen" (Warren 438) has always been shaped by discourses of purity, propriety, and sexual normativity, and the threat of the racialized migrant has been articulated not only in the language of anti-terrorist fearmongering but also of seduction, promiscuity and miscegenation. Instead of the militarised, necropolitical mode of invasive species eradication, wildcat conservation is conducted in the mode of biopolitics – a project of monitoring, definition, regulation and intervention that aims to produce the right kinds of lives. The pandas, meanwhile, are subject to an even more intensive regime, under constant surveillance in the quest to produce a single cub; in the public eye, their status oscillates between welcome visitors, part of a global elite whose presence nourishes the nation's natureculture, and suspect foreigners using up national resources.

These reproductive anxieties of purity and promiscuity can be read, at the most obvious level, through nativist discourses of preserving whiteness against multicultural modernity. But delving into the scientific and political debates around the panda and the wildcat will unravel an ever more complex story of shifting borders and ontological indeterminacy, as well as struggles over who owns national space in more than just a metaphorical sense. Questions of temporal thresholds, human agency and non-human autonomy are tightly woven into the fabric of the wildcat's existence; in this story of a creature whose ontology is put into question by its own excessive sex life, the threat of hidden hybridity haunts every feline body marked for protection, and the question of what must be saved and how to save it becomes a site of bitter contention among different organisations who all claim to be acting in the interests of nature.

Commodities, migrants and mythologies: animals in and out of place

The panda is one of the biggest wildlife superstars of the conservation world – the instantly recognisable face of the WWF, a status to which other charismatic megafauna might only aspire, jetting around the world, showered with adoration by its fans and vocally disparaged by those who think it's overrated.[12] It is also one of the most overt examples of conservation as a site of nationalism and a mode of international relations, where the biological, the technological, the social and the economic are tightly intertwined.[13] This has been described as "panda diplomacy"; since the Cold War, China has exported the bears as gifts or loans to secure allegiances and trade links with other countries (Buckingham et al). The Edinburgh pair arrived in 2011 as part of a £2.6 billion trade deal, to a great deal of media fanfare, and in the years since they have been put to work in various politicised roles. Between 2011 and 2016,

[12] BBC naturalist Chris Packham, for instance, has characterised pandas as "an evolutionary cul-de-sac" and argued that conservationists should "pull the plug" on the species. "I'm not trying to play God," he insists: "I'm playing God's accountant. I'm saying we won't be able to save it all, so let's do the best we can" (quoted in Benedictus). Many others concur that the resources that go into panda conservation are better spent elsewhere.
[13] See E. Elena Songster's recent book *Panda Nation* (2018) for a thorough account of the panda as a significant participant in China's nation-building.

Tian Tian and Yang Guang found themselves unlikely symbols for the Scottish independence movement: the oft-repeated joke that "there are more pandas in Scotland than Tory MPs" became a pithy assertion of national difference and an effective expression of the "democratic deficit"; the idea that these imported, endangered animals were more representative of Scotland than the Conservative government in Westminster was intended as an absurdity, exposing the absurdity of the UK's uneven electoral system and Scotland's disenfranchisement within it. In a more material sense, the pandas were seen as an investment and a status symbol for an SNP government keen to cultivate a reputation for internationalism, economic competence and environmental concern, crafting a future-oriented narrative of potential Scottish statehood.

Panda diplomacy, indeed, is all about futurity: sent abroad in pairs, the ultimate goal of each loan is the production of a cub, to be returned eventually to China. But pandas are notoriously difficult to breed in captivity; females are only fertile for a brief window of 24-36 hours each year, and even when those precious days arrive, the bears often seem disinterested or even incompetent at mating, ignoring each other or engaging unsuccessfully in "awkward fumbling" (McCarthy). This failure has inspired a range of erotic innovations. Apart from the obvious route of artificial insemination, more creative attempts to encourage "natural" breeding have included experiments with Viagra and videos of other pandas having sex (described alternately as "sex education" or "panda pornography", depending on the degree of sensationalism desired). Animal reproduction in the space of the zoo, of course, is always a multispecies affair shaped by human as much as animal desire; but panda sex is an especially mediated, technologized encounter, and one that attracts a great deal of public attention and amusement.

Kathleen Buckingham regards this process of assisted reproduction as a central part of the panda's diplomatic function: "In many ways China is testing the global technological capacity through panda loans. The USA has proved its capability and technological prowess to China with the birth of its panda cub. Can Edinburgh do the same?" (quoted in Hogenboom). Edinburgh Zoo's website, indeed, plays up to this role, adopting the language of job interviews and business pitches: "We are confident that we have the skills and expertise to contribute to the growing success of Panda reproduction in zoos" ('Giant Panda Breeding Season'). In this context, panda sex becomes a problem to be solved, a site for the performance of human prowess, and a strategy for a small nation to prove its place in the world. A commenter on the *Daily Mail* website offers a suggestive expression of the geopolitics involved: "If they have a baby I'll be so proud to see something stamped 'Made in Scotland' sent to China instead of vice versa!" (comment on Naish). Panda cubs are materially implicated in globalized commodity chains; the breeding pair are the raw materials to be transformed through human labour into new, valued life, a materialization of what Shukin calls "animal capital".

But there is another side to the panda's national status in Scotland. Recall McKenna's aggressive disgust in the quote that opened this chapter: in this mode of representation, the bears are framed in terms of pathetic spectacle, unnatural captivity, and wasteful frivolity. A *Daily Mail* headline emphasises the costliness of supporting creatures that will "get through £70,000 of bamboo and live in luxury suites costing £270,000 a year to rent" (Naish), and it's easy to hear echoes of the same newspaper's other disparaging coverage – refugees and welfare recipients, lazy freeloaders in expensive houses, a drain on the tax money of hardworking citizens. If the panda isn't a lucrative commodity, it's a cash-draining migrant, and borders are less permeable for bodies than they are for products. In this narrative, the panda is stripped of its universal appeal as an elite representative of global wildlife, and instead pressed into specificity as a representative of the foreign wild – the alien that erodes and encroaches upon native ecosystems, the invasive species that eats up resources and smuggles dangerous pathogens in its body.

Although the pandas, confined to a cage, clearly have no *ecological* impact on Scotland's flora and fauna, they are associated instead with an *economic* invasiveness, as a drain on conservation resources better invested into the country's "real" wild, and more subtly with an *affective* invasiveness, in the idea that public infatuation with the pair distracts from other priorities, monopolising our limited capacity for emotional investment in the nonhuman world. For McKenna, the pandas "captivate the witless and the infantile" – an ironic role reversal, the spectators confined by glass just like the animals they gaze upon – while the fate of the native wildcat goes neglected as "a mere footnote" ('Lynx effect'). The wildcat, he writes, "ought to matter a great deal to Scotland and its sense of itself" ('Extinction by stealth'), and not just for dispassionate environmentalist reasons: "Such are the defining physical and instinctive attributes of this gorgeous and ferocious predator that it must have been made for Scotland just as surely as Scotland was made for it" ('Why the Scottish wildcat'). Bearing a significant weight of national symbolism, the wildcat becomes "the very essence of our natural heritage" and "Scotland's most vivid species" ('Extinction by stealth'). If the panda cub is to be "made *in* Scotland" for export – a materialization of modernity that represents scientific expertise, industry and innovation – the wildcat is instead "made *for* Scotland", naturalising the nation in a fantasy of evolutionary progress and ecological harmony across deep time.

McKenna's scientific source for his interest in the wildcat is an organisation called Wildcat Haven, formerly known as the Scottish Wildcat Association.[14] The homepage of their educational

[14] Wildcat Haven is an independent organisation, unaffiliated with the official government-funded Scottish Wildcat Action, and there are sharp tensions between the two over biopolitical strategy and definitional authority. The former is fixated on conserving what it believes to be a tiny remaining population of pure wildcats, and opposes captive breeding programmes, focusing its efforts on neutering feral cats and maintaining a "haven" free from reproductive threats: "Keeping wildcats in the wild where they belong" (Riley). The latter invests in high-tech genetic testing and captive breeding, insisting that the wild population is too small to be sustainable, and works with a somewhat broader definition of what counts as a wildcat. The implications of these different positions will emerge throughout the chapter.

website, ‘Save the Scottish Wildcat’, in a similar tone, weaves a national mythology of wildcat ancestry and co-habitation:

> Far back in the history of Scotland, the earliest settlers told legends about wildcats so fierce they bested human champions, and worshipped them as forest spirits. Centuries later, clans formed together under the image of the wildcat and fought wars for the independence of the land.

In these passages, again, the nation is projected back into prehistoric time, its continuity marked by the enduring presence of the wildcat as antagonist, deity, or symbol. The political intricacies of clan society and its place in wider power structures is collapsed into a vague, ahistorical montage of “wars” for “independence”; we are left uncertain precisely which wars, for whose independence, for independence from what. It is notable, too, that “independence” here is an independence not of the people or even the nation, but independence of the *land* – a rhetorical twist that ties the nation’s fate to its physical environment, implicating organic and geological temporalities in the project of national identity. Shukin writes that animal signs “endow the historical products of social labour to which they are articulated with an appearance of innate, spontaneous being, and they serve as powerful substitutes or ‘partial objects’ filling in for a lost object of desire or originary wholeness that never did or can exist, save phantasmically” (3). Against the modernity and internationalism signified by the pandas, the wildcat represents the pre-modern isolation of the Scottish Highlands, made into an origin story for the nation – a Scotland birthed through the “originary wholeness” of human-animal camaraderie and fierce, wild resistance.

But this intrinsic Scottishness of the species “made for Scotland” is, in fact, not as self-evident as it seems. In a paper on the dilemmas of wildcat conservation, Macdonald et al. concur that its value must be justified in cultural terms, writing that they “see nature as part of nationhood.” But nationhood in the United Kingdom is a slippery concept: the wildcat, they go on to clarify, “is a part of the *British* heritage” (490; emphasis added). Although today it only survives in the Scottish Highlands, until the mid-nineteenth century the wildcat also lived in England and Wales, and here that deeper British identity is made integral to saving the species: “we will judge our efforts to save the wildcat to have been successful when we can no longer call it the Scottish wildcat, because it has been restored to suitable habitats throughout the length and breadth of Britain” (Macdonald et al. 491). In this framing, far from being a unique symbol of a specifically Scottish wildness, the wildcat’s Scottishness instead represents a degraded, fragmented remainder of a once-wild Britain. As Cairns Craig writes, “there is never only one nationalism in a nation” (248), and here we witness two competing nationalisms at work: one regards Scotland as a territory with a distinct national/natural heritage, whose meaning and materiality can be projected back into prehistoric time; the other sees Great Britain as a singular,

coherent island space with the Highlands as its wild edge, a frontier into which British civilization has gradually encroached.

The meaning of the wildcat's nativeness, then, cannot be mapped simply onto dichotomies of citizen/foreigner, inclusion/exclusion that shape much thinking about nations, states and borders; wildcat conservation is a node of natureculture where contradictory layers of identity and alterity accumulate, a material-discursive site for negotiating the internal tensions of Scottishness, Britishness, and (post)coloniality. Indeed, as I discussed in the first chapter, the particular "wildness" of the Highlands has been a key site of meaning-making in the history of Scotland, Britain, and the British Empire. It has been represented, at different points and for different interests, as a site of threatening barbarity and barren wildness that must be subdued and civilized by the Lowland elites, its lands expropriated from local people and put to more productive agricultural use; as a romanticized site of traditional culture and an exhilaratingly wild hunting ground for wealthy southern tourists; as a locus of violent resistance to colonialism, often appropriated in cultural memory as a generalized *Scottish* resistance to encroaching Anglicization; and as a prized military resource, recruiting "Gaelic-speaking soldiers as the highly regarded shock troops of the empire" (Jonsson 13). It has been materially and symbolically mobilized and exploited for both Scottish and British national interests. If Highland wildness has historically been marginalized and denigrated as a site of lawless violence, it has also been lionized as a site of military prowess and proud resistance. And if the present-day wildness of the land is critiqued as a product of violent dispossession, a barren emptiness marking the enduring trauma of the Clearances, it is also aestheticized and packaged as a place of nourishment and adventure. Representations of the wildcat are threaded through with these histories, latent and unarticulated, associated alternately with the landscape and the people of the Highlands, and its endangerment is imbricated in a larger story of decline and resistance, where ecological and cultural changes are enmeshed in the nation's memory.[15]

The meaning of the pandas, too, has oscillated between Scottishness and Britishness depending on who is talking about them. An article in the right-wing *Spectator* magazine the year before the referendum speculated on what a panda pregnancy might mean for the UK's national politics:

> "If it happens, [the First Minister] will surely make the most of it. 'Scotland's panda', he will call it; more evidence that Scotland doesn't need England to get ahead. And it is not

[15] In 'Lynx effect,' McKenna specifically maps the wildcat's decline to the decline of the Gaelic language – another highly politicised and contentious aspect of Scotland's national identity: "as an ancient species such as the wildcat is allowed to die, it seems, too, that 2013 will also mark the beginning of the end of the Gaelic. There are now fewer than 60,000 Gaelic speakers left in Scotland and, unless proper government financial intervention is forthcoming, the language will soon reach that point at which death becomes inevitable. All this, of course, doesn't really matter if you remain indifferent to losing those natural treasures that make Scotland unique." Gaelic is subtly transformed from a cultural artefact to a "natural treasure," and its importance is tied not to the specific living communities where it is spoken, but to its function in maintaining a "unique" national identity.

> inconceivable that it will help the cause of Scottish independence by creating a patriotic, feelgood atmosphere in the run-up to the referendum. Against that will be the feelgood atmosphere created throughout the United Kingdom by the birth of a future king or queen. But I fear that the Scots may prefer the panda cub." (Chancellor)

In this narrative, the pandas – despite their foreignness – are more potent national animals, in all their reproductive potential, than any mythologised native past. A Chinese cub to replace an English monarch becomes a more threatening prospect than stories about wildcat clans and prehistoric warriors. But the pregnancy, in the end, much like the referendum, came to nothing; unlike the monarchy, it seems, the pandas have little interest in propagating their bloodline. In the next section, I turn to look in more detail at the gendered biopolitics of convincing pandas to mate, and at the problems of artifice and uncertainty that plague the conservation of both pandas and wildcats.

Sexing the species: authenticity and artifice, vulnerability and threat

In his analysis of zoo conservation practices, Matthew Chrulew mobilizes biopolitics to critique "the beneficent and salvific aura of conservation and other prevailing regimes of scientific knowledge of animals" (141), emphasising Foucault's insight that "the fostering of life" is always bound up with the operation of power. Foucault writes of sexuality as "the point where body and population meet" (252), where disciplinary and regulatory mechanisms of power intersect. In the same way, animal sex often becomes a critical point of concern for conservationists, mediating the fraught relationship between individual and species. While most captive conservation involves a degree of reproductive intervention, aimed at maximising genetic diversity or producing the healthiest offspring, the panda and the wildcat are unusual in the degree to which their reproductive instincts become the central obstacle to their salvation. In a very literal sense, much of panda and wildcat conservation is aimed not at saving the wild from human destruction, but at saving the wild from itself.

Panda conservation worldwide involves a proliferation of expertise, monitoring, recording, regulation, and knowledge production aimed at panda bodies and populations, all working to incite and control what is supposed to be the most "natural" act of biological beings. In 2015, the *Guardian* published a long piece on the problems of panda breeding, in which a journalist went to Edinburgh to document the intense preparation that goes on in the run-up to ovulation. The pandas are not only on display during opening hours; they are constantly under the gaze of cameras and expert eyes, every gesture analysed as a potential sign of impending fertility:

> most of the keepers' match-making work took the form of minute monitoring – of bamboo consumption, behaviour, daily photographs of Tian Tian's vulva – to ensure everyone was primed for the big moment. An important part of this surveillance is the analysis of

> hormones in Tian Tian's urine. […] although Tian Tian has been trained to urinate on command, she frequently refuses to comply. 'Quite often she is like, "I'm holding on to this,"' said Maclean. 'Keepers scurry in with syringes to collect precious drops from the ground when she is not looking.'" (Knight)

For all the seeming omnipotence of human surveillance over panda life, this small gesture of animal agency reminds us that control is never absolute; in the refusal to cede the basic biological act of urination to its reproductive functionality, a holding-on-to of waste made "precious", the human keepers are rendered strangely animal and vulnerable as they "scurry" and hide from the very creature whose life is in their hands.

But despite this intensive labour, a cub has yet to materialize, and this reproductive failure is often expressed as a sharply gendered inadequacy. On the pandas' arrival in Scotland, the *Daily Mail* held them up as successful emblems of their respective sexes: the male is described as "well endowed" and "boisterous" while the female is "quiet and nervous", and both are congratulated for having proved their reproductive value (Naish). But a few years later, after repeated sexual failures, these representations start to be inverted. The male shifts into a space of feminized impotence – watching their awkward attempts at mating, one zookeeper comments: "He's a gentleman and maybe he shouldn't be," and later she comments that the female "is not seeing him as the big, butch male" (quoted in Knight). The zookeepers attempt to address this problem by spraying the enclosure with a more virile male's urine "in order to spice the air with competition and possibility," as the journalist puts it (Knight) – a pale imitation of the complex scent-marking mating rituals that, in the wild, would involve chases over vast distances; an olfactory simulacrum of masculine potency to trick Tian Tian into an illusion of choice. She, meanwhile, is framed as stubborn and uncooperative, and incapable of doing her reproductive duty: described as "mercurial" and "prickly" and "sending contradictory signals" to her potential mate (Knight), Tian Tian comes to embody the fickleness of femininity, failing to live up to her promise as a demure, receptive body.

Every year, after attempts at artificial insemination, Tian Tian generates a storm of excitement with the appearance of pregnancy. "For unknown reasons," Knight writes, "female pandas also often experience 'pseudo-pregnancies', generating all the symptoms – hormonal changes, nipple development, even the production of bright-green first-stage breast milk – just without the cub." In another such case in 2017, a panda in a Chinese reserve made headlines with speculations that "the panda may have been pretending to be pregnant to reap the benefits of having a cub in the oven," like extra food and a more comfortable enclosure – a deceit of the feminine body, converted into anthropomorphised intentionality (Mosbergen). This strange drama seems another oblique assertion of the panda's biological agency against the human systems of knowledge/power that seek to capture it; the omnipotent gaze is frustrated by a reproductive process that does not deliver what it appears to

promise. Sitting in a simulacrum of her wild habitat, surrounded by the smell of a phantom male who never materializes, this parody of pregnancy seems somehow apt. Artifice, it turns out, is not only for humans.

Animal artifice becomes a central problem, too, in wildcat conservation. In contrast to the panda's plight, the "genetic extinction" of the wildcat is framed as a problem of promiscuity, where wildcats interbreed with feral domestic cats and gradually water down the "purity" of their species. But the very fact of interbreeding problematises the species' ontology: if hybrids appear indistinguishable from the "real" thing, when does a wildcat cease to be a wildcat? McKenna writes that the wildcat's endangerment "may have been camouflaged from our consciousness by the existence of a counterfeit cat – a feline facsimile that looks like a wildcat but whose genealogy is far from pure" ('Extinction by stealth'). This language of fraud, deception, and inauthenticity is sprinkled liberally throughout his writing: hybrids "masquerading as pure-bloods" gain access to protection as "ornamental wildcats" ('Extinction by stealth'), while a 2014 piece uses the sci-fi imagery of a "chimeric confection" and a "Frankenstein version" ('Why the Scottish wildcat'). There is a subtle slippage, here, in the balance of agency: the hybrid cat shifts ambiguously between a creature of active deception ("masquerading") and a grotesque victim of human hubris ("Frankenstein"); at one moment it plays the role of a dangerous and unknowable seductress, at another the feeble, fabricated product of an overbearing humanity. In all of this, the agency of the "pure" Scottish wildcat remains elusive, its only prerogative to be "saved" by human action. This absence is noted sardonically by commenter who puns: "Is not the primary problem that wildcats can't get enough of that sassy domestic pussy?" (comment on McKenna 'Extinction by stealth'). In this shift of emphasis, the wildcat becomes the promiscuous agent of its own demise. But another commenter responds by placing the blame squarely back on the domestic cat, which becomes a racialized other that has infiltrated the nation with its contaminated genes: "a nasty invasive species […] carrying sexually-transmitted and other diseases that are fatal to the Scottish wildcat, which is one way genocide occurs in Nature." The diatribe continues by calling for domestic cats to be sent "back to where they came from": "Let UKIP sort them out" (comment on McKenna 'Extinction by Stealth'). While such comments are evidently tongue-in-cheek, they demonstrate how easily the tropes of race, migration and national invasion become available as a resource for interpreting nonhuman nature.

In this story of masquerade, seduction, and promiscuity, we can again detect a persistent pattern of gendering, but the line between masculine and feminine does not correspond strictly to male and female reproductive bodies; instead, it represents the line between wild and domestic, between pure authenticity and tainted artifice, as the "domestic pussy" seduces and corrupts the masculine wild. But this line, too, is a shaky and permeable one. The feminine has always inhabited a contradictory position in the nature/culture schema of western philosophy, seen as closer to nature – wild and unruly, matter more than mind – but at the same time threateningly artificial, always cloaked in the art of appearance and liable to deception. The gendering of the domestic is similarly double: modernity can be read "as a

grand-scale process of domestication" (Heise 132), where domestication represents the exercise of human mastery over nature, the masculine colonial project *par excellence*; but the domestic is also the sphere of the home, the private, the intimate, the place where man's embodied animal needs are sustained – that is, the feminine sphere of biological and social reproduction. In this wild/domestic dichotomy, with its oscillating semiotics of identity and power, the feral haunts both terms. The feral is the domestic "gone wild", cast into a state of ecological homelessness – a wildness without a proper place, irrevocably tainted by its contact with humanity. It "evokes liminal, excessive, inappropriate, and transgressive abject connotations, marking the need to correct, neuter, or even exterminate ecological and political outcasts" (Yoon 136). Most threateningly of all, any domesticated cat could go feral, or even already be part-feral when it slips out of the human gaze. According to one recent pop-science book, "despite their apparently effortless transformation into urban sophisticates […] cats still have three out of four feet firmly planted in their wild origins" (Bradshaw xx). In contrast to the dog's long history of breeding and docility, they "still think like wild hunters," not "humankind's creation" but a product of an entangled process of coevolution (xxiii).

Yoon writes that "the excess that overflows domestication" makes "subjected bodies both dangerous and vulnerable" (146), and this tension between danger and vulnerability shapes the gendered, racialized representations of wildcats and their impure others. The 'Save the Scottish Wildcat' website, in its descriptions of the wildcat's character, repeatedly emphasises ideas of unbridgeable distance and predatory power. In its dubious claim that the wildcat is "the only wild animal to be untameable, even when captive reared," the species is inscribed as fundamentally oppositional and resistant to human control; it embodies the absolute alterity of nature, the materiality that escapes signification, the thing that cannot be brought into the sphere of domestic modernity. The text goes on to weave a cinematic narrative of survival against the odds:

> one of the most elusive creatures in the world, Scottish wildcats may look a little like your pet tabby but these are incredibly tough super-predators capable of surviving Scotland's harshest winters, battling eagles and drawing the admiration of men who bested entire empires.

This hyper-masculine romance of physical strength and primal violence echoes familiar fantasies of wilderness and survivalism, and in a similar tone, McKenna writes that "the wildcat's demise seems to be part of the neutering and emasculating of our wildest places" ('Lynx effect'). What was once powerful and threatening has been reduced to vulnerability, not only by the destructive encroachment of modernity and civilization but more insidiously by the seductive charms of domesticity. "Neutering" is an interesting choice of word here: in fact, the wildcat's problem is not a lack of reproductive ability, but an *excess* of sexual activity that spills beyond the proper boundaries of species. Paradoxically, then, the sustenance of this wildness, the nature that escapes man's domain, requires careful biopolitical

management (including the literal neutering of feral cats) to protect the wild from its own excesses. The Wildcat Haven project requires human intervention into both reproductive behaviours and spatial relations to create "a vast, threat-free haven where the Scottish wildcat can thrive again" ('Welcome to Wildcat Haven'). Masculine wildness is neither pure nor self-sustaining, but needs to be managed and protected from temptation.

If the feral threatens the purity of the wild, the hybrid puts its very ontology into question. Many biologists and conservationists are alert to the messy complexity of wildcat embodiment; in a detailed exploration of the wildcat's biology, history and conservation, Macdonald et al. write that "the predicament of this species illustrates, in microcosm, fundamental questions in both the science and ideology of species' conservation." Against McKenna's dualistic story of "pure" versus "impure" cats, they trace the ways that genetic purity is indeterminate and species unstable, and explore the material consequences of legal categories in shaping those bodies. "As well as the fear that widespread hybridization could lead to genetic extinction of 'pure' wildcat populations," they write, "it can also lead to difficulties in identification of 'pure' wildcats" (472); the very thing that threatens purity also impedes access to that purity. Domesticated cats have lived on the British Isles since at least Roman times and possibly even earlier (Fredriksen 695), making it impossible to determine when hybridization began. Without this mythic origin story, the first sinful encounter that set off an irrevocable chain of decline, there is no reliable biological benchmark for what constitutes a true wildcat, and no creature that can conclusively be regarded as "the same animal as the Scottish wildcat of prehistory" (Macdonald et al 473).

One proposed answer to the Scottish wildcat's taxonomic quandaries is simply "to define as the wildcat those whose characteristics are furthest from those of the domestic cat" (Mcdonald et al 482). In this framing, species becomes less a sharply defined category than an ambiguous spectrum, and the domestic becomes the baseline against which "wildness" is measured. The original, "authentic" version of nature can only be defined in relation to its "counterfeit". Again, here, the idea of distance becomes key, and time is spatialized (or space is temporalized): the wildcat's prehistoric identity is expressed as an existence far from domesticity, where the wild is located in a deep inaccessible past that can be understood as a distant inaccessible space. Ironically, this physical and epistemological inaccessibility that defines the wildcat's ontology and confers its value is also what prevents its containment in bounded categories; distance is what makes the wildcat worth saving, but distance eludes the biological and legal control that would make such "saving" possible. As Aurora Fredriksen argues, the "unruly, embodied lives of wild-living cats" (690) have an unsettling tendency to exceed and undermine the very categories through which their saving is enacted.

Chrulew critiques "the zoo-logic by which embodied living creatures, in connectivity with generations and kin, and emplaced within habitat, are subordinated to reified notions of the species and

its genome [...] prioritising species over individuals, code over life, genes over bodies" (148). This mode of saving, in which some animals are made disposable in the name of saving a species, has clear resonances with wildcat discourses that cast feral and hybrid cats as unworthy of care or actively threatening to their own kin. But the long process of hybridisation also weaves more complicated relations between bodies, genes and species, where the animals that fall between categories cannot simply be cast out as valueless life. Discussing the legal difficulties of protecting such an ambiguous animal, Macdonald et al write: "The more strictly the Scottish wildcat is defined, the rarer it will be, and therefore, paradoxically, the more important to its conservation is likely to become the biodiversity locked up in the bodies of cats that *just* failed to qualify" (486). In this context, even if identifying an absolutely "pure" wildcat proves impossible, wildcat genes remain a valuable resource in reconstructing something that might be called a species – a resource harboured in the very bodies that seem to threaten that species' existence.

Extinction by reproduction: colonial hybridities and hybrid nationalisms

The genetic debates I have outlined above are not unique to the Scottish wildcat. On the other side of the world we find its canine counterpart: in 'Dingoes and Dog-Whistling', Fiona Probyn-Rapsey traces a near-identical discourse in Australia, where dingoes are threatened by their liaisons with wild dogs and it is not "a matter of dingo death but rather dingo birth" (56) that drives the extinction narrative. Like the wildcat, the pure dingo turns out to be a "taxonomic spectre" (57), an essence that proves impossible to extract from the bodies of dogs that are always-already contaminated by inaccessible histories. Like the wildcat, the dingo poses an ontological dilemma: as scientists begin to accept the impossibility of defining purity, "hybridity no longer equals extinction" but becomes "an integral feature of dingo life" (67); in moves towards more pragmatic conservation criteria, "hybridity is under threat, this time from more hybridity" (67), and the animals must be protected from an aspect of their own biological existence. Probyn-Rapsey unequivocally situates these debates in the sphere of race, colonialism and "eco-nationalist sentiment" (66). She argues that conservation discourses of purity and miscegenation function to put supposedly obsolete racist ideas "back into circulation", that their material effects "cannot be contained to 'species' only" (60). Her mobilization of the term "dog-whistling" in this context posits a specific, direct connection between the discourses that shape animal and human bodies, where conservation science is read as coded racism. Specifically, dingo discourse is read through the history of Australian settler colonialism and forced "biological assimilation" (57) of Aboriginal people, where the threat of hybrid bodies was neutralised by incorporation into whiteness: by "shifting them from 'protection' to 'assimilation', mixed race Aboriginal people were then deemed to be no longer authentically indigenous and thereby denied any special claim to belong" (70).

But Probyn-Rapsey does not fully explore the contradictions and tensions generated by this link, sometimes slipping too easily into a pattern of animal-as-analogy; although both discourses deal in purity and authenticity, protection and threat, one does not map neatly onto the other. The value of indigeneity is inverted as it shifts between human and animal bodies; while both have been cast in terms of pre-civilizational purity and closeness to "nature", the effects of such an association are dramatically different. Native animals have a special claim to national belonging and symbolic prestige, but indigenous people have consistently been denied full access to that belonging, cast outside the privileges of citizenship – often in the name of protecting pristine "wilderness". The protection of native animals is mobilized to naturalize the nation, but the continued existence of indigenous people, and the genocidal history to which their bodies bear witness, threatens the very foundations of the nation's legitimacy. It might be argued that the language of dingo conservation (and other efforts to protect "native" species in settler colonial societies) is not simply a displaced racism, but a displaced sense of colonial culpability, channelled into fantasies of restoring the "purity" of precolonial landscapes instead of giving aboriginal people material political power in the present. Indigeneity and colonial violence are perpetually pushed back into the past, where present-day white settlers can express postcolonial regret and melancholia without confronting contemporary realities.

Biologically, the Australian dingo and the Scottish wildcat face the same taxonomic quandaries, but the spaces they inhabit have been shaped very differently by their respective geopolitical histories. Scottish concepts of indigeneity, as I have argued, are channelled through an idealized Highland culture associated with purity and wildness for both British and Scottish nation-building projects. But the nation has also always been understood, as literary scholar Cairns Craig argues, through the idea of hybridity, which has been framed alternately as a threat and a strength for national identity. Craig notes a historical tendency to position the Gaelic people as the ethnic source and guarantee of Scotland's identity, "despite the many ethnic and cultural elements that went into the making of Scotland" (230), while at the same time materially decimating that same origin:

> Hybridity represents an underlying threat to Scottish culture because any compromise of the purity of its "Celtic" origins in the *regnum Scottorum* undermines its refusal to accept English suzerainty. At the same time, Scottish development since the Wars of Independence, focused on the Lowlands and the *Inglis* language, increasingly marginalised and devalued the very culture – Gaelic – on which the nation's independence was based. The nation was forced to assert the purity of its original Gaelic roots at the same time as distancing itself from the actual Gaelic culture which derived from those roots (231)

In later theorizations of Scottish culture, he argues, "hybridity […] becomes both Scotland's characteristic feature and its inherent failure" (233). The doubleness of Anglo-Scottish nationhood, caught between an assertion of uniquely Scottish subjectivity and an assimilation into English culture,

is positioned as an impediment to the development of a fully-formed and independent cultural identity, where "the fundamental weakness of Scotland's cultural history is its hybrid formation, *a hybridity that undermines its capacity for reproduction and prophecies its eventual extinction*" (233, emphasis added). This anxiety over reproduction and extinction brings us back to the wildcat, whose hybridity corrupts its reproduction, coming to be framed as a biological weakness and an "inherent failure" of the species (even though, from an evolutionary point of view, the wildcat is successfully passing on its genes regardless of which cats it mates with). Scottish culture and Scottish nature are not opposed but intertwined: if the culture is ailing and incomplete, embodying neither a true premodern tradition nor a full modern nation, its nature is not a pure pre-cultural sphere of authenticity but an equally ailing sphere populated by history's "deformed offspring" (Craig 233), a monstrous mixture of ancient and modern lineages that cannot be reconciled into a healthy whole. But as Craig argues, there is no originary purity in Scotland or any other nation, and it is only via the anxiety of hybridity that the ideal of "purity" is given meaning and affective force: "hybridity is the apparently overwhelming condition of the modern world against which a continuing purity has to be defended" (245).

There is another side, however, to Scotland's sense of its hybridity, where the hybrid is mobilized to position Scottish culture in a postcolonial framework. For theorists like Homi K Bhabha, Craig writes, hybridity is revalued and regarded "not as a degeneration from cultural health, but as the index of true cultural vitality […] the truly creative and procreative condition of the modern world" (233). Again, here, cultural hybridity is associated with biological reproduction – but this time with abundance instead of sterility. Following the rise of postcolonial theory, Scottish literary and cultural studies shifts to a "celebration of Scotland's hybridity" (234), enthusiastically aligning the nation with the postcolonial world. In this mode, again, the nation's identity is seen as simultaneously constitutive of and resistant to dominant British culture, "the source of both canonical English literature *and* of postcolonial resistance to it" (239). The active, ongoing creation of the nation, not its pure roots, becomes the locus of a nationalism that is keen to emphasise both Scotland's peripheral status within the Union *and* its centrality to the making of an always-already hybrid Britain, a Britain whose identity has been built from its margins. It is in this context that we might locate the Scottish Natural Heritage stance towards identifying a wildcat, which is looser and more open than Wildcat Haven's fixation on purity. "The population of wild-living cats in Scotland contains a mixture of domestic and wildcat genes, and the animals have varying physical characteristics," the official webpage states, and while it's impossible "to say with certainty that a cat with classic wildcat markings is genetically 'pure' […] wild-living cats that look like wildcats should be treated as wildcats and regarded as legally protected" ('Wildcats'). In this framing, the Scottish wild might be irreducibly hybrid and its origins

epistemologically inaccessible, but it is to be valued and protected nonetheless as a vital part of the nation's living heritage.[16]

This state of affairs is in some ways counterintuitive: the official government-endorsed conservation plan is more open to fluidity and contradiction, less fixated on purity and origins, than the supposedly more grassroots and marginal project that would seem to have less material interest in nation-building narratives. But for an SNP government keen to distance themselves from the associations of ethnic nationalism, invested in performing national difference through ideals of openness, hospitality and postcolonial sympathy against the imperial arrogance of Englishness, it is unsurprising that the language of genetic purity is handled with caution, always carefully qualified and placed in parentheses. From another perspective, the looser definition of a wildcat works in the official project's, providing more impressive statistics for its success; it might be seen as a pragmatic choice for a government to promote a thriving, high-tech breeding project rather than clinging to an uncertain and vanishing purity. This, at least, is one of the grounds on which Wildcat Haven attack the official project: "SNH, you see, would like us all to believe that it is winning the battle to save the species when it is doing nothing of the sort" (McKenna 'Why the Scottish wildcat').

Wildcat Haven, meanwhile, has its own material interests that bind bodies and landscapes together across global geographies marked by colonial history, class hierarchy and capitalist opportunism. Wildcat Haven's website proudly declares that, unlike SNH's wasteful frittering of "public money", its own conservation project is funded entirely by "grants and donations from the US, China, commercial sponsors such as Highland Titles and the international general public" ('Welcome to Wildcat Haven'). Although its approach to marketing the wildcat is vehement in its Scottishness (recall the Highland romance of battling clans), the organisation is actively antagonistic towards the Scottish Government and its conservation agencies, which it regards as taking a timid, tame, *domesticated* approach to saving the wildcat. Economically, its own project relies not on public ownership and state management, but rather on paradigms of private property, charitable patronage and the "power and protection" (Wightman 29) of land ownership. Its central marketing strategy marries capitalist globalization with feudal nostalgia: for £30, the homepage declares, you can buy a plot of Wildcat Haven and "style yourself as a Lord or Lady of Wildernesse."

The scheme is run by a company called Highland Titles, which sells "souvenir plots" of Scottish land, supposedly in the interest of nature preservation. It is heavily marketed abroad, particularly in the settler colonies; Australian and American patrons, enchanted by the old-world romance of a

[16] From another perspective, however, the looser definition of a wildcat works in SNH's favour, providing more impressive statistics for the project's success; it could be seen as a pragmatic choice for a government to promote a thriving, high-tech breeding project rather than clinging to an uncertain and vanishing purity. This, at least, is one of the grounds on which Wildcat Haven attack the official project: "SNH, you see, would like us all to believe that it is winning the battle to save the species when it is doing nothing of the sort" (McKenna 'Why the Scottish wildcat').

Scottishness marked by landed class power, are encouraged to come and visit "their" land. Last year, the Scottish Green Party MSP Andy Wightman, who is also a prominent legal scholar and campaigner for land reform, published a blog post questioning the business practices of Highland Titles and Wildcat Haven, challenging the legal status of the plots being sold. The organisation – which is registered not as a Scottish charity but as a "Community Interest Company" in the offshore tax haven of Guernsey (Gray) – did not take kindly to this public criticism: Wightman is now in the midst of a libel lawsuit that threatens him with bankruptcy, and the blog in question has been removed from his website. This strange series of events gestures towards the many entangled layers of meaning, money and power that underpin all attempts to "save" nature; wilderness – or "wildernesse" – is always marked by the invisible lines not only of national borders but also of title deeds, real or imagined. Especially so, perhaps, in a country with a sharply unequal pattern of land ownership, where half of all privately-owned land is in the hand of less than 500 people, described in terms ranging from cautious – "one of the highest concentrations of land ownership in Europe" (Keane) – to forceful: "the most inequitable land ownership in the west" (McKenna). In the next chapter, indeed, the material impact of ownership in shaping the wild and the nation will become clear.

Conclusion: resignations and rebirths

The panda and the wildcat represent two opposing modes of relation between humans and endangered species. A keeper at Edinburgh Zoo explains the enthusiasm for pandas as an experience of recognisability and sameness: "People just have an instant connection with them […] because they can look like someone in a suit" (Knight). A Chinese official frames their appeal in similar terms: "when pandas sit on their hind quarters, eating, they look like human babies" (Zabarenko 2011). The wildcat, on the other hand, is consistently valued for its elusive otherness and its absolute aversion to human contact, often cited as the key characteristic that marks the "true" wildcat apart from domestic, feral and hybrid cats. These two modes of value are reflected in the problems posed by each species' sexual habits. The panda's is a constantly monitored existence, the human gaze awaiting a sexual performance that never arrives, like the proverbial watched pot – a reproductive futurity that is forever postponed. The wildcat's sex life, on the contrary, is an unsettlingly elusive one that escapes human eyes – a proliferation of unknowable sexual encounters that haunt its taxonomies, a reproductive history that cannot be accessed nor reliably reconstructed. Both of these modes, as I have argued in this chapter, are entangled with political investments and anxieties, with operations of power and difference, and with layered spatial and temporal borders that are never as stable as they seem.

Both the panda and the wildcat have made it into the news again in recent months, as emblems of a failed conservation and a new reproductive hope respectively. In March 2018, after five

unsuccessful attempts at producing a cub, the panda breeding programme at Edinburgh Zoo has been suspended and its director has resigned. In a *Guardian* article on the decision, the pandas' impotence is blamed not on the animals' inadequacy or on human incompetence, but on Edinburgh's physical environment: the director speculates that "[b]ecause the city is further north than their natural home in China, the longer days in summer and longer nights in winter may have upset her hormones", and he is also said to have "complained that military jets taking part in Edinburgh's military tattoo would fly over the zoo during August, at a crucial moment in the panda's pregnancy, just as she was close to birth" (Carrell). The Scottish city shaped by human and nonhuman agencies, by the situated materiality of the sun's movement and by the technological materiality of an imperial military, is finally represented as irreconcilably distant from the "natural home" that would nourish panda embodiment and proper reproductive behaviour. For all the futuristic hope that captive breeding has been made to symbolise, it ends up subordinated to the plenitude of the wild – although the team remains invested in the redeeming power of science and global networks of knowledge production, insisting that the pause in breeding attempts will "allow us further time to consider the scientific data, our own experiences and those of colleagues around the world, including the latest thinking on giant panda accommodation" (quoted in Carrell).

In April, though, the absence of a panda cub was compensated by a new presence in the zoo: the birth of two wildcat kittens in a captive breeding programme made headlines in June as a "lifeline" for "one of the UK's most endangered mammals" (Robertson). In a peculiar twist, just a month later, another spate of headlines appeared with an amplified tone of crisis and redemption: in the *Independent*, 'World's rarest kittens rescued in Scottish Highlands'; in the *Telegraph*, 'New hope for world's rarest feline'; in the *Express*, 'The rarest kitten alive is clinging to life to keep Scottish wildcat line alive'. In the shift from the zoo to the wild, the wildcat is upgraded to a uniquely, supremely endangered status. This dramatic rescue was the work of Wildcat Haven, and in the pages of national newspapers these kittens are quietly mobilized as a weapon in the ongoing conflict between conservationists. "The markings looked amazing, far better than any kitten I'd seen in a zoo," says the organisation's chief scientific advisor – a subtle attack on the breeding programmes that Wildcat Haven opposes, and a veneration of the wild as the only true provider of genetic abundance. Each of the news stories quotes the organisation's dubious figures for "pure" wildcats, emphasising the kittens' miraculous rarity: "the siblings represent six per cent of the 35 pure Scottish wildcats in existence" (Winter). Once again, the story oscillates between evoking fragile vulnerability and predatory power: "weak and dehydrated" when they are brought to the Highland Titles reserve, the kittens quickly recover the behaviour that marks their authenticity: "By next morning after some food and water the timid kittens had transformed entirely and we had two spitting balls of fury in their place […] stamping, hissing and growling, displaying all the explosive aggression typical of the species, reputed to be untameable" (quoted in Winter 2018). Distancing itself from the captivity of the zoo, the Haven is

described as a “near-wild environment,” providing a “safe place to recover” until the kittens can be released into their true habitat: “We must do everything we can to keep as many wildcats in the wild as possible. The look in these kitten's eyes tells you immediately that they don't belong in a cage” (quoted in Winter 2018). The inescapable implication is that some animals *do* belong in cages; this is not a principled expression of an anti-captivity stance, but a conflation of the Scottish wildcat with the wild itself, with freedom and autonomy against a managerial state.

“Modernity can be defined by the disappearance of wildlife from humanity’s habitat and by the reappearance of the same in humanity’s reflections on itself,” writes Akira Lippit, and the animals I have tracked in this chapter are part of the new “genus of vanishing animals, whose very being is constituted by that state of disappearing” (3). They are invoked constantly in the plenitude of their absence, populating texts and imaginations and generating affective responses precisely by virtue of their rarity. The next chapter will track a different mode of conservation, in which animals are, on the contrary, constituted by a state of perpetual *re*appearance. The deer that overpopulate the Highlands are constantly hunted and constantly multiplying, an excess of life that degrades the wildness of its own ecology. The wolves that have long been eradicated from the island, meanwhile, have started haunting its possible futures, in imaginaries of “rewilding” that recruit predators to transform and manage ecologies. As wolves make a comeback across Europe, sparking bitter conflict and passionate support, their presence looms in narratives that contest modernity as a history of disappearing wildlife, trying to reinstate the wild at the heart of a still-modern world.

3. The deer and the wolf: killing and restoring in necropolitical ecologies

Introduction

In the 'Monarch of the Glen', a nineteenth-century oil painting by Sir Edwin Landseer, a red stag fills the foreground, head turned slightly to gaze out of the frame, against a dramatic landscape of receding mountains and a forebodingly clouded sky. Landseer gained fame as a favourite of Queen Victoria and the creator of the lions at Trafalgar Square, and the Monarch has become an iconic Victorian image of Scottishness. Over the course of the twentieth century the painting passed hands between various companies, put to work in advertisements for soap and whisky, and in 2016 the multinational drinks company Diageo announced that it was up for sale again. The National Galleries of Scotland, who held the painting on loan in their collection, mounted a £4 million fundraising campaign, and in March 2017 headlines announced that the Monarch had been successfully "saved for the nation". The painting is not simply a representation of iconic national wildlife, but a site of contestation over Scotland's image as it is mediated through gazes coded alternately as British, English, or Scottish, shaped by class power and complex layers of colonial history. It is a quintessential expression of 'Balmorality' – "the embrace by the English aristocracy of a sentimentalised version of Highlands culture" (Kitchener), named for the royal estate at Balmoral. George Monbiot describes it as "the emblem of the ersatz culture" that went hand-in-hand with the Clearances: a "mythologized re-enactment of the lives of the vanished Highland peoples – all tartans and claymores – was the narrative with which those who had expropriated the land and expelled its inhabitants justified and eulogized the new dispensation" (149). In a defensive article on the National Galleries website, Lachlan Goudie acknowledges such accusations of "cultural colonialism," granting that the "the stag and stag hunting were key culprits in the tragedy of the Highland Clearances,"[17] but he insists nonetheless that the painting remains "part of our DNA and cannot simply be airbrushed from Scotland's past," suggesting that it might even be a valuable resource for a "fragile" national identity – "the kind of cinematic image that has turned the idea of Scotland into a blockbuster."

The red deer itself still plays a prominent role in representations of Scotland's nature. The Scottish Natural Heritage website informs the public that "Scotland's majestic red deer is our largest

[17] In fact, the primary nonhuman "culprit" in the Clearances was the sheep, as the land was cleared to make way for sheep farming. But as Wightman notes, the rise of the stag took place within "living memory" of the Clearances, and "whilst the development of hunting estates was merely the next stage on the transition to a capitalist system of landholding, the emotions that the Clearances had evoked were in many senses rekindled by the spread of the hunting estates" ('Hunting and Hegemony' 7). Deer are not the only important game in the Highlands – grouse moors also have significant environmental and social consequences – but I focus my attention on the deer as the most prominent and prestigious of Scotland's prey, the "prime species in the region's animal order" (H Lorimer 417).

wild land mammal – and one of our most impressive wildlife spectacles. An encounter with this iconic species is unforgettable" ('Deer'). It is also a species still inextricably involved with class, power and masculinity. In a *Daily Mail* article on the rising tourist value of deer-rutting season, one agency spokesperson enthuses that the spectacle of reproductive competition is "amazing, like the wilderness equivalent of a city-centre pub on a Friday night, but perhaps a bit more spiritual" (quoted in Eade). If the panda and the wildcat make it into the public eye via anxiety about their improper reproduction, the deer is valued instead for its extravagant performance of a properly masculine sexuality, in all its competitive violence. But against this celebration of wild potency, there is an increasingly acute sense that the deer's vitality is a threat to the wild itself, and its status is shaped by competing regimes of death. Unlike the wildcat, the deer is far from endangered: it is excessively lively, overabundant in a degraded ecology, preventing the return of native woodland with its vast appetites, and so the question of saving the wild in the Scottish Highlands inescapably involves the question of killing in order to restore. It is in this role that the deer has gained increasing public prominence in recent years. In 2017, David Lintern wrote an article on the topic for popular hiking website WalkHighlands:

> They are at the heart of an ongoing struggle over land use and ownership, symbolic of our nature both wild and tamed, and are emblematic of the often-ambiguous relationship with the ground under our feet. And lest we forget in a sea of tourist (card)board cutouts and political metaphors, they are also real, physical animals over which diverse social, economic and conservation interests battle furiously.

It is these struggles, symbols and materialities that the first part of this chapter will examine, tracking the discourses and affects that circulate around the proper and improper killing of deer. I draw on media sources, conservationist statements, scholarly analyses of deerstalking and landownership, and a recent literary essay on the ethics and affects of deer culling, published by Cal Flyn in *Granta*. My background knowledge of these conflicts is supplemented by conversations with employees of the John Muir Trust, who are heavily involved in deer culling and Highland land management more broadly.

Culls always cause controversy,[18] but the case of the deer presents a counterintuitive conflict: the primary purveyors of anti-cull outrage are people who themselves deal in animal death – the landowners who want to maintain high stag numbers for the purposes of elite sport hunting. Shukin writes that "the productive contradiction of animal capital's metaphorical and material currencies is constantly at risk of igniting into 'real' social antagonism should their separate logics brush too closely up against one another" (21). The deer-as-icon, metaphorical currency for Scotland's noble wild, is constantly brushing too closely against the deer-as-prey, the material currency of destruction that paradoxically sustains the animal's presence in the Highlands. This friction generates social

[18] Other recent examples of cull backlash in Scotland include the culling of mountain hares (Magee) and ravens (Grant).

antagonisms that both displace and materially implicate the antagonisms of class and region that constitute Scotland's place in the UK and the Highlands' place in Scotland. If the panda and the wildcat embody the biopolitical aspects of conservation, I argue, the hunting and culling of deer foregrounds a necropolitics of sovereignty and death, bound up with Scotland's sharply unequal landownership patterns and the question of power over land and bodies.

The reason that deer thrive in modern Britain is a lack of what is often called "natural predators" – that is, nonhuman predators like wolves and lynx that would once have kept deer numbers sustainable through their own hunting habits, animals that were long ago eradicated on the British Isles. The second part of the chapter will look at an alternative proposed solution to the deer problem: so-called "rewilding" projects, increasingly popular across Europe, where the reintroduction of keystone predators is a crucial strategy in restoring ecologies to a wilder state, reinstating a properly natural economy of death. Rewilding as a concept began to emerge in the late 1990s and early 2000s, part of a shift in conservationist discourse and practice from landscape preservation to ecological restoration. It is a loosely defined and shifting set of practices and aspirations, but it is principally concerned with ideals of ecological autonomy – an effort to give nature back to itself, where ecosystems will become self-regulating as human intervention is gradually withdrawn and eventually abolished. In some readings, rewilding is the descendant of outdated wilderness paradigms that rely on a vision of nature without humans, fixated on a return to an arbitrary historical or prehistorical baseline (Jørgensen). But for many of its proponents, it foregrounds entanglement, experiment and "hybrid landscapes" (Prior and Ward 135), holding the promise not of a pristine past but of an unpredictably feral future. As the Rewilding Europe website puts it, "Rewilding is really not about going back in time. It is instead about giving more room to wild, spontaneous nature to develop, in a modern society" (quoted in Jørgensen 486). Similarly, George Monbiot insists that "We can, I believe, enjoy the benefits of advanced technology while also enjoying, if we choose, a life richer in adventure and surprise. Rewilding is not about abandoning civilization but about enhancing it" (10). Once again, here, I will investigate this relation between the "wild" and the "modern" – the tensions between mythology, tradition and civilization that mediate rewilding's affective and political force within national imaginaries.

The principles and paradigms of rewilding are gaining ever-increasing currency in Scottish conservation, and Scotland appears frequently as a site of potential in rewilding literature. The final part of this chapter will shift focus away from actually-existing conservation projects and towards two British texts that feature Scotland as a key imaginative site for their rewilding visions, situating the Scottish wild within the UK's contested environmental and political geographies. Monbiot's memoir-polemic *Feral* and Sarah Hall's novel *The Wolf Border* will take us down a more speculative, literary path than the one I have been following so far; rewilding is still more theory than practice in the UK today, and I take up Aaron Cloyd's suggestion that literature can offer fertile ground for exploring both the potential and the anxieties of this emerging naturalcultural endeavour. Although rewilding purports

to move away from species-focused conservation towards ecological-scale processes, the return of large predators in general and the wolf in particular has been a key signifying trope in imaginaries of what a wilder Britain might look like. Wolves function as a synecdoche for the predator and for the wild, and they are often made to stand in for the human's gendered, racialized relationship to its own animality. In Derrida's *The Beast and the Sovereign*, the relation between human and wolf is located at "the foundation of the town or the city, the origins of the political" (11), not opposed to civilization but constitutive of it, and I follow his reflections to examine relations of antagonism and affinity between human, wolf and deer in making the wild and the modern. Not only predator but also prey is involved in practices of identification and disavowal, a body made to stand in for the sovereign and for human wildness even as it is made subject to sovereign power. Finally, in rewilding's navigation of dichotomies like threat and vulnerability, hope and fear, I find resonances with political discourses of state-breaking and nation-building, explored most explicitly in Hall's fictionalisation of Britain's break-up and the wolves that come to symbolise its new structures.

Bring back the trees: hunting and culling in threatened landscapes

Late 2015, Knoydart – one of the most remote places on the British mainland, a peninsula populated by 157 people and 7000 deer, cut off from the infrastructures of industrial modernity, accessible only by boat or by a strenuous two-day hike. Eighty-six dead stags, shot and left out on an open hillside, spark a flurry of public outrage that ripples beyond the tiny local community: a petition beseeching the local MP to "STOP the John Muir Trust from massacring our Scottish Red Deer" collects over a thousand signatures; national headlines report a "gratuitous slaughter" and "dozens of stags left to rot" (Peterkin). The JMT goes on the defensive, insisting on the ecological necessity of the cull, putting it in proportion to the 60,000 deer killed yearly across the country. But the affective energy put into motion by the sight of those carcasses – dismembered and decomposing, a stark image of death's materiality – is not easily quelled. It's a strange scene: a conservation charity fights on the side of death, justifying the destruction of wild animals, while the wealthy owners of hunting estates perform their disgust at the idea of such improper killing. "If the environmentalists are mounting a war," Cal Flyn writes, "the shooting estates – those professional deer killers – call for peace, for the gentle approach" (181). This is only one of many such counterintuitive conflicts that characterise the state of nature in the Anthropocene, testing the limits of environmental ethics and multispecies coexistence. But it is one that carries particular political weight, I argue, in a country whose landscape and history has been shaped by deer, not only symbolically but in a deeply material sense.

The "deer forest" is a geographical category unique to Scotland, designating a large tract of land owned and managed for the purpose of stalking and shooting deer. Hayden Lorimer notes that the term is an ironic misnomer, applied to "areas of moor and mountainside long denuded of trees, only

retaining the arboreal association in their title" (404). Both of the words that compose this category, in fact, contain suggestive histories; their genealogies branch into more expansive meanings than their present-day denotations. "Forest" is thought to derive from the Latin *foris* for "outside", linked etymologically to "foreign", and in the Middle Ages the word signified uncultivated land set aside as a royal hunting ground, beyond "the usual rule of law" (Monbiot 200), weaving obscure affinities and antagonisms between the wild and the sovereign, the nation's body and its undomesticated other. "Deer", meanwhile, comes from a Germanic word for "animal" or "beast", sometimes specifically "wild animal", and in some languages its derivatives still signify this broader sense of the animal-as-such (the Dutch *dier*, the Swedish *djur*, the Icelandic *dýr*). The word most likely made its way into Old English through the practice of sport hunting, in which the red deer was the most abundant prey; "wild animal" becomes synonymous with "animal-to-be-killed".[19] The deer forest, then: the uncultivated outside, where wild animals roam, and the place where human sovereignty ventures to kill them.

In the Scottish Highlands, since the Victorian era, the deer forest has been a key site of cultural meaning and political power. Today, sporting estates sprawl across 30% of Scotland's privately-owned land, and comprise as much as half of all privately-owned land in the Highlands, described by Wightman as "a vast outdoor playground for the upper strata of British society" ('Hunting and Hegemony' 4). In a detailed study of deerstalking in the interwar period, Hayden Lorimer argues that the "distinctive culture of nature" (403) developed on the sporting estates has played a significant role in shaping Scotland's patterns of land ownership and management, inextricably entangled with colonial masculinity and rhetorics of nationhood, as well as with landscape preservation and ecology. The legitimacy of the deer forest is established through an active construction of history, tradition and "the cultivation of an authentic memory landscape" (405), but also via "newly emerging discourses of nationhood and environmentalism" that attempt to secure the status of the hunting estate in a modern Scottish landscape (404). The deer forest, with its roots in aristocratic sovereignty and Victorian customs, is today often described as an "anachronism" at odds with twenty-first century values and institutions (Wightman 'Hunting and Hegemony' 23) – but, as Lorimer demonstrates, it has in fact been "anachronistic" from the beginning, amalgamating disparate histories and hybrid temporalities. In positioning their hunt as "the 'civilized' inheritance of 'barbaric' native traditions" (Lorimer 408), landowners and their elite guests associated themselves simultaneously with "the immemorial and immortal qualities of a natural Highland environment" (410) and with the civilizing modernity of the British state, depicting the Scottish mountains as a training ground for imperial adventure and the site of "many a formative lesson in British citizenship" (414). With the decline of the British Empire, however, along with shifting public attitudes to animal welfare and environmental preservation,

[19] See the entries for "forest" and "deer" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* for etymological data; further reflections on these terms and their derivations can be found at the Online Etymology Dictionary, https://www.etymonline.com/.

landowners began to mobilize new strategies of self-legitimation, positioning themselves as benevolent caretakers of "wild land" that would otherwise be neglected or exploited. The landowner-controlled preservationist organisations that arose around this time, according to Lorimer, were involved in "an articulation of sentimental, or perhaps more specifically environmental, nationalism; an affirmation of the fierce pride held in the unique character and distinctive history of the Scottish landscape, but still framed by a firmly pro-Unionist agenda" (422). The hunting estate is an institution where the Scottish wild becomes central to an elite British national identity.

In recent years, though, with changing views of ecological value and a growing shift from preservation to restoration, traditional landowners increasingly find themselves in conflict with conservation organisations, and deer find themselves at the centre of political contention. In a twist of linguistic fate, the term "deer forest", in the most modern sense of those words, now encodes an irresolvable internal conflict: deer and trees are cast into a relation of enmity, as attempts to regenerate the native woodland of the once-great Caledonian Forest[20] are thwarted by the excessive appetites of these multiplying creatures. The conflict over the deer is conducted through conflicting representations of the landscape as lively or deathly, abundant or barren, as well as conflicting ideas of what "wildness" means in this schema. For the environmental projects of Highland estate owners, as Lorimer shows, "wild" land was made to signify both an older meaning of uncultivable, unproductive land, and a newer aesthetic meaning of dramatic, sensual, and thrillingly uninhabited nature; taken together, these ideas frame the Highland wild as a space in which hunting is the only sensible form of land use. The "ecologically degraded sporting environment" was transformed into "a treasured cultural representation of the Scottish landscape" (424) – but because such wild land was unproductive and costly to maintain, landowners cast themselves as selfless custodians, managing this "treasured" landscape at their own expense for love rather than profit, bringing life and money to the area with their vital killing.[21]

For organisations like Trees for Life and the John Muir Trust, however, and for an increasing number of the conservation-minded public, Scotland's wild aesthetic is a degraded, ailing shadow of a once-thriving ecology – "a dim, flattened relic of what there once was, of what there could be again" (Monbiot 89). A video by the rewilding organisation Scotland: the Big Picture refers to Scotland's iconic and "idealized" landscapes as fossilized "museum pieces" in a "depleted, impoverished" ecology that must be "brought back to life." Its vibrant forests have become "geriatric woodlands" (Lintern), and the deer are central culprits in this inexorable decline. Their existence is described in the language

[20] Its remnants are sometimes referred to as the "Celtic Rainforest" – a "rebranding" effort that Ben Dolphin compares to "efforts in the last decade to rebrand the Scottish wildcat as the Highland Tiger," each mobilizing the affective appeal of more "exotic" ecologies.

[21] In 'Hunting and Hegemony' Wightman quotes a recent estate management plan that claims "the owners see the estate as a 'valuable wild land asset to be loved', rather than as 'a producer of income'" (8). It is true that most estates do not make profit through their hunting activities and generally run at a loss – but Wightman argues that this fact obscures the substantial financial and social benefits of land ownership, including the capital appreciation of land value, tax benefits and high-status conspicuous leisure consumption.

of disease, a population that has reached "epidemic proportions" (Lintern). "They swarm over the fells like a plague in Moses' Egypt, covering the land like a cloak, picking it clean, moving off as fast as they arrived," writes Flyn (179); the land becomes a kind of body, and the prey becomes predatory. In this context, culling – or "deer management" as it is more clinically referred to – is necessary to begin restoring the lively biodiversity that the woodland would sustain. One of the contributors to the Big Picture video insists "we can't keep leaching the life out of the Scottish landscape – we have to start putting something back," and that "something" means, among other things, the liveliness of death. Against the discursive power of carcasses "left to rot" and the "emotive language" of "massacres," "bloodbaths" and "killing fields" that associate the conservationists with a landscape of death, the John Muir Trust reframes the cull as a sustaining part of living ecologies, "recycling nutrients" and providing food for eagles and other wildlife ('Deer management in Knoydart'). As the next section will demonstrate, though, mass killing – set in contrast to the individualised stalking of the traditional hunt – remains a point of political and affective contention.

The sovereign stag and the slaughtered herd: affective economies of death

In the opening pages of *Necropolitics*, Mbembe elaborates Bataille's view of death as "the very principle of excess", in which he "interprets death and sovereignty as the paroxysm of exchange and superabundance [...] the most luxurious form of life, that is, of effusion and exuberance: a power of proliferation" (15). In the hunting estate, we can trace a comparably counterintuitive relation between life and death. Deer populations are kept deliberately abundant in order to maintain the sport of hunting them: a proliferation of life kept in motion for the purpose of its potential death. This is a death that signifies not just the end of a life, but also all the life that exceeds it: it is the very "superabundance" of living deer that makes a successful shoot possible; the number of animals that must be kept alive far exceeds the number that will become trophies. The deer are not simply commodified as corpses, like so many other animal bodies. Their economic value lies rather in their status as living beings invested with the potential for death – an experience rather than a product, where all the embodied, affective vitality of the landscape is available for purchase. Moreover, this is a deeply "luxurious" pursuit, a hunt that goes "beyond utility" in what Mbembe calls an "anti-economy" (15). As Flyn points out, many of these estates run at a loss: "A Highland truism: you don't get rich from owning a deer forest; you own a deer forest because you are rich" (186). The hunt is not a rational profit-making venture but a performance of status, a luxury of bodily excess, a ritual of masculinity.

It is also, arguably, an act of sovereignty – asserting power over the land, over animal bodies, and so over nature itself. Sovereignty, in Derrida's words, is "figured sometimes as what rises, through the law of reason, above the beast, above the natural life of the animal, and sometimes (or

simultaneously) as the manifestation of bestiality or human animality, i.e. human naturality" (26). The hunt is simultaneously a "manifestation of bestiality," of the human-as-predator, and an act of human supremacy over the animal. Monbiot describes the red deer as "both the idealized quarry of the new lairds and their own imagined embodiment" (149-50), and this doubleness can be seen in the affective structures of "fairness" and "respect" that set up particular relations between human and nonhuman, predator and prey. Sport is only sport when it contains the possibility of losing: deer stalking is experienced, among other things, as a battle of wills, in which nature has its own agency that might evade human prowess. Flyn writes of "a deep unease about mass killing among many of those who earn their living on the hill" that is "based on perceived sportsmanship, on fairness, on tradition [...] flying in by helicopter simply feels wrong, like cheating. So does leaving carcasses to rot. So does taking too many in one go" (186). In the traditional hunt, as Lorimer demonstrates, animals are highly individualised, granted "remarkable levels of sentience, consciousness and intentionality of action" (417), invested with value and ritual, sometimes preserved and put on display as trophies. They are vested with "an antiquarian heritage and a regal genealogy" (408) that makes them a worthy foe for human nobility; stalkers are invited to "spill the blue-blood of prehistoric times" (quoted in Lorimer 409), and kills are categorised by their antler points as "royal," "imperial" or "monarch" (418). And for this prestige to be meaningful it cannot be easy prey. Like the wildcat, the deer is represented as an "elusive and retiring" creature that requires "expanses of empty mountain wilderness" (408) as its habitat – but this time, the expansive wild functions less as a protective haven than as a thrilling obstacle course in which the pleasurable challenge of the hunt can be prolonged, the kill postponed. There is an unmistakable sexual undertone to all of this: the wild hunting ground is "a feminine nature constructed at the margins of society" (Lorimer 409) in which a virile white masculinity is given free reign. But if the space of the hunt is coded as feminine, the prey itself is decidedly masculine: "[t]inged with homoeroticism," Lorimer writes, "descriptions of the finely tuned classical male body mirrored the respect shown for the power, athleticism and virility of the stag" (410).

In the cull, it seems, all of this ritual and pleasure is excised, and the relation of respect between man and stag is undermined by a practice that focuses its attention on the less-prestigious hinds, whose death carries no glory but is "the real way to impact upon population growth" (Flyn 181). The mass of bodies on the hill represents a distastefully rationalistic approach to deer and, at the same time, an excess of inappropriate affect: one blog post, describing the Knoydart cull as a "massacre," accuses the John Muir Trust of "killing deer out of frustration and anger" (Clements) – as opposed, one assumes, to the more measured motivations of a true deerstalker. Against the "atavistic discomfort" of "the privations enforced by nature at her most hostile and barren" that were seen as part of deerstalking's character-building masculinity (Lorimer 410-11), the conservationists' cull is depicted as somehow too clean, too easy, and barbarous to precisely the degree that it is *not* an animalistic contest between equals. In her poetic account of participating in a deer cull, Flyn experiences a moment of grief after her first

successful kill – a feeling prompted less by the fact of death than by the reaction of the still-living herd who "continue to graze, unperturbed": "I was prepared for mass panic, a thunderous retreat. Not this. This dumb acceptance, a total lack of comprehension. My heart bleeds for them. We could take them all now if we wanted. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang" (187). Such "dumb acceptance" undermines the image of the deer's proud nobility, shifting its status from worthy opponent to helpless victim, shifting the structure of killing from sport to slaughter.

Much of the media discourse around culling expresses a similar sense of unease at an unequal match. A *Scotsman* article recounts conservationists shooting deer at times when they are "too weak to escape," quoting a gamekeeper who describes it as "like shooting fish in a barrel" (Munro). A *Daily Record* piece describes deer killed at night by "gun for hire contractors," condemning practices in which the animals "can be easily picked off"; an animal welfare spokesman says: "My concern is that deer, which are supposed to be an iconic species in Scotland, are now given the status of vermin" (McPherson). What marks the line between icon and vermin? Both are exposed to death, both subject to the whims of human power. But there is a point of divergence between individualising and massifying rhetorics that marks the meaning of that death: the iconic species is a personal opponent, picked out deliberately for its impressive stature; the vermin is a homogenous swarm, to be eradicated as efficiently as possible.[22]

These conflicts, though, are not only about deer, and they have wider-ranging consequences for the relations between people, animals and land. Wightman writes that "[l]anded power begins and ends with sovereignty – the supreme or ultimate power or authority over a territory" ('The Poor had no Lawyers' 9), and he argues that the "conspicuous consumption of leisure" in the hunt is "intimately bound up with the ideology of landownership and the sanctity of property rights" (166). It is on this question of "authority over a territory" where the hunt and the cull clash. Deer, like all wild animals, wander at will across the imagined boundaries of nations and estates; they do not belong to anyone. But if wild life cannot be owned, the right to its death can be: "game was converted into an exclusive right of property not by claiming ownership of wild animals which are still legally *res nullius* or 'belonging to no-one' but by effectively excluding all but landowners from the right to kill them" (Wightman 'The Poor had no Lawyers' 163), and media attention around deer culls tends to ignite when landowners feel that their rights over "their" deer have been infringed upon. In this context, controversies over culling are less about the lives of deer than about power over land expressed through the sovereign power of death. Lintern writes that there is currently "no legal obligation for deer to be managed in a way that benefits them, other wildlife, habitat or even the economy. They are managed on a voluntary basis by

[22] In reality, as Flyn's piece makes clear, both hunting and culling are visceral pursuits that generally use the same methods of killing, often indistinguishable in practice except by the intention that drives them, and the activities of traditional deerstalkers also includes culling; for them, it is "a matter of scale" (189). The affects I am discussing here are produced less by real experience than by structures of representation.

the landowners, who have the right to shoot or fence them… or not, as they see fit," and many sports estates have a vested interest in "maintain[ing] artificially high numbers" to keep their hills abundant with game. Conservationists call for "a statutory deer management system" ('Deer management in Knoydart') with government-mandated culling targets, taking the power of death out of the hands of landowners and putting it in the hands of the state. The deer are entangled in broader class anxieties and political shifts; in a context of land reform campaigns and constitutional uncertainty, the question of sovereignty is more than abstract, and landed power is keenly aware that its property rights must be rigorously defended. The divide between the hunt and the cull, then, might also be a divide between, on the one hand, a masculine capitalist ideology of free and fair competition, and on the other, the looming threat of a new order in which statuses are levelled, hierarchies collapsed and land expropriated in the name of a national or ecological greater good.[23]

The conflict over the deer seems, at the most obvious level, like a supreme example of human exceptionalism, a conflict between different methods of exercising sovereignty over wild animals. But both sides rely, too, on an identification with the wild that situates the human as an integral part of natural processes. Flyn writes that "the role of the predator, the role of the wolf, is what the estate owners of Scotland now cast themselves in" (181). We can identify, here, two different modes of identifying with nature (which will emerge, too, as two intertwined ways of seeing the wolf). The traditional hunter aspires to embody the predator pursuing its prey, refining his stealthy "*pas de loup*" to become the war-waging wolf that Derrida aligns with the sovereign. The cull, meanwhile, attempts to imitate the wolf not as an individualised sovereign at the top of the food chain, but rather as a regulatory representative of nature's equilibrium, where the predator is one key part of interconnected ecological processes. While the wealthy hunter tests his skills against the biggest, most formidable game, the conservationist pursues the lives that "nature itself" would take out of circulation, the old and the unhealthy: "we aim to mimic natural predation by selectively culling the weakest animals in the herd" ('Trees for Life').

I want to suggest, then, that the shift from sovereign power to biopower (a shift that is never complete, as 'Necropolitics' makes clear) might be marked by a shift from the hunt to the cull. In the former, life is taken because it belongs to the sovereign; in the latter, life is taken in the name of making-live. The former relies on paradigms of ownership and absolute power; the latter relies on regulation and management for the maximization of health and the public (national) good. In the same sense, the wolf is recruited as symbolic representative and material participant in structures of both sovereign power and biopolitical governance. From an antagonistic relation of war and destruction, a fundamental

[23] But this story, like all stories, is more complicated than this two-sided formulation of wealthy landowners versus egalitarian conservationists might suggest. One high-profile deer conflict takes place in Assynt – an estate that was bought back from an absentee landlord by the small-scale crofters who live on the land, a celebrated success story of sustainable community ownership. The crofters still rely on deerstalking income, and feel that "a certain class of conservationists" are imposing unrealistic targets from above (Flyn 190).

divide between polis and wilderness, the wolf shifts into a relation of regulation, management, and ecological harmony. This also entails a reconfiguration of the human's relation to the wild: rather than a sovereign power that decides from above what lives and what dies, ecologists gradually come to insist that humans are not as good at managing ecosystems as animals are, and not as good at imitating the wolf as they would like to think. As Monbiot notes, "hunting by humans is a less effective means of protecting forestry than hunting by wild predators" because "[w]olves not only suppress the population but radically alter the behaviour of the deer" (117) in ways that human hunting practices are not capable of achieving.[24] But, as the next section will show, the conflicts of human-wolf history remain as a stubborn affective trace, thwarting scientists' plans with public fear, hatred and resistance. Lorimer writes that deerstalking was validated via "a combination of rational (scientific) knowledge and irrational (sensual) experience" (405), and I will argue that the wolf is caught up in a similar doubleness both by its advocates and its enemies, its meanings mired in both reason and affect.

Bring back the wolf: rewilding the nation

On the "rewilding" section of the Highland Titles website, a series of manipulated photos visualises the resurrection of the wild – not in distant, empty Highland landscapes, but roaming among Scotland's iconic urban landmarks. A pair of wolves perch on a hillside at the edge of Edinburgh; lynx lounge on the lawn of the Parliament building; beavers nestle among whisky casks; a bear bathes beneath the Forth Bridge. Each of these images has the synthetic, vaguely comical quality of an amateur Photoshop job. The animals look awkward, out of place, pasted into places and times they have never been and will never be. Traditional nature photography, as Kathleen Jamie writes, is about covering its own technological tracks: "How to employ all that technique expressly to make the result look natural, techniqueless" (75). But here the relation is inverted: technique here is simple, even clumsy, but it is technique worn on the sleeve; the rewilded landscape is made not through ideals of candid capture but though overt manipulation. In a certain sense, these images embody the paradoxes of rewilding: the production of wildness through technique and technology; the tension between wild, rural and urban space; the resurrection of prehistory via the knowledges and desires of modernity; the uneasy coexistence of past, present and future. In principle, rewilding involves "a rejection of species-focused approaches" in favour of a broader perspective that values biodiversity and ecosystem restoration (Deary and Warren 216); but in public discourse it often collapses back into the iconography of species, of which the photos above are only one particularly overt example. And the ultimate symbol of the wild brings us back to the beast and the sovereign, the sovereign as the beast.

[24] Trees for Life have made attempts to imitate the wolf in a mode not centred on killing: in 2016, 'Project Wolf' recruited volunteers to act as "human wolf packs" not by hunting but by moving through the forest to create a "landscape of disturbance" and frighten deer away from seedlings ('Project Wolf').

Wolves, as Carla Freccero writes, are often "asked to stand in for a nostalgia for the wholeness of the human and the natural, a longing that is both spatial and temporal" (93), and we will see this longing emerge starkly in the texts that follow, alongside a future-oriented desire for renewal that alternately incorporates and disavows the politics of wild nostalgia. But wolves are also feared and loathed, and violently disavowed both spatially, in demands for their containment or removal, and temporally, relegated to primitive relics of a pre-civilizational past with no place in modern society. For rewilding advocates, the wolf is one of the "keystone predators" that transforms and regulates ecosystems through cascading trophic effects,[25] and after being persecuted to near-extinction in Europe, in recent decades it has begun to repopulate the continent. As Derrida writes, "[w]ithout asking permission, real wolves cross humankind's national and institutional frontiers, and his sovereign nation-states" (4); in many European countries, the return of the wolf is less a deliberate human decision and more an unpredictable, unmanaged resurgence – an ongoing migration that represents, for some, the rewilding ideal of nonhuman autonomy on a continent-wide scale. On an island state like the United Kingdom, meanwhile, the wolf cannot simply go where it will: it must be decided upon or against, transplanted back into the landscape by the force of human will and technological power. And wolves, saturated with material-semiotic histories of antagonism and fascination, continue to pose "thorny frontier questions" (Derrida 4) wherever their looming presence or conspicuous absence makes itself felt.

Britain's last wolf was shot in Scotland sometime between the 17th and 18th centuries, and Scotland is where some would like to see the species resurrected. In July 2018 a crowdfunding campaign was launched to publishe a book titled *Scotland: A Rewilding Journey*, and the press hung the story on the potential return of the wolf (Weldon). The same month, millionaire Paul Lister was in the news with his long-running plans to bring wolves to the Alladale Wilderness Reserve (Smith). Against the near-fantasy status of full-scale reintroduction ("I doubt that wolves will be reintroduced in my lifetime," says the CEO of Trees for Life), bringing the animals to a private enclosure could be reality within a few years. Lister's proposals rely on the reassurance of fences, made palatable by a specific rejection of wolves in the wild, echoing public concerns that "there's too much livestock, people, and infrastructure here". He insists that his reserve, limited and limiting, is a practical alternative to true "rewilding", and once again the deer is invoked as justification and guarantee for the wolf's presence: "If we can manage thousands of deer, I'm sure we can manage a dozen wolves" (Smith). In the sphere of ecological science, too, wolves continue to fascinate, and a 2016 article in *Restoration Ecology* took Scotland as a case study for examining the relationship between rewilding and predator reintroduction. In terms of "symbolic wilderness", the authors write, wolf reintroduction would be a measure of "the

[25] "A trophic cascade occurs when the animals at the top of the food chain – the top predators – change the numbers not just of their prey, but also of species with which they have no direct connection. Their impacts cascade down the food chain, in some cases radically changing the ecosystem, the landscape and even the chemical composition of the soil and the atmosphere" (Monbiot 84).

enlightened attitude of present-day humans toward a species that has traditionally been feared and loathed," a triumph of science over superstition, and a "symbol for a harmonious, sustainable Scotland" (Arts et al. 30). Again, here, conservation becomes a site for performing progress, rationality and modernity against the dark prejudices of the past. The tourist value of wolves, like that of wildcats, is not dependent on their visibility to a human gaze; they function as a signifying absence that transforms the meaning of landscapes through abstract knowledge rather than embodied experience: "realizing that few people would actually see wolves in the wild, the knowledge that they exist in Scotland could be regarded as a valuable wild experience in itself" (Arts et al. 30).

But such proposals are still highly controversial, and the wolf's place in the modern biopolitical order is by no means secure. A recent *Guardian* article notes "resurgence of hostility to the wolf" across northern Europe, which one conservationist attributes to a power struggle between rural and urban spaces: "The wolf became the symbol of how people in rural areas would like to take that power back and have less centralised decision-making" (quoted in Barkham 'Harmless or vicious hunter?'). For people in urban centres, this story goes, the wolf is vested with the romance of distance where it has no material impact on their lives, while for farmers and other rural people it remains a dangerous enemy, wreaking havoc on livestock, casting a shadow of anxiety on what was once a safe and comforting landscape for human enjoyment. The wolf becomes a target, then, for "political parties seeking votes in rural areas" (Barkham), who promise culls to keep numbers down. Such anxieties over dispossession and sovereignty echo with the anxieties of Highland landowners, as well as other modes of political rhetoric about keeping the nation safe and preserving "traditional" ways of life. The class and racial composition of the "rural," and the kinds of national desire it signifies, varies across Europe, but in Britain the rural is a key site of the "production of whiteness" (Knowles) and of Britishness.[26] In this context, the politicisation of rewilding as an urban-centric project might be read through other anti-urbanisation discourses, in which the metropolis becomes a site of multiculturalism and racial anxiety, constantly threatening to encroach on the "real" white Britishness of the small town and the countryside. The racialized other is associated simultaneously with the urban (modernity, industrialisation, global migration) and with the wild (aggression, irrationality, unknowability). The rural, in contrast to the wild, is gentle, safe and orderly, and in line with older conservationist tendencies it is not to be radically "restored" but to be tended and defended against disruption.

It is easy to imagine conflicts with the wolf as part of an existential human-animal condition, the eternal battle of two "top-of-the-food-chain predators finding themselves side by side" (Freccero: 94). But such conflict is evidently shaped by material, historical, social and political circumstances, and

[26] Earlier this year a short *Bella Caledonia* piece by Raman Mundair turned a critical eye on the whiteness of wild Scotland, recounting her experience as a body out of place in the Shetlands: "although I feel married to the landscape and committed to my relationship with the natural world, the human 'natives' don't always recognise me as a fellow species, let alone local […] the countryside, the rural landscape, is fundamentally a white space."

it takes different forms in different political contexts. According to one commenter, the primary problem is wolves' lack of respect for borders; the point is tied to the animal's lack of language, the eternal mark of its subjection to human superiority: "If wolves could read the signs that indicate the limits of those boundaries there would be no problem" (comment on Barkham 'Harmless or vicious hunter?'). In the same article, professor of ecology Guillaume Chapron maps attitudes to the wolf along lines of national identity and attitudes to the state:

> "My intuitive understanding is that in Nordic countries we expect society to be working perfectly, rules are followed and the government takes care of everything. When you have a trouble-making species in a society where everything is supposed to work perfectly, that's very disturbing. In southern Europe we accept society to be a little bit messy. When wolves create problems, it's just how life is supposed to be" (quoted in Barkham).

In this framing, attitudes to the wolf are not only understood through an urban/rural divide but also a north/south one. This dichotomy is often mobilized, too, with a postcolonial twist, in which the rich countries of the global north demonstrate stark hypocrisy in their concern for the exotic predators of far-flung lands and their simultaneous neglect or hostility to the ones on their doorstep. Chapron regards European wolf culls as "insulting to the world": "imagine the outcry if [African] nations sought to kill half of their lions?" There are certain risks here: of naturalising associations between the colonial other and the savage beast; of replicating a north/south discourse of modernity versus primitivism, civilization versus wildness. But in the emerging discourses that I have been tracking, where valuing the wild becomes a marker of modernity and progress, there is also some potential here for a shift in epistemological power relations, where the colonial centre is no longer the exclusive subject and propagator of knowledge: "We need African countries to teach us, rich Europeans, how to live with predators" (quoted in Barkham).

For now, rewilding in Britain is still more theory than practice, and comments sections rage with impassioned debate every time the wolf makes it into the news. Often resistance is articulated by reference to the country's geographical size and its overcrowded density: on a recent article, the idea that Scotland is "too small to indulge" such creatures, "a confined space," "inhabited round every corner by humans, domesticated animals and long established wildlife," is a recurring theme, while a recurring retort maintains that Scotland is far emptier than many other European countries that sustain large wolf populations (comments on Weldon). Echoing other discourses of "overcrowding" that target human migration, this resistance is rooted not in rational calculation of space and population, but in an affective sense of what the nation is, what it should be, what degree of upheaval its ontology can support. Fear, writes Ahmed, "is an emotion that is often characterized as being *about* its object" (124), but she suggests that it operates instead through "a sense of being overwhelmed: rather than being contained in an object, fear is intensified by the impossibility of containment" (124), and it "responds to that which

is approaching rather than already here" (125). The figure of the wolf is always "looming, an object of apprehension," always "not there yet, no real wolf, no so-called natural wolf, no literal wolf" (Derrida 5), and so always resistant to the "containment" that would subdue its terror – even though it poses no empirical threat to human wellbeing. In the next section, I explore this tension between the reassuring rationalism of safety and the affective thrill of fear in a text that has been central to shaping the British rewilding debate.

Narrating wild affect: safety, fear and feral masculinity

George Monbiot, a prolific English writer and activist, is widely credited with bringing the idea of rewilding into British public discourse in 2013 with *Feral*, a book that combines pop science, journalism and memoir to make an impassioned case for a wilder Britain. The preface begins with the wolf, though not in its natural habitat. We meet this iconic creature of wilderness transposed into a world of banal modernity: "Arrange these threats in ascending order of deadliness: wolves, vending machines, cows, domestic dogs and toothpicks. I will save you the trouble: they have been ordered already" (xi). The point, of course, is that the wolf's legendary ferocity is a fairytale "more powerful than the facts" (xii), and Monbiot goes on to describe the near-nonexistence of wolf attacks on humans even in places where their numbers are abundant. But his project is not simply to reassure the public of wolves' harmlessness; in fact, the text is propelled by a perpetual tension between rational, temperate ecological arguments and an intense nostalgia for the experience of primitive fear that the wolf represents. The cultural imaginary of the wolf-as-threat, he suggests, might express "a subliminal yearning for the kind of danger that no longer infects our lives" (xii), the affective trace of "ancient terrors" (xiii) that shaped human evolutionary history.

It is precisely this yearning that drives Monbiot's enthusiasm for rewilding. Despite extensively drawing on the authority of science and invoking the rational case for rewilding, Monbiot is frank that his motivations are not shaped by dispassionate reason – that he can and will "produce reasons scientific, economic, historic and hygienic" (107), but that he is driven fundamentally by something else. Call it emotion, affect, or instinct, something primal and bodily, something shot through with fear and mystery. It is "the thrill that comes from roaming in a landscape or seascape without knowing what I might see next, what might loom from the woods or water, what might be watching me without my knowledge" (106-7) – the thrill of the wild's unknowable alterity and its unpredictability. Throughout the text, classic nature-writing sensations of delight, enchantment and wonder abound, but more prominent is an adventure-narrative sensation of electric danger and uncertainty, "a shiver of transgression" (106), and contact with death becomes a crucial part of the affective structures of the wild. An early chapter relates

an experience of stumbling upon the body of a freshly-deceased deer, and the moment is framed as a turning point that unlocks something buried deep in the human psyche:

> "The deer wrapped around my neck and back as if it had been tailored for me; the weight seemed to settle perfectly across my joints. The effect was remarkable. As soon as I felt its warmth on my back, I wanted to roar. My skin flushed, my lungs filled with air. This, my body told me, was why I was here. This was what I was for. Civilization slid off as easily as a bathrobe." (33)

There is no hunt here, no kill, but the physicality of a deer's corpse is what activates an embodied sense of human animality; the human's buried wildness emerges once again as an identification with the wolf. Ahmed writes that, in conventional understandings of feeling, "emotions become property, something that belongs to a subject or object" (119). In her theorization of affective economies, on the other hand, "emotions *involve* subjects and objects, but without residing positively within them" (119). In Monbiot's account, the affective experience of wildness emerges only in the encounter with an animal object, an entangled involvement of human and animal, subject and object, life and death. But in a move of "containment" – the same term Ahmed uses to describe how fear attaches to and restricts particular bodies (127) – he decisively situates it back within the depths of the human psyche:

> "We have had to learn techniques of containment, to press our roaring blood into quieter channels. Where these urges are familiar to us, experience has taught us how to suppress or redirect them. But this sensation was new. I could not assimilate it because – until I picked up the deer – I had been unaware of its existence. It was overwhelming, raw, feral. I did not have a place to put it; but I knew that it belonged to me as much as the tendons I use to curl my fingers." (34)

This wildness, then, is framed as something that has been lurking in the depths of the civilized human body all along – another manifestation of the beast within the sovereign, the ineradicable animality that haunts human endeavour, and something that explicitly *belongs* to the subject, though it cannot be "assimilated" into the signifying structures of consciousness. But this scene of repression and rediscovery may be masking a more complex circulation of power and meaning, enmeshed in gendered histories of how human wildness is expressed and experienced. The history of "civilization", far from a "bathrobe" that can be shrugged off to reveal the real human animal beneath, is embedded deep in the flesh of that animal; the wild and the civilized are not so easily prised apart.

The project of researching and writing *Feral*, Monbiot tells us, was sparked by a sudden sense of "the smallness of this life" (5) in rural Wales. This moment of revelation arrives after some pages recounting a particularly thrilling youthful adventure in the Amazon; after an intensely storied career in investigative journalism, he finds himself in a life in which "loading the dishwasher presented an interesting challenge" (5). The repression and restraint of modern life is associated immediately with domestic labour, and this becomes a recurring theme: "I could not continue just sitting and writing,

looking after my daughter and my house, running merely to stay fit" (7); "somehow I had to reconcile this urge with the life I could not abandon: bringing up my child, paying my mortgage, respecting the rights and needs of other people" (8); "I thought of the conversations confined to the three Rs: renovation, recipes and resorts" (44). The home and the family, and the expectations of modern manhood to be present in these spheres, are what stand in the way of "a richer, rawer life" (8). Pre-empting accusations that he is fetishizing a fantasy of authenticity, Edenic harmony or naïve primitivism, Monbiot coins an appropriately contemporary phrase to describe his yearning: "I was, I believed, ecologically bored" (7). In more familiar vernacular, as some reviewers have noted, this might also be called a "mid-life crisis" (Attlee).

Far from representing a timeless, repressed human wildness, then, the feral affect Monbiot describes might be regarded instead as a productive force in the making of a particular masculine subjectivity. In the passages above, there are echoes both of the deerstalker's visceral identification with his prey and of the conservationist's yearning for a wildcat untainted by contact with domesticity. Monbiot's political and public identity is built around ideals of equality, liberation and progressive modern manhood; but as a man who has lived through tumultuous, disorienting shifts in the structures of gender and sexuality, perhaps his craving for wild adventure, danger and violence represents "a trace of how histories remain alive in the present" (Ahmed 126) – an unarticulated identification with older models of masculinity against a domesticated present. The stories he recounts are haunted by the animal motifs of classic texts of masculine self-realization: a chapter dwelling on the solitude of the sea and the physical challenge of fishing recalls Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*; a bird-watching mission to catch sight of an osprey has hints of J.A. Baker's *The Peregrine*[27]; time spent with nomadic tribes in Kenya taps into colonial narratives of "going native"; a tour through the "monstrous" megafauna of American prehistory draws on the myths and epics of man-versus-beast; and all of it, of course, "stands in a long tradition of back-to-nature narratives" (Attlee) in which men go wild.

Throughout this story, the British landscape is associated with a timid, bland domesticity. Devoid of large carnivores and sparse in vital woodland, it is described as "the most zoophobic nation in Europe" (112) and as "dendrophobic: afraid of trees" that might initiate a "disorderly, unplanned, unstructured revival" of the landscape (210). British conservation, Monbiot argues, treats nature "as if tending a garden" (8), working to preserve already-degraded agricultural landscapes, in contrast to the more ecologically-minded efforts going on elsewhere: "it is as if conservationists in the Amazon had decided to protect the cattle ranches, rather than the rainforest" (8). The real wild is something distant, exotic, elsewhere. But there are corners of the British landscape, he suggests, where it might be made

[27] In an essay on this topic, the Scottish poet and essayist Kathleen Jamie notes the masculinity of Baker's writing, which has been described as evincing "a wish to identify with terror, with the predator over its prey" (46). While Baker "has utterly effaced himself from his book" (38), Jamie's everyday life is inescapably present in her writing, which refuses to enact a categorical division of the wild from the domestic: "Between the laundry and the fetching kids from school, that's how birds enter my life" (39).

to thrive, and it is notable that those corners are predominantly in parts of Britain whose relationship to Britishness is marginal and contested – the Welsh uplands and the Scottish Highlands, where the chapter 'Bring Back the Wolf' is set. For Monbiot, rewilding is a radical project in that it advocates a break with old orders of seeing and managing nature, a politicised refusal to simply accept what is and a way of thinking wildly different futures. Against a frugal environmentalism of scarcity, restraint and apocalyptic fear, rewilding is a mode of "positive environmentalism" (12) and "a work of hope" (152) for multispecies coexistence. "My aim here," he writes, "is to expand the range of what we consider possible, to open up the ecological imagination" (136). Against "a desire for tidiness" (82) that freezes landscapes into picture-perfect states, "the process is the outcome" (83); there is no predetermined destination but diversity, entanglement, and complex coproduction. After his title, this mode of rewilding might well be described as a feral endeavour, a reversion of civilized space to a state that is not pristine but unpredictable, even threatening, undoing bounded categories. In this sense, Monbiot's vision for rewilding shares much with recent feminist work on the Anthropocene, in which the feral is increasingly taken up as "a way to critically reanimate wildness" (Yoon 136). But it is striking how much it also shares with the political rhetoric that circulated in Scotland in the run-up to September 2014. If Britain in 2013 was dominated by an insular conservatism, Scotland was its unruly edge, unsettling the coherence of the island, opening up a space for the possibility of remaking its structures and transforming them into something unrecognisable.[28] The affective economy of the independence referendum revolved around two antagonistic poles, "hope" and "fear": the anti-independence No campaign was widely referred to as "Project Fear" and accused of "scaremongering," while a series of pro-independence rallies took up the same theme with the name Hope Over Fear. The discourse of rewilding and the discourse of an independent Scotland share tensions between utopianism and pragmatism, between making-new and making-old, between reinstating something lost and creating something unprecedented; they share an interest in questions of sovereignty, autonomy and self-determination.

The nature of these connections, material and discursive, is tentative and uncertain; they have not been extensively explored anywhere that I am aware of, though they are often hinted at. In a 2014 *Guardian* article on the links between land ownership patterns and ecological degradation in the Highlands, Monbiot expressed support for Scottish independence in these terms: "I would vote yes in September if I lived here, on the grounds that it presents an opportunity to do something new" ('I'd vote yes'). The founder of Trees for Life, meanwhile, mobilizes the postcolonial narrative of Scotland to draw connections between environmental destruction and a deep-rooted Scottish identity, claiming that after the Battle of Culloden and the Clearances the nation is afflicted with a "psychological wound," "subservient and demoralized": "Like all indigenous people when they lose their connection to the land,

[28] Today, of course, the structures of Britain are in greater turmoil than ever; in the conclusions I will reflect briefly on the consequences of Brexit for Scottish politics.

we lost our confidence" (quoted in Monbiot 152). If Scotland has been reduced to "a nation of sheep" (152), he implies, perhaps it needs to transform itself and claim a lupine sovereignty. To flesh out these connections further, I turn to Sarah Hall's novel *The Wolf Border*, which fictionalises both the 2014 referendum and a wolf reintroduction project, weaving intriguing affinities between the two.[29]

Crossing wild borders: the privatized wild and the modernized nation

Published in 2015, *The Wolf Border* follows Rachel, a zoologist from northern England who has spent a decade working with wolves on a reservation in Idaho – a contested space of co-habitation and struggles for power among indigenous peoples, settler colonizers, scientists, hunters, and the wild predators that anchor the text. Rachel is drawn back to Cumbria by a series of life-altering events – her mother's death, an unplanned pregnancy, an unusual job offer – and the bulk of the novel is set at her new home and workplace, the Annerdale Estate, where a fenced enclosure lies ready to welcome a pair of Romanian wolves. Owned by Earl Thomas Pennington, a wealthy eccentric with a fondness for ecology and a fixation on wolves, Annerdale is a fictionalised version of Paul Lister's Alladale in the Highlands, its location shifted a few miles over the border for reasons that will become pertinent to the novel's intertwined politics of class and nation. The narrative's focalisation through a female consciousness weaves different relations between the rational and the affective, contesting the gender politics of *Feral* but also raising its own set of fraught questions about knowledge and power in making the wild.

The Wolf Border by no means offers a 'feminine' approach to the wild against Monbiot's masculine one, and for the most part Hall firmly disavows any ecofeminist associations between woman and wildness. Rachel is a representative, first and foremost, of science and rationalism, and the novel's events are refracted through her "determinedly dispassionate subjectivity" (Clark). In many senses she seems to identify with wolves over people, but it is a markedly different kind of identification than the primal flush of feeling that Monbiot describes. This is a colder kind of regard, an austere aesthetic of distance and respect, and a certain degree of scientific arrogance. When the Earl's daughter wants to be

[29] Towards the end of the research period, I became aware of a novel by Highland writer Mandy Haggith that shares striking similarities with *The Wolf Border*: published in 2013, *Bear Witness* also imagines an alternative historical trajectory where Scotland has become independent, and its narrative follows a female scientist's quest to reintroduce bears to the Highlands. One reviewer writes: "Reintroducing a species to the land it once roamed, and giving it its freedom – what better symbolic gesture for a country re-emerging after 300 years?" (Crockett). While I do not have space to engage with this text here, it offers a suggestive opening for further comparative research.

involved in the project, she is sharply sceptical, and keen to emphasise an appropriate detachment from the animals themselves:

> what does she expect? That they will be pets? That they'll be fed milk from a bottle, like orphaned lambs? She will have to explain to Sylvia, give her the facts. They will rarely be seen – defined as much by their absence as their iconography […] she will have to endure hours of monotonous surveillance, reading prints, weighing carrion, data entry. Unglamorous at best. ('Everything tends')[30]

At times, this resolute rationalism tips into faint contempt: when confronted with protestors, "[s]he feels embarrassed for those who have misunderstood, the irrationals of the world" ('The Wolves'). Throughout the text, the restoration of the wild is repeatedly associated with objectivity, progress and intellect, and those who fear it are too unintelligent or emotional to grasp the scientific facts, no matter how eloquently argued: "The fearful will always be afraid […] Only time will prove them wrong" ('The Wolves'). There is a strange contradiction here between the reverence for animality and the ridicule of affect; Rachel admires the wolves for their instinct, their physicality, their predatory power and embodied knowledge of the land – but when people respond with an instinctive fear they are "irrationals". Despite her commitment to the wild, Rachel maintains an unarticulated division between human and animal, an investment in the human exceptionalism of the higher mind. Against Monbiot's feral masculinity, Rachel's wild is rooted not in a gendered positionality but in the Enlightenment fantasy of the neutral, knowing humanist subject.

Again, here, wolves repeatedly become involved with questions of ownership and power. Although Thomas declares himself "a custodian of sorts," a benevolent caretaker of the land, the project is evidently also about producing a space of ecological sovereignty: "his dominion, his private Eden" ('Old Country'). The wolves themselves are associated with the body of the sovereign – the van that transports them to Annerdale is escorted "into the mountains, sedately, like some kind of royal procession, the diplomatic arrival of a crowned couple" – and at the same time they are associated with criminality: "brought in, to all intents and purposes, secretly, under the radar, like contraband" ('The Wolves'). The analogy goes in the other direction, too, as the Earl and his class are rhetorically associated with the predatory power of the beast or the criminal. From Rachel's perspective, Thomas "could almost be another species" ('Old Country'), and in the eyes of protestors against his scheme he represents "the apex class; the financial raiders in charge" ('The Wolves'). The sovereign and the beast, Derrida writes, both share with the criminal "that very singular position of being outlaws, above or at a distance from the law, the beast ignorant of right and the sovereign having the right to suspend right, to place himself above the law that he is, that he makes, that he institutes" (32), and the Earl's project

[30] My edition of this text is a Kindle e-book without static page numbers. Following MLA guidelines, I cite quotations by shortened titles of the chapters in which they appear.

depends on his ability to bend the law to his will: "it was quite a feat to get that bill passed in Parliament," he comments, referring to legislation that has allowed for this enclosure of publicly accessible land. The wolves, too, are obliquely associated with the "outlaw"; Rachel experiences their arrival as an affective tension between law and lawlessness: "The journey could not be more regulated, but it still feels like a bank robbery, a crime – like the van is filled with explosives" ('The Wolves'). On the one hand order, control, propriety; on the other, the simmering threat of chaos, carnage, the uncontainable excess of the wild.

The Earl's project is subject to sharp controversy, and the resistance of the estate's gamekeeper neatly encapsulates the tension that I have been tracking throughout this thesis: "In his mind, wolves are no doubt faddish, indicative of Thomas Pennington's contradictions, his liberalism and modernity, or worse, he is inadvertently sponsoring a return to the dark ages, to the primacy of the feral. The systems are cracking up" ('We are all red'). The wolf once again comes to embody the temporal hybridity of wildness, an unsettling amalgamation of "liberalism and modernity" with "the dark ages," and a threat to the "systems" that keep the world safe and ordered. It is a hybridity represented, too, by the Penningtons themselves: they are ostensibly "a new breed of aristocracy – integrated, liberal, positive investors in a floundering nation" ('The Wolves'), but they also represent a relic of a decrepit system that is "essentially feudal, a realm so antiquated it seems impossible that it has survived the reformist centuries" ('Follies'). These rigid, outdated class structures and the absurdity of their rituals are rhetorically associated with the paltriness of the landscape. Like Monbiot, Hall depicts the British landscape as small and domesticated, meagre in its ecological aspirations against the grandeur of American wilderness, where Rachel has spent a decade studying wolves that are free to roam across vast distances. As a child in the Cumbrian countryside, she reflects, "the territory seemed so wild that anything might be possible," but in her adult travels she has learned that "true wilderness lay elsewhere" ('Old Country').

Throughout all of this, Scotland is perpetually looming and receding, close enough to be conflated with Cumbria ("No, this is not Scotland," Rachel has to explain to a journalist; "Scotland lies forty miles to the north"), but politically and ecologically distant – distant enough to signify a space of possibility and freedom, an "elsewhere" associated with the promise of real wildness. Throughout the text, there are scattered references to its ecological and economic radicalism – talk of "public acquisition of private land, recalibration of resources" ('Old Country') – set in contrast to English conservatism and landed power. In a pre-referendum appearance, the fictionalised First Minister declares that "Scotland was, is, and will be a beacon of social enlightenment," and against jibes about the country being plunged into darkness by the economic catastrophe of independence, he invokes its abundant natural resources: "The lights in England might soon depend on Scotland's hydroelectric power and

oil" ('Everything tends').[31] The day the wolves are released into the enclosure is the same day as the independence referendum, and Hall's story tips the balance of history in the opposite direction: "A slim margin of votes has cut the north of the island free [...] Great Britain no longer exists" ('We are all red'). And after the vote, far from the predicted chaos, Scotland continues to serve as a model of effective governance and public ownership – though sketched out only in the briefest of asides and impressions from afar, with little flesh on the bones of its new statehood. During weeks of intense snow that shuts down England's infrastructure, "Scotland is equipped and faring well. The ploughs are out; the roads are gritted. Glasgow airport is open for business, flights to Heathrow are being redirected there" ('Follies'). Against unpredictable climactic forces, Hall implies, this upstart nation is more prepared and adept than the fossilized world to the south, and more capable of living harmoniously with nature. The weather is put to work as a political retort to "Project Fear": it is the British state, not the nascent Scottish one, that falls into chaos in the wake of independence.

The wolves begin their British life as a deeply "divisive" phenomenon – a word that signals their place in the production of dichotomies, dividing rural from urban, ecology from agriculture, human access from natural autonomy, the wild from the civilized. But after Britain is suddenly and quite literally divided, they shift status and become a symbol of unification, "good press" for a Prime Minister who has lost a nation and its nature. When the pair finally breed, the promise of reproductive futurity secures a sense of identity and purpose for a shaken national pride: "These are the first wolf pups born in the wild for centuries, the significance is not lost on the nation. They become almost like mascots, for what exactly no one is sure, a beleaguered England, an England no longer associated with Scotland's great natural resources" ('Follies'). But their place in the national community is by no means secure. In the book's final act, the wolves are set free, the enclosure's border thrown open by an unknown vandal. They head towards the border, and Scotland again comes to signify both wildness and modernity, both danger and safety. Its forward-thinking statehood "gives it the opportunity to revert to something more primal," as one reviewer put it (Clark), and when the wolves arrive it is a space that they instinctively understand as their rightful dominion: "They will sense the greater uplands to the north, and will keep moving until they find the best territory" ('The Exposed'). But they are also described in the language of immigration, biopolitics and bureaucracy; more importantly than its superior wild territory, Scotland is a political territory where the pack might be granted stronger legal protection. Thomas insists that "our refugees seeking asylum in the newest European nation" will find a warmer welcome in a country keen to prove its ecological credentials: "they can't be seen to be conservative on this" ('The Exposed'). Rachel eventually realises that Thomas himself was responsible for the escape, and that "the extradition of his wild pets" has been the plan all along, a covert rewilding: "The worthy investment, the millions spent building a trophic Eden, it is simply another grand scheme that he can choose to dismantle again,

[31] All of this is a relatively faithful representation of the real-life SNP's rhetoric in 2014, though the truly radical redistributive policies Hall describes are something of an artistic exaggeration.

if he so wishes. There is a bigger, more exciting game – testing beyond the cage, wolves in the real world" ('The Exposed'). The Scottish Highlands, then, are the "real world" – the real wild – to the English Earl's synthetic playground.

Rachel's relation to power is ambivalent throughout the text. She is clearly critical of the institutions within which she is working, uncomfortable in their stratified spaces. But she is keen to imagine herself a detached, disinterested representative of science, working only in the name of nature itself, and in her identification with the wild she becomes at times complicit with the power structures that make her project possible. She is aware that her role cannot be extricated from "the machinery of segregation, which always enables the elite" ('Follies'), but she makes a decision to side with the wild over the iniquities of human politics:

> She would like to believe there will be a place, again, where the streetlights end and wilderness begins. The wolf border. And if this is where it has to begin in England, she thinks, this rich, disqualifying plot, with its private sponsorship and antiquated hierarchy, so be it. The ends justify the means. ('We are all red')

Even the final ends – the release of the wolves into the expansive habitat of the Highlands, into this newly-made space of public ownership and liberated nature – is only facilitated by the Earl's landed power, a private import unleashed without public consent. "Has he achieved something unarguably worthwhile, no matter the means?", Rachel wonders. "No other individual in the country was in a position to do what he has done. He is an accelerant in the world." [32] When the Scottish government agrees that the wolves will be permitted to remain, Thomas is smug in his success: "This will suit Douglas very nicely, Thomas says. A new icon for a new nation. I wouldn't be surprised if the wolf ends up on the Scottish flag" ('The Exposed'). A national icon, indeed, that bears the signifying weight of both beast and sovereign – the declaration of a new nation and a new wild, but with an ineradicable trace of the old power at its root.

This, perhaps, is the crucial problem with *The Wolf Border*'s politics. It is a text that taps into something significant about the desires and affects that have driven both rewilding and Scottish independence as utopian, system-breaking projects. The potential for radical change in the structures of power and ownership, through the breaking of Britain and the making of a new state, animated much of the independence movement's political drive, and Hall's version of the newly-born state redistributes wealth and power with seeming ease; she takes up the slogans of the pro-independence left – "Britain

[32] This acceptance of existing power structures for the sake of wild nature recalls Wightman's critique of conservationist organisations in Scotland, who have tended to acquire large tracts of land to control its management rather than intervening in the politics of landownership and campaigning for reform. In 'Hunting and Hegemony,' he quotes a critic who opines that "the rapid rise of conservation landowning in Scotland is a statement of failure not success. It represents a first aid response to the deeper problem of power over land." Ownership by conservation-minded elites, he suggests, risks transforming the landscape from a deerstalker's desert to a "benign ecological dictatorship" (13).

is for the rich, Scotland can be ours" (Hind) – and converts them into narrative fulfilment. But it is a tellingly slight narrative, devoid of the details of post-independence conflict, and such radical utopianism sometimes verges on naivety, participating in an exceptionalising narrative of Scottishness. At one point in the novel, England is described as "a country particularly owned" ('Old Country') – but Scotland, in fact, is more owned still. The entrenchment of landed power, not to mention the tentacular reach of global capital, has deep roots on both sides of the border. In this sense, the novel shares the independence movement's limitations: concentrating all political ills in the idea of "England" or "Britain", both imagine that breaking with the crumbling structures of the British state will be enough to radically remake the nation.

Conclusion: ecological power and ecological democracy

The resistance of Annerdale's gamekeeper to the wolves in framed in terms of both structured hierarchies of power and circulations of animal affect:

> "Not happy about being displaced in the chain of command, for she now holds a lateral position, perhaps even a higher position. Certainly not happy about the reconstitution of Annerdale, with its new apex predator. She, and they, represents dire competition, beyond his experience. The beloved deer, previously targets for the noble shotgun, are to become glorified dog food." ('Everything tends')

The status of the deer is regulated by the status of who kills them, and here the wolves are stripped of their sovereignty and associated instead with their domesticated descendants – a hint that even the wildest of beasts is no match for the power of man and his "noble shotgun," even as he is usurped in the formal structures of the estate. In fact, some real-life rewilders propose that the solution to anti-wolf sentiment is a regulated reassertion of human supremacy. Licensed hunting of wolves, Monbiot writes, "strange as this may sound, could be the wolf's salvation" (115). The status of prey, as this chapter has shown, is one significant way in which animals are vested with affective value, and paradoxically, "allowing licensed hunters to shoot wolves is likely to create a powerful lobby for their protection" (115). Such managed killing also functions as a regulator of fear in both human and animal bodies: it reassures the public that wolves are "under control," minimising "unauthorised" attempts at vigilante justice; and it "keeps the wolves afraid," ensuring they don't get too comfortable in human company (115), keeping them properly wild via carefully planned violence. Lintern makes a similar proposal, framed in terms of tourist income from "a genuine sense of quarry… for a more 'discerning' and wealthy client who wants to hunt big game in the UK." Ecological and economic abundance are woven together in the bloodlust of the rich. Killing in order to restore, then, is not only about saving one endangered species (trees) from another destructive one (deer), but importantly also about saving

species from themselves and from "us," about containing the circulation of fear to maintain order. "At other times people have hunted the wolf in order to eliminate it," writes Monbiot. "Now we might hunt the wolf in order to preserve it" (116). But both modes of killing will continue to coexist, impossible to disentangle; the wolf remains caught up in interdependent circulations of necropolitics and biopolitics, capital and power, lively death and deadly life.

As I have argued, however, many rewilders also see themselves as opening space for new relations between people, animals and landscapes, more democratic organisations of nature and society. A web pamphlet titled 'Rewilding: Why Now?', available on the website of Scotland: the Big Picture, emphasises that rewilding "evolved out of traditional conservation practice, but is now an antidote to it […] It challenges established thinking and the establishment" (Eaglesham 1). It is environmental policy "not settled upon in a boardroom" but "developed organically" (2), involved with "citizen science" (3) and popular participation. It is "a sign of the times from a technological point of view" and a mode of "ecological redemption" (3), tying together high-tech modernity and its antidote in a single project. And it is resolutely pro-human, "freeing up more space for the land to be returned to nature, for the enjoyment of the masses, not the select few" (4). In a climate of widespread anti-establishment sentiment across the political spectrum, and in a moment when "the many not the few" has become a ubiquitous slogan of the left (Frankel), this new language of rewilding clearly aims to entwine itself into a broader political conversation. In breaking the linguistic and philosophical link between "conservation" and "conservatism," where nature and society alike are expected to stay static and unchanging in a perpetual present derived from an orderly past, the wild is recruited instead as a temporal disruption. It is a response to crisis and a site of hope, a resurrection of a neglected past and an opening to an unpredictable future, and many other seemingly contradictory things at once. And like politics, "there is no point at which it can be said to have arrived [...] The process is the outcome" (Monbiot 83).

Conclusions: contested territories, wild futurities

In the final days of finishing this thesis, two news stories made their way to my inbox. Both have feline protagonists, and both generate strange new frictions in the narratives and arguments I have been building here. In the *Times*, the Scottish wildcat makes another appearance, but this time its Scottishness is not the focal point: "plans are being drawn up to reintroduce the wildcat to England" (Horne). The ecological consultant behind the proposal is quoted: "As a Scot it pains me to say this but the habitat is just not as good as it is in southern England […] People have this mental image of a wildcat being an animal of rock, mountain and moor. In reality its Latin name is *Felis silvestris*, which means wood cat" (quoted in Horne). Suddenly, it seems, the wild has moved south, and Scotland's tree-stripped mountains are trumped by English forests – spaces that once seemed tame against the thrilling expanse of the Highlands, but now stake their claim to ecological abundance. But a commenter expresses scepticism that the wildcat can be welcomed back into the English multispecies community: "Not really sure this is the way forward. The damage inflicted by domestic cats on our wildlife is enormous, don't need to import 'professional' assassins to increase the mayhem" (comment on Horne). The wildcat, native or not, pure or otherwise, is too close to its invasive feline relatives, with no iconic mythology to support its claim to citizenship south of the border. The PR campaign waged on behalf of the Highland tiger, emphasising the ferocity and skill of this magnificent predator, is liable to backfire in a landscape so vigilant against ecological terrorists. Wildcat Haven, for their part, are quoted expressing equal scepticism, bristling at the idea as an "unwelcome distraction" from their pet project in the Highlands.

But Wildcat Haven are involved, too, in the prospect of a wilder England: on the same day, their spokesman is also quoted in reports that the Lynx UK Trust – an organisation run by the same handful of people – have gained the cooperation of landowners to release six lynx into the Kielder Forest, just over the border in Northumberland. If their licence application is approved, the return of large predators to the British Isles will not be Highland wolves in the distant future but English lynx in the coming years (Graham). The lynx is seen by many rewilders as a precursor to the wolf – a gentler and more socially palatable beast, "solitary" and "secretive" ('Eurasian Lynx'), less ecologically transformative but also less relentlessly present in cultural history and so unfettered by the baggage of symbolism. "Unlike wolves and bears that weaved their way into our childhood consciousness," says the blurb of recent book *The Lynx and Us*, "the lynx is largely unknown to us." If a wolf is always a villain, an opponent, or a reflection of the human, perhaps the lynx can be nothing but itself.

As this thesis has argued, though, no wild animal – however elusive, however apparently distant from human society – can fully escape the webs of meaning and power that human animals weave through the worlds we inhabit. The lynx at Kielder Forest are already plagued by politicised conflict. One *Guardian* article describes the project as creating a "bitter divide" that "splits friends and family"

as farmers clash with rewilders (Halliday and Parveen). Another reintroduction proposal by the same organisation back in Scotland is "branded brazen and presumptuous," engaged in a façade of democracy with a "sham consultation" (Cramb). A letter in *The Scottish Farmer*, meanwhile, discusses concerns over governance for a project "so close to the border," and in the question of how environmental legislation is distributed throughout the UK post-Brexit, it speculates about a potential situation in which "the UK Government turned down an application to re-introduce lynx, the Scottish Government allowed a trial, and they then moved in to England anyway" (Clements 'Lynx and devolution') – an inverted version of Hall's migrating wolves. The wild always has to grapple with power and territory, with money and law, and especially so in a space whose relation to itself and its others is so contested and contradictory. Cairns Craig writes that "far from being the projections of an ultimate unity, nations are the necessary negotiations of profound internal conflicts" (248), and wild animals and landscapes are both symbols for and participants in those conflicts; like nations, they are always "the focus of a series of competing claims" (249) for meaning, value and power.

Today, as the chaos of Brexit negotiations continues, all four nations of the United Kingdom are suspended in a state of political uncertainty. If the Scottish referendum in 2014 was a site of feral possibility, mobilizing affective energies against the United Kingdom as a means of making something different, the Brexit referendum saw the emergence of similar energies with very different political content. There is much still to be written on the extent to which the Brexit campaign drew on the same rhetorical and affective strategies as the independence campaign – ideas of sovereignty, control, democracy, anti-establishment sentiment, the status quo as "Project Fear" – but fleshed out with reactionary nostalgia, imperial arrogance and xenophobic insularity, invested not in the potential of radical change but in a reversion to something lost, a preservation of the past rather than a rewilding of the future.

The interactions between Brexit and Scottish nationhood are still playing out, and their consequences remain to be seen. Only 38% of Scottish voters opted to leave the European Union, and a second independence referendum is likely to be called, but when it will happen and what kind of politics it will engender is hard to predict. One emerging trend involves a certain taming of what Scottish independence is made to represent, "a temptation to make an argument for elite Independence based on the continuity of European institutions" (Chapman) – a defanging of its threat to the current order. A recent blog post by literary scholar Scott Hames analyses shifts in the rhetoric and politics of pro-independence material, a move away from bold utopianism to a defensive pragmatism. In focusing on the practicalities of state-building and the preservation of institutions in imagining a new Scottish state, he argues, "this future Scotland is cut off from the energies and arguments that could produce it," fetishizing a corporate managerial efficiency and disavowing the unpredictable affects of democracy. It is a process not of invention but of "reverse engineering: looking at what 'modern states' do, and commissioning a smart, sleek and efficient Scotland to match." Instead of a radical break from (and

breaking of) the British state, this mode of nationalism aspires only to replicate and refine it: "it is assumed in advance that there is no alternative to the available forms of nation-statehood, and that to imagine or desire anything substantively different from the British state will risk the whole project of escaping the British state." If the politics of devolution in the 1980s was "like riding on the back of a tiger," involving serious challenges to power and requiring a willingness to "live a little dangerously" (quoted in Hames), this new vision for independence is more like building a zoo, where sturdy barriers and cautionary signs will keep us safe from any monsters we might bring into existence.

What, then, is the relation between "wild" and "Scotland"? The answer, perhaps unsurprisingly, is multiple and unfinished. In this thesis, I have traced the conflicting histories, politics and sciences of making a Scottish wild; I have argued that wildness is a key trope in the nation's discourses of modernity and civilization, a resource in its memory-making and identity-building, a participant in its political and constitutional debates, and a repository of its suppressed anxieties. The wild is inextricably involved with colonial histories and exclusionary processes of bordering – but perhaps it can also be a space of radical reimaginings. If the nation's valued landscapes and its treasured species today bear the marks of violence, dispossession and inequality, making new spaces of multispecies community will not be an easy task: what kinds of wilds are possible will depend on what kinds of life are made to matter, what structures of relation are set up between human and nonhuman, what modes of ownership or habitation are invented to care for the land and its inhabitants. These ideas cannot only be contained within an insular national framework; their meanings and their trajectories will be shaped by interactions between the local, the regional and the global, between states, organisations and communities, between ecology as a planetary concept and the embodied specificity of particular beings and spaces. In times of environmental and political crisis, the wild must not be fossilized as a space of redemption or an Edenic refuge from its own contradictions, but perhaps its affects can begin to open "a threshold of potential" (Massumi 3).

And what, after all, is Scotland's official national animal? Not the deer or the wildcat, nor any other creature of which you might catch a glimpse if you visit: Scotland's national animal is the unicorn. The unicorn is associated with "nobility and purity," but it is also a hybrid cobbled together from incomplete realities, invented via second-hand knowledge of distant creatures – the Indian rhino, the Tibetan antelope, the Persian onager (O'Neill). It comes into being as an amalgamation of ancient mythologies, emerging scientific knowledges, artistic depictions, and opportunist commodification, and it gets attached to Scotland in the 1300s as an act of antagonism: the unicorn is the "natural enemy of the lion – a symbol that the English royals adopted around a hundred years before" (O'Neill). Today the unicorn is associated with a feminized innocence, but it has a long history of representing power, domination, and ferocity. It is an absurd, fantastical, fictional creature – and for that reason, perhaps, it's a more appropriate symbol for the nation than any real wild animal could ever hope to be.

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