REALITIES OF AN 'ORKNEY WAY':
COMMUNICATING PERCEPTIONS OF RENEWABLE
ENERGY IN ORKNEY, SCOTLAND

Sara Bowman Friend

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

2017

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Realities of an ‘Orkney Way’:
Communicating Perceptions of Renewable Energy
in Orkney, Scotland

Sara Bowman Friend

University of St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

23 September 2016
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Realities of an ‘Orkney Way’

Communicating Perceptions of Renewable Energy in Orkney, Scotland

Submitted by Sara Friend
For the Degree of Ph.D. in Social Anthropology
23rd September 2016
Orkney

Cover Map: Map of the Orkney Archipelago
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PART TWO

We, Us, Our
What is it to be Orcadian?
Belonging and Familiarity among the Renewables Community
Returning to Orcadian-ness
An Opening for Others

Alternative Perspectives
Nine Commentaries on Renewable Energy
Making Sense of it All
World-Views
Sense-making & The Flow of Meaning

The Nature of the Data
Is the Data Front-stage?
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Is the Data Inflected by Demographic Categories?
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Conclusion to Part Three

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Orkney is currently home to over 400 wind turbines and a growing marine energy industry, developing cutting edge technology for what could be called a global energy transition. Situated off the north tip of the Scottish mainland, the archipelago is also home to a long-standing local population of just over 21,000 inhabitants. In fact, habitation in these islands stretches back over 5,000 years, a connection expressed by the local population. This thesis rests at the intersection of these two points of interest: energy and locality. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork conducted between October 2013 and October 2014, this thesis analyses the communication of perceptions of renewable energy in the archipelago. It takes into consideration the specificity of one particular network of relations: the individuals employed or otherwise involved in the development and production of this energy, while situating the specificity of these perceptions within the larger body of residents. Here, collective history, the importance of place, and maintenance of identity are intimately tied up in the range of perspectives present, as well as within the very promotion of the industry. The relationship between individual perception and collective affirmation, existence of multiple spheres of realities, the simplification of realities in the communication meaning, and the relationship between nodes of interaction are all analysed. While far from a constantly discussed occurrence, the presence of renewable energy in Orkney has provided residents with a mobilising force, an impetus for discussions of the self, of identity and belonging, of the importance of place, and of the relationship between the past, present and future.
Acknowledgements

The past four years has been a roller coaster of emotions for me, and there were many points when I questioned continuing. Now I am at the end, with this completed thesis the artefact of this journey, and I am left with an immense feeling of gratitude towards all those who made this time in my life and this intellectual pursuit possible. It is difficult to decide where to begin; the order cannot reflect the amount of thanks each person or institution is due. It seems fitting to begin at the beginning, so, to that order, I must thank my primary supervisor Mark Harris, with whom I first began discussing the idea of a Ph.D. candidacy. Dr. Harris has continually provided valuable intellectual, administrative, and emotional support. Like others in my life at this time, he allowed me the space to question my commitment to this pursuit. This questioning always led back to my continued commitment, giving me confidence in my pursuit. I also thank the University of St Andrews, and in particular the Department of Social Anthropology for accepting me into the Ph.D. Research Programme. I am further grateful to the University of St Andrews for supporting my studies through the St. Leonard’s Scholarship in the 2014-2015 academic year.

My parents, Diana and Stephen Friend, have also been a source of continued support and encouragement. Thank you for the endless calls, the ups-and-downs, and for never failing to be there. You have never pushed me in a direction I did not want to go, but have always encouraged me to stick to the commitments I have made. You are both wise, kind, and truly the best. Staying with the theme of family, thank you Grandma BiCi. Your offer to read my work as it progressed in the final months of writing up helped give me the push of a weekly deadline. And to my Fiancé, William Annal – from the first day we met in the Scotrenewables office in Stromness you have always been there for me, first as an interlocutor, soon after as a friend, then later, as my fieldwork was ending, a partner. That first winter in Orkney was one of the points I questioned the Ph.D., but your kind and inclusive nature gave me the courage to stay. Since then you have continually supported my work, been a source of information, and provided valuable intellectual engagement when I have sought it out. Thank you as well for all the wonderful friends you introduced me to, and to those friends for filling my time in Orkney with fond memories.
It must be said, that none of this would be possible without the numerous individuals in Orkney who took the time to speak with me or otherwise facilitated my research. My struggle and aim for this thesis was always about accurately representing of the array of perspectives I encountered. Indeed, it was my commitment to these individuals, their perspectives, and our encounters that pushed me through difficulties during the writing up process.

I am also extremely grateful to my second supervisor, Nigel Rapport, who took on an increased supervisory role during the writing up stage of my thesis. Thank you for your time and attention to detail, your input was invaluable and your comments always appreciated. Thank you for your literature recommendations, and for your own plentiful stock of literature, which was well worth thinking with.

I must also thank my peers and fellow colleagues: The Social Anthropology Department at the University of St Andrews is not only filled with great minds, but fun and sincere individuals. There has always been someone there when I found myself wanting advice, engagement or a casual chat over a pint. The friends I have made over these four years are truly great human beings and I cannot wait to see what they will continue to bring to this world. A special thanks to Linda Scott, for your helpful grammar edits, but primarily for your confidence building words of encouragement. A huge thank you is also due to my dear friend and cheerleader, Aasta Eik-Nes. Thank you for providing me with a bed to crash in, a second home, the best book recommendations, an endless supply of tea, countless chat-filled dog walks and many fun-filled nights. And, finally, to my high school Latin and Philosophy teacher, Lucybell Jarka-Sellers, at Germantown Friends School in Philadelphia; thank you for turning me onto a path of intellectual development that would eventually lead to my taking Social Anthropology in my first year at the University of St Andrews.
-a of
‘ave have
‘bout about
’e he/she
‘em them/him
imagin’ imagine
ahint behind
an’ an
b’cus because
Ba both the name for the ball and the game, described in Chapter 2
bairn child
bride’s cog celebratory drinking vessel at weddings
cloot cloth
cu’d could
davelopment development
doon sooth down south
Uppies those born south of the cathedral in Kirkwall, designates Ba team
dyke wall
evenin’ evening
fae from
fither father
gansey jumper/sweater
gonna going to
heed head
hinda hinder
holm home, spelled ‘holm’ on maps
hoo how
hoos’ house
ken know
kirk church
me my
mither mother
morn’s morn tomorrow morning
natter to chat, in a quick and possibly gossipy manner
no not
noo now
oot out
peedie small
pleep  whine
plitter to play about in water
pootsin’ sulking, expressively being upset
sooth south
ta to
tagether together	
tawards towards
teachin’ teaching
tha the
tryin’ trying
Doonies those born north of the cathedral in Kirkwall, designates Ba team
wanna want to
wi’ with
ya you
yarn(s) a story (stories); a long chat
The wind tore at my clothes and the spray of the sea licked my face, the only part of my skin that was uncovered; everything had to be tucked in or risk being whisked away. Waves crashed over 30 meters high. I was in Orkney: an archipelago of approximately 21,000 inhabitants off the north coast of the Scottish mainland. The waters that run inbetween these islands reach speeds of up to 4.5 meters per second. In the Pentland Firth, the channel between Orkney and the mainland, speeds can reach up to 6 or 7 meters per second. Some of the fastest wind speeds in the world also blow here, where the Atlantic Ocean and North Sea meet… or, rather… sea-saw into each other (A1-19.1.15). Wind speeds are generally above 6 meters per second, and can get to be above 11 meters per second on the hills. With the majority of the land in the archipelago being quite flat, “There’s no… no obstacles, no obstructions for the wind, what-so-ever… it’s like having an off-shore wind farm,” as one friend and turbine installer in Orkney put it (T1-11.3.14).

Over the last decade Orkney has become a hub for the generation and development of renewable energy, that is, both the generation of the actual energy and the development of the required technology. The abundance of energy in the tides, waves, and wind is now being harnessed by individuals, communities, corporations and technology developers, tracked by research initiatives and promoted by the local authority. The proliferation of projects can be linked to rising global scientific, public, and political concern for what is now widely known as climate
change: the threat of rising global temperatures and the destabilization of weather systems that continue to put life as we know it in danger. The issue of anthropogenic climate change is the starting point for both my own academic interest and this thesis. It will not, however, make up the main content or substance, nor will it provide the endpoint – a point I will return to.

I came to Orkney with the intention of exploring perceptions of renewable energy, specifically among those people who worked in its production and development. From past research, conducted during my undergraduate degree, I was aware of the connection between people who invested in or worked with renewable energy and a certain environmental sensibility. However, the fieldsite for this research, a small off-the-grid semi-intentional island community off the coast of Washington State, was vastly different from the Orkney Islands, which is, to reiterate, an entire archipelago of approximately 21,000 people. My true fieldsite in Orkney, consisting of the people I spoke to and the places I visited, was much smaller.

The shift from my undergraduate fieldsite to Orkney was not direct. I had intended to go to and submitted my fieldwork proposal for another archipelagic area of Scotland. The specific site was a small island in the Inner Hebrides. The island’s population was close in number to that of my undergraduate fieldsite, and it was off-the-grid, thus not connected to the national, or any larger, electricity grid. However, for a number of issues, including my inability to find accommodation and the worry that this island may already be ‘over researched,’ I decided to shift fieldsites a month after submitting my proposal. Only later did the irony emerge as Orkney is probably much more researched than the island of my initial proposal.

My Ph.D. supervisor served as my initial connection to Orkney and told me of his friend, Magnus, whose colleague, Sigurd, worked as a wind turbine contractor for the same company and offered to put us in touch. Sigurd was born in Orkney as part of the long-standing local population there. One does not go far in Orkney, at least as a tourist or incomer, before being introduced to the archipelago’s long history of human inhabitation. However, Sigurd did not speak about Orkney’s history that night on the phone. Instead he told me about what I was most interested in at the time. “Orkney is one of tha centres of renewable energy generation and development right

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1 Here the concern was with academic attention, and also the media. As the proposed island had been
"n oo,\" he said. \"We’ve got EMEC, ICIT, and,\" Sigurd continued to mention more companies and organizations than I could write down or keep track of at the time.

I had heard about Orkney once before I decided to check it out as a fieldsite. The area was at this time an imagined land, with not much to it in my mind but the name and the knowledge of its existence as archipelagic area of Scotland. Orkney seemed to fulfil my two main criteria for a fieldsite: it was an island region and was home to a number of renewable energy projects and developments. Sigurd was enthusiastic about it so I thought, \"Maybe I should just go?\" On the other hand, Orkney was about twenty times the size of the fieldsite I wrote my proposal for. There were a number of small communities investing in wind turbines in Orkney, but also a burgeoning marine energy scene and hundreds of individually owned turbines. While these issues of scale would surely make a difference, I did not dwell on it too much; I was ready to get into the field and did not want to waste any more time deliberating.

This is how I arrived in Orkney: slightly unprepared and with the naïve optimism that the proliferation of renewable energy initiatives would allow for the easy transition of my research project.

**Entering the Field**

It was late October when I arrived in Orkney to begin my preliminary fieldwork, which involved living in Orkney for a while before officially changing my fieldsite. I left St. Andrews early in the morning and the trip took almost ten hours. I drove my Micra stuffed full of my possessions over to Dundee, then Perth where I joined the A9, the road that takes you 200 miles north to two different ports to Orkney: Gills Bay and Scrabster. I took the Pentalina, which departs from Gills Bay and docks in St. Margaret’s Hope in South Ronaldsay, then drove the final forty-five minutes through Orkney before I arriving at my destination. Daylight Savings was the week before and the sun was just setting when I reached The Mews. The Mews is a little one-bedroom studio structurally, though not internally, connected to another two-bedroom cottage and an even larger five-bedroom house. Together the complex was called Smoogro and, up until January, I was the only person living in any part of it. To get to Smoogro you have to head west out of Kirkwall, towards Stromness, on the connecting road less travelled. Smoogro is in the Orphir parish, the village which
lies roughly half way between Kirkwall and Stromness on the road less travelled. Travelling from the east, to get to Smoogro you take the first left before Orphir Village\(^2\). The turn is easy to miss, but if you are coming from Kirkwall, in the east, just look for the red post box to your right, just after the Germiston Road turn, and if you reach Orphir Village you’ve gone a mile too far. After a half-mile on the single-track road, take the first right down the potholed farm track. Around a mile down, past the two eerie barns, is Smoogro, sheltered by trees, surrounded by fields, and half a muddy-field mile from the coastline.

It was a mistake to live on my own, far outside both of the main towns. One of my first acquaintances in Orkney agreed, but only told me a good three months after I arrived when I had officially started my fieldwork and began thinking about moving to Kirkwall or Stromness. I wanted to live between the two main towns, as I wasn’t sure where I would be spending most of my time. Sigurd had spoken about renewable related activities in both places. I also needed to find a place that allowed dogs, as I had brought mine with me. Jala will be mostly absent from the rest of the thesis, but she does help describe why I decided to live alone... in what felt like the middle of nowhere, in an archipelago of strangers. Despite being one of the most loving creatures I know, Jala was far from an aid in the field. After a few bad experiences at the kennels when she was younger, Jala was suspicious of other dogs, known or unknown. We avoided all conflict and, therefore, most people we might have met out on a walk with a dog in Orkney. Her recall was terrible, but she had an abundance of chaotic energy and usually required three hours of walks spaced out throughout the day. This energy was to be expected for her breed and in addressing it daily I became well acquainted with the harsh winds and rain Orkney is known for. I thank her for this. She was my guide and my companion, joining me on all the walking paths I could find on the Mainland, and on a few of those on some of the inner and outer isles.

Sadly Jala’s presence restricted my own flexibility and thus I never did move from Smoogro. Because of these restrictions – the location of my home, my duties as a dog owner, the time of year I entered the field, and my change in fieldsite – I found settling in difficult. I was upset with myself for thinking I did not need to be more prepared, that all would work out once I arrived. Of course, looking back it could

\(^2\) Orphir Village consists of a small collection of houses, a primary school, a pub/guest-house, church, and post office.
have been impatience, but I cannot stress the importance of planning, even if – as often happens in the field – plans change.

In these early days my walks with Jala guided my movements around the islands. Along with walks in the less inhabited areas of Orkney, I would frequent those that took me around the two main towns. I walked the streets of Kirkwall and Stromness, threw the ball along Scapa Beach, and walked the path out towards Warbeth and the cemetery that looks out towards the hills of Hoy. Once a week I would set up another meeting with Colin Cameron of OREF, the Orkney Renewable Energy Forum, to inquire about work or an internship with one of the renewable companies.³ I would also visit museums and the various World Heritage Sites. In time I joined the gym, a badminton club, and later a handful of fibre craft groups and the rock-climbing club. However, these activities were spaced out through the week and only provided a brief relief from my feelings of isolation. All the while I felt stifled and stunted by my lack of knowledge about this place, by the feeling of being so removed from the lives other residents seemed to be living. I hated the lack of progress on my assumed task: to investigate the perceptions and experiences of those people who worked in renewable energy in Orkney.

**Establishing a Methodology**

During these early days I jotted down fieldnotes when I could. However, my attention remained steadfast on my intended subject of focus: renewable energy. The lack of content in my notes during these early days speaks volumes. Renewable energy was just not discussed. If it was, it was because I brought it up. Nor was the technology and infrastructure particularly visible to my untrained eye, apart from the wind turbines, that is. Before I looked up the exact addresses, I walked the streets looking for visible signs of the existence of the various companies and organizations to no avail. It was a few months before I saw my first marine energy device in the water, the snake like Pelamis wave energy generator, near the Warbeth cemetery. It was only later that I found out the majority of these companies – EMEC, Aquatera, Herriot Watt University’s International Centre for Island Technology (ICIT), and a number of the Marine technology developers – were located in the old Stromness

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³ While intimately tied to marine renewables via location and membership, at the time of my arrival OREF was looking for ways to expand its base of members to those involved in wind energy, a far more diverse and diffuse group.
Academy. Stromness was the hub for the Marine renewable energy sector, with OREF down the road in a room of the largely empty Old Commercial Hotel.

Wind energy technology was much more visible in Orkney. The proliferation of turbines – just over four hundred at the time of my arrival (Ashie 2013) – was spread thin throughout the landscape so that at least one was able to be spotted from most locations. The supporting social infrastructure of turbine contractors and installers was far less visible. The small-scale turbine contractors, all men and mostly Orcadian, worked primarily from home, or in small offices situated in a number of seemingly random locations, such as a room in the (livestock) Auction Mart and a room above an electronics shop that also doubled as a children’s toy store. I soon learned this was far from random for Orkney, where demand visibly dictated employment and business activities. Many people held more than one job and shops catered to more than one category of commerce. One of my favourite pairings (for its oddity) was a baby pram and off-licence liquor store. Along with the small-scale turbine installers, there was also one large-scale wind turbine installer located in an office on one of the winding alleyways in Stromness and the Community Energy Scotland (CES) Orkney office, the latter of which primarily aided in island community wind turbine purchases. It took months – almost the extent of my fieldwork – to figure out the locations of all of these individuals and companies. For at least the first two months the nodes and locations of renewable energy related activity remained almost completely hidden and I remained distraught, worried about how I would make the ‘right’ connections.

By January I was ready to quit, I wasn’t getting anywhere, or so I thought. Before I made any rash decisions, I decided to devise a strategy around interviewing in order to create the opportunities for connection and discussion about what I felt I was there for and to explore. I also decided to apply for a student internship with OREF, which Colin Cameron had told me about. These two actions saved my fieldwork. Conducting participant observation, or my idea of what participant observation needed to be, did not seem to be working. Again, in hindsight, such ideas could have been impatience and stubbornness. Creating connections in a new place is variable but is often a slow process. And while most of these connections came after I began the interviewing process official fieldwork, I spent a good three months making myself at least peripherally aware to those I was hoping to work with, no doubt an important process.
Before I began contacting people to ask if they would like to be interviewed, and before I began handing out flyers advertising my research interests to various offices of the marine renewable energy industry, I also made sure to make the public aware of me in the local newspaper. I submitted a description of my work and made myself contactable by including my e-mail address. The article produced fewer contacts than the flyers, but both put me in touch with a crucial and diverse group of people that spread outwards from there. This group ranged from an artist who relocated to the islands from England over a decade earlier, an Orcadian mechanical engineer who worked as a technology developer for one of the marine energy companies, and a retired builder who – despite growing up in Glasgow, a fact aurally visible in his accent – felt intimately tied to Orkney and the local population through his Orcadian parents and the summers he spent here as a child.

In late February I learned I had been accepted for the internship at OREF, one that would help my fieldwork a great deal. The internship gave me a place to go twice a week, but more importantly it provided an opening into the industry and to the relevant events, people and places. The OREF office in Stromness was small, two desks lined up against one of the long walls of a rectangular room. The Development Manager at the time, Colin Cameron, and I worked side by side those first two months. My work involved developing an electric bus scheme, one later subsumed by the local authority, and following up on small administrative tasks that Colin delegated to me. The electric bus scheme was one of three projects prospective interns could apply for, all aimed at alleviating the current strain on the electricity grid due to overproduction. The other two projects included a crop-drying scheme and socio-economic study on ‘impacts to the Orkney economy of delay in delivery of the transmission cable’. As I was told, Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE), the energy regulator in the region, and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), began looking into a third electricity cable to accommodate the power potential of the Orkney seas and wind almost a decade ago, and had even promised to deliver one years ago, a date that continued to be pushed later and later. However,

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4 I was motivated to take this action because of my previous fieldwork experience, where I just assumed word had spread about my presence, but later found most people had no idea, some of whom might not have agreed to have an anthropologist around. While Orkney was about two hundred times larger than the other location, I still felt obligated to make some sort of announcement, which would also hopefully help open up avenues for connection and discussion.
I am not sure whether or not these regulating bodies did or did not make this promise, as this information is based on word on mouth and not physical documents.

During these first two months at OREF I continued to interview a number of individuals, mainly those who worked within the renewable energy industry, often connections made at events and meetings. However, by the beginning of April I was informed that the current Development Manager was leaving for another post and asked if I would stick around at the office, answering phones and fielding e-mails, until the Board had decided on a new candidate to fill the position. While accepting this position brought me closer to the core of action, it did not necessarily put me in touch with more people on a daily basis. I spent most of the next two months alone in the OREF office. Along with answering phones and fielding e-mails to the relevant board members, I also helped prepare a number of events. It was these events I found most useful for my fieldwork.

The first was All Energy 2014 held in Aberdeen, which proclaimed to be the largest renewable energy exhibition and conference in the United Kingdom. I travelled down with the ‘Orkney contingent’ for this event as the OREF representative. I helped prepare for the Three Liners Day, an event I will return to later. What struck me most during my time at OREF and ‘in the industry’ was the feeling I was really a part of something. Even with all my solitary days at the office, there was a feeling of togetherness and of working towards something, something good. I stayed on with OREF for another two months once the new Development Manager, Shirley Barlow, started. It was at this time that OREF secured funding for a graduate position, a new Marketing Advisor. After my work finished with OREF the feelings of ‘being a part of it’ (i.e., the renewables industry) faded. To fill my time I at once resumed conducting interviews, this time reaching out to farmers, artists, and friends. Throughout and after my time at OREF I also kept up with most of the activities I started at the beginning of my fieldwork, with the exception of badminton. Along with my knitting circles I took up a wool spinning class. And of course, I continued to walk Jala daily, in all weathers, often in full high visibility waterproofs.

While I had written a methodology section in my proposal, much of this plan changed when I got to the field, largely because of the change in fieldsite, but also because the methodology I had set out did not fit the way my fieldwork developed. This initial methodology was based on working with a renewable energy company or
organization, or community development trust as was the plan for my proposed fieldsite, and only building up to interviews after taking notes on activities and conversations to see where these interviews should be directed. However, while I employed the method of interviewing far earlier than anticipated, I did still base these questions on what I had heard others talking about: why was renewable energy so successful in Orkney, why had there been such an uptake? The interviews were sometimes recorded, depending upon how comfortable the individual was with being recorded. If not recorded I would take detailed notes, then send these notes to the interviewee to allow them a chance to comment on how I written their words down. Most of these interviews were semi-structured, where I came with interview questions to prompt discussion, but also let the conversation go wherever the person speaking wanted to take it.

Along with interviews, I continued to take fieldnotes throughout. That said I have never been an avid writer or recorder of events, not because I don’t believe in its merit, but rather because I’ve never really enjoyed writing down what is happening in my life. If I ever started a diary when I was younger, it was only for a week. So along with taking fieldnotes and conducting interviews I also cut out newspaper clippings and took screenshots of various postings on Facebook or photos of flyers hanging up around Orkney. Once I returned from the field I compiled all my notes, interviews, clippings and images into a large binder, which I then indexed by topic and event. Overall my methodology was as much something that evolved with my fieldwork, as it was something that shaped it. While aspects of my methodology strongly guided my persistence to work with a particular set of individuals in Orkney, it was also highly influenced by my relationships and encounters, which evolved while I was in the field.

As a final note on the methodology, I have chosen to represent my fieldnotes and interview transcripts in a particular way in this thesis. Inspired by Michael Lange’s (2007) citation of fieldnotes in his ethnography of Norwegian-Scottish identity in Orkney, I often cite quotes, passages and information from my fieldnotes, such as at the end of the first paragraph in this thesis, i.e. (A1-19.1.15). The first section of this citation is a coded reference to the person, place, or event; the second section is the date. I quote both fieldnotes and direct transcripts, with transcripts identified by a poem-like format used to convey the rhythms of speech. I also include
dialect where possible, however, I am neither a linguist nor a dialect specialist, and there is surely room for improvement in this area.

**Establishing a Fieldsite**

Much like aspects of my methodology, my fieldsite emanates from the particular path I took through Orkney, outlined above. By looking at my fieldsite this way it can be seen to encompass the people I met and the places I frequented, which are not necessarily Orkney in its entirety. It was my intention to work primarily with individuals who worked in the renewables industry, but as I found this difficult in the beginning, I used my time in other ways that allowed me to get to know other places and people. In navigating these aspects of research I rooted myself in a number of other intersecting worlds: the activities I joined, my work within the renewables industry, the interviews I conducted and the friendships I made. At the time I mentally separated the activities I was involved in and friendships I made from my work in the industry and the interviews I conducted. I thought of these former interactions and encounters as ‘my time,’ whereas at work and in the interviews I was an ethnographer doing ‘research.’ I should note that at work I was also an intern and an employee and often put these roles before my role as the ethnographer, especially when in the office.

Despite this initial mental separation, I soon found when I came back from the field that these ‘other’ experiences could not be separated from my overall knowledge of Orkney. Nor could they be separated in the daily rhythms of life in Orkney. The worlds of work and life (family, friends, activities), whether in the renewables sector or as a farmer or electrician, were far from separate. Nor were they the same, but rather intersected, drawing different people together in different situations creating various overlapping networks of relations. It is for this above reason that the renewables industry in Orkney can be seen as part of Orkney itself. It may not be or at least seem that way for every individual, but through those who work in the industry and live in Orkney it has been woven into the networks of relations that underpin social life in the archipelago.
Chapter Structure

The thesis is broken up into three parts. The first part comprises of three chapters and serves to impart further background information. Chapter 1, ‘Situating the Research’, deals with relevant anthropological literature, giving disciplinary context for the information that follows and laying a foundation for the texts and authors I will address in more detail throughout the thesis. Such literature includes the topics of renewable energy and climate change, belonging and identity, and the regional literature of the British Isles and Orkney itself. I also introduce some of the phenomenological underpinnings with which I entered the field, setting up for a return to the relevance of this approach Chapter 8, ‘Alternative Perspectives’.

Chapter 2, ‘The Orkney Locality’, includes an overview of Orkney as a locality, to borrow Hugh Raffles’ (1999) use of the term. In this use locality represents both the place and the people of an area, a nod to the idea that these entities are inseparable in the experience and flow of social life. Chapter 3, ‘Entities of Renewable Energy’, includes an overview of what could be considered the renewables industry, those individuals, companies and organizations involved in the production and generation of renewable energy in Orkney. ‘Industry’ is used locally as a loose term to describe the particular branch of economic activity that the production of renewable energy involves; it is also often used to describe the people, companies, and organizations working in this area. This chapter describes the various entities, and their roles, as well as the types of people found in each area of this diverse and diffuse whole. The renewable energy industry is not separate from the Orkney locality; however, it can be identified as distinct, as would the fishing industry, or the whaling industry, other previous booms in the Orkney economy.

In Part Two, which is also comprised of three chapters, I begin to build the main argument for this thesis. The chapters here continue to focus in on the renewables industry by analysing a particular way of speaking or discourse I found to be prevalent. This discourse often pulls on particular moments in Orkney’s past, categorized as history, to make sense of the current energy production. Chapter 4, “‘It’s in Our History’”, introduces and analyses the use of history, labelling this discourse as ‘the myth of cohesion.’ Here ‘myth’ does not stand to discredit the reality of the world this discourse represents, but rather seeks to emphasise its role as ‘speech with a message’ (Barthes 2009 [1957]), and as a way of communicating one particular way of seeing. I discuss why the term ‘myth’ is better suited than
‘discourse’ for the argument I am making. In Chapter 5, ‘Working Together’, discussion of the myth of cohesion centres on one particular component of this myth, which is the quality and tendency of Orcadian people to work well together. Here I look at the ways in which this discourse, this myth, is not only one employed by local residents, but also by the industry itself. I ask the question: does the speaker make a difference? And finally consider how the applicability of this particular facet of working together legitimises widespread use. Chapter 6, ‘Attitude’ looks closely at one component of the myth of cohesion: attitude. Like ‘working together,’ ‘attitude’ is a quality of the local people grounded in history and it is a quality people reference when making sense of the current presence of renewable energy. Here I explore what this attitude is and also clarify why myth can be seen as the communication of a particular way of seeing or world-view. I also consider the source of this myth and its components. Finally, I explore how this attitude is particular to Orkney, setting up for this first chapter in Part Three, Chapter 7, ‘We, Us, Our’.

In the first chapter of Part Three I look at the two major employments of collectivity – being Orcadian and being part of the renewables industry – I encountered while conducting fieldwork. Here I continue to question how the myth of cohesion can be incorporated into both local and an industry sense-making and promotion, but also how various individuals relate to Orkney in terms of belonging. In Chapter 8, ‘Alternative Perspectives’ I recount a number of alternative perspectives I became increasingly aware of throughout my fieldwork. I analyse the variety perspectives in a particular understanding of phenomenology that focuses on life history and one’s engagements with place. I also briefly look at these perspectives in terms of ‘world-views’ (Rapport 1993). Finally I consider the variety of perspectives in terms of sense-making, and how the compulsion to make sense, a fundamentally individual process, necessitates individually informed meaning. Of course, this individual process of sense-making can occur collectively, it can overlap and intertwine with the experience of others, the occurrence of which can help make sense of how the guise of collective identities and world-views come into being. In Chapter 9, ‘The Nature of Data’ I analyse the kind of data that informs this thesis. This analysis provides a different angle of inquiry into my research, while further exploring how this research emanates from my own particular journey through Orkney. Finally, the Conclusion revisits the evolution of this thesis and the main argument.
Concluding Remarks

In Orkney there is an extensive community of residents, many with deep roots to the place. All are intimately connected to the place they call home. This thesis seeks to explore this community of residents while focusing in on a particular node of this complex whole. It seeks to provide specificity and a larger context. This node is rooted in an interest that brought me to Orkney, the generation and development of renewable energy. This interest guided my initial movements around and interactions with the people of this archipelago. However, this initial interest did not serve as the foundation for my entire experience of Orkney. Through my efforts to keep busy when I was not involved with the renewable energy industry I embedded myself in other areas, other nodes. It is such an experience that enabled me to represent both the specificity and the larger context.
Part One

A Narrowing In
This is an experiment, an academic inquiry into two points of observable interest and how they might overlap. The first point of interest is that which initially guided my anthropological research and my choice of fieldsite: the Orkney Islands. This point of interest is renewable energy and how humans engage with and perceive the importance and implementation of this resource. Over the past decade there has been an explosion of renewable related activities: the establishment of a marine energy testing centre that facilitates the technology developers it draws to the area, the introduction of over 400 wind turbines of all sizes into the landscape, the implementation of a smart grid to manage the excess energy being produced, and a local supply chain, which supports all of the above areas. The second point of interest came later, emanating out from my field notes and experience, and from the lives of those with whom I spent most of my time. This interest is the individual association with a collective and a sense of belonging that is often associated with a particular group identity. While the first point of interest served to orient my research, directing my attention primarily towards those in Orkney who worked in or were otherwise involved in the development and generation renewable energy, it is the second point of interest that has consumed my mind and the majority of my analysis after returning from the field.

The regional anthropological literature of the British Isles spans over sixty years and for a large part holds the issues of collective association and individual elaboration at its core. This literature serves to orient both how I came to see my field and how I finally planned the structure of this thesis. Additionally, the existing research into issues of renewable energy and social life is highly relevant to a number of current debates in anthropology. A review of this literature will present the wider framework of research to which this thesis will contribute. In addressing these two stocks of literature will continue my so-called ‘experiment,’ one that is particularly relevant when considering what perspective the long-standing focus on the balance between collectivities and individuals in the anthropology of the British Isles might add to current and more globally oriented debates on what Dominic
Boyer (2011) has coined as ‘energopolitics’ – or the politics surrounding the generation, use, and dissemination of energy. In the context of Orkney these two points of interest can be continually swapped to provide a window onto the other.

Energy and Anthropology

As Laura Nader, professor of anthropology at UC Berkeley and author of The Energy Reader (2010), argues, “Human evolution is intricately tied to energy use” (2011: 10). The manipulation of energy sources – from the food that fuels our bodies to the use of wood, coal, oil and more recently renewable energy, primarily in the form of wind, solar, wave and tidal – has enabled human populations to flourish, growing in both size and complexity. A more temporally isolated version of Nader’s comment, one that might read, “Everyday social life is intricately tied to energy use,” underlies most, if not all, current work on energy within the field of social anthropology.

Early anthropological work in the area of energy overlaps the development of anthropological theory as well as anthropological approaches to the relationship between social life and the environment, one presented as a dichotomy for most of this time. Leslie White, an American anthropologist and cultural evolutionist working in the mid-twentieth century, was one of the first to place specific attention on ‘energy.’ While White claimed, “Everything in the universe may be described in terms of energy” (1943: 335), he used this premise to posit ‘culture,’ or ‘inner resources,5 above ‘nature,’ or ‘outer resources.’ Furthermore, White goes on to analyse the effort expounded in the extraction resources, the efficiency of extraction and the amount of goods produced to argue for an evolutionary development of culture. While the framing of White’s argument may be similar to that of Nader, by focusing on the ‘development of culture’ White posits the intricacy of human interaction and the process of meaning-making on a continuum, suggesting a particular order exists through which all social groups progress or can be positioned. This dangerous and damaging theory plagued anthropology and western thought for a number of years. The theory, its use during the colonial era to justify the mistreatment and subordination of other peoples and the perpetuation of this

5 For White these inner resources included symbolic interpretation, spiritual satisfaction, and “singing, dancing, myth making, etc.” (White 1943: 336).
subordination in a great deal of the discourse on development and aid has also been detrimental to the general use of the word ‘development.’ In this thesis the word ‘development,’ will instead refer to a) the unavoidable process of change that occurs with the passing of time or b) a particularly situated growth, as in the development of renewable energy and the renewable energy industry in Orkney, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Most of the anthropological work on energy has been more recent. Ethnographies concerning mining, drilling and the extraction of fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas) make up a plentiful part of this literature. While not strictly an anthropologist, Patrick Scott’s *Stories Told* (2007) provides critical reflective documentation of his time travelling with the Berger Inquiry – an investigation into the social, economic and environmental impacts of the proposed Mackenzie Valley (gas) Pipeline that would traverse the Northwest Territories – back in the 1970s and 1980s. The Berger Inquiry ultimately found the proposed pipeline a threat to both the local environment and native populations, influencing the Canadian Government’s decision to deny permission at the time (Scott 2007).

Suzana Sawyer’s *Crude Chronicles* (2004) follows the movements of an Ecuadorian grassroots organization, the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza (OPIP), as they challenged multinational oil corporations looking to drill in their territory. Throughout the book Sawyer discusses the organization of the group; analyses the processes of building unity, the shifting nature of identities, and conflicts between the communities involved; she produces a condemning critique of implementing neoliberal policies in the third world (2004). Importantly, Sawyer presents herself as an activist, deeply involved in the activities of the group she is studying, and therefore contributes to a general movement in anthropology that questions the role of the anthropologist as a neutral observer, one rooted in the

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6 With the exception of a few studies, such as the mid-twentieth century sociological study titled *Coal is our Life* (Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter 1956 in Rapport 2000). There are likely numerous studies on similar topics in other areas of the world. Indeed, Richard Adams notes the work of Robert Carneiro, Marvin Harris, Roy Rappaport, Marshall Sahlins, Elman Service, William Kemp, R. Brooke Thomans, Steven Beckerman and Daniel Gross in his discussion of ‘The Study of Energy in Anthropology’ (1978: 298).

7 Ethnographies on resource extraction span the world. Much of this literature has to do with non-energy resources, however, once the specifics of what goes into the production of the infrastructure of energy extraction and production is appreciated, this becomes much more complex. For the sake of space, I focus on texts related specifically to energy, although a broader look at the literature of resource extraction would most likely bring interesting and important conclusions for the more specific genera of energy.
questions of representation and interpretation brought about through the Writing Culture Debates in the 1980s.

Ethnographies of areas and peoples affected by oil extraction are also present in the regional literature of Papua New Guinea and Africa, specifically Nigeria. James Weiner’s (1994) work with the Foi people in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea is primarily concerned with local perceptions of the discovery and extraction of oil in this region. Weiner describes how “fluid facts, the social facts about body fluids, and mythical fluidity of factual fluidity come together in the New Guinea world felicitously in their own origin myths” (1994:39). By examining a number of myths associated with fluids and reproduction – one in particular involves oily substances associated with menstrual blood and the ‘menstruation’ of the *Campnosperma brevipetiolata* tree in the form of yellow-orange sap – Weiner shows how the Foi have incorporated the extraction of petroleum oil by Western multinational corporations into their own cosmology. James Ferguson’s (2005) critique of James Scott’s *Seeing Like A State* (1998) leads him to an analysis of what he calls ‘extractive enclaves’ in Africa. Ferguson claims that while oil companies and other resource extraction projects are located in various areas of Africa and seem to contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), due to the neoliberal systems in place and local corruption – these areas still see none of the profit.

The clearest case of extractive enclaving (and no doubt the most attractive for the foreign investor) is provided by offshore oil extraction, as in Angola, where neither the oil nor most of the money it brings in ever touches Angolan soil. (Ferguson 2005: 379)

Ferguson uses this and other examples from the continent to argue that whole capital is invested in geographically dispersed extraction enclaves; the flows of capital do not cover the globe, but instead amass in discrete locations (2005).

Numerous other texts could also be discussed. However, the above serve to depict the range of topics and locations associated with the anthropological study of

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8 Some notable texts include articles by Caura Wood; Sandy Smith-Nonini; Canay Özden-Shilling; Bridge Firat; Charlotte Johnson; Stephanie Rupp; Cristina Cielo, Lisset Coba and Ivette Vallejo; Ben Campbell, Jon Cloke and Ed Brown; Austin Lord; James and Ann Acheson; and Davida Wood – all of which are discussed in Thomas Love and Cindy Isenhour’s “Energy and Economy: recognizing high energy modernity as a historical period” and included in the same issue of *Economic Anthropology* 3(1) (2016). Dominic Boyer (2014) also mentions a number of anthropologists who worked on issues of energy in the 1970s and 1980s, namely, Jean Nordstrom, James Boggis, Nancy Owens and JoAnn Scootkis (1977); Lynn Robins (1984); John Kruse, Judith Kleinfeld and Robert Travis (1982). He notes these authors mainly focus on the social impact of energy development for indigenous peoples.
fossil fuel extraction. Key topics include the loss of indigenous people’s land, the threat to previously remote local communities and their way of life, the continued relegation of non-Western peoples through Western systems of economy and business for the benefit of the Western world, and the ways in which particularly situated peoples conceive and make sense of the resources and practices of extraction involved. Here, Weiner’s (1994) article stands as a counter example to the narrative of exploitation, with the Foi incorporating the presence of oil into their own origin story. In these ethnographies local areas of resource extraction can be positioned as ‘non-Western’ and the imposing force of resource extraction positioned as ‘Western,’ but it is a stark dichotomy that I find unsettling, as it suggests there are two forces in the world. While representative of a particular reality, the focus should be on how extraction in particularly located areas is often for the benefit of far off regions and how through this extraction often comes the implementation and coercion of different ways of being and thinking.

Anthropological critiques about the social impacts of fossil fuel extraction have also been accompanied by increasing evidence concerning the globally detrimental affects the uses of this source of energy has. The notion of unlimited growth fuelled by these unlimited resources has also come into question. The past three decades in particular have seen an overwhelming acceptance of the damaging effects a heightened dependence on previously considered unlimited fossil fuels has on the stability of our ecosystem. The threat has been labelled in terms of ‘climate change’ and ‘peak oil’ and has spurred on the race to find affordable alternative solutions. Where the threat of climate change is concerned these alternative solutions primarily include renewable energy and nuclear energy. More drastic forms of fossil fuel extraction – such as fracking and the mining of tar sands – are the primarily solutions where peak oil is concerned.

These new sources of energy have also attracted the attention of anthropologists from around the world, with much of the literature acknowledging the acceptance of climate change, peak oil and the detrimental effects of fossil fuel dependence as their opening. In opposition to the imposition and coercion of fossil fuel extraction, many early publications have focused on the autonomy allowed by off-the-grid renewable energy. An early albeit short publication by Eric Dean documents how much of Zanzibar was able to avoid being affected by the loss of their sub-sea electricity cable because of newly installed solar photovoltaic panels.
(2008). Dean notes, “The panels represent the decentralized and diversifying form of contemporary development projects” (2008: 25), a comment that alludes to the relegation I spoke of above, in which certain areas of the world are placed into or kept in positions of dependence through systems of governance, economics, and, here, energy. Other ethnographies also show how renewable energy sources allow for heightened self-sufficiency in remote areas (Kendrick 2011; Pinker 2016), with both Kendrick (2011) and Pinker (2016) depicting the areas they are describing within the wider complex political and economic systems in which they are entrenched.

Particularities of the intricate relationship between politics, projects, economies and local residents is expressed in almost all the anthropological literature on the subject of renewable energy. Cymene Howe and Dominic Boyer are particularly well known for their work in this area. Howe has contributed work on both the specific region of Oaxaca, Mexico (2011), and larger issues confronting Latin America as a whole (2015). In Oaxaca, Howe and Boyer conducted research with the local residents, activists, journalists, government officials and transnational wind energy corporations involved with a number of large scale wind farms in the isthmus (Howe 2011). The force and dependability of wind in this region, as in Orkney, makes it an ideal place for the capture of wind energy. However, much of the land is owned and managed by indigenous communities through a system called ejido. There is a long history to this system, one that involves issues of political autonomy and concerns about the government exploiting their land. Howe describes how current negotiations draw on a ‘communalist logic,’ which highlights the “promise that the bounty of wind can benefit all” (2011: 8). The Oaxaca wind case brings up a number of important and widely relevant issues. While not always true, many renewable energy projects operate in post-colonialist informed negotiations in which the communalist logic is attempted.

Similar to Howe’s work in Oaxaca, James and Ann Acheson (2016) discuss the numerous factors involved in the success of a proposed offshore wind power development in Maine. Their article outlines the stages of state planning permission, agreements with energy regulators, public support, and financial backing through a bid for government funding that the project navigated. Through a survey the pair found that a great deal of Maine residents backed the project primarily on moral grounds, “A majority agreed or strongly agreed that humans had done great damage to the environments and that the offshore wind power would help to solve this
problem” (2016: 166). Many also agreed the project would help bring jobs to the area and reduce dependence on foreign oil. Another smaller, yet still significant, portion of the public was concerned with aesthetics, noise, hazards to the navigation of fishing zones, and high subsidies paid by the people. These concerns usually influenced an individual’s choice to oppose the project. Such work shows the range of factors involved in decision-making behind ‘public opinion’. It is for some of the previous reasons that Ben Campbell, Jon Cloke, and Ed Brown (2016) argue against the homogenization of ‘energy communities’ warning that such rhetoric glosses over the inescapable individual intricacies of human life.

Other anthropologists, including Campbell, Cloke and Brown (2016), have approached the issues prompting the energy transition by discussing much broader themes central to understanding how we arrived at this situation of climate change and peak oil in the first place and where it might lead us; ‘we’ and ‘us’ can be taken to mean the Western world, although there are complications with this and other generalising categories. Again, I caution the reader to think of this ‘we’ and ‘us’ as the main energy consumers, who have assumed the mentality of unlimited growth, one often associated with neoliberal politics. Dominic Boyer in particular discusses how energy has fuelled the current modern statecraft and political economy (2011, 2014). He also discusses the possibilities a shift in energy sources and production might open up (ibid). Boyer argues that ‘energopolitics,’ or “power over (and through) energy” (2011: 5), are still at play in these new energy markets, drawing attention to the fact that a transition away from fossil fuels may not necessarily signal a move away from the current power politics. Laura Nader (2011) has discussed similar issues, placing her focus, however, on perceptions of risk, growth models and imagined futures. Nader’s earlier work, *Energy Reader* (2010), calls for and begins to provide an interdisciplinary approach to the energy transitions and the question of how we all ‘meet our needs.’ In a similar vein, Thomas Love and Cindy Isenhour’s (2016) article on ‘high-energy modernity as a historical period’ argues that a more public and engaged anthropology is needed to understand how people are experiencing this ‘unprecedented change’ from high-energy to alternative energies. I would argue that these alternative energies present an unprecedented change as they often conjure up notions of a reciprocal relation between ‘social’ and ‘natural’ life in which the two are inextricable intertwined, breaking down the previous dichotomy.
that has posited ‘humans’ or ‘culture’ over ‘nature’. As such this unprecedented change also brings about intriguing new possibilities for cosmopolitan studies, in the pursuit of understanding “what humans can make of themselves as ‘free acting’ beings who are nonetheless destined to share the same world for better or worse with others akin to themselves” (Wardle and Shaffner n.d.: 2).

Despite this ‘unprecedented change,’ we must be wary about positioning renewable energy projects as entirely distinct, removed from criticisms directed at the management and extraction of fossil fuels. As both Cymene Howe and the Acheson’s work suggest, these projects can threaten the value systems and practices of local residents in the name of sustained progress and power, whether that be ejido land management in Oaxaca or fishing industries and aesthetics of the coast of Maine. What sets most of these projects apart is arguably the increased concern for environmental sustainability and local acceptance – whether everyone at the local level feels this concern results in their views being respected is another question. Such realities show that while renewable sources of energy may be ‘greener,’ ‘cleaner,’ and ‘inexhaustible’, they can still have a very serious impact on the lives of those living in the areas of operation.

The above cautioning is no clearer than in Knight and Argenti’s recent article regarding the recent development of numerous large-scale renewable energy farms in Greece. Renewable energy resources are rich in Greece; they provide lucrative areas for foreign multinational investment, through which the Greek government has planned to repay the national debt (Knight and Argenti 2015). In the regionally distant areas of Thessaly and the Aegean island of Chios, land historically devoted to agriculture is changed into farms for the production of solar and wind energy, respectively. For farmers, the production of energy outweighs the financial benefits of working the land. However, despite the financial incentives the transition has neither been easy or pleasant. Residents in both areas see these farms as a new kind of occupation, likened to that experienced during the Ottoman era and the Second World War. What’s more, the rents provided by multinational investors are not enough to pull most residents out of poverty, with families burning illegally sourced logs, and sometimes furniture (Knight 2016) to keep warm in the winter; the cost of petrol has now far spiralled out of their financial reach. The disproportionate flows of

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*Please excuse my implementation of the dichotomy in the very discussion of its break down.*
capital depicted in Ferguson’s (2005) article comes to mind, with Knight and Argenti also referring to these new practices of sourcing energy as ‘extractive economies.’

Jessica Smith’s (2016) work with American coal mining towns echoes the above caution as well. Smith describes how the booming coal town she grew up in is now in decline due to the closure of the mine, the result of a nationwide effort to cut down on fossil fuel emissions. People struggle with balancing the morality of clean energy with the loss of jobs and means of subsistence. Although not ingrained in centuries of tradition, the loss of coal can be likened to the coming of coal, as a way of life and whole ontologies are called into question. This comparison does not seek to belittle the fight of native peoples against coal companies in the early 1900s, as these fights were part of a long history of violence and colonialisit agendas under the guise of ‘manifest destiny.’ Rather, it seeks to point out that, just as the extraction of particular resources has brought shifts in ways of being and knowing, so has and will current energy transitions.

Finally, Mette High’s recent work also promises to engage critically with another aspect of the current trope that green (i.e., renewable energy) is good and black (i.e., coal, oil, and gas) is bad (2016). Shifting from the extractive economy of gold in Mongolia to that of fracking in the United States, High’s work focuses on oil and gas employees who are increasingly criticized by a progressively environmentally conscious public. Preliminary work suggests a move away from current social responsibility frameworks, arguing this is because not “all energy actors move within or share the values of these corporate domains” (2016: 6 conference booklet). By placing emphasis on the ethics of these actors, High emphasises the ethical dimension involved in all energy related activities.

The above work demonstrates that energy relationships are often critical points of negotiation between local populations, governments, and corporations, with numerous other actors also involved. While specifics of these relationships differ between projects and locations, issues of energy bring up questions about land rights, power (who has the right?), and economy. Current systems of energy use and production are intimately tied up in ways of being and living, so that changes in energy use and production often elicit changes to ways of being, thinking and living. While the shift to renewable sources of energy may signal a global shift in the way humans see themselves in relation to the rest of the world, as interconnected and not
dominant over, the literature above also suggests that its production, development and distribution may not solve all the problems of the previous energy era.

**Literature of the British Isles**

Most of us know the origin stories, the colonial roots and the armchair anthropologist, Rivers and Malinowski leading the way in the early 1900s with their lengthy fieldwork stints. In the early years, anthropology was the study of the ‘other,’ the exotic and unknown. However, in the mid-1900s, anthropologists began to turn their attention ‘home,’ to Britain and, in doing, so began to see the concept of the ‘other’ and subject of the human in a very different light. For some, like Raymond Firth (1956 in Rapport 2000), fieldwork in Britain was a secondary endeavour, after having established their place in the discipline in ‘more credible’ locations; for Firth this was in the Solomon Islands with the Tikopia. For many others, however, like Alwyn Rees (1951 in Rapport 2000), Michael Banton (1955, 1964 in Rapport 2000), Valdo Pons (1955 in Rapport 2000), Ronnie Frankenberg (1956, 1957 in Rapport 2000), and Ervine Goffman (2008 [1959]), Britain would mark the foundation of their research. Some of the above produced mass studies, more akin to Sociology and Social Geography than Anthropology, however together they showed an increase in the value and importance of social analysis in the UK itself. These authors challenged the notion that there was not much to be learned from fieldwork at home, a home that set the standard for the ‘other,’ and instead began to show that the ‘other’ is merely a state of perspective.

Goffman is perhaps the most relevant of these early ethnographers of Britain. Originally from Canada, Goffman’s doctoral fieldwork took him to the small island of Unst in Shetland, another northerly Scottish archipelago with Norse roots, a few hundred miles north of Orkney. Fieldwork in Unst lead Goffman to establish the dramaturgic analysis of social life in his *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (2008 [1959]). Here Goffman likens social interaction to theatrical performance. In the ‘front-stage’ roles are performed, with occupations and positions within society informing the way individuals interact with one another. This arena is contrasted against a ‘backstage’ area where the complexities and contradictions – the preparations and the developments – occur. While Goffman likens front-stage interactions to performances, he argues these performances are not necessarily
intentional. Instead these performances can be seen as the ‘public selves’ we all inherently present to the world in face-to-face interactions.

Another notable early ethnographer of the British Isles is Ronald Frankenberg (1990 [1956]). Trained in both pre-clinical sciences and anthropology at the University of Cambridge, Frankenberg studied under Max Gluckman at Manchester University, as the ‘Manchester School’ school of thought was being developed (Gluckman 1990). Frankenberg, like many others at the time, intended to explore the structural elements of the community he was studying, in particular, the recreational activities that brought the villagers together. However, not only did Frankenberg delve deeper into how the internal relations of those involved affected the functionality of these activities, but also how the desire for these activities stood as a symbol for the group’s desire to be a community. Frankenberg describes these activities as arenas in which internal relations – conflicts, disputes, gossip and feuds – were worked out. By focusing on what these activities stood for, beyond themselves, Frankenberg’s work marks the beginning of a shift from structure and form to content, substance and, finally, meaning: one that tracks the progression of the anthropology of the British Isles. This shift was solidified in the work of Anthony Cohen, whom I discuss shortly.

The 1960s and 1970s saw a slight decrease in the anthropological attention gained in the previous decade with James Littlejohn (1963 in Rapport 2000), Sheila Cunnison (1966 in Rapport 2000) and Clement Harris (1974 in Rapport 2000) among the few who contributed during this time. The 1980s, however, saw another proliferation of work, primarily by Anthony P. Cohen, who was to carry on Frankenberg’s symbolic inclinations and set in motion what is now known as the British Symbolic Approach to Anthropology. Cohen, like Goffman, worked in Shetland, but on a different island, Whalsay. His fieldwork spanned a great transition, the coming of the oil industry in Shetland. While his contemporaries in the region were placing their attention on the direct effects of this change – such as Judith Ennew’s (1980) work on marginalisation and out-migration in the Western Isles; Reginald Byron’s (1981, 1986) work with Burra fishermen and economic change in Shetland; and Diane Forsyth (1982) work on urban-rural migration on one of the small isles of Orkney – Cohen turned his attention to a more general examination of the human subject: the shifting nature of symbols through which
individuals and groups continuously mark off their collective identity (1978, 1982, 1986, 1985, 1987).\(^{10}\)

Cohen’s symbolic focus echoes that of Clifford Geertz (1957) and Victor Turner (1967) and continued the solidification of symbolic approach within the wider discipline. In his (1987) ethnography, *Whalsay: Symbol, Segment and Boundary in a Shetland Island Community*, Cohen emphasised the shifting network of individual interpretation and expression that lies beneath any social group, however cohesive it may seem. Of Whalsay Cohen writes, “The ‘community’ as a conscious collective… manages a tricky balancing act: of collectivity and individuality, of similarity and difference, of the simple mask adorning a complex face” (1987: 201). The balancing here is of *form* and *meaning*. Form is collective and common, whereas meaning is unique and individual. Symbols\(^{11}\) have both form and meaning, enabling individuals to easily connect on the level of form, but not necessarily on the level of meaning. Of course, connecting on the level of meaning is fully possible and, I would argue, much more probably when individuals have a shared stock of knowledge and similarity in experiences, as Cohen argues is also the foundation of both a collective sense of belonging and identity.

Another crucial argument in Cohen’s work concerns how the solid front of a community or social group is often defined in terms of an ‘other’, against which it is set (1978, 1982, 1985, 1986, 1987). Furthermore, the presentation of the front may not always be the same, but changes depending upon the audience (1978, 1986). This oppositional pairing is often phrased in terms of ‘insiders and outsiders’ or ‘locals and incomers’ and, after the work of Cohen, saw a great deal of attention in the anthropological and social geographical literature of this region.\(^{12}\) In the 1980’s Peter Mewett explored similar themes concerning life in a small village on the Western Isle of Lewis, also in Scotland (1986). Turning the idea of insider-outsider relations

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\(^{10}\) Okely’s (1983) work *The Traveler-Gypsies* also came out around this time and was primarily conducted amongst Gypsies in mainland England and Ennew (1980), Byron (1981, 1986), Forsyth (1982) and Cohen (1978, 1982, 1986, 1985, 1987) were conducted in archipelagic regions of Scotland. However, Okely’s insightful analysis was important in challenging ideas of Gypsy communities as isolated and threatened by industrialization and modernization.

\(^{11}\) I mentioned above a difference in structure and content. To be more specific structure is the activities, rituals and institutions that exist within a social group, whereas content is the individual relations, symbols, actions and experiences that make up daily life.

\(^{12}\) The previous work of Judith Okely (1983) on traveller-Gypsies could also fall into the category as it explored how internal systems and practices reinforce the separation of Gypsies and non-Gypsies in the United Kingdom. However, it would take a deeper reading of this text to tease out these connections.
on its side, Jane Nadel-Klein (1991) discusses localism explicitly in terms of external perceptions, informed by her time in a fishing village on the east coast of Scotland, between Aberdeen and Dundee. However, it is important to remember that while collectivities may be defined in opposition to an ‘other,’ it is at the level of the individual that collectivities are best understood, a point I found particularly present in the ethnographic material that informs this thesis.

Cohen’s acknowledgment of the individual as a crucial point of focus also marked a shift in wider anthropological attention, again, particularly notable in the anthropological literature of the UK. In the book published from his Ph.D. thesis, *Diverse World-Views in an English Village* (1993), Nigel Rapport exaggerated this focus. In this work Rapport primarily focuses on the lives and interactions of two individuals with whom he lived and worked. Through discourse analysis Rapport reveals that, while part of a particularly identifiable community sharing an intimate stock of knowledge and experiences, these individuals each had and expressed multiple world-views depending on the context of the situation and conversation they were in. Often these conversations would carry on with each person following their own ‘way of seeing,’ talking past each other to put their own view forward. At any one moment each individual may be operating within any one of their world-views, seeing and slotting the world into the categories of their own interpretation. Rapport’s attention to micro-situations further examines the interplay between forms and meaning, finding it is not just the expression of community or of the collective that is defined by the situation, but the expression of individual as well.

It might not be so surprising that the emphasis on the individual came from work situated in the United Kingdom and, most often, carried out by British citizens. Marylyn Strathern’s (1992) *After Nature: English Kinship in the Late Twentieth Century* analyses the ways in which the idea of the individual is at the core of consciousness in the region. In this consciousness, the individual is bound up in a complex set of relations that are created before physical birth and do not dissolve with the coming of death. Issues of birth and death are paramount to Strathern’s analysis as her focus is on kinship, relations, and modern reproductive technologies. The book, published as part of the Lewis Henry Morgan Lecturer Series, places English “culture” and society under the same critical gaze that anthropology has placed on the subjects of its focus from other regions of the world, putting into question the very representations of these subjects.
The following decades saw a diversification in the anthropological literature of the British Isles. A number of anthropologists have followed in the path of Marylyn Strathern’s focus on reproductive technologies (1992). Sarah Franklin (1988; Franklin and Roberts 2006) also writes about reproduction and the role of science and technology in social life. Jeanette Edwards (1999, 2000) wrote about in-vitro fertilisation and how its existence challenged people’s perception of family and personhood in an English town near Manchester. More recently Sarah Dow (2013) has written about the issues of parenting and the ethical choices parents make about raising children in a highly technological and moral world. Nigel Rapport turned his attention to literary representations of the social and the work of E.M. Foster (1994), and then to the lives of hospital porters (2009), among other subjects. Adam Reed, who had originally worked in Papua New Guinea, also contributed to what could be called the Anthropology of Literature with his ethnography of the Henry Williamson Society, primarily based in England (2011). Earlier and later works based on fieldwork in the UK include the walking tours in the city of London (Reed 2002) and the world of animal activists (Reed 2015). The issue of religion is also present, most notably in the work of Joseph Webster (2012), who, like Nadel-Klein, conducted his fieldwork in a north-eastern Scottish coastal village.

Amongst this large stock of recent anthropological literature of the British Isles one major theme is that of place and landscape. Paul Basu’s fieldwork in Sutherland and Caithness led to his analysis of how social and personal memory becomes embodied in the landscape and how, through these landscapes, current identities are constructed in relation to the past (1997). John Gray’s At Home in the Hills: A Sense of Place in the Scottish Borders (2000) also explores a deep-rooted sense of place through his work in the sheep hill farming town of Teviothead. Here the practice of ‘place-making’ is the primary focus, as Gray seeks to explore how these sheep hill farming families create the intimate associations they have with their farms and with each other. These works tie well into the discussions of place, space, the environment and social life had by Barbara Bender (1993, 2002), Christopher Tilley (1994, 2006), and Tim Ingold (1993, 2011). Individually these authors critique the historical separation of nature and culture in academic research and the development of Euro-America thought, through the proposal of a phenomenology approach to landscape

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13 This is not surprising in the case of Paul Basu, whose joint-supervisors were Christopher Tilley and Barbara Bender.
within the fields of anthropology and archaeology. This approach calls for an increased focus on the interaction between the ‘people’ and the ‘environment,’ with the body as the connecting node.\textsuperscript{14} Also dwelling on place, Jo Vergunst’s work in Orkney suggests that it is through the phenomenological approach to landscape that distinctions between farmland and non-farmland can be understood (Lee 2006). By looking at the current and past practical engagements with the land, Vergunst explains how current notions of farm landscape in Orkney are tied up in a history of hill land reclamation. Andrew Whitehouse also focuses in on how practical engagement can make sense of current perceptions of landscape in Western Isle of Islay (2009). Whitehouse employs the symbolic approach alongside phenomenology to explore how the opposing world-views of local farmers in Islay and (largely incoming) workers from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds conflict in the way each believes a farm turned bird sanctuary should be managed.

There was also a particular resurgence of academic attention on the issues of locals and incomers in the late 1990s and early 2000s, a category that the Whitehouse article could also fall under. In this literature, the local/incomer dichotomy is often represented as complex and interactive. Tamara Kohn (2002) considers islander identity in Scotland along a continuum, regulated by the presence of a specific behaviour and the engagement in particular activities. Sociologists Ross Bond and Michael Rosie (2006) also consider ‘Scottishness’ in general along a certain continuum, however they complicate this continuum by gauging its position in association to a number of other criteria. Other anthropologists such as Fiona Mackenzie (2006\textit{a}, 2006\textit{b}, 2008)\textsuperscript{15} and Kimberly Masson (2005, 2007) oppose the continuum perspective and instead focus respectively on how identity is employed and how subtleties in identity are negotiated. And finally, in his ethnography of Scottish-Norwegian Identity in Orkney, Michael Lange (2007) dissects a variety of notions on identity, heritage and belonging, to reveal the very complex and shifting network of ideas that lies beneath a simplistic surface of stereotypes and generalisations, all of which his informants are aware. All of these regionally relevant

\textsuperscript{14} Also see Hirsch and O’Hanlon (1995), Feld and Basso (1996), Flint and Morphy (1997), and Olwig and Mitchell (2009).

\textsuperscript{15} The connection between social life and place also come into Mackenzie’s work as she discusses to collective reclamation of place through discussions surrounding a proposed wind farm in the Western Isle of Harris.
ethnographies serve to demonstrate the overwhelming presence and complexity of identity and local/incomer distinctions in Scotland.\textsuperscript{16}

As a final note on relevant regional literature, I will return to the anthropology of energy and the environment. Over the last decade there have been a number of anthropologists researching issues of energy and the environment, particularly in Scotland. This increased attention reflects a real concern among the general population and larger issues being tackled at the national and global level. Fiona Mackenzie was one of the first to begin tracking local community engagement with renewable energy technologies in Scotland with her fieldwork in the Outer Hebridean Isle of Harris. Over the years she has published numerous articles on the issues of community land ownership, another highly relevant issue in Scottish politics, and local concerns about the pending installation of a large wind energy farm (2008). Mackenzie also tackles the ever pressing issue of the marginalisation in the Western Isles and the implantation of concepts such as ‘nature’ and ‘national interest,’ interwoven into conversations between residents, the North Harris Trust and financial backers of the wind farm in question (2008). Justin Kendrick (2011) gives a more critical look and the political and economic systems in place through his discussion of neoliberalism and the community buy-out and off-the-grid electrification of the Isle of Eigg, also in the Western Isles of Scotland. Upcoming multi-sited work by Annabel Pinker on wind turbines projects across Scotland promises to put attention on the physicality of the devices themselves, as a means of exploring the various social, practical, political, and economic entanglements (2016).

Orkney’s own involvement in Scotland’s move towards heightened dependence on renewable energy has also received anthropological attention through the work of Laura Watts, whose primary focus has been the marine energy and the town of Stromness (2007, 2009\textsuperscript{a}, 2009\textsuperscript{b}, 2011, 2016). Although Watts’s writing tracks her journeys to other areas of Orkney, it is from the vantage point of the

\textsuperscript{16} Thus far I have not begun to tackle the differences between Scotland and England, in which most of the issues between incomers and locals in Scotland are rooted. These differences are based on centuries of history, which I will not get into here. As suggested by the focus of Michael Lange’s work in Orkney, however, these are not the only nationalities at play in my own fieldsite. Both Orkney and Shetland have a deep roots with Scandinavia, having been occupied by Norwegian Vikings for just over half a millennia. Both were a part of Denmark’s empire until given as a dowry in the marriage between Princess Margaret of Denmark and King James III of Scotland in 1468 AD (Lange 2007: 49). However, once again, as suggested by Lange’s focus, feelings of connection are felt for both Scandinavia and Scotland and can be heard and seen in the dialect and place names. While there is a distinct lack of Gaelic, the Orkney dialect is a mix of Scots and Norn, a variant of Norse still spoken in Orkney into the early 1900s.
marine energy industry that she encounters these other sites, a key difference in our work. Watts also tackles issues of peripherality by often depicting Orkney and the marine renewables industry fighting against the potential risk of failure at the hands of external forces. Her particular emphasis on ‘future studies’ is evidenced in her work, which focuses on ‘future-making’ in Orkney and the threats to this particular future. A student of Watts’ and long term resident of Orkney, Becky Ford, is now in the process of conducting doctoral fieldwork on marine energy with a particular interest in what might result when considering this fieldsite through the lens of Mikhail Bakhtin’s work. Ford’s multi-disciplinary Masters thesis looked at the use of humour in the dialogical construction of identity in Orkney (2013). With a new book by Laura Watts titled ‘Energy Islands’ out later this year and Becky Ford’s thesis to follow my own, there will be a rich source of literature documenting and analysing this era in Orkney.

While the regional literature provides an academic context for anthropological and ethnographic studies conducted within the United Kingdom, much of the above work is also highly relevant to my specific experience in Orkney. I am primarily talking about the literature that deals with the notions of collectivity and individuality, as well as belonging and identity. Another topic present in much of the above literature is that of continuity and change. The coming of the oil industry in Shetland (Cohen 1987; Byron 1981); the move from loom weaving in homes to factories and the process of outmigration in the Western Isles (Ennew 1980); increased dependence on technology and changes to ideas about kinship, reproduction and personhood (Franklin 1988; Strathern 1991; Edwards 1999); the rise in the number of incomers in areas previously dominated by local populations (Cohen 1987; Forsyth 1982; Rapport 1993; Kohn 2002; Bond and Rosie 2006; Masson 2005, 2006). In some of this literature the issues of continuity and change provide merely a backdrop for other content, while in others they take main stage. Issues of how the local is entangled with the global (Ennew 1980, Cohen 1986, Mackenzie 2006, Kenrick 2011) will also serve as a quite backdrop.

**Defining the Terms**

In this thesis I will employ a number of terms as tools in explaining my analysis. The main analytical term, which much of the other terms will be oriented around, is ‘myth.’ I will discuss the term as it comes into play in Part Two and again
in the Conclusion where I will once again reflect on how my use of the term adds to Bronislaw Malinowski’s and Claude Lévi-Strauss’s theories of myth. However, it is worth introducing the importance of ‘myth’ in Social Anthropology here and to discuss the main uses and meanings it has had over the years.

Myth is a term and concept fundamental to the development of Social Anthropology. It was used by two of the discipline’s most notable figures in the foundation of two of the discipline’s early major approaches. First, by Bronislaw Malinowski in the development of functionalism and, second, by Lévi-Strauss in the development of structuralism. Malinowski’s theory of myth and functionalist approach were informed by his time spent with the Trobriand islanders of the Eastern Pacific. As Malinowski argues is true for all aspects of a society and culture, Trobriand myths serve a particular purpose and contribute to the current state and continuation of Trobriand society and culture (Strenski 1992; Malinowski 2014 [1922]). Here I am using ‘society’ and ‘culture’ as Malinowski uses these terms in his seminal work Argonauts of the Western Pacific, that is, as a means of differentiating the life-worlds and even the lived experience (Erlebins), or so Strenski (1992) argues, of the human subjects of Anthropology’s attention.

Part of what I have found so difficult in reading both Malinowski and Lévi-Strauss is that neither provides a straightforward definition for their use of myth, it must for the most part be inferred. For Malinowski, myth is not a term he encountered in the field, but is rather an analytical tool and term he uses to describe a particular kind of communication and, indeed, a particular kind of story. In Argonauts Malinowski mentions myth a number of times – especially in relation to Kula, belief and magic – before providing some concrete defining features. Speaking about the Story of the Shipwreck Malinowski writes,

… there is a certain amount of historical evidence for the saving power of magic, and a mixture of fanciful and real elements makes our story a good example of what could be called standardised or universal myth – that is, a myth not referring to one historical event but to a type of occurrence, happening universally.

(Malinowski 2014 [1922]: 437, his italics)

Here we get a definition for a ‘standardised’ or ‘universal myth,’ but not necessarily a definition of myth itself. Malinowski’s definition, however, becomes a bit clearer
two chapters later, in ‘In Tewara and Sanaroa – Mythology of the Kula,’ where he asks a few crucial questions.

The question which presents itself first, in trying to grasp the native outlook on the subject is: what is myth to the natives? How do they conceive and define it? Have they any line between the mythical and the actual reality, and if so, how do they draw this line?

(ibid.: 496)

Almost immediately before he poses this line of questioning Malinowski also asserts that myth is something that enacts influence upon the landscape, “it colours it, gives it meaning, and transforms it into something live and familiar” (ibid.). In doing so it also exercises influence “upon the general outlook of the natives” (ibid.). These quotes speak a great deal to Malinowski’s overarching theory of myth, especially as it is presented in Argonauts, that is, that myth serves as a straightforward cognitive function (Strenski 1987, 1992).

Before I continue to explore Malinowski’s overarching theory of myth, I would like to touch on how he differentiates myth from other types of stories. Immediately following the line of questioning above, Malinowski introduces four different aspects of what he calls Trobriand folklore, or, verbal traditions, tales, legends and texts passed down through the generations (2014 [1922]: 497). First is libogwo, which Malinowski recognises as ‘old talk’, but which he also likens to ‘tradition’; second is kukwanebu, which he recognises as ‘fairy tales’, “recited for amusement, at definite seasons, and relating to avowedly untrue events”; third is wosi, which he recognises as ‘various songs’, here he also mentions vinavina, or “ditties, chanted at play or under other special circumstances”; fourth is megwa or yopa, which he recognises as magical spells (ibid.: 497-498). Of the libogow Malinowski singles out a particular class, the ilil’u, which he defines as “myths, narratives, deeply believed by them, held by them in reverence, and existing as active influence on their conduct and tribal life,” (ibid.: 498). Malinowski is also clear to distinguish between myths and historical accounts and tales, which also make up libogow. The distinction between what count as historical tales and what count as myths is helped by the Trobriander’s distinction between things that have occurred in recent memory (i.e. things that have happened in one’s own, one’s parent’s or one’s grandparent’s time) and things that have occurred in the amorphous time before recent memory, with historical tales referencing the former and ilil’u or myths referencing the later. Such a distinction
also informs the difference between the world of myth and that of reality, which Malinowski ultimately argues are not entirely distinct. It is helpful to reflect back on the quote about how myth gives colour to the landscape here, as it provides a crucial link and bolsters their authority.

The presence of magic, or the supernatural, also sets the ilil’u apart from other libogow. In many ways magic, like the landscape, can be seen as this link, both between the mythical world and current reality and between the past and present. “If the magic could be recovered, men would fly again in their canoes... Myth has crystallised into magic formulæ,” continuing on Malinowski asserts, “Often the main function of myth is to serve as the foundation for a system of magic, and, wherever magic forms the backbone of an institution, a myth is also to be found at the base of it” (ibid.: 504). Here we can begin to see why some Malinowski scholars, notably Ivan Strenski, have described Malinowski’s understanding of myth as important and pragmatic stories or, quoting Malinowski’s paper Myth in Primitive Psychology, “as [the] indispensible ingredient of all culture” (Malinowski 1926: 115 in Strenski 1992: xvii).

Another defining feature of Trobriand lili’u is that they carry with them traditions unique to each clan group. This is where Malinowski’s main points about the nature of myths and their function within society as it relates to the functionalist approach becomes even more clear. The functionalist approach is a holistic one, it conceives of cultures, societies and units of social life as discreet systems, in which all aspects of a social unit function to support the whole. There is a utilitarian vein, but only so far as each aspect of the social unit has a purpose locally, as part of that discrete whole. Malinowski does not propose some sort of universal sense of utility, rather he suggests utility, purpose and function exists within unit. Along this same line of reasoning Malinowski argues that if myths were to be take out of their context they would lose their meaning. Furthermore, if any part of the whole were to be taken away, the culture would begin to fall apart. Taken to the extreme this theory can promote the image that certain groups of people are stuck in space and time, denies them the reality of development and interaction. The dark shadow of evolutionary anthropology is very visible here. However, the theory has many merits as well; looking at the various elements of a group of people can help one understand how different ontologies, epistemologies and cosmologies come into being. Myths
for Malinowski provide both the base and the backbone of culture as a discrete whole. As vessels of tradition, they should not, however, be seen as explanation. Rather myths serve as active parts of culture.

As can be expected of any academic and their theories about the world, and I would hope any person, Malinowski’s theory of myth seems to develop through the years (Strenski 1987). Strenski describes this development as a shift from a “spiritual sense of life to an organic one” (1987: 46). His mature theory of myth, and indeed of functionalism, sees society as an organic whole, like a body. Myths give society the ‘breath of life’ and language itself serves a biological utility. This shift can be seen as a strengthening of his previous views, cementing them in the same kind of logic as hard science. In my opinion this strengthening did not do his theory any favours. While the holistic approach of functionalism presented indigenous societies as closed-loops of their own cultural reproduction, it also went against previous theories that promoted the view of indigenous societies as precursors to ‘civilized’ and ‘modern’ Western society and presented social life as multiple and varied. The rejection was not complete enough, as the holistic view still promotes the lives of indigenous peoples as timeless. Instead the harshness left gaps in the study of social life that would be criticised by both structural-functionalism and structuralism. It is structuralism and the work of Lévi-Strauss I will now turn my attention to.

In his *The Future of Anthropology* (1959-1960) it is clear that Claude Lévi-Strauss set out to create a new anthropology (Lévi-Strauss 1984). He asserts that anthropology is losing its object of study, i.e. ‘primitive peoples’. The idea that societies are bounded wholes, as Malinowski suggested, set this object apart from the rest of the human population. Instead, Lévi-Strauss asserts that people all over the world are undergoing processes of transformation, albeit he does stipulates in that these processes are bring non-Western people closer to Western civilization, continuing to promote a binary distinction. Furthermore, Lévi-Strauss argues that inequalities between the observed and observer were becoming clear. “Their fear is that, beneath the semblance of global ethnography, we seek to portray as desirable *diversity* what appears to them [subject of anthropological focus] as an intolerable *inequality*” (ibid.: 13). The solution, Lévi-Strauss argues, is that anthropology must find an absolute foundation, which I have understood to be one that encompasses the study of all humanity. To achieve this solution he proposes that anthropology shift its
focus to the underlying structures of society, in order to better understand the nature of human thought (*ibid*). As with Malinowski’s functionalism, myths feature prominently in the establishment of Lévi-Strauss’s Structural approach.

Prominent theorists of functionalism and structural-functionalism, namely Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, argued against implementing historical inquiry in the study of anthropology because of objections concerning the conjectural nature such historical inquiry had in the past, namely in the approaches of diffusionism and evolutionary anthropology. The rejection of history influenced Malinowski’s functionalist focus on bounded societies in the present. Lévi-Strauss, however, did not reject the cautions against conjectural history, but he did reject the idea the anthropology must reject history. In establishing the methodology of structural analysis he instead sought to develop a concept of history within anthropology through differentiating between synchronic and diachronic analysis. Synchronic analysis, such as Malinowski’s functionalism supported, was important but should lead to diachronic analysis, he asserted. Furthermore, he believed something could be gained from comparative analysis, whereas Malinowski’s functionalism rendered comparison irrelevant because each society functioned as a discrete whole. (Gow: 2001)

With the help of his students, Lévi-Strauss set out to catalogue myths of the native peoples across North and South America. It was a project that took him a decade and resulted in the collected works of *Mythologiques*, published in 1964. He would not base his historical analysis on conjecture but on comparison. Furthermore, the object of inquiry would not be ‘native peoples’, but history itself, with myths as the historical objects being analysed. In discussing Lévi-Strauss’s approach to myth Strenski asserts that he will not demonstrate the structural analysis through analysis of a single myths or even a few

One reason for refusing to take this course is that Lévi-Strauss himself has made it clear – at least ever since the *Mythologics* – that structural method cannot be demonstrated by reference to one, or even a few examples.

(Strenski 1987: 129)

I find myself in a similar predicament here. I have not read the entirety of *Mythologies*, and therein lies a majority of the problem. I can, however, provide an outline of the major points and findings here. Lévi-Strauss found there to be
commonalities across many of the myths collected despite distinct differences in peoples, places and languages (Lévi-Strauss 1984). The differences in the myths of different peoples and regions could be seen as transformations, throughout which common structures remained intact (Lévi-Strauss 1984; Gow 2001). Lévi-Strauss took the presence of the vast series transformations as evidence for the compulsion for equilibrium in human thought (ibid.).

[All] the Indian peoples of both North and South American seem to have conceived of their myths for one purpose only: to come to terms with history, and on the level of the system, to re-establish a state of equilibrium capable of acting as a shock absorber for the disturbances caused by real life events.


In other words, throughout time and among different peoples myths transform to fit the particularities of the current peoples who tell them. Such findings promote the notion that processual development throughout time is a fact of social life, something the functionalist approach did not allow for.

One critique of structuralism has been that it’s establishment risked losing an important battle functionalism won, that is, the acceptance of the multiplicity of human social and cultural worlds (Gow 2001: 14). Some worried the re-introduction of history and aspects of diffusionist methodology could be co-opted by Western narratives of history (ibid.). However, it is clear in The Future of Anthropology that Lévi-Strauss did not intend for the structuralist method to be used to promote one history. Arguing of biology, and it seems for the social sciences as well, Lévi-Strauss states that, “biologists have become increasingly unwilling to posit unilinear hypotheses and they tend to think, in historical terms, of transformations rather than of necessary steps in an oriented evolution” (1984: 15). While the link between social life and the biological sciences may be unnecessary, it is clear these developments in the hard sciences influenced Lévi-Strauss in promoting the idea of the multiplicity of history.

Lévi-Strauss also asserts that “history is a method with no distinct object,” (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 262 in Gow 2001: 14) and rejects the idea that history is tied to humanity. In other words peoples without history, as it was and is know in Western society, still have important stories to tell about humanity. Furthermore, even if myths act to erase history, the history being erased is not necessarily colonial history.
but most surely includes the history of the indigenous peoples (*ibid.*). Again, the possibility of multiple histories is present here.

The differences between structuralism and functionalism hold keys to the difference between Malinowski and Lévi-Strauss’s theories of myth. In the functionalist approach myths are important because of what they do, which is to tell important stories fundamental to the reproduction and continuation of that society as it is encountered. Myths act upon social life. In the structuralist approach myths are important because of what they are, they are the objects of analysis that enable a comparative study of peoples and the underlying structures of human thought; they reveal the building blocks of social life and it’s transformative nature; they obliterate time and allow for a very different understanding of humanity than is afforded in the functionalist approach. However, to say that only in functionalism are myths important because of what they do would I argue, be wrong. While myths are important because of what they are for Lévi-Strauss, what they are has a huge impact on what they do. However, instead of functioning to reproduce society, they function to maintain the illusion of equilibrium, therefore they do not act on social life in the same way Malinowski argued.

There are a number of other theories of myths, but for the discipline of Social Anthropology Malinowski’s and Lévi-Strauss’s are by far the most important. In Chapter 5, ‘‘It’s in Our History’’, I will also explore Roland Barthes’s (2009) theory of myth as speech with a message. In fact, it was my reading of Barthes that brought my attention back to the works of Malinowski and Lévi-Strauss. In the final conclusion to this thesis I will once again review the work of Malinowski and Lévi-Strauss to clarify what my use of myth can add to theses prominent discussions.

**Conclusion**

While I read a number of texts before entering the field, my initial focus was on the phenomenology of landscape and anthropological discussions concerning the relationship between social life and the environment. Much of the above review, including anthropological literature about Orkney, has been the result of more recent reading. It should not, therefore, be seen as the knowledge with which I entered the field. The above discussion of literature instead serves to contextualize the following
ethnography in the wider relevant thematic and regional anthropological discourses within which it sits. In the final Conclusion I will return to this literature to reflect on what my thesis has to offer.
The Orkney Locality
Chapter 2

The People – Part One: Population & Population History

Orkney is an archipelago of approximately seventy islands and skerries17 located off the northern tip of the Scottish mainland. Of these seventy islands, which together add up to a total area of 382 square miles of land (Census 2011) and 570 miles of coastline, currently only seventeen are populated (Leslie 2015). This population has had various peaks and troughs over the last five thousand years, much of which is undocumented. Instead, the evidence for the presence of humans exists in the landscape, with numerous archaeological sites and relics from the Neolithic age, early turn of the century, beginning of the first millennia and onward. The current population (21,500 people) has risen steadily since 2001 (Crown 2015).18 The majority of this population resides on the main island, aptly named ‘Mainland,’ with a large number settled in and around the main town of Kirkwall in East Mainland. The second most densely populated town is Stromness, located approximately fifteen miles west of Kirkwall, in West Mainland. Other towns and centres of population, dot East and West Mainland and the outlying islands, with large properties, farms, peat banks, bird reserves, archaeological sites and sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSIs) filling in the gaps between.

The long history of population in these isles is emphasised by a long-standing local population, the Orcadians. Many such Orcadian residents can trace back their family histories back over hundreds of years. However, the concept of being ‘pure’ Orcadian is absent, with the people of Orkney often relishing in a history of contact that has brought ‘new blood’ into the area. Of all these types of heritage, that of the Vikings is the most celebrated. While Orkney is known to have been populated by Picts, the fate of how these earlier bloodlines mixed with those of the Vikings is unknown. Were they wiped out by the Viking raiders? Were some kept on as slaves? Did the Vikings live in peace with the original inhabitants of Orkney? The last of

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17 ‘Skerries’ are large rock formations in the sea, too small to be inhabited.
18 This increase correlates with the start of the renewables energy industry, but I cannot comment on whether this correlation is direct, indirect or only partially related.
these scenarios, based on what we know of the Viking’s habits, is the least likely. The answers may be unknown, but various theories exist in both the fields of History and Archaeology.

Other encounters are also cited when residents discuss the history of the Orkney people. These encounters include, but are not limited to, the resourcing of Orkney men by the Hudson Bay Company, which began operation in the late 1600s and ran for the following two centuries; the coinciding Whaling Boom of the late 1700s and early 1800s, which saw both the profit and demise of a number of young Orkney men; the sinking of a Spanish Armada ship off the coast of the northern isle of Westray in the late 1800s; the Herring Boom, also in the late 1800s, which saw an influx of women – who were employed to gut and cut the fish – and fishermen from all over Britain, as well as the employment of locals. The more recent influx of British troops during World War I & II and the installation of the Flotta Oil Rig, which still provides work for skilled locals and incomers are also frequently recalled. All of these moments in time are well known by all who live in Orkney, referenced in conversation and seen as relics throughout the land- and seascape. Some people include the most recent development of renewable energy technology to this list of encounters, as I will discuss in Chapter 4, “It’s in Our History”.

While the influx of people and times of travel in Orcadian history are well known as distinct events, they are often known more personally to individuals through their knowledge of family history. Many Orcadians have distant family relations in Canada, America, and Australia, who make themselves known when they come to Orkney to trace their family histories in the archives. Other knowledge comes from those living in Orkney, as well as mementos, family heirlooms and photographs. A photo of a great-grandfather – whose dark skin, dark straight hair, low sloped nose, and thin eyes suggests a non-Orcadian heritage – hangs outside the entrance to a kitchen, reminding descendants of how, many generations ago, one of their relatives enlisted in the Hudson Bay Company, only to return years later with an Inuit bride. The coarse curly hair and deep-olive skin of a friend is now openly recognized as a sign of Spanish Heritage. However, this friend tells me her grandmother would never speak of it, not because of the shame of sleeping with an outsider, but because of the shame of fornicating out of wedlock – as was the case with this particular ancestor. Others compare Westray hospitality to the hardships
encountered by another wrecked Armada ship found on Fair Isle, which lies between Orkney and Shetland (Towrie 2016).

Here, they were offered sanctuary, with a number not only settling on the island, but also marrying and beginning a unique community, vestiges of which survives today. These Spanish settlers, and their descendants, became renowned as daring seafarers and notorious smugglers. 

(Ibid)

When one considers the personal nature of the knowledge regarding such past events, it is no wonder multiple and varied accounts endure. Further stories of more isolated events of travel and connection within family histories also exist, most of which continue the recurring theme of relatives immigrating to places within the United Kingdom and often returning Orkney, usually with a bride or groom.

Movement within Orkney has also been quite continuously common, at least in the last hundred years. Many women and men in their late 60s and 70s told me of how their families, or parent’s families, moved from homes in the outlying islands to East or West Mainland. This trend continues today, with increased numbers of people often moving to Kirkwall for work or education (Hall Aitken 2009). Understandably the population of the outer islands in these years has dwindled and is now most often sustained by primarily English incomers and an aging population of locals (ibid). “In-migrants are an essential part of the Orkney population,” an executive summary of the 2009 Orkney Population Change Study notes, with “one in five people living in the islands [having] moved to Orkney within the past 10 years” (Hall Aitken 2009: 3). Here, the summary speaks of the general in and out migration of Orkney, and not just of the outlying islands. These numbers have hovered around this level for the past few decades, their difference usually determining the population change (Crown 2015). A recent economic review of the archipelago based on census data found there was a 10.9% increase between 2001 and 2012 (OIC 2012-2013: 3), which is interesting considering the renewable energy industry began in the early 2000s.

Many people move to Orkney as a family, but the highest in-migrant population has traditionally been of older generations (Crown Copyright 2015). Statistics also reflect a general trend of out-migration among young adults, many of whom move to areas of mainland Scotland and England for higher education (ibid). This is not a recent occurrence, as many forty to seventy year olds also recalled
moving from Orkney for both higher education and additional training. One seventy-
year-old woman recalled how her mother moved down to Glasgow to study nursing
in the early 1900s, returning almost a decade later with her husband, originally from
the boarders (but with Orcadian ancestry), and their eldest child. All these statistics
serve to show that while there is a distinct historically situated local population, there
is a great deal of movement to and from Orkney, with incomers making up a good
portion of the recent population increase.19

The Place – Part One: Getting to and from Orkney

Amongst all of this movement there remains a strong sense of locality, of a
people intimately tied to a place. This strong sense, feeling rather, may perhaps be
due to the relatively remote nature of these islands. Once you are in Orkney, you are
in a place apart.

Numerous ferries run multiple times a day transporting people, goods and
livestock from Orkney to three different ports in the North Highlands and to a fourth
in Aberdeen. However, the sea is a major obstacle. Ferries are a costly and often
nauseating way to travel. Stories of scenes of dozens of sick passengers are not
uncommon, especially on the seven-hour journey to and from either Shetland or
Aberdeen. In times of severe weather, which is not uncommon in Orkney, especially
in the winter, sailings are often cancelled. There are two main transport ferry
companies in Orkney. Both Kirkwall and Stromness have ports where vessels from
the Northlink Ferry company dock. The Kirkwall ferry connects Orkney with the city
and Scottish oil hub of Aberdeen and the even more northerly archipelago and
additional oil hub of Shetland, each a seven-hour ferry ride away. The Stromness
ferry has a much shorter journey time of an hour and a half and docks in Scrabster, a
port town a few miles from Thurso – the last stop on the North Highland train route.
A third vehicle ferry, run by the Pentland Ferries company, docks in St Margaret’s
Hope, the main town in the most southerly isle of South Ronaldsay. As South
Ronaldsay is connected to the mainland via four different causeways, which also
connect the islands of Lamb Holm, Glims Holm and Burray, this port is often used
for transport to and from Mainland. In fact, the construction of the causeways, built
between World War I & II as defensive barriers to shield the British Naval fleet

19 See Forsythe 1982 for a detailed population change study of one outer isle in Orkney.
positioned in Scapa Flow, has almost made the islands it now connects extensions of East and West Mainland. I say ‘almost’ because in times of high-tide and rough seas, the break water on the second barrier can make driving so dangerous that the local Council, Police force and Coastguard have come together to enforce periodic closures which restrict access to the Pentalina and southerly isles. The Pentland Ferries’ vessel, the Pentalina, docks in Gills Bay, three and a half miles west of John O’Groats, where a fourth ferry also docks. However, the John O’Groats ferry is for foot passengers only and, therefore, caters more to tourists wishing to make day-trips than to residents wishing to get to and from the mainland.

In addition to the ferries, Orkney has an airport about three and a half miles Southeast of Kirkwall. Planes that fly in and out of the Kirkwall airport connect passengers – residents, relatives, tourists, politicians and businessmen – with four major airports in Scotland: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Inverness. In the summer, flights between Kirkwall and Bergen, a coastal city in Norway – are another reminder of the Norwegian/Viking heritage of these isles. Both flights and ferries connect the small isles with West and East Mainland; flights, however, are reserved for those most northerly and remote places: Eday, North Ronaldsay (once called ‘Rensa’), Westray, and Papa Westray (via Westray). Flying is an expensive way to travel, but discount cards do exist for residents. Furthermore, the NHS covers travel for health reasons, such as the need to see a specialist in Aberdeen, for example. As with the ferries, planes can be cancelled due to bad weather, although the plane will often fly when ferries are cancelled or delayed. After living in Orkney for a year, it would be surprising if one did not experience at least once thwarted travel to or from Orkney. It is at times of high winds, fierce rains – with no transport between the islands, or between the islands and the mainland – that one remembers how removed Orkney is from more central nodes of activity.

The People – Part Two: Activities and Employment

Despite the experience of my first winter in Orkney, in which feelings of loneliness and depression were frequent, I later found that winter is actually a time for a multitude of structured social activities. Winter is “a very busy time!” said the mother of a friend from university who grew up near Stromness. This was hard for me to believe at the time she said it. No. I was far from busy then. I felt distinctly
removed from the regular movements of those who lived around me. I was out of sync. But, as with many new places, it takes time to get integrated into life and the regular rhythms of others in a new place. With time I found that many events were listed on the Orkney Communities website, others were announced daily in the morning on the BBC Radio Orkney show, and others still, in the newspaper. Suggestions by friends are also always good to follow up and this is how I began all my regular activities: rock climbing, badminton (for a little while), wool spinning, and crochet and knitting circles. Once I knew what I was interested in it was easier to pick out things posted or announced publicly. However, if I have one point to make here it is that, as a newcomer – and as a resident – one has to be proactive in Orkney. Routine is not set out for you, especially if you are single – without a family – and without a job.

One of the ways many people structure their time in and movements through Orkney is by attending group activities. Here, where people live spread out across the landscape, the ‘social’ nature of these group activities is exaggerated. There are hundreds of group activities – from sports to crafts to music – that run throughout the year in Orkney. Activities are hosted by a variety of groups, from the Highlands and Islands Development Board, to parish communities, leagues, clubs, etc. Sports include football, badminton, (men’s) rugby, running, sailing, netball, fencing, swimming, rock climbing, kayaking, and (field) hockey. While not a sport, I even became aware of a ‘sauna club’ in Stromness. Many towns, villages, and parishes have their own teams, with inter-county tournaments throughout the year. Although not as interactive, the Pickaquoy Leisure Centre hosts a number of fitness classes. It also boasts an indoor climbing wall and bouldering cave, swimming pool, gym, movie theatre and spa. Craft groups, such as Knit and Natter, or Yap and Yarn run in the winter months at the local libraries in Kirkwall and Stromness, with others put on by the charity For Arts Sake running throughout the year; these groups including (yarn) spinning classes, felting workshops, additional crocheting and knitting circles, as well as general ‘fibre crafts’ sessions, where primarily women brought their quilting projects. Youth board game nights were also held weekly in the Kirkwall town hall. There were most certainly numerous other activities I never become unaware of.

Jobs are another source of routine, with the highest area of employment being farming. In 2012 farming employed a total of 1,821 people, occupying some 2,000
farm holdings – around 93% of the total land in Orkney – in operation (OIC 2012-2013: 14-15). Many farmers in Orkney work a second or third job a couple days a week, tending to the farm before and after work, on their days off and on the weekends. “I get one day off,” a full-time farmer from Dounby, in West Mainland told me. Another indicator of the dependence on farming is the high number of people working over sixty hours a week in Orkney; 10.8% of the employable population (aged 16-74) in Orkney work over sixty hours, compared to an average of 5% across Scotland. Fishing and ‘forestry’ employ a number of people, with the total number of agriculture, forestry and fishing enterprises making up just over a third of the total number of business enterprises in Orkney (OIC 2013: 10). However, based on data from 2012, the total number of regularly employed people in fishing, including those involved in farmed fishing, equalled 235 people, with 119 people partially employed (OIC 2012-2013: 17).

Another major area of employment is the local authority (government): the Orkney Islands Council, regularly abbreviated as the OIC. Recent research reports that the OIC employs over eighteen hundred people (Leslie 2015). From my conversations with individuals, the OIC also seems to be a popular place to work for young educated adults who wish to return to Orkney. Many of these individuals proceeded to change jobs when others became available within the renewable energy industry, another source for skilled employment. Based on data from 2014 approximately 300 people were directly employed within the marine renewables industry alone (EH-25.02.14). However, this number does not include wind turbine contractors or community development trusts employees who are funded by their wind turbine profits (EH-25.02.14).

An additional area of high employment includes construction, employing 130 people. Tourism – which includes all visitor’s centres, guided tours, museums, food and drink locations, and craft workshops/shops – also employs around 130 people. As with the renewables industry, tourism is more of a recent phenomenon, although its presence and impact has been longer than the renewables industry. In 2010 a report by the European Commission stated that there are approximately 127,000 visitors to Orkney a year. These visitors come en masse on cruise ships that dock mainly in Kirkwall or on tour busses driven up from other areas of Scotland. Smaller groups, families, and individuals also visit these islands, traveling via all types of transportation. In 2014, the year of my fieldwork, Tourism surpassed Farming as the
most profitable industry in Orkney, with Renewable Energy coming third (FN-11.03.14).

As a final notable point, a relatively high number of self-employed people reside in Orkney, when compared to the averages in Scotland and the United Kingdom. In Orkney 11.1% of the population is self-employed, compared to 8.1% in Scotland and 9.6% in the United Kingdom (OIC 2012-2013: 7). All these numbers are based on data from 2012, in which year there was also an average of 1.5% unemployment (ibid: 5).

The Place – Part Two: Landscape

This is Orkney: a low-lying, rolling, green landscape interspersed with a few larger hills, rugged cliff faces and seas stacks\(^2^0\). A place where the ocean is always near, Orkney seemed quite desolate to me when I first arrived. Here the coastline eases into the sea, except in an opposing manner, when it plunges down hundreds of feet. I spent much of my younger years in Seattle, a relatively hilly and busy city, full of old growth evergreen trees with mountain ranges to the East and West. Orkney was a stark contrast. The archipelago is almost completely absent of trees. Those that do manage to grow are either very short or looking like something you would expect to come out of Wuthering Heights – snarly beasts that have fought for their survival during frequently wild weather and blasting winds. The spiked stone dykes that line most of the roads add a further sense of rural ruggedness. The same sense of wildness, of a place raw to the elements – which I initially experienced as unwelcome isolation and remoteness – has, over the last decades, drawn many people from more southerly regions of the United Kingdom with no previous connection to these isles. Many continue to come here, usually as a rejection of a previous and perceptibly opposing lifestyle, to experience exactly what I was initially put off by. Only in my last months, perhaps not until after I finished my fieldwork and removed my “ethnographer’s goggles,” when revisiting Orkney to see my partner’s family, did I come to appreciate the gut-wrenching beauty in this bleak and tempestuous place.

A myriad of elements layer, enfold and jostle up against each other, elaborating the starkness. The rolling landscape is scattered with Neolithic monuments and

\(^{20}\) Sea stacks naturally occurring columns of stone, often just off the coast of cliffs and also often as high as the cliffs the stand next to.
settlements, some of which are still active archaeological digs. Pictish fortresses, runic graffiti, raided tombs, and current place names tell of the Viking invaders that followed. In Kirkwall, St Magnus’s Cathedral – named after a saint whose story is told in Orkney’s own Orkneyinga Saga – stands next to the Earl and Bishop’s Palaces, all built in the middle of the second millennium. World War I and II battlements dot the coasts, while both British and German war ships lay mostly hidden to all but those who seek them out. The causeways connecting Mainland and the south isles were built at this time, to prevent the German submarines from entering the protected waters of Scapa Flow. Other additions from the World Wars are less identifiable, such as the network of paved roads connecting the towns and villages of East and West Mainland, the Hatson Harbour and Industrial Estate in Kirkwall. There are also homes; towns; hundreds of farms; an oil terminal; thirteen RSBP nature reserves; a number of protected Sites of Scientific Interest (SSIs); and a World Heritage Site. All of the features of the landscape listed, including the new addition of renewable technologies, are closely linked with both what draws people to these islands and what enables continued residence. A sense of past is always present, or, as author George Mackay Brown has put it – *The Orkney imagination is haunted by time* – a frequently quoted phrase I first encountered at the Skara Brae Visitors Centre (FN-25.10.13).

Residential dwellings are spread throughout and amongst these geological features of the landscape, gathering into small to mid-sized villages. Of course there is Kirkwall, the capital, which is relatively big and used to don the categorization of a city, due to the presence of its grand red sandstone Cathedral, St Magnus, built in the 1400s. Kirkwall has many of the amenities of mainland towns and cities; all the major shops and businesses are located here, although many of them are local versions and not the chains found down south. Kirkwall is also host to amenities such as a cinema, major port, gym, rock-climbing wall, library and archive, university campus, swimming pool, fitness suite, spa, and number of playing fields, pubs, and museums. Stromness, a medium sized town, which is Kirkwall’s historic rival as a population centre, also hosts a major port, a gym, a pool, a university campus, three pubs, a library and a museum, as well as an art gallery. Outside of the towns Orkney
is dominated by farms, with just over ninety per cent of the land devoted to agriculture, mainly beef.\textsuperscript{21}

Recently, various renewable energy devices have also been added to this landscape. Hundreds of wind turbines of all makes and sizes have been erected across the various islands and segments of the surrounding sea have been marked off for the testing of wave and tidal devices, which can be seen from various points along the coast line.

The People – Part Three: Family

Kinship relations are a key part of life in Orkney. It is a point I observed during my time in these isles, as well as one vocalized by many who live there. I often asked individuals what they most enjoyed about Orkney, to which many replied some version of, “it’s safe here and a great place to raise a family”. This answer, given by locals and incomers alike, suggests a general emphasis on the importance of family. In my experience and observations, having family in Orkney is what makes it habitable. I should note that close friends often make up a family of sorts. The ‘friend-family’ unit of kinship is, from what I have experienced, common across Euro-America, as well as in Orkney. Finally, there is a strong local population with a dense network of extended family connection and long family histories, emphasised by the frequency of particular surnames: Tait, Sinclair, Spence, Marwick, Muir, Flett, Rendall, Scott, Linklater, Harcus, Clouston, Mowat, Miller, Mainland, Ibister, Chalmers, Manson, Firth, Stevenson, Rosie, Leslie.

While the increasing number of incomers might suggest a current or future or ‘weakening’ of this core local population, many of the incomers are either passed having families or are single and, if the stay, end up finding partners in Orkney. The children of those who move to Orkney with families often become integrated into the local demographic of children, with friend groups and relationship forming regardless of background. The increase of incomer children, primarily from Scotland and England, has however, weakened the Orcadian accent. The older generation of

\textsuperscript{21} Along with beef farming, land is also devoted to sheep farming and the growing of grass for grazing and silage. Silage is grass that has been cut, gathered into hay bales, sealed to be water tight and left to sit until it biodegrades and this is fed to farm animals during the winter. It provides a means to store grass/hay for later and some argue that it is more nutritious than grass or hay itself.
Orcadians have much broader Orcadian accents than the younger generations, a point I will return to later on.

Family heirlooms are another marker of the importance and presence of past kinship relations. Family treasures, such as a 19th century spyglass or a grandmother’s christening dress, the bride’s cogs, painfully detailed lace knits, and Orkney chairs fill houses. Orkney chairs are particularly coveted, as they are now very expensive to commission, with only a handful of trained chair makers and each chair taking hundreds of hours of skilled work. These objects, much like features of the landscape where historical family events occurred, invoke stories and anecdotes.

Stories are a traditional part of Orkney life, with many of the older adults remembering how stories, drawn from family or regional history, were told around peat fires. The fire was the heart of the home and never to be allowed to die out. Such stories, often told dozens of times, enforce one’s understanding of one’s family history. As they often involved references to both relatives and areas or features of the landscape, they also reinforce one’s personal connection Orkney.

Most people in Orkney have a basic understanding of their own extended kinship circles; here I am referring to those relations that extend beyond the traditional extended family of Euro-America. “She’s a relation of mine” is not an uncommon interjection, one sometimes preceded by the words “… I think”. Indeed, some individuals have expressed that they often feel there are too many family connections to keep track of. This general knowledge of familial connections, or kinship circles, in the present is also backed up by the general knowledge of family history. While much of the common knowledge about family history is learned through stories, the detailed tracing of family histories is also quite common, albeit predominantly among older males.

The Place – Part Three: Weather

“We’re in the middle of the sea!” one friend exclaimed, as we ran from the pub to her house down the block, both of us envisaging the rain was sea spray ripped up from the ocean and strewn across the land. There are many quotes about the weather in my fieldnotes. Another coming from an acquaintance, a wind turbine installer, who exclaimed, “Well we don’t live here for tha weather, ya ken?” There is no shortage of written comments either. An Orcadian in the early 1900s wrote: “No
other region in Great Britain can compare with it for the violence and frequency of its winds” (Spence 1908: 4). And to top it off, a quote from Hugh Marwick, a local historian, “To adopt a Stevensonian phrase, the climate of Orkney is one of the vilest under heaven” (Marwick in Towrie 2016).

While the temperature in Orkney is usually quite mild, there is never a dry season, with the heaviest rainfall during the winter months; the average number of wet days per month hardly ever falls below ten. Positioned towards the tail end of the Gulf Stream, the rainfall in Orkney is also often fast and strong. Average annual wind speeds fluctuate between eight and fourteen and a half miles per hour (WeatherOnline Ltd. 2016). That said it is not uncommon for speeds to reach up to sixty miles per hour, nearing that found within hurricanes. The peaks and troughs of these annual speeds largely follow the cycle of the year. The strongest average speeds occur between November and January and the weakest between May and July, with a slow rise and fall between each period of time.

The residents of Orkney often remark that only two seasons exist here: the light and the dark season. The northerly positioning of Orkney means it experiences extremes in daylight over the course of the year. At the summer solstice the sun rises above the horizon for up to eighteen hours. In the winter this number drops to six. However, in the winter, when storms are more frequent, one may never see the sun. You will wake up to darkness, experience a gradual lightening into grey until around one o’clock, at which point the grey recedes back into black. In the summer, the light of the sun is visible for at least two hours after it sets and before it rises. In 2012 there was a meagre twenty-one actual hours of sunlight in the whole month of December, as opposed to one hundred and fifty six in June (OIC 2012-2013). May, however, seems to be the sunniest month, with two hundred and fifty four hours of sunlight in 2012 and a twelve-year average of two hundred and twelve (ibid). These longer averages were also similar to the 2012 data for December and June, suggesting these data points are representative of longer trends.

The People – Part 4: Festivals and Events

Following the trend of the last two sections on ‘The People,’ I will now discuss an additional part of Orkney life where residents are drawn together: festivals and
events. The first big event of the year is the New Year’s Day Ba. The Ba is a ‘no rules’ ball game held in Kirkwall between the Doonies – traditionally those born north of St Magnus Cathedral – and the Uppies – traditionally those born south of the cathedral. More recently these rules of inclusion have extended to include all people who live in the town, as many current residents of Kirkwall have moved there from elsewhere in Orkney. The conditions concerning which side you belong to have likewise shifted, with the road you first entered Kirkwall as the new deciding factor regarding which side you should play for or support. Alternatively, for those who have moved many times within Kirkwall or who now live outside but have played in the past, the side to which you belong is determined by where your parent from Kirkwall was born. Even more recently people have begun to play with no personal or familial connection to the town. The advent of this has sparked some controversy as higher numbers are seen joining the Doonies, who have the more heroically attractive goal of the Kirkwall Harbour. While a women’s and girl’s Ba was introduced in the 1970s, the Ba is now reserved for men and boys only, with a game in the morning for the boys and a game in the afternoon/evening for the men. The disbanding of the female Ba is commonly cited to have occurred because the female Ba was too violent. Most women say this with pride, however, one women remarked that this could just be the reason the men, who wanted the game for themselves, gave at the time.

While the Ba is often heralded as a ‘no rules’ game, there are a few basic rules, including those about what side you play on. The ball dons the same name as the game, the Ba. There are detailed instructions for making the Ba, all the materials for which can be found in Orkney. The boy’s toss up is always at ten in the morning and the men’s at one in the afternoon, with the game being played in all weathers. Each side has a designated goal area. The Doonies’ goal is the harbour or, more precisely, the water – with no specified entrance point. Once it is in the water the Doonies have won. The Uppies’ goal is a wall on New Scapa Road, the section between Main Street and Manse Road. There are no boundaries to the game. However, the general area of play is usually contained to the area west of the cathedral and east of the Peedie Sea. Horizontal hardwood blockades are screwed onto the sides of buildings where the wall opens up exposing windows and doors. There are also no rules about the number of participants; however, this usually fluctuates between fifty and one hundred.
Before the toss-up, thrown by the winner of last year’s Ba, the players from each side congregate on either side of the cathedral. Hundreds of spectators come to watch, crowded in between the two sides before the start. At about five to one, each side starts to make low, slow, grunts and begin to walk towards each other. The crowd separates to let them through. They stop when they meet in the middle, the winner from last year perched on the stone dyke of the cathedral’s exterior wall, marking the middle point. Silence. People watch the clock. At one o’clock the cathedral bells sound and the winner from last year tosses the ball high in the air. Spectators scatter, unsure which way the Ba will go. Players from the two sides press into each other around the ball, creating a very large huddle, a mass of bodies. This is how the game continues for the next few hours, the huddle often stagnating for the best part of an hour, each side hoping for a ‘break.’ Breaks occur when one or a few people are able to break the ball free from the huddle and run in the direction of their goal. Sometimes someone will break the ball free without anyone knowing, and the huddle will continue to press into a Ba-less centre for as long as it takes for those on the outside to realise they are pushing in vain. The game often lasts for over four hours, continuing long past sunset.

For spectators the Ba is a very social event, offering the opportunity to see old friends and relatives, and to catch up when the huddle has stagnated. This was also true when I attended the Christmas Ba in 2015; however, there was much less time for chatting as the game went particularly quickly – it ended before three-thirty. The Ba in this game went west of the Cathedral, where no blockades had been set up. One stone dyke and a resident’s window and gutter were all broken by the force of the men huddled around the Ba. Most of the time the Ba is smashed up, stagnated, against a barrier of some kind. I was later assured that some of the men would come around to fix the damages the next day. The Ba Committee has a special fund for damages. In the days following the 1st of January, the Committee members and players who are joiners, employed via the committee fund, will go around the town and fix any damages that occurred during the Ba at no cost to the owners.

Once a side has won, there is a further fight to see who in the winning team has won the Ba. As such, it is not always the person who gets the Ba to their side who wins. I was told that there are a lot of politics involved, with the winner sometimes being predetermined. The Ba often goes to someone who has a long history of
playing the game but has not yet won the Ba, with social pressures enforcing this unwritten rule.

The next event in the calendar comes many months later, at the beginning of May; this is the Nature Festival, which usually lasts about a week. It is one of the more recent additions to the calendar, held for the first time in 2013. This festival is hosted by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in Orkney, with help from the Big Lottery Fund and the European and Scotland Regional Development Funds. Individual events include nature photography workshops, kayaking trips, a number of walks throughout Orkney, a boat trip in Scapa Flow, Rockpooling (looking into and learning about the inhabitants of rock pools), archaeological workshops, and a children’s art workshops. Each walk or trip into the waters around and landscape of Orkney is hosted by a nature enthusiast or academic who discusses the various species of plants and animals that one can see in this vast archipelago.

Following the Nature Festival there are few music festivals. The Orkney Folk Festival is first and held over three days in May. There is also a folk festival in Shetland around this time; both showcase local talent, as well as acts from other areas of Scotland and Ireland, with additional acts from as far away as Canada. Both festivals gather people together in the name of drinking and dancing, all the while enjoying songs passed down through the ages – songs that both celebrate and lament the joys and tragedies of living in these costal and remote northerly regions. The St Magnus Festival, a classical music festival held in Kirkwall, is the next big event in social calendar of Orkney. This festival is far more elaborate in Orkney and has no Shetland equivalent, drawing large numbers of established performers and musicians, from around the world. A third music festival takes place at the end of summer, the Rock Festival, also held in Kirkwall. The festival usually runs for one or two nights, showcasing bands from Orkney and around the UK.
The next event is Stromness Shopping Week, which is a town fair started originally to bring more shoppers in to Stromness. Ironically most of the shops close for the festivities, which include games for children, music, food carts, and a three legged fancy dress beer race around the town.

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The (agricultural) County Show in early August is the next event. Farmers groom and show their livestock in competitions for prizes. The event lasts a week, with shows held in most counties, culminating in Saturday’s Country Show. This is when all the winners come to Kirkwall to enter their now prize winning animals in an Orkney wide competition. Along with the hundreds of farm animals on show there is a maze of vendors. Local crafts people, food and drink tents cater to the thousands of people in the field below the Kirkwall Grammar School. Rubber boots are a must, as the whole field turns into mud, especially when it rains, as it has the years I’ve attended. While, as with the Ba, rain may reduce the numbers of attendees, yet large numbers always turn out – with most spectators of drinking age huddled in packed humid beer tents. There are also a number of rides, games, and activities such as the classic snail race.

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Following the County Show is the Science Festival, held in the middle of September. Again primarily in Kirkwall, the Science Festival spans a week, often hosting over a hundred events including talks and interactive sessions. Topics range from talks or discussions about the solar system to sessions on the science of brewing beer or knitting to presentations on the current state of the renewable energy industry. There are a number of events that cater to children and each year the festival invites an influential, and usually internationally known, scientist to give an opening talk. A few of the recent speakers have included Professor Peter Higgs, Professor Jane Goodall, and Professor Jocelyn Burnell.

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The Story Telling Festival occurs in October. Sadly I arrived the week after the 2013 event and left before the one in 2014. However, I hear it is a very special experience. Story telling has played an influential role in Orkney for many years, partly discussed already. Knowledge of kinship ties, areas of the landscape, and history are all tied up in this practice. While stories will prove to be a continuing feature of this thesis, I will not address this practice directly.

The following month, in November, the Pantomime is held. A Pantomime is an interactive comedic theatre experience held in the run up to Christmas and is common throughout the United Kingdom. In Orkney, each year one of the local armature dramatic societies take responsibility for producing the event, which many people attend throughout the week.

The final event of the year is the Christmas Ba, which, like the New Year’s Day Ba, also consists of a boys Ba at ten in the morning and a men’s Ba at one in the afternoon. Some residents whose families play in the Ba hold Christmas day and dinner on the 24th, not the 25th of December, so there is time to attend the game. As they are positioned at the closing and opening of the year, the two Bas happen very close together, with some spectators choosing to attend one or the other. Most dedicated players play in both.

**Religion**

I did not spend much of my fieldwork time focusing on religion, as prevalent as it is in Orkney. After conversion in the mid-1500s Orkney became a predominantly Christian region. All islands, parishes, and towns still have their own church, features of the landscape that attests to the prominence of religion in this area. Indeed, many of the older generation remember Orkney as severely religious; from my experiences I would not say this is true today. Instead religion provides a
quiet backdrop, or in many cases a quiet stronghold, for individuals who live there. Church communities are a prominent feature for some, but not all. Various family members are religious to varying degrees, with the younger population less religious than the older. A number of churches, or religious sects of Christianity, now exist – allowing individuals to choose which best fits the nature of their faith.

Religious events – such as Christmas and Easter, as well as Lent, although to a lesser degree – punctuate the annual calendar along with the events and festivals listed above. However, while Christmas was celebrated for its religious roots, Hogmanay (New Year) was always the greater of the two, at least up until the 1970s, when the modern notions of Santa Claus and present giving seeped in. Christmas and Hogmanay, and Easter – to a lesser degree – provide times of increased socialization. Most people are off work for the holiday season, with all shops closed on Christmas and New Year’s day. Grown up children come home to visit their parents. Friends who now live across the UK and Europe can meet up with those who still live in Orkney. The parties run late and the alcohol flows easily. Many people attend a night-time mass on Christmas Eve, and then spend the day with family, if they are not at the Ba. On New Year’s Eve (Hogmanay), larger families and groups of friends gather together to ‘bring in the bells’ – when the clock strikes midnight. Some Orcadians still engage in the age-old tradition of first-footing: where you bring around a bottle of whisky and move from house to house visiting friends and relatives, until the bottle is finished and everyone is very drunk. Although Hogmanay is not a religious event, I include it here, as – like Christmas and Easter – it is about gathering people together as much as it is about any religious or calendric celebration based on well-wishing and renewing friendships.

**Conclusion**

The above sections offer a window into the broader experience life in Orkney. Here both the activities of the people and a description of the place are crucial in imparting, or at least beginning to impart, what life is like in these islands. The description provided will set the scene for the following chapter, which focuses in on one particular nexus of life within the larger network of residents. This particular nexus is that of the renewable energy industry. In Chapter 7, ‘We, Us, Our’, I will return to the intersection of those involved in the renewables industry and the wider
community of residents in Orkney, alongside analysing the category and identification of being ‘Orcadian.’
“We’re a community within a community,” Colin Cameron told me when I came to speak with him the first time (M1-10.11.13). Colin Cameron was the current Development Manager at OREF, Orkney Renewable Energy Forum, and we had been in sporadic contact since I began to consider Orkney as a fieldsite. In this chapter I focus on the first “community”, that of the renewable energy industry. I will ask and begin to answer: “of whom did this community consist and how do such entities intersect?” – a question that will extend throughout this thesis to include intersections between those involved in renewable energy in Orkney and the wider community of residents, as discussed in the previous chapter. To answer the above question I will discuss the various companies, organizations and types of individuals involved in the generation of renewable energy in Orkney. To do so I will divide said areas of involvement into four to six categories: The Promotional Trio; The Technology Developers; The Supply Chain; Wind Energy; and OIC & OREF. Finally, I use the phrase, ‘the renewables industry’ here, as this is the phrase used to articulate the entities involved in the general development and generation of renewable energy in Orkney.

**The Promotional Trio**

What I am calling ‘the promotion trio’ is a trio of two companies, the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) and Aquatera, and one research centre, Heriot Watts University’s Orkney Campus: the International Centre for Island Technology (ICIT). All three institutions, along with the Orkney Islands Council (OIC), were fundamental to the establishment and success of the marine renewables industry in Orkney. I will begin chronologically with the establishment of ICIT.

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22 Although Colin used the word “community”, I use this term tentatively here as I only occasionally heard used it during my time in Orkney. More regularly group associations, especially those within the sphere of renewable energy or larger notions of residency in Orkney, were implicitly recognized with the pronouns ‘we’, ‘us’, and ‘our’, a point I will return to in Chapter 7: We, Us Our.
ICIT was established in the early 1990s as an offshoot of a project funded by the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC, currently Scottish Natural Heritage). The head of research and a research assistant for this project still worked in Orkney at the time of my fieldwork, in their respective positions as a professor at ICIT, and the founder and director of Aquatera. The majority of the information in this section comes from a conversation I had with the latter individual. Over the decade following its formation ICIT developed courses and established itself as an institution both within its host university in Edinburgh and in the town of Stromness, where it was physically located. While not its main founding principle, one of the original areas of interest for ICIT was the potential power of marine renewable energy, only a concept at the time it was set up.

However, by “1998/99 the interest [in resource development opportunities] was beginning to grow into the concept of a test centre as ICIT did some feasibility work though one of the students,” the founder of Aquatera recounted. The man went on to explain how the subsequent establishment of EMEC in the early 2000s and following growth of the entire marine energy industry in Orkney could not be pinned down to one occurrence. “It was a complete confluence of timing and interests on numerous levels,” he said. Not only was the Orkney Islands Council in support of establishing the centre, but also the research came at a time when the British Government was also looking into the potential benefits of marine energy and the establishment of a centre for the development of these technologies in Britain. At the same time a few wave technology developers were getting ready to test their devices in the open sea. “So there was this perfect storm of academic interest, government interest, industry interest and community interest, which it was up to Orkney to host”. Aquatera was established as an environmental consultancy around the same time as the Orkney Renewable Energy Forum (OREF), a few years after EMEC.

When I first encountered EMEC during my fieldwork it was the primary leasing body for the region’s Crown Estate waters, designated for the testing of wave and tidal energy generating technologies, all of which were located in the waters that flowed around and through Orkney. EMEC was also the main point of contact and support for the marine energy technology developers who came to Orkney to test their devices. That said, both the Orkney Islands Council (OIC) and Aquatera were often involved correspondingly in the initial hosting of potential developers and the filling out and submitting of various legal and environmental documents and
assessments. On top of its role as a leasing body and host, EMEC also functioned as a data collection and research centre, continuously collecting, analysing and publishing information from its test sites.

As I encountered it in during my fieldwork, Aquatera was involved as a consultant for marine and wind energy, as well as other schemes such as the EV trials. Its work supported the general development of renewable energy in Orkney, both responding to external requests and producing its own research to aid the industry. The type of work Aquatera most often conducted included environmental impact assessments and surveying necessary for the installation and testing of renewable technologies, such as the marine devices and wind turbine placement applications. They also provided “technical and operational support” as well as “public and stakeholder communications” (Aquatera Ltd 2015), which I witnessed in their public presence at conferences and in the hosting of events in Orkney. At the time of my fieldwork Aquatera was also involved in a number of other renewable energy projects around the world, such as a marine energy project in Chile. Over the last two decades the company has been involved in projects in over thirty different countries spanning four continents, the majority of which were conducted and carried out in Orkney.

At the time EMEC was started ICIT’s research focuses were broad, covering a wide range of marine and costal projects and degrees. However, by the time I arrived ICIT had become intimately tied into renewable energy related activities in Orkney, with Postgraduate programmes in ‘Environmental Interactions of Marine Renewable Energy,’ ‘Marine Renewable Energy,’ and ‘Renewable Energy Development,’ as well as the more general ‘Marine Resource Management’ course and Ph.D. candidacy positions. As will be echoed in comments included later, it could be said that ICIT, like many companies and organizations in Orkney, ‘grew’ with the renewables industry. That is, it specialized to support the growing area of interest that was renewable energy. Research and final degree projects undertaken here also often support the growth of renewable energy, with a focus on gaps in knowledge or data.

The main offices for EMEC, Aquatera and ICIT were not only all located within 100 yards of each other, in the Business Centre of Orkney, but these three organizations can be identified as the three most public ‘faces’ and champions of renewables – most notably marine renewables – in Orkney. The three organizations
were also intimately linked through their every day collaborations. EMEC, Aquatera and ICIT often worked together to put on events and talks, approach politicians, and attend conferences when and wherever possible. ICIT and Aquatera had a particularly close relation, with Aquatera contracted in to aid ICIT’s development plan over the coming years. Some of the staff even held dual positions at both ICIT and Aquatera. While EMEC was solely devoted to marine energy, Aquatera and ICIT conducted work for and research on other areas of renewable energy in Orkney, most notably on-shore wind. OREF, and less so the OIC, could be included in this trio to make a quartet (or quintet), as the two were also often included in the planning of such events and the promotion of renewables in Orkney. However, for numerous reasons I will save my discussion of both OREF and the OIC for later in this section.

All three institutions employed individuals and accepted students from a wide range of locations, Orkney, Scotland, the United Kingdom, Europe, and from overseas. Those enrolled and employed at ICIT, EMEC and Aquatera moved to live in Orkney full time. However, at the time of my fieldwork the Managing Directors of each institution were not originally from Orkney, a point never made by anyone in the industry.

**The Technology Developers**

At the time of my fieldwork EMEC was host to over a dozen marine energy technology developers. The list of companies included five wave energy developers – Aquamarine Power, Pelamis, Scottish Power Renewables (also testing Pelamis’s devices), Seatricity, and Wello Oy – and eight tidal energy developers – Alstrom (formerlly TGL), Andritz Hydro Hammerfest, Atlantis Resource Cooperation, Bluewater Energy Services, OpenHydro, Scotrenewables Tidal Power Ltd, Voith Hydro, Sustainable Marine Energy, and Nautiricity. While some of these companies only came to Orkney with an external team and for short periods of time, a number of the companies testing their devices had a more fixed presence, with local offices in Stromness or Kirkwall. Sometimes these later companies would have employees rotate in and out of head office, wherever it was located in the UK or Europe, and their Orkney office, where they needed staff, engineers, and electricians to monitor the device performance, oversee the towing of the device in and out of the test site and carry out repairs when necessary. Other companies had employees permanently
stationed in Orkney, or some sort of mix of permanent and rotational staff. There was also one local technology developer, Scotrenewables Tidal Power Ltd., whose head office was located in Orkney. Scotrenewables was founded by a local Orcadian man who initially developed the design for the device as part of his Ph.D. at ICIT. This company, in particular, prided themselves on sourcing local expertise and labour at all stages of development and testing whenever possible.

As with the other marine energy companies and organizations with offices in Orkney, such as, EMEC and Aquatera, Scotrenewables Ltd employed a mix of locals and incomers, the latter of which came from the UK, Europe, and some from even further afield, such as Indonesia, America and Chile. All of these incomers permanently moved to Orkney for their jobs. However, these companies also provided crucial area of employment for skilled locals. As one woman at the OIC told me, “Renewables, like Oil in the past, has been a huge success for Orkney, socio-economically speaking. It’s bringing new blood in – smart, interesting people, and gives a lot of the smart young Orkney folk a good job and a good reason to stay” (C₁-20.01.14). In a similar comment, one engineer from of a technology developer company said, “It’s stemmed the brain drain” (A₁-11.01.14). While the woman at the council was in her late forties and the engineer was in his late twenties, both were Orcadian. Both had also moved off island for higher education when they had graduated school, the woman pursuing a masters after her undergraduate degree and then returning to work for the council, the man returning right after his undergraduate degree when he was offered a position at the tidal energy company.

The Supply Chain

Unlike the employment demographic in what I have termed the ‘promotional trio’ and among the technology developers, the supply chain was predominantly local. However, what exactly ‘local’ means is not a simple matter in Orkney. I will discuss the complexities of being local, being an Orcadian, being an incomer, a resident and all the in-betweens later, in Chapter 7, ‘We, Us, Our’. Here it is enough to say that most of the individuals who made up the local Orkney marine renewables supply chain, and almost all of those in managerial positions, had not only been born and raised in Orkney, but also had “many generations in the kirkyard”. A large majority of individuals in the supply chain had years of experience in the Orkney
waters, many had been fishers or divers in earlier years. Similar to the development of ICIT, which started off as a research centre for the exploration of all marine technology in general and then transitioned into a nationally renowned centre for renewable energy, many of the companies in the supply chain followed a similar trajectory of specialization. As one man told me:

“We’re all growing up with this industry and most of us have grown up in this area. In our past jobs most of us were divers or fishers, fishermen so we have a good knowledge of the sea conditions. If you don’t have the local knowledge you can either get caught in a bad situation or be overly cautious and waste your company’s time and investor’s money.”

(B2-05.03.14)

Bob, the man speaking, had started the underwater surveyors company Roving Eye with his wife Karen. The company’s name was based off its main asset, a ROV, i.e., a remote operated underwater vehicle.23 The pair, who I return to in other chapters, initially started the company as a service advertised within Orkney’s tourism sector. Roving Eye would take people out in their boat who wished to see the old WWI and II German and UK wrecks at the bottom of Scapa Flow, but who did not want to or could not go on the diving expeditions offered by a number of local diving companies. “By 2002/2003 we became aware of the renewables industry and began getting contracts for that kind of work,” Bob explained. Bob originally worked as a scallop diver. Bob and Karen – who manages the business and communications side of Roving Eye – now focus on work involving geological and visual underwater surveys of renewable devices, subsea electricity cables and pipelines, and various features of the seabed.

Another company in the local marine energy supply chain was Green Marine (UK) Ltd., a marine operations company based in Orkney. The operations, advertised as ‘services,’ include onshore storage and workshop facilities; heavy lifting capabilities; mooring installations; towage; vessel and barge charter; device deployment and recovery; salvage; methods, planning and marine consultancy; and naval architectural services (Green Marine UK Ltd 2015). Originally established to work on a wide range of vessels and with a wide range of materials, Green Marine

23 ROVs enable visual inspections and recordings of underwater structures, geological features and devices. They are unpopulated and highly responsive underwater machines piloted remotely from above the water, a boat or other type of sea vessel, to which they are tethered both physically and electronically. Often, although not a descriptive necessity ROV is equipped with a camera that provides live video feed on their host vessel.
has opened its expertise to include the experience gained from working with marine energy technology developers. Experience is crucial here and a key point for this whole sub-section on the local supply chain. Like many of the companies in the supply chain, Green Marine and Roving Eye “grew with EMEC,” as Grant put it. They ‘grew’ with the growing, yet still globally nascent, marine energy industry. With this experience and knowledge they have been able to include and advertise their specialties in the marine renewables sector.

Similarly, originally a run of the mill construction company in Orkney, Heddel Construction is now able to advertise their experience as wind and marine energy civil engineering contractors. The same or similar could be said about Orkney Aggregates, Orkney Fabricators, Lows – a typical multi-purpose Orkney company that provided a wide range of services including legal and financial assistance and advice, as well as assistance and advice for property owners. The OIC and individuals, Orkney residents, who trained as electricians, engineers, welders etc. have developed their skills in unexpected situations and in new ways as they too ‘grow’ with the industry.

Although not as publically recognised as a distinct entity, many companies, including a number already listed, have also developed skills through their work with wind turbines. Clark Thompson Insurance Brokers are a Scottish company with a local office in Orkney and are the main insurer for small-scale wind turbines in the area. The banks, most notably RBS and TSB, in the area have become experienced in advising individuals regarding loans specifically tailored to the type of financial investment wind turbine purchases necessitate.

**Wind Energy & Orkney’s Energy History**

With over four hundred turbines spread across the archipelago’s 382 square miles, Orkney had one of the largest densities of wind turbines in the United Kingdom.\(^{24}\) The majority of these turbines were installed between 2010 and 2012. However, the presence of wind turbines and the general harnessing of wind power

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\(^{24}\) Based on figures from UK Wind Energy Database (UKWED), there were just over 5,000 wind turbines installed across the entire nation in 2015. This means that at the time of my fieldwork Orkney contained a 10% of the United Kingdom’s (UK) turbines. Covering over only approximately 0.4% of the UK’s landmass, Orkney was most likely one of the densest areas for the production of on-shore wind at the time. This figure does not account for the data for kW production, and, therefore, does not reflect the density of energy production, although it is safe to assume that was also quite high in Orkney. (Renewable UK 2015)
are not recent occurrences. Just as it was host to marine energy technology development at the time of my research, Orkney was also host to the development of wind energy technologies in the 1980s. The main area of activity was Burgar Hill, in the West Mainland, today the site of a commercial wind farm. However, the first ever grid connected wind turbine was installed back in the 1950s at Costa Hill (OREF 2015). While only cement blocks remain from the old Burgar Hill test site, its memory is continually threaded into the present as a relic of Orkney’s ‘energy history,’ a concept promoted by the OIC, Orkney Tourism Group and a number of renewable energy organizations, such as EMEC, Aquatera and OREF. This energy history, often recited or displayed as part of introductions to the current state of wind and marine energy development in Orkney, also includes recollection of an even more distant past, in which handmade windmills were connected to generators to power a variety of technologies.

The Burgar Hill Test Site was established in Orkney in late 1980s and ran until the early 1990s. At the time it was one of the first test sites for commercial wind turbine technology development in Europe. Two companies tested their devices there: the Wind Energy Group, who tested one 3Mw and one 250kW device, and
Howden, who tested a 300kW device (Figure 3). Local construction and electricity companies Heddel Construction and Andrew Wilson Electrical were involved in the operations at the time, providing a number of local residents with experience working with this new technology, many of whom went on to work with renewable energy as it gained popularity between the early 2000s and 2010s.

The more recent presence of wind turbines in Orkney began to emerge around 2008. From there it snowballed, with a peak starting around 2011, when Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) – the electricity distributor for the area – began to reduce the number of grid access applications they accepted. By 2014 access had almost completely closed, the grid was oversaturated, an occurrence I will describe in greater detail later, both in this chapter and again in Chapter 4, ‘Attitude’.

There are three types of wind energy ownership in Orkney: commercial, community and individual, the last of which makes up the largest demographic. Some of the commercial turbines, like those on the isle of Sanday, are owned and operated by larger companies external to Orkney, while others, like those at Hammershill, are owned by a consortium of individuals, a majority of whom – including the largest stakeholder and owner of the land on which the Hammershill turbines are located – lived in Orkney. The community owned turbines are almost primarily owned by outer isle communities through local community development trusts (CDTs) set up for management of community funds and development of the quality of life on these islands. Here it might be helpful to stipulate that by ‘outer isle’ I am referring to all those islands in the Orkney archipelago that are not physically connected to or are not the mainland. Lastly there is individual ownership.

While there were some individuals who own larger turbines (1mW), the large majority purchase relatively smaller turbines (250kW-900kW). Farmers and farmers’ relatives are the primary owners of individual owned turbines. Farmers were particularly well positioned, monetarily and physically, to both buy and construct wind turbines. They usually have substantial assets invested in land, livestock and machinery, to which bank loans can be secured. There were also a number of grants and funding schemes specifically aimed at farmers wishing to construct wind turbines. Along with getting permission to connect to the grid, individuals wanting to install and put up wind turbines on their land must also get planning permission from the OIC. With large plots of land, farmers in were ideally placed to get planning
permission for their turbines. Of course, farmers and farmers’ relatives were not the only demographic to own small scale turbines, but they made up the vast majority.

The OIC

I spoke with two different people associated with the council during my fieldwork. The first was a woman in her mid-forties named Phemie who worked as the Head of Economic Development for the OIC. The second was a man in his mid-fifties named Alexander Argos who was the elected councillor for Stromness and the South Isles. It was through my conversations with these two individuals, as well as research conducted in the Orkney Islands Library and Archives in Kirkwall, that I learned what I know of the OIC’s involvement with renewable energy. Both Phemie and Alexander were born and raised in Orkney. They moved, like many do, *doon sooth* for higher education, returning to find work in Orkney. As Phemie worked for the Council and Alexander was an elected member, they represent the two major entities of any local authority. However, as I discuss in the following chapter, Alexander and Phemie share an interest in development, which may help make sense of their interest in the continued development and generation of renewable energy in Orkney.

Phemie’s current work for the OIC is primarily focused on working with marine technology developers and looking for solutions to ‘unlock’ Orkney’s electricity grid. At the time of my fieldwork Orkney’s grid was completely saturated, that is to say, Orkney was generating more energy than it could export, a situation that threatened to limit the current development trajectory of the marine energy industry and the investment in wind turbines. Phemie’s work ‘unlocking the grid’ involved meeting with the grid steering committee, a group of individuals from various areas of renewable energy development and generation in Orkney who met monthly to discuss the current state of the grid and potential solutions, some of which centred on finding other uses for the energy currently being generated in the area. Both Colin Cameron and Alexander Argos also sat on this committee. Phemie’s work with the marine technology developers involved hosting potential clients, as well as visiting international government officials interested in learning how Orkney

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25 ‘Doon sooth’ is vernacular for ‘down south’ and refers to anywhere on the mainland of the United Kingdom, although when used to refer to Caithness or other regions in the very north of Scotland, there are usually notes of sarcasm involved.
has dealt with the unforeseen challenges of renewable energy generation. Such interest also often extended to the governmental strategies the OIC has employed and the Active Network Management (ANM)\textsuperscript{26} system designed by SSE and the University of Strathclyde in 2010. “Another hat\textsuperscript{27} I have,” Phemie continued, “is keeping the [marine technology] developers at the table,” which was another way of saying she worked to keep EMEC’s client’s in Orkney. “After all, the council is one of the co-owners of EMEC,” she added (C\textsubscript{1}-20.01.14).

A point Phemie and Alexander stressed was the issue of local jobs. “We’re working to keep jobs in Orkney,” Phemie told me. Similarly Alexander talked about the issue of jobs, about giving the population of young educated adults a reason to stay in Orkney, but he spoke of a larger notion of development.

> We would like to see
> Tha continuation of tha development…
> Because it’s such, it’s part of such a
> Small economy
> That we don’t want to see us doing phase one and then [see] tha
> whole thing disappearing somewhere else.

(S\textsubscript{1}-10.03.14)

Along with his position as Councillor and member of the grid steering committee, Alexander Argos held two other elected positions: chair for the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee and chair for Planning Permission Committee, which oversaw all applications for planned renovations and new buildings or structures, including wind turbines. In this capacity he represents another area in which the OIC is involved with renewable energy in Orkney, which is at the stage of planning permission.

**OREF**

The Orkney Renewable Energy Forum (OREF) was established in 2000 as a point of contact for information about the development and generation of renewable energy in Orkney. Another founding principle for the company was a fundamental

\textsuperscript{26}I will discuss the ANM system in detail later in the thesis, for now it is enough to know it is a system that manages the electricity input for the Orkney micro-grid and was developed to enable increased connections when the issue of grid capacity first became an issue.

\textsuperscript{27}Having multiple ‘hats’ is not exclusive to Orkney, but used frequently there. “Hats” often refer to the various jobs or responsibilities individuals hold.
belief in the importance of renewable energy as an alternative to fossil fuels. Started as a forum for the discussion of renewable energy related issues, the company became increasingly involved in aiding the general development of generation in Orkney. By the time I arrived in Orkney OREF was a limited company, with a large part of its finances generated from paid membership subscription. Anyone was able to sign up for OREF membership, although it tended to be individuals and associations involved or otherwise interested in the development and generation of renewable energy in Orkney. The price of membership paid for access to the forum, promotion on the OREF website and at conferences and events, a weekly e-mail newsletter and an annual printed magazine.

OREF’s designation as a forum far exceeded the presence of the online forum on its website. The company was one of the main promoters and supporters for all kinds of renewable energy production and development in Orkney with the website, presentation boards and the projects bearing testament to this; and during my fieldwork OREF was present at all the renewable energy conferences and events in Orkney and two major conferences on renewable energy in Scotland. The events and conferences in Orkney included the Marine Energy Supply Chain Showcase in October 2013, just before my arrival; the E-Harbours conference in February 2014, hosted by ICIT; the SSE’s Orkney Grid Consultation in February 2014; the European Union Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) Ocean Energy Day event in June 2014, hosted by EMEC; the Three Liners Day in July 2014; and the OREF Orkney Renewable Energy Pop-Up Exhibition in August 2014. The conferences outwith Orkney, but in Scotland, included the All Energy Exhibition and Conference held in Aberdeen in late May 2014, which I attended as the OREF representative, and the Renewable Energy Scotland Conference held in Inverness in September 2014, which occurred after my time with the organization.

The company was managed by a Board of Directors, which was voted in yearly at OREF’s Annual General Meeting. During my time in Orkney the OREF board included the Managing Director of EMEC as chair, the Managing Director and founder of Aquatera, an Aquatera employee who also worked closely with ICIT, an EMEC employee who was the previous development manager of OREF, the Managing Director of Orkney’s Community Energy Scotland (CES) office, a Ph.D. student at ICIT, a professor of sustainable development at the University of the Highlands and Islands Orkney campus, and two members of the marine energy
supply chain. At the beginning of my fieldwork OREF also employed one permanent employee, a Development Manager. They brought on an administrative assistant over the winter of 2013 to help with overseeing membership re-subscriptions and an intern, myself, in February 2014 to put together an Electric Bus Funding scheme for the islands. My work on the scheme was subsumed by the OIC, which secured alternative funding for a similar project in May of that year. Between April and June the position of Development Manager changed hands, with the acting development manager leaving the position for a job with one of the wave energy development companies. During this time I was kept on as the sole employee of the company. The role of the Development Manager was, like most jobs in the area, advertised in the Orcadian, the local newspaper, and was filled by a woman from EMEC. In August my time with OREF came to an end when the company brought on an additional full-time employee, a Marketing Director. The position – also advertised in the Orcadian as well as on online job sites – was a graduate scheme funded by the Highlands and Islands Enterprise, HIE, and went to a young woman originally from the Isle of Skye.

At the beginning of my fieldwork OREF was heavily involved with the marine renewable energy industry and large scale wind energy production, with most of its membership coming from the developers, supply chain, EMEC, Aquatera, ICIT, CES and the large scale wind turbine array of companies and installers. However, in one of our first meetings, Colin Cameron, OREF’s Development Manager when I first arrived, was already speaking about the ways that OREF planned to involve the large population of micro-generation wind turbine owners. We discussed incentives for joining, and how and why would it benefit them. These conversations had clearly extended to the higher-level management of the company, as by the time I left Orkney OREF had established a wind turbine performance monitoring system, in which turbine owners entered data.

Figure 4: Image of OREF Banner from Three Liners Day, June 2014
Photographer: Self
on the performance of their turbines and were able to track this performance against
the anonymous general data gathered from all those who participated. As such, by
the end of my fieldwork OREF had succeeded in widening its projects to include all
kinds of renewable energy activities: promoting electric vehicle travel, providing a
point of connection for marine renewable technology developers and the local supply
chain, incorporating wind turbine owners via a data collection scheme, and
continuing its position as a place for information on renewable energy in Orkney via
its website and public presence.

While I spent a total of six months at OREF, most of my fieldwork does not
draw directly on my time there, i.e. my time in the office. Instead it was the
knowledge of individuals and opportunities to attend events my position at OREF
facilitated. Much of my time at the OREF office was spent alone, but did allow me to
see the importance of virtual connections in the industry, as well as the links between
Orkney as a local centre and the national governments as the nodes of policy making
that influence crucial funding, and the more global ideals of a renewable energy
transition.

**Bringing it together: Interaction, A Common Goal & The Grid**

One of the ways these various entities become knitted together was through
continuous interaction, whether that be for work contracts or at events, such as
conferences, talks and showcases. I discuss this point further in Chapter 7, ‘We, Us,
Our’. Aquatera would also host a renewable energy work social for the different
companies, a sporadic and sometimes more regular gathering for drinks and often a
buffet on Friday nights after work; I made it to three of these during my time in
Orkney. While involved in different areas and types of technology, the entities of this
diffuse whole also shared an underlying fundamental purpose, the production and
generation of renewable energy in Orkney. It is one particular complication of this
purpose that I would now like to turn my attention too, one that served to knit the
different components together at the time of my fieldwork. This complication was
the electricity grid in Orkney.

The electricity grid (Figure 5) in Orkney was installed during the First World
War when Scapa Flow, the channel that runs between Orkney Mainland and the
South Isles, was used as a naval base for the British fleet. During this time most of
the roads were paved, and the first major port, Hatson Pier, was constructed. Before this time Orkney was powered primarily by generators; before that, by peat and, if you were lucky, seal oil. People also used some small forms of renewable electricity, as I will continue to discuss in the next chapter.

Figure 5: Orkney Electricity Grid and Renewable Energy Generation Sites
Ebenezer Ashie (2013)
Even after the installation of mains electricity, small handmade wind turbines were used. One woman in her 70s recalled how many people she knew had what she called ‘free lights’ that ran off the small turbine. The electricity grid in Orkney, like everywhere else, was built for large-scale production near large centres of population with a trickle-out distribution – like a heart and the venous system in the body. The cables installed towards the remote and less populated areas tended to be much smaller, as they did not need to carry a large load. This is the current grid system in place. It is not, however, well suited for the production of renewable energy, which in Scotland tends to be the most plentiful in traditionally remote and sparsely populated areas.

When Orkney started producing renewable energy those involved where aware of the probable over production, there was just so much potential energy in and around these islands. If it was to be harnessed there needed to be a third subsea cable. Early on EMEC, Aquatera and OIC began looking for solutions, such as the ANM scheme discussed in Chapter 6, ‘Attitude’. From what I could gather, SSE\textsuperscript{28}, OFGEM\textsuperscript{29} and DECC\textsuperscript{30} had, in these early years, even promised delivery of the third sub-sea cable, but as the years progressed the date of installation was continuously pushed back.

While the OIC and SSE had attempted to make ‘space’ for more generation via the ANM scheme, no one was prepared for the massive uptake of micro-generation – i.e., individually owned – turbines and the continued delay of the third subsea cable. When I arrived the grid was completely saturated. On low wind days the grid was able to handle the input, but on more windy days, the cables were literally heating up due to over generation. Even with some of the turbines shut off, a process enacted by the ANM scheme, the generation was still too much. This was a problem for everyone involved with the generation of renewable energy in Orkney and brought different people from the various entities together to look for solutions. The problem was one of limitations to growth, a subject I discuss in more detail in the following chapter. It is through this collective problem that the more distant entities in marine and wind can be seen as part of one unit and helps describe my focus on both. In the

\textsuperscript{28} SSE is Scottish and Southern Energy, the energy distributor – and collector, in this case – in the region.
\textsuperscript{29} OFGEM is the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets, the United Kingdom’s energy regulator.
\textsuperscript{30} DECC is the United Kingdom’s Department for Energy and Climate Change.
field this general grouping together was also supported by cross involvement of different work projects in companies as described above, as well as the general reference of ‘renewable energy’ by many residents.
I opened up Part One by addressing the main entry points of this thesis. First was my intended focus of renewable energy, second came later through my fieldwork and feeds into the already well-documented issues of identity and belonging in the British Isles. In setting up for my investigation into these two areas of inquiry this thesis has opened with a discussion of the relevant—here, regional and thematic—literature in anthropology. This discussion highlighted two major themes, those being everyday experiences of energy, and the establishment and maintenance of identity and belonging. Much of the literature on renewable energy reveals that research on energy projects highlights the tensions between local, national and global agendas, with each level of these levels also often containing a variety of invested parties. Two questions this stock of literature raises for my own research are “Who are the invested parties?” and “How do these new energy possibilities in Orkney reveal the priorities and values of the current residents?” As will become clear in the following chapters, these questions tie into literature on identity and belonging as residents in Orkney call on these categories in different ways to express and explain their views on the presence of renewable energy. There is a third major theme which Chapter 1, ‘Situating the Research’, also addressed. That third theme was myth and it’s place in the thesis will become clear in the following ethnographic chapters. While the theme of renewable energy came out of my initial guiding interests and the theme of identity and belonging came out of my ethnographic research, the theme of myth can be seen as coming out of my analysis.

The two chapters that followed Chapter 1 served to gradually narrow in on my main subjects of focus and intended interlocutors, whom I set out to engage with and study. These subjects were people in Orkney working with or invested in renewable energy development and generation. I intentionally use ‘subject’ instead of ‘object’ here, but clearly my intention was to follow the functionalist leanings of studying people and not a particular aspect of society. Indeed functionalism is not the only approach in anthropology to take a particular group of people as the main
subject/object, many anthropological approaches do so, a clarification that will help in later discussions about how I employ myth.

In Chapter 2, ‘The Orkney Locality’ I gave a broad overview of Orkney, intertwining sections focused on the people and the place. While this chapter may seem to provide some information not immediately relevant to the rest of the thesis, my hope is that it gives a broader context of social life in which the more pinpointed events and people I discuss in the following chapters exist. This context is crucial in understanding how the renewables industry, via its employees, is interwoven into the fabric of general social life in Orkney. Orkney is presented as it was presented to me, a place and people strongly defined by the weather, the residents, the geography, the accessibility and the history. This chapter is also plays an important role in insuring my attention on the renewable energy industry does not give a inaccurate view of the role renewable energy plays in the everyday lives of the general population. The industry’s importance lies instead in its ability to draw Orkney into national and global sphere.

The following chapter, ‘Entities of Renewable Energy’, provided a structural description of the renewable energy industry, breaking down the various companies and organizations involved and describing their various make up and roles. By structural here I am not employing Lévi-Strauss’s structuralism, which focused on the underlying structures of human thought. The structural description I give is far less theoretically loaded and describes the organisation of the industry. Such a description is provided to ensure clarity of individual’s association in the future chapters. There are technology developers, consultancy agencies, a leasing body that manages the testing facilities, a research centre, a local supply chain, local wind turbine contractors, community development trusts, and the local authority. The industry employs a great deal of locals, but has also drawn incoming workers, researchers and students to these isles. As is also true of the existing the literature on energy and on belonging and identity, which has often been associated with some element of change, the presence of renewable energy has opened up to discussions of what it means and has meant to be from Orkney. The following chapters in Part Two will primarily deal with conversations I had with people I encountered in the renewable energy industry. These conversations will focus on a particular representation of the industry that was intimately tied to past and present elements of Orcadian identity.
Part Two

The Myth of Cohesion
“It’s in Our History”
Chapter 5

Before I could even turn my tape recorder on Alexander Argos, Councillor for Stromness and the South Isles, launched into a monologue on renewable energy in Orkney:

This place is, is… steeped in its history.
So, *ya* got an island group that was,
well, was infused with people coming through,
like *tha* Vikings, *an’* establishing a place here…
as a place -*a* connection.
So there was people going throughout all *tha*
all *tha*, *ya* know, *tha*, *tha* Viking world
*an’* this kind-*a* like, this centre -*a* movement…
as people’s first step away from Norway,
towards, *ya* know, further movement down
*ta* Ireland and up *ta* Iceland *an’* then on *ta* Canada.
So it’s a real heartland.
Orkney ‘*as* got that kind-*a* idea.
It’s always been, always been *tha* same.

(S1-10.03.14)

Councillor Argos knew why I was there. In an introductory e-mail I had prompted him with my interest in the presence of renewable energy in Orkney. “Why are there so many projects here? Why has there been such an uptake?” I asked. A few weeks
earlier I had heard him speak at the ‘E. Harbours’ conference in Stromness where he had focused on similar themes: the centrality of Orkney, its position as an energy hub and not a peripheral out-of-the-way island community. I was intrigued and wanted to hear more; he was happy to oblige. Alexander’s words flowed freely...

It had that kind-a movement,
a culture -a… it wasn’t a static population,
as many island groups are,
an’ we’re so often not, tha [other islands]
they’re tha destination, whereas Orkney wasn’t tha destination.
Orkney was on, on tha way ta something.
kind-a tha gateway oot, an’ then
more recently… Ya know, there were
two massive influxes -a people through tha world wars.
An’ Scapa Flow being used as a,
as a, as a base
with… ya know…
twice as many servicemen on the island as inhabitants
plus, ya know, a fleet -a maybe five or six times that number
on the ships.
So that’s kind-a there in the makeup. So
when people come - even from further away
tha work here - they find there’s an openness
and there’s a, ya know, people wanna kind-a help ya…
rather than hindya ya.
An’ that’s all got ta do with culture and,
and how there’s been a development,
over the years, -a that… collective working.

(S1-10.03.14)

This was not the first time I had heard this line of reasoning, this kind of logic, present above. “Well, it’s in our history,” Sigurd responded matter-of-factly. I was over at Sigurd’s house for a chat and a cup of tea and had just asked him why he thought renewable energy was so predominant in Orkney. Why were people so accepting of it? When Sigurd didn’t elaborate on his comment I pressed a little harder, asking what he meant. Sigurd continued…

Ya ken we talked about the Vikings earlier… they came here, raided, used Orkney as a base for a while. Even when some moved on they left their decedents… Later we were a stopping-off point for tha Hudson Bay Company; Orcadian men joined up, they were known by tha company ta be good, hard workers. An’ ya look at World War I & II. Tha soldiers comprised over four-fifths -a the population at points. Then there was tha Flotta Oil Terminal. I guess the renewables sector has just… added ta that legacy.

(FN-20.11.13)
Indeed, Sigurd and I had talked about the Vikings. One of the first things Sigurd brought up as the kettle was boiling was a recent newspaper article he had read about a genetics study. The study confirmed that an extremely high number of Orkney residents descended from the Vikings. “I’ve got Viking blood in me,” Sigurd proudly stated in a simultaneously un-emphatic manner, that broad Orkney accent still noticeable despite the years lived in Aberdeen and London.

I had also heard a similar timeline of events from other people. The Vikings, the Hudson Bay Company, the whaling, and fishing booms, World War I and II, and the Flotta Oil Terminal were all cited. It was hard to ignore the repetition of events, a certain reasoning, which was beginning to enforce itself with each iteration. While not everyone included all these events, some assemblage of this timeline was provided as an explanation for the current uptake of renewable energy in Orkney by a number of individuals, as if to imply some sort of cause and effect, some building of experience that set a precedent for the current state of affairs. This was a particular type of reasoning, a way of making sense of the present by looking at the past.

**History**

The history referenced by these individuals is not just any kind of history. As histories often go, this one is specifically located. Those who referenced ‘history’ as an explanation for the present were not merely citing the past. ‘History,’ as opposed to the past, in Euro-American discourse, is more concrete, past proven as fact and knowledge acquired via investigation. Such an understanding would comply with the use of the term history here, by these individuals. Meditations on these moments fill texts, many written by local historians, non-fiction and fiction writers, and poets: Joseph Storer Clouston, Hugh Marwick, George Mackay Brown, Ernest Marwick, Christina Mackay Costie, and Magnus Spence, among others. These texts fill the bookshelves of residents, visitor’s centres, and libraries throughout the archipelago.\(^{31}\) Museums and monuments are dedicated to displaying and preserving investigations into the presence of Neolithic settlers and Viking invaders; the movements of the explorer John Rae who discovered the Northwest Passage; the Orcadian men

\(^{31}\) Michael Lange also makes a note of this in his ethnography of Norwegian-Scottish identity in Orkney, “The bookshelf against the wall always contains some names which are rapidly becoming familiar to me: J. Storer Clouston, Hugh and Ernest Marwick, Walter Traill Dennison, George Mackay Brown, W.P.L. Thomson, C.M. Costie, George Lamb” (2007: 24-25).
employed by the Hudson Bay Company who travelled his discovered route; and the critical role Orkney played in World War I and II. Some of these moments also feature in the education of children in Orkney. “We used to do plays and projects on the Vikings,” one man now in his late twenties told me. Here we see history as investigation into the past, but also others’ historical investigation recounted and presented as historical fact, historical testimony as an historical narrative or an historical consciousness in the present.

Embedded in a larger discussion of the balance between the subjectivity and objectivity of – and truths and fictions within – historical testimony and investigation, Carlo Ginzburg states, “Historical narratives speak less to us about reality than they do about whoever has constructed them” (2012: 3). Here I take Ginzburg’s use of ‘historical narratives’ to mean written investigation and testimony, as this refers to the post-modern critique of historical texts. I use the phrase ‘historical narratives’ later and above to describe the meta-narratives that come from the particular repetition of past moments recounted and investigated. Ginzburg’s quote is important to include as it emphasises the subjective nature of the historical process, whether that be the recording of events or the investigation into these recordings. Both are subject to the will, perspective, and inquiry, of the person or persons doing the recording and investigating. However, in the ethnographic statements above, ‘history’ is offered up in conversation as a ‘thing,’ an object almost. It is presented as fact, as a collective past, not subjective and open to interpretation, but something concrete that can be referenced to make sense of the present.

The history these individuals are referring to is not necessarily investigation into the past, but one particular line of representation, historical investigation, and testimony turned into historical narrative and consciousness. So while the history as investigation is conducted, many individuals in Orkney learn the investigations of others through lessons, by reading texts or visiting museums, and through hearing family stories related to such events. It is through this process that ‘history’ can become a pinpointed narrowing in of investigations. “Well, it’s in our history,” becomes an accepted answer, it carries its own weight.
History as Myth

Roland Barthes begins the final chapter of his *Mythologies* by stating, “myth is a type of speech” (2009 [1956]: 131), but quickly adds that myth is not just *any* type of speech, myth must be speech as a message. Barthes deviates both from Malinowski’s theory of myth as important stories and Lévi-Strauss’s theory of myth as erasers of history. Myth here is far more commonplace. The foundation of this speech as message is what Kathleen Stewart (1996) might call the mimesis of everyday life, the retelling of events. Similarly Barthes states, “[For] it is human history which converts reality into speech, and it alone rules the life and death of mythical language” (Barthes 2009 [1956]: 132). This is the micro-process of history that I am concerned with, the foundation for the written texts that become fact, that become a message retold or reread throughout time. The history referred to by my interlocutors in this chapter, that is, a particular timeline provided as explanation, can also be considered as myth. It stands for itself and something larger, especially when employed above as an answer to my questions about the acceptance of renewable energy in Orkney. This is not to say history is the same as myth, but rather in the instances above what is being signalled as history is really myth. In all of the conversations I had, ‘history’ was presented first, before any further explanation, as if it could stand alone. So what does this particular myth involve? What is its message contained in speech?

Myth and not Discourse

Before I go on to address the questions above I would first like to address a potential point of confusion in my use of myth. That is, my discussion of myth here may sound a lot like the well-established field of study that is discourse. “Discourse, at its broadest, can be understood to mean ways of speaking which are commonly practiced and specifically situated in a social environment” (Rapport and Overing 2000: 117). One particular line of discourse analysis, à la Dell Hymes, looks at ‘speech communities’ and the various ‘speech events’ that allow for and are made up of particular ‘speech acts’ (*ibid*: 118). The invocation of history in the explanation of the current presence of renewable energy can accurately be described as one such
speech act, with the event being the interview\textsuperscript{32} and the speech community being those involved in the generation and development of renewable energy in Orkney. Indeed, much like my use of Barthes’ description of myth as ‘speech with a message,’ speech acts have been described as ‘speech about something’ and ‘preformative utterances,’ with Robert Paine and others further defining rhetoric as a particular type of (political) discourse intended to persuade \textit{(ibid)}. However, there are crucial differences in these descriptions. Myth as speech with a message is not merely speech about something. While it may be a preformative utterance and even used as rhetoric in some of the instances I encountered it, as will become clear in the further chapters and in some of the examples above – such as in the text experts from my conversation with Sigurd – the myth of cohesion seemed much more a matter-of-fact explanation than some performance. However, an alternative definition of what constitutes a performance might alter my analysis here. Such a narrowing in on this subject would have to be saved for further research. The point I wish to make here is that while myth may be a type of discourse, it is not equal to it; in this thesis, discourse cannot merely be substituted for myth to mean the same thing. Myth is used intentionally, to highlight the story being woven into the particular invocation of history and identity seen in this chapter and the two that follow. Here myth resembles Malinowski’s understanding of it as an important story. Story and narrative, however, cannot be equated with myth, but can be used to describe myths that follow the narrative structure, with events connected and told to communicate a particular message. As I will repeat later, I also use myth to challenge its associations with falsehood and promote the idea that myths speak to the lived realities they help construct.

\textbf{A Continuation of Openness}

All of the points in the timeline are times when Orkney can be connected to the larger migrations of people through Europe and the rest of the world; they are evidence both of a past and for the current ‘openness,’ to borrow Alexander’s use of the word. “A place -\textit{a} connection… this centre -\textit{a} movement… it wasn’t a static population,” he told me. Sigurd and others were less explicit, merely listing the

\textsuperscript{32} There were surly other speech events in which this speech act came up, although it was primarily in the interview or semi-structured discussion that I experienced it.
moments to back up their initial answer of “It’s in our/the history”. But Sigurd did say, “Renewables just adds *ta* that legacy,” – having also listed off a timeline of events similar to Alexander’s, I assumed this legacy was also the ‘openness’ Alexander spoke of. All of these points in time were provided as evidence for why Orkney has a proliferation of marine and on-shore wind renewable energy activity. The unsaid, yet acknowledged, statements here are; one, that renewable energy is a new technology, and with something new comes change; two, that there have been objections to renewable energy projects in other areas that have prohibited development. Orkney, instead, has been open to the development of renewable energy, an openness that can be understood through the history of this people and place. What I find most interesting is how this question of ‘why here’ is answered by arguing that change is a continuation. “It’s always been *tha* same,” Alexander told me, whilst reeling off a list of encounters. Or as Sigurd said, “Renewables just adds *ta* that legacy”. Change here is a constant. There is value in this repetition.

“It’s a continuation,” Bob and Karen Harcus told me when I was at their house for a chat and a cup of tea. Bob and Karen run a ROV (Remote Operated Vehicle) service for the marine renewables industry in Orkney. The couple also take work contracts from the oil terminal in Flotta, as well from SSE and DECC surveying the sub-sea electricity cables. However, they did not always run a survey service. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Bob and Karen use to use their ROV to offer a tourist a chance to see the underwater ship wrecks. “[It was] by 2002/2003 we became aware -*a* *tha* renewables industry *an’* began getting contracts for that kind-*a* work as well,” Bob told me. “That was when we first realized something was going on,” Karen echoed. “Since then we’ve been involved with most [marine renewables] development companies who come here,” I lost track of who was talking. It was at this point that one of them mentioned the comment about continuation.

It is a cutting edge industry. If it works we’ll make big history, if it doesn’t we’ll make little history. But there’s that feeling that you’re involved in something quite special. It’s a continuation. We feel like we’re in the centre of it, as we were during the Neolithic age.

(B2-05.03.14)

Neither Alexander nor Sigurd mentioned the Neolithic age, but it could be added to the list of points in time when Orkney held a central position in history. Recent archaeological evidence shows that the Standing Stones of Stenness and the Ring of
Brodger in Orkney outdate Stonehenge (Smith 2014), a topic of many conversations in Orkney around the time of the discovery. As I was told by one Orcadian woman, “the technology was developed here first!” (M1-14.09.14).

As with the comments from Alexander and Sigurd, there was a sense of fluidity in what Bob and Karen were saying, a sense of fluidity between the current presence of renewable energy and past events. However, here continuation is not about a quality of the people, or openness to new people, events and ideas, as Alexander suggests. The continuation is about the importance of Orkney as a place. “We feel like we’re in tha centre -a it”. This comment also reveals much about what makes ‘history,’ that is, moments when Orkney is a centre of activity, importance, and innovation. As another woman said to me, “I just feel like it’s really a special place. And I do think it’s really special to be able to contribute to the next part of that…story, because it’s kinda like the future history that is happening now” (L2-25.09.14). This Orcadian woman worked in a marketing position at one of the renewable energy companies, with the last few generations of her family coming from Stronsay. Here, the presence of a marine renewables industry and opportunities of wind energy generation are putting Orkney at the centre again, the centre for this kind of technology development. There is a value in this centrality; it makes history.

**Precedence**
The understanding of openness as repeated change and encounter also helps make sense of the logical weight placed on history itself. This reasoning suggests: something is more understandable if it has happened before, thus the indicative weight of historical precedence. The use of this reasoning is not only seen in the use of Orkney’s ‘history’ as an explanation for the current presence of renewable energy, but also in the implementation of a specific ‘energy history’. Orkney’s energy history is a phrase often used by those involved in renewable energy in Orkney, especially those involved in its promotion, such as OREF, Aquatera and EMEC. Along with pages on ‘Archaeology,’ ‘Craft,’ ‘Food and Drink,’ Orkney’s ‘Energy History’ was also mentioned on various sites, such as ‘www.visitorkney.com’ – a site run by the Orkney Tourism Group – and ‘www.orkney.com’ – a site run by the Orkney Islands Council, often sites people or, more specifically, tourists newly aware of Orkney go to for general information. The first time I met Colin Cameron, Development Manager of OREF, he showed me a slide show picture (Figure 7) presenting this ‘energy history,’ a variety of old windmills and wind turbines.

A few months later in an interview another man showed me a family photograph when discussing Orkney’s energy history (Figure 8).
“See that wheel secured _ta_ the top –_a’tha_ mast?” he asked. I nodded. “That’s a turbine with _tha_ sails taken off”. Further adding with an air of satisfaction, “and stone wheels on the cart too,” a few moments later (A1-11.01.14). Along with being a mechanical engineer for one of the tidal turbine companies, this man also owned his own turbine, a 500kW Kingspan installed on his father’s land. He was able to get grid access before SSE began limiting connections. In these references to a more particular energy history, precedence holds logical weight: the force of future revelation.

**Time and Development**

Why show me these photos? Why reference any history at all? I have begun to answer this to some degree. The idea of precedence, like that of centrality, holds weight, but there is more. There is a particular understanding of time embedded in this argumentational matrix. “It’s a nice place to come into,” I noted after Alexander had finished speaking about the openness of the Orcadian people. To this Alexander carefully responded, “Well, it’s, it… It’s formed by what’s happened…” Similarly, Sigurd initially answered my question with, “It’s in our history”. Putting aside Alexander’s comment about “it’s always been _tha_ same” for the moment, what
Alexander and Sigurd are implying is that openness developed into the current quality of the people who live in Orkney due to repeated encounters. Here we have a specific understanding of how events and actions build upon themselves to influence behaviour.

In an article on the uptake of solar energy in Greece, Daniel Knight and Nicholas Argenti discuss similar evocations of history by farmers who have been financially forced to erect solar panels on their lands to help repay the national debt (2015). Instead of evoking a positive narrative of encounter and centrality, however, the history remembered is one of German and Ottoman occupation. For the farmers these solar panels signal a third occupation, that of foreign multinationals. Yes the financial incentives of solar farms have made their installation attractive, but the families that have installed them still burn wood, including furniture, to keep warm at night. The cost of petrol is high and most of the money being made from this energy production is used to repay a debt these individuals aren’t responsible for. “Just look out the window,” Knight’s informant tells him,

There are two hundred years of family history in fighting for that land you see, fighting against occupiers – Turkish, German, British. But now it is owned by foreign invaders again, by Mrs Merkel. My family have won back their land before and my children will have to do it again, but for now I have no choice to collaborate.

(Knight and Argenti 2015: 790)

While there is a similarity in the employment of history to make sense of the present in both the case of the Greek farmers and my Orcadian interlocutors in this chapter, there are differences in particular representations of time. In Knight and Argenti’s article the Greek farmers speak as if the installation of solar panels signals a repetition of history, as if the current presence of renewable energy signals a collapse in time. For my interlocutors the current presence of renewable energy signals a particular development, a progression, as discussed above. I would not go so far as to say that the Greek farmer sees the expanse time differently from the Orcadian renewable energy advocate, that for one time operated in an A-series and for the other a B-series time (Gell 1996: 151). My research is not sufficient to make such a claim; however, I can speak to these particular contexts and moments. Further the employment of history by both signals the logical weight this line of reasoning holds for the human mind, or at least for these Euro-American iterations.
Before I move on, I want to explore the understanding of time as progression or development in the Scottish Highlands and Islands region, especially as it relates to the comments of Councillor Argos and Sigurd. During our interview Alexander told me that it was a “particularly exciting time” when he was elected to the Council as ward of Stromness and the South Isles. “[They] were trying ta do things, ya know, I brought a lot – a projects ta my ward”. I had also heard an ex-Councillor, one from the south parishes, describe her entry into the council in the same way: exciting and with lots of new projects. Alexander continued…

It was a dying town.
Stromness was working against a historic… disadvantage.

…
Everything that had happened since the OIC was formed
an’ controlled, had been in Kirkwall. Everything had been built in
Kirkwall, and tha davelopment in Stromness had just stagnated.
An’ I knew that we were in a transition period,
because trade an’ things
are changing all tha time.
Tha world is moving on.
So, it’s really about looking forward.
An’ I realised that right at tha beginning.
We had ta invest in tha town.
…
So it could be productive an’ active.
…
So that is kind-a where I’ve been.
I’ve set me thoughts on a very local basis,
but at tha same time,
on tha global – Orkney-wide – basis.
Ya know I’m very interested in davelopment.
An’ things like tha renewables.
I’m interested in looking at,
transportation routes, an’ things like that.
An’ that’s tha kind-a stuff I’m involved in noo.

(S1-10.03.14)

Alexander was born and raised in Stromness, Orkney’s second largest town. He had seen it fall behind the continued development of Kirkwall. Others I spoke to remarked about this too. “Shops [in Stromness] were boarded up when we first moved in,” one woman who had moved up to Orkney with her husband when they became pregnant with their first child told me. “The marine renewables industry has really turned that around, brought new projects and people in,” she continued.

While Sigurd did not mention the issue of development as directly as Alexander, he did talk about the threat of depopulation. We had just been talking about how abundant the wind resource was in Orkney. “-A’course, that’s why
everyone wants ta get on tha bandwagon, because here it makes money,” Sigurd explained. But it wasn’t just about money, Sigurd continued:

Ya know, tha north isles are split inta two groups.
There’s tha inner an’ tha outer islands
And tha inner islands are really Shapinsay, Rousay
Egilsay an’ Wyre.
An’ then Stronsay, Westray,
Sanday, Eday an’ North Ronaldsay
They’re on tha other side a ‘tha Stronsay Firth an’ tha Westray Firth,
So it’s further oot.
An’ they have more depopulation issues.
When I started going ta tha isles, right…

That’s me dad there

[Sigurd points to a photograph behind him]

An’ he worked tha business before me.
An’ he use tago ta Sanday, right?
An’ he wenta one hundred farms…
This was in tha 1950s.
I started going there in 1980,
An’ I wenta fifty-five.
An’ by tha time I stopped in 2006,
That was down ta under twenty.
So…
There’s a big problem in tha isles with depopulation,
An’ tha fact that they can’t earn enough from tha small farms.
So tha small farms disappear an’ tha big farms are getting bigger.
So tha whole thing,
well there’s been a depopulation issue in tha,
In tha whole -a’ Orkney.
For tha last hundred years.
An’ ya know, at like tha end -a’tha 19th century
tha population -a’ Orkney was 36,000.
An’ by tha, by tha 1960s… I think
I think it had bottomed ta something like 18 [thousand].
It has climbed up a bit.
But there’s a depopulation issue.
An’ I saw renewables as a way ta…
Stop that. Not stop it,
It’s just another source –a’ income for tha islands.

(E1-11.03.14)

Sigurd’s experience is not of a “dying town,” but of what could be called “dying island communities” – or “tha depopulation issue”. In both comments the lack of investment, in the case of Stromness, or income, in the case of the outer isles, leads to stagnation. Here stagnation is not neutral, but leads to regression, to lack of life.
Depopulation has been a continuous theme for the Scottish Highlands and Islands region for as long as the central areas surrounding Edinburgh and Glasgow, and later Aberdeen, Stirling, Perth, Dundee and Inverness, have drawn young adults into the cities for education and employment. The Highland Clearances did not help either. As represented in the comments above there is an interconnected nexus between lack of income and development and increased depopulation and marginalization. As a continuous reality, it is not surprising that depopulation and marginalisation are also common themes within the anthropological literature of the region. In the early 1980s Judith Ennew argued that external forces perpetuated this marginalisation in the Western Isles, with research efforts at the time placed on “preserving a static picture of culture” (1980: xiii). In her ethnography The Western Isles Today Ennew describes how feelings of resentment grew as the Western Isles were repeatedly left out of capitalist development and their futures made more and more insecure.

It is this same sense of periphery which dominates Hebridean self-image. It is not just a feeling of being on the edge but the insecurity which arises from the sensation that one might fall off or be pushed off.

(Ennew 1980: 104)

Ennew argues these two processes – the marginalized periphery and the growing centres – cannot be analysed as separate. Similarly, Jane Nadel-Klein – whose fieldwork is located in the eastern costal Highland region of Scotland – asserts, “local/regional marginalization in Britain [can] be seen as the outcome of unequal political and economic relationships” (1991: 502), so much so that ‘localism’ has become a synonym for ‘marginality.’ Justin Kenrick (2011) and Fiona Mackenzie (2006a, 2006b) also represent the political and economic marginalization of the Western Isles as the premise on which their respective interlocutors base their desire and efforts to reclaim their land through ownership of both the land itself and renewable energy projects in the area.

In Shetland, the work of Anthony Cohen (1978, 1982, 1987) and Reginald Byron (1981) instead tracks changes to the economy and daily life as driven by external forces, such competition and demand in the fishing industries. In Orkney,
Diana Forsythe looks at the issue of depopulation in terms of shifts in population dynamics, with English incomers repopulating the small outer isle where she conducted fieldwork (1982). In stark contrast, the issues of depopulation and marginalisation are completely absent from the initial mythic history initially provided by Alexander and Sigurd. This history is a success story. Albeit it a collection of events, pinpoints along a timeline, the collection weaves a narrative of encounter, centrality, and importance. As it was presented to me, these collections of events build up to the present and explain a development of a particular way of being. It is a myth that backs up both a current ethos and a current world-view.

It was only in later my conversations with Sigurd and Alexander that the threat of depopulation and the presence of past stagnation entered. While tied into the history, depopulation and stagnation were not part of the myth. The current development and generation of renewable energy, however, is part of the myth, it is part of the message. It is a message perpetuated in the work of Laura Watts (2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2016) and is my focus on the subject matter here. Again, it is important here not to equate myth with fiction, but rather to understand it as a speech act, a message, as suggested by Barthes (2009). Both wind generation and the development of marine energy technology have brought massive financial opportunities to the Orkney Islands. These various forms of renewable energy have provided a new source of income for these areas, new supports for life, new development. However, development is not just continued growth; it is also continued existence, the avoidance of stagnation and, therefore, regression and inexistence. If you’re not moving forward you are falling behind. At least this is the story told by Alexander and Sigurd. The moments in time selected by Alexander and Sigurd, as well as Bob and Karen’s reference to the Neolithic past, are all points of great importance, pivotal points of growth and prestige in Orkney’s past. “All memory is selective, and belonging requires a selection of elements to pick out, which social relationships to mark… and which identities to promote” (Edwards 1998: 150). This is the particular story or myth that is told, the particular identity being woven.

Jeanette Edwards also found a particular history, as opposed to ‘any old history,’ evoked by her informants in a small town in northern England (1998). She

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the face of change. Nevertheless, while Cohen does not dwell on the ‘then and now’, the changes are apparent in this work.
argues that is it through this particularity that residents not only define their own identity, but also ensure their future. The same could be said about Alexander, Sigurd, Bob and Karen. The particular myth they tell is a self-perpetuating in that it supports the continued presence of renewable energy development and generation in Orkney, and, therefore, the continuation of Orkney’s role in issues of global importance. Such an analysis gives further depth to Watts’ unexplained focus on future making in Orkney (2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2016).

History as a Dialogue between the Present and the Past

Carlo Ginzburg’s (2012) inquiries into the subjectivity and objectivity of the historical process lead him to claim that present oriented narratives of the past often reveal much more about current motivations and interests than they do about the past itself. Such present motivations and interests highly influence how the past is represented. Similarly, Susan Lewis, quoting Edward Hallett Carr, dwells on the implication of history as “an unending dialogue between the present and the past” (Carr 1964” 30 in Lewis 2002: 57). Lewis introduces this Carr quote when analysing a quotation from her own fieldnotes, one that was said during the Tynwald Day celebration in the Isle of Man and reads, “We can’t rewrite the history books” (2002: 57). Lewis challenges this statement, offering up multiple symbolic interpretations: did this statement stand as testament to the unchallengeable right to self-government? And what of those who consider the event as a celebration of colonial power? Thus, the presence of renewable energy in Orkney, the Tynwald Day celebrations seem to provide a catalyst for discussions of local identity as rooted in history. There is pageantry in the expressions of identity preformed during the celebrations, and while Tynwald Day is an event and the presence of the renewables industry an extended period in time, a comparison draws attention to the ways in which humans mobilise around occurrences and moments in time. The evocation of history by my informants is nothing irregular, nor would I say it is special. However, this is not to say this contribution is unimportant – far from it. This particular evocation of history, of points of importance, highlights the current motivation driving individuals to support the renewable energy industry in Orkney, the primary motivation being de-marginalisation.
Collective Working & Attitude

There are two more elements of the myth discussed above I would like to discuss here. The first is the notion of collective working and the second is a particular island attitude. At the end of Alexander’s statements above Alexander says this repetition of openness and centrality has led to a particular way of being, which could be equated with a welcoming nature and openness to new ideas.

So that kinda is there in *tha* makeup. So when people come even from further away *ta* work here, they find there’s an openness *an’* there’s a, *ya* know, people *wanna* kind-a help *ya*… rather than *hinda* *ya*. *An’* that’s all got *ta*do with culture and, *an’* how there’s been a *davelsment*, over *tha* years, *-a* that… collective working.

Then later, he expanded…

Well, it’s, it, It’s formed by what’s happened… … *An’* so people aren’t a afraid *-a* *tha*, *-a* *tha* influx *-a* people. Or people coming with new or crazy ideas. Because they will, They’ll work with them.

(S1-10.03.14)

“It’s got *ta*do with culture,” Alexander told me. Later, when talking with Sigurd about the uptake of renewable energy he told me, “It boils down *ta* attitude, no question about it,” linking the cause for this attitude into the remoteness, a need to be multi-skilled, to work with what you’ve got and be innovative. In the following chapters I will look further into the qualities of collective working and attitude as I revisit openness. For now it is enough to see how they begin to link up here and are made sense of through a particular telling of a collective past.

Mobilising the Past

In the above sections I have presented a particular mobilisation of the past by individuals who work in or with the generation of renewable energy in Orkney. All of these individuals – with the exception of Karen who is American with Orcadian ancestry – are Orcadian. When they evoke this past, they are evoking a past they are

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34 Here, as in other ethnographic references to ‘culture’, the term can be understood as a way of thinking and being, or a particular disposition of the people.
personally connected to. However, it is not just any mobilisation of the past, as asserted at the beginning, but a very particular history. It is a history turned myth not only by the selective nature of moments this history includes, but primarily by its use as a message. This history speaks for more than itself. It is stated as the outright answer, as a given, and only later is this answer explained. As with Jeanette Edward’s interlocutors in Alltown, it could be argued these individuals are mobilising this history by perpetuating this myth, for a particular end. This end is a centralised future as well as their own self and collective identification, through which they make sense of their current involvement in the production and generation of renewable energy in Orkney.
The Three Liners Day

It was four o’clock in the afternoon and I had just finished gathering the materials our supply chain members had dropped off in one of the downstairs rooms of the Old Commercial Hotel in Stromness. OREF had recently rented the room for the Orkney Renewable Energy Exhibition it was opening the following month. The plan was to move the exhibition to Kirkwall for the weekend. See, tomorrow was the Three Liners Day. Kirkwall was about to double in size (from 7,000 to 14,000 people) with tourists from around Europe and America. While most of the residents in Orkney planned to stay either in-doors or out of Kirkwall’s town centre, business owners, crafters, the OIC, the food and drink industry and representatives from the renewables sector all gathered together to prepare for this unique occasion. Two liner days, where two cruise liners docked in Kirkwall’s Harbour and/or the nearby Hatston Pier, were relatively common, but three! This was an occasion to take advantage of. As some would say, the Orkney PLC\textsuperscript{35} had organized.

Barbra pulled around with the EMEC van. Colum, one of Aquatera’s summer interns, and Gavin Ibester, a local photographer who did work for the marine and on-shore wind renewables in Orkney, were there to help with the loading. Both Colum and Gavin were born and raised in Orkney. Gavin also produced a number of the pop-up banners\textsuperscript{36} and signage that we were now loading into the EMEC van. These were the same banners and signage that we had taken to Aberdeen for All Energy 2014 in May, the same that had also lined the walls of the Stromness Town Hall a few months prior for the E-Harbours Conference; and, indeed, again, most recently, the same used in the Pickaquoy Leisure Centre for the EUSEW\textsuperscript{37} Ocean Energy Day, when representatives from the European Union’s Committee on Climate Change and

\textsuperscript{35} This is a term thrown around by some of those I knew in the renewables industry and at the Orkney Tourism meeting I attended. The Orkney Tourism meeting was before the Three Liners Day and was the point at which a number of sectors in Orkney gathered together to organize (plan who was going to be where, etc.) for the day. PLC stands for Public Limited Company. I gather that the Orkney PLC was used loosely to refer to the gathering of the different businesses and the tourism association for the purpose of promoting Orkney, mostly to tourists. Laura Watts also refers to the Orkney PLC (2009a).

\textsuperscript{36} Pop-up banners are tall stands that collapse into their small portable metallic bases.

\textsuperscript{37} EUSEW stands for ‘European Union Sustainable Energy Week’.
Energy Ministers from the United Kingdom Government came to Orkney for a series of talks, exhibitions and tours on the current state of the marine energy industry in Orkney.

Once the van was packed up Barbra and Colum set off, with Gavin and I heading to the Stromness Business Centre to pick up Aquatera’s EV38 (Figure 9) and drive it to Hatston Pier. The OIC was letting us use one of their recently built, empty warehouse-office structures, built to accommodate the various transient marine renewable energy R&D (research and development) companies. These companies came to Orkney to test their devices in the waters leased by EMEC. At the venue a few other employees from Aquatera and EMEC joined to help us set up, while Gavin and Colum took the van to Kirkwall Airport to retrieve the ‘Energy of Orkney’ display, featuring a section of the sub-sea cable, which was set up in the middle of the baggage-claim carousel. We all turned to Barbara for our instructions; she was the Director of Marketing at Aquatera, with extensive previous experience in the American gas and oil industry.

Finishing at seven that night, we all arrived back at the venue at eight the next morning. A number of crafters were also arriving and setting up in the Northlink Ferry terminal at the end of the pier. Anthony and Mark arrived with the last two EVs. Anthony was a car salesman who specialized in electric and hybrid vehicles. The two were planning to offer test-drives to interested tourists from the cruise liners. The EVs, along with a few banners, were positioned outside the opening to

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38 EV stands for ‘electric vehicle’.
our pop-up\textsuperscript{39} exhibition on renewable energy in Orkney in the hope these attractions would catch the eye of tourists walking into town and entice them inside. We were also offering free tea and coffee, snacks, and juice, as a further incentive.

The site was ideally placed next to the Hatston Pier’s 900kW (Figure 9) turbine and in walking distance of a few R&D tidal turbine devices, currently out of the water for maintenance and repairs. Those of us manning the event worked in rotation between positions at the end of the pier. We explained what the turbines on the pier were for (Figure 10) and guided tourists towards the exhibition. Some of us were positioned in the exhibition to answer any questions. One of the Ph.D. students from Heriot Watt’s ICIT Orkney Campus, and newest member of OREF’s board of directors, had prepared a ‘facts sheet’ for reference when speaking with the visitors. “In one hour, the 900 kW turbine over there can produce enough power to charge one of these EV cars for 3,000 miles!” This ‘fact’ was to be read out in sight of the EV and wind turbine pictured in Figure 9. Another read, “In 2013 Orkney produced over 100% of its annual demand”. While not false, these short sound bites were far more complicated than presented, but we all knew this. The point was to get the information out there, as Barbra later said: “Someone might hear something here and a little seed will get planted in their brain. They might even go home and tell ten people about renewable energy in Orkney, and the seed will grow”

\textsuperscript{39} Pop-up exhibitions (shops, etc.) are the recently labeled phenomena of setting up temporary exhibitions (shops, etc.) in empty buildings; often these last anywhere between a day and a few months.
This was what we were all there for after all, the opportunity we were taking advantage of.

The Seed

“A little seed will get planted in their brain,” these words echoed through my head at numerous points during my fieldwork. The ‘facts’ we disseminated at the Three Liner’s day were like others written across OREF’s pin-up banners at the All Energy Exhibition and Conference. They are also not unlike the pinpointed history I spoke of in the previous chapter. This is not to say these elements of the discourse surrounding renewable energy were not based in truth. Rather, they are parcels of a wider reality, condensed into transmittable and digestible sound bites. Here we begin to see the influencing factors behind any reduction of meaning or larger story. Of course, while a necessary element of efficient communication, reductionism will always leave parts out, and therein lays the danger.

In reality, the EV could only be charged to run about one hundred and fifty miles at any one time, the current battery storage technology limiting its range. It also often takes much more than an hour to fully charge that particular EV, unless on a rapid charger. Orkney did produce over 100% of the demand for the archipelago in 2013, but the energy produced did not directly support the demand, with fuel poverty remaining a real issue for a number of residents. However, the point being made – or, rather, the seed being sown – is not about fuel poverty in Orkney. The point being made in this particular instance is that the wind, waves and tides in Orkney can produce a massive amount of energy and, furthermore, this is where the new global age of renewable energy is being heralded in. Similarly, the particular mobilisation of history in the previous chapter is not as much about Orkney’s history as it is about communicating first, that there is a particular acceptance of renewable energy in the present, and second, that Orkney is at the centre of a global shift in energy production and reliance. While for the latter there exists a dialogue between the present and the past, in both there exists a dialogue between a larger nuanced reality and a particular message.
Mobilising the Myth

“In Orkney people work through collaboration, that’s how these islands work. *We* work through collaboration, and so does the renewables industry”, Tom Jones, managing director of Aquatera, proclaimed to the audience of the E-Harbours conference (EH-25.02.14). Tom did not elaborate on what this said collaboration meant, so we must assume he expected a certain degree of understanding from the audience. There was an implicit degree of collaboration present at the conference itself. That is, the presence of representatives from a variety of companies and organizations involved in the development and generation of renewable energy in Orkney. Along with the speakers who had travelled to Orkney from various places in the UK and Europe, there were a number of speakers from renewable energy companies and organizations in Orkney. These speakers included members from EMEC, Aquatera, OREF, SSE, and CES (Community Energy Scotland). There was also a councillor from the OIC, with students and staff from ICIT facilitating the event. The students greeted attendees at the door and handed out nametags and welcome packets, they also served tea, coffee and lunch during the various intermissions. As such, the E. Harbours conference could be likened to the Three Liners Day, as one type of collaboration Tom was talking about: members of various organizations and companies involved with renewables getting together to take advantage of an opportunity to promote Orkney globally, and in these two cases, in its own backyard.

Like Tom, other speakers from Orkney also imparted short memorable messages within their speeches. “This is actually a community that gets things done!” Mark Drummond said, following up later with, “people use everything they can get their hands on here, if one person puts something down, another person will come and pick it up!” (EH-25.02.14). Mark was speaking about the current excess of energy in Orkney and how he was sure, given the ingenuity of the people here, it would be used. The messages weren’t always the same. At the Three Liners Day less was said about the Orcadian people and their ‘can-do-attitude’, their knack for collaboration and their history of working with new people and new ideas. Instead we focused on the energy and Orkney’s role as a world leader in the generation and production of renewable energy. In the pop-up exhibition at the Three Liners Day, the energy history timeline also presented the Burgar Hill wind turbine test centre, showing that this is not a new history. There was a slide that stated “A Community Committed to
Connection”, another that suggested there was unanimous support from the residents of Orkney. There were also photos, lots of photos, of people with the technology, and especially those with people working on the machines. All suggests that these different audiences required different sound bites in order to promote the same message. The effect an audience has on the message and image being presented is discussed in detail by Anthony Cohen, whose work in relation to this point I will discuss later in this chapter.

In the previous chapter I primarily referenced personal discussions I had with Orcadian members of the renewable energy industry in Orkney. Here, and in the dissemination of the facts – as speech acts with a message – above, we can see that some of the same messages are used in the promotion of the industry. The myth is mobilised, just as history is mobilised into a myth, when presenting the renewables industry to the world. It could be said that Alexander and Sigurd were mobilising the myth of cohesion in their discussions with me, and potentially Bob and Karen as well. Again, here the myth is about the cohesion of the present production and generation of renewable energy with Orkney people and their history in the justification of Orkney’s current role as a world leader in the development of this technology. Furthermore, in the case of most of the events I went to – the E. Harbours conference, All Energy 2014, EWSEW, the Three Liners Day – even when the myth wasn’t being mobilised, it was being enacted, put into practice by the way the different companies who worked together. This brings up a question I will return to later, about the crossover between myth and reality.

**Laura Watts on Collaboration**

The science and technology studies trained anthropologist Laura Watts has conducted fieldwork with the marine energy industry in Orkney intermittently over the last decade. I only discovered Watts and her work once I was in Orkney. At first it was terrifying, another anthropologist who had already established herself in the area I was hoping to work. However, Laura assured me our fieldsites would inevitably be different and that the topic needed academic attention. Much of Watts’s work focuses on how Orkney is making, and sometimes fighting for, its future as a continued centre for energy production. In one particular conference paper, available on her website, she tells a story of a venture capitalist from Silicon Valley who came
to visit Orkney in order to gauge whether or not the development of marine renewable technology was worth the investment. Laura is privy to a discussion in which one of the employees at EMEC\textsuperscript{40} pitches Orkney to ‘the Visitor,’ the anonymous title Watts gives this man. The EMEC employee gives the Visitor a PowerPoint presentation detailing the technical specifics of the marine energy industry in Orkney and the data already generated on the various local wave and tidal testing sites. He presents Orkney as the “Saudi Arabia of marine energy” (Watts 2009a: 4). In his presentation the employee also focused on the people of Orkney, emphasising that “collaboration is inherent to living an island life” (\textit{ibid.}). But the Visitor is not impressed:

\begin{quote}
Teamwork, collaboration, the terms were uninteresting to him. They were generic, the same the world over, not at all unique to Orkney in his eyes.
\end{quote}

\textit{(ibid. her font)}

As Watts tells it, throughout his time in Orkney the Visitor continues to miss the point, continues to be blinded to what Orkney has to offer as a place where truly spontaneous, necessitated and authentic collaboration occurs. He is, fundamentally, unable to see what the marine renewables industry has to offer as a unique and well-placed investment. Watts presents this inability to see as one based on a fundamental misunderstanding in the meaning of collaboration and the benefits this unique and authentic collaboration in Orkney can offer the global development of marine renewable energy technology.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, ‘Situating the Research’, one of the main points at which my work departs from that of Laura Watts is our relationship with the marine energy industry. While her work remains firmly rooted within the industry, almost taking on the anthropologist as activist role, my work only stepped into this industry for a time, and even then, the other activities I was involved in revealed multiple sides from which one could approach the topic of renewable energy in this region. While Watts’s story of the Visitor can be seen as an ethnographic example of when Orkney has been presented as a place of ‘true’ collaboration, sign-posted as something people should take notice of, it is also a story of a different kind of collaboration. It is a story of Watts’s own collaboration with the renewable energy industry in Orkney. After the meeting with the EMEC employee, the employee was to take the Visitor to see a

\textsuperscript{40}In another publication this man is the director of an environmental consultancy agency in Orkney.
number of points of interest in Orkney: the 5,000-year-old Ring of Brodger, the newly installed tidal turbine off the coast of Eday (visible on the ferry out and back from this isle), and the anaerobic digestion site located on Eday. But some urgent personal business comes up and Laura Watts is given the responsibility of giving the Orkney tour. Laura Watts was well integrated into the marine renewables scene. She worked for Aquatera for a time and led workshops to benefit the continued development of research in the area. In short, she was not just an ‘outsider’ anthropologist, but part of the ‘we,’ which I will discuss in Chapter 7, ‘We, Us, Our’. Such an inclusion in the ‘we’ can be seen when Laura is passed the responsibility of guiding the Visitor around Orkney.

I too felt this sense of being a part of something, a part of the ‘we,’ when I was working for OREF and helping out at the events. I promoted the message; I was the participant more than the observer. However, not all of my time was spent with the industry, my fieldsite was not the same as Laura Watts’s. This time apart allowed me insight into other perspectives, which highlighted the particularity of the one I was introduced to by those involved in the development and generation of renewable energy in Orkney. Watts depicts the world of the renewable energy industry truthfully, as she experienced it, and I as I did. I will return to these experiences of other realities of Orkney and the presence of renewable energy there later, in Chapter 8, ‘Alternative Perspectives’. For now, it is enough to understand first, how working with the renewable energy industry often involves becoming part of a distinct group in Orkney, becoming part of a effort to work towards and secure a particular future and second, how my own work differs from that of Laura Watts in the extent to which each of us were included in this group.

Collective Working vs. Working Together vs. Collaboration

In the week following the Three Liners Day there was an article summarizing the event in the Orcadian newspaper, a publication read widely and thoroughly in Orkney. “Positive feedback follows Triple Liner visit: Organisations work together to handle influx of 7,000 visitors to Kirkwall”, the headline read (The Orcadian 10/07/14: 4). The article quoted Orkney Tourism Group’s (OTG) business manager

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41 Anaerobic digestion is process during which microorganisms breakdown organic material in the absence of oxygen to manage waste and produce fuel.
saying, “Saturday worked because everyone involved pulled together – it felt like there was a real ‘Team Orkney’ spirit, which was great” (ibid.). Here the OTG business manager used a variation of the phrase ‘pulling together’ instead of collaboration, as seen in Tom’s speech and Watts’s story of the Visitor, or ‘collective working’ seen in Alexander’s comments in the previous chapter. However, Alexander’s use of ‘collective working’ is the only time this phrase was used.

“We all have our territory, but we all try to work together”. Bob and Karen also told me when we were discussing the local marine renewables supply chain in Orkney. Later they again proclaimed, “We work well together”, elaborating,

Bob:
We’re all growing up with tha industry an’ most -a’us have
grown up in tha area
…
In our past jobs most -a’us were
divers or fishers,
so we have good knowledge -a’tha sea conditions.
… We all grew up together,
so there’s a bit -a comradely

Karen:
A bit of competition too!
Bob agreed.

Also commenting on a number of similar points (local knowledge, working together and competition), Duncan told me,

There’s certainly a lot of knowledge here,
well…
Competition as well. We’re not all friendly,
we all have ta work together,
but we all have ta work in competition with each other as well.
Um…
So,
I think it works okay that way.

Duncan, originally from Aberdeen, moved up to Orkney in the early 1980s to work for an R&D commercial wind turbine company testing their device at the Burgar Hill test site in West Mainland. Since then Duncan has continued to live and work in Orkney. At the time of my fieldwork he owned a company that sold and managed large-scale (900kW and higher) wind turbines and wind farms in both Orkney and
Duncan’s comments were in response to a question I asked him about what he found special or unique about both Orkney and the presence of renewable energy there, if he thought anything was special or unique at all.

What stands out in both Duncan’s comments and Bob and Karen’s comments is the recognition that working together does not negate competition. There was a difference in what this non-negation of competition really was, with Duncan describing it as ‘not all friendly’ and Bob and Karen jovially commenting that working together included both competition and comradely. However, this difference could do with other factors, such as the different fields of renewables in which each worked, with Duncan working in large-scale on-shore wind and Bob and Karen working as part of the local marine energy supply chain. There was also a difference in their understandings of my project, with Duncan quite tentative and seemingly unsure of the reason or need for my work and Bob and Karen interested in helping a young scholar interested in their company, whatever the project was. Finally, there was also the difference each person’s association to Orkney, with Duncan being a non-Orcadian Scottish long-term resident of Orkney and Bob (and Karen, by association and heritage) having a long history of family in the area.

Despite the differences in their comments, a further similarity in what is meant by working together can be gleaned. This similarity is the necessity of working together. Whether it is that “they all grew up together”, as Bob and Karen stated, or that the variety of knowledge requires an internal resourcing of skills, as Duncan suggested, working together is part of how they carry out their labour. Such comments can be related back to Alexander’s mention of a culture of ‘collective working’ in Orkney, with the use of the word ‘working’ providing a key link. Whether and to what extent this type of work is different from other communities or industries is difficult to say. Those I spoke with in Orkney were quick to deny being ‘unique’ or ‘special’, as Alexander said, “it’s just how it developed”.

There is one major difference between the use of the phrases working together, collective working and collaboration. That is, the context in which the phrases working together and collaboration were used. Collaboration was notably used in presentations, speeches, exhibitions and conversations to promote the development and the generation of renewable generation in Orkney. The evidence for such a claim

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42 Caithness is the most northern county on the mainland of Scotland. It is the closest area of mainland UK to the Orkney archipelago.
can be seen in the examples of Tom’s talk at the E. Harbour’s conference and Laura Watts’s discussion of the presentation given to the Visitor. Working together, on the other hand, was used in far more informal settings, where those using the term did not make a point of it, nor where it was meant to hold weight or meaning. I would also go as far as to connect the use of ‘working together’ versus the OTG business manager’s use of ‘Team Orkney’ in The Orcadian article to the use of ‘working together’ versus ‘collaboration’. The audience here is crucial. While The Orcadian has a primarily, if not exclusively, local reader base, the comment was most likely issued as some sort of press release. I know this as comments from my own edits on a rough draft of Aquatera’s press release made it into the same article.

The above difference between the use of ‘working together’ versus ‘collaboration’ correlates to what I found in another article by Laura Watts, also about the Silicon Valley ‘Visitor’. The use of collaboration in the presentation given to the Visitor was already discussed. However, Watts also includes a quote from a bookseller in Stromness earlier in the article.

But here in this centre of many islands and stones, collaboration is endemic. On Orkney you do not compete, you do not put your neighbours out of business, you collaborate: you work together to keep each other in business, the bookseller explains. The landscape is demanding, to endure you must work together.

(2008: 8, her font)

Watts does not focus on this difference. Considering my analysis of ‘collaboration’ and ‘working together’, I am still inclined to argue that the two are used in different contexts. A difference in meaning also exists. Collaboration often refers to working together for a common goal or with a degree of shared responsibility; it is used in presentations and conversations to promote the industry, often to those outside of Orkney, and is used by those in positions who engage in this kind of promotion. Working together, on the other hand, refers to a necessitated engagement with others, one that is helpful and beneficial, but one that does not come without its conflicts. However, this difference is the only one I observed and was not drawn attention to by others. In fact, ‘collaboration’ and ‘working together’ were sometimes used interchangeably in communication between individuals who used the informal term and promotional term. While subtle differences existed, these differences disappeared in the public communication. While Mark may use the term
‘collaboration’ in a conference, when Bob and Karen reiterated the point they the phrase ‘working together’, and even if it was to impart a slight difference in meaning – when the two communicated their points to each other it was as if the two iterations were equal.

**Does the Speaker Make a Difference?**

In the previous chapter I primarily cited private conversations I had with Orcadian residents. In this chapter I bring in public speeches and presentations given by key members of the renewable energy industry in Orkney, many of whom were not originally from Orkney. Despite the differences in the actual terms used, the message being communicated was similar and often accepted as equal. However, a certain legitimacy is often afforded to local people, and rightfully so. But when there is little difference in the message, does this difference really matter? I suggest, to a degree, yes. If local residents did not back up the statements of the industry then the industry would lose their legitimacy. The fact that a number of very vocal local residents work in and support the industry prevents this from being an issue in Orkney, a point I would add to the reasons why renewables has been so successful there, when compared to other regions. The local population is not completely distinct from the renewable energy industry; instead, as described in the introduction and as will be further explored in the following chapter, the two are intertwined, allowing the industry to make legitimate claims about local integration and support.

**Different Faces, Same Message**

Throughout the above discussion of who uses what term is the underlying discussion of how audience effects representation, a point briefly introduced a few sections above. “When I’m showing outsiders photos, I don’t name names… the relations are irrelevant to them. When I’m showing Orkney residents the photos, I always name names”, Mark told me in a workshop I held in mid-August. He had just mentioned the importance of including people in the photos of the devices when relaying the message that these are not disembodied machines, but a relatable enterprise employing real people. While the use of images as a message, is present here, I would instead like to turn my attention to the differentiated use of the images and speech acts. Both Jeannette Edwards (1998) and Anthony Cohen (1978, 1987)
speak about their fieldsite respondents showing different ‘faces’ at different times. These faces were those of the community, representing the ‘we’ in different ways depending upon the audience and the situation. Mark’s quote above is an excellent example of this. Other examples can be seen in the different ways renewable energy in Orkney was presented to different audiences, as discussed in the section ‘Mobilising the Myth’. But here we see an interesting twist on why the difference exists. It is not only about presenting different images to different audiences in order to present different fronts, but more about presenting different images so that the same message can be imparted. Whalsay is presented as a cohesive whole to the Shetland Island Council as it exists as a cohesive whole in this particular relationship. Whalsay as a whole is revealed as a complex constituent of interlocking parts when examined internally, the boundaries of which break down when you examine the definition of each part further. The renewables industry also presents a unified identity, that of the Orcadian people and Orkney itself. It too may breakdown when examined closer, as I will discuss later in Chapter 8, ‘Alternative Perspectives’. However, the point I wish to make here is that, at the level of both public and intimate one-on-one presentation, the fundamental message of cohesion and prominence remains the same, despite the variations in how this message is relayed.

The Necessity of Myth

Mark’s quote above is a good example of how intentional the promotion of a particular image and story was. A Marketing Advisor from one of the promotional trio (see Chapter 3) also conveyed the intentionality to me.

In terms of imagery...
because what we do is very
unique
and, well
quite
new,
a lot of people don’t really understand what’s happening.
And even when you try to explain it,
it's hard to
explain it for people
to get a good picture.
Images are
the best ways
to show someone what’s actually happening here.

(Mc-12.09.14)
In some ways, the myth of cohesion can be thought of as an image as well, as least as the woman above is describing it; both are vehicles for a particular message. The message being presented is a necessary form of communication. As discussed at the end of the previous chapter and the beginning of this current one, the reality is often too large to impart as a whole, the myth, short sound bite, image and story all allow for the message to be communicated quickly. While necessity may be a bit of an overstatement, this is how this form of communication is viewed from within the industry; something I would argue is true for in the large-scale promotion of many goods and services.

**Legitimacy in Applicability**

The term ‘myth’ gets a bad reputation, at least in its popular use. So often myth can get associated with something false or made up. Even to my informed mind, I can’t help but feel every time I use the word myth, I worry it may delegitimise the thoughts and beliefs of my interlocutors in the renewable energy industry in Orkney. This is not my intention. If we take myth to be speech with a message (Barthes 2009 [1956]: 131), a great deal of speech can fall under the category of myth. Here I find it useful not only to think of myth as speech with a message, but as speech with a story. This story is not the ‘beginning, middle and end’ story you learn to write in school, but one about representations of reality that contribute to a particular way of seeing the world, a narrative or ethos even. These ways of seeing are how we present and interpret our worlds, and the existence of many does not necessarily delegitimise any particular one.

The myth of cohesion is not false. It is the world the renewable energy industry operates in. People point to real events and real stories they have heard and texts they have read about these events to provide evidence of the myth’s legitimacy. It is a story perpetuated by action, particularly through labelled action, as seen in the Orcadian article about the Three Liners Day and in various speeches. It is also seen in the referencing of a collective history; it is a myth that is widely applicable. It is in these points that the myth finds its legitimacy – a shared past and present.
The G83 Connection

“It boils down ta attitude, no question about it,” Sigurd remarked (T1-11.03.14). He had been telling me about a new project he was working on with a friend of his from one of the outer isles and an electrician from Stromness. This project would enable Orkney residents to secure grid connections for newly acquired wind turbines. By the time Sigurd and I had this particular conversation SSE were no longer allowing any more grid connections in Orkney. The grid was already overloaded, saturated by the current production of energy. The cables were “literally overheating,” as one woman told me. This was not a new problem. SSE and the OIC had already worked together to introduce the Active Network Management (ANM)\textsuperscript{43} scheme, which also gained Orkney the recognition as a Registered Power Zone (RPZ).\textsuperscript{44} The ANM scheme provided a system through which some areas of generation could be switched off during times of peak input in order to allow for a higher constant base load (or standard input). Now, with the delay of the third subsea electricity cable, even this higher base load was being exceeded, meaning turbines and generators were having to switch off more often or even ‘dump’\textsuperscript{45} energy, especially when located near one of the later connection points in the Orkney grid.

Currently there was a ‘Grid Steering Committee,’ made up of a number of people from different areas of the renewables industry, whose aim was twofold. Firstly, to secure the delivery of the third subsea electricity cable that would enable further production of renewables energy. Secondly, to think of current solutions that would involve using the excess energy in Orkney. Some of these solutions included the use of excess electricity to dry crops, power green houses, and run trials for

\textsuperscript{43}The Active Network Management system in Orkney was developed by the OIC, SSE and Strathclyde University.

\textsuperscript{44}A Registered Power Zone is an area of the UK’s national electricity (and in some cases geographical) grid that is designated for the purpose of research, development and demonstration of new technologies. Such designated areas are utilized for developing solutions to problems associated with connecting generating capacity at the level of distribution. Orkney’s RPZ designation enabled further support by SSE and Strathclyde University in developing the subsequent introduction of the Active network management system.

\textsuperscript{45}One way energy was dumped was through a heat generator in the sea.
Electrical Vehicles (EV) for the purpose of research and data acquisition. As far as I know only the third solution was ever implemented, and this was achieved through two schemes. One scheme included a fleet of ten EV cars and the other an EV Bus that took on the airport route lease from Stagecoach. This second aim was primarily geared towards freeing up space for further grid connections and electricity input in the event of further delays to the delivery of the cable.

The project Sigurd was working on would not necessarily free up space for electricity input, but it would enable people with turbines not currently connected to the grid to obtain permission to connect. It was a project he had been quite intent on describing to me. Sigurd had been directing the conversation back to the G83 connection for almost as long as we’d been talking, which was a good forty-five minutes at this point. During this time a couple of phone calls, the doorbell, two different photographs and two different landmarks, visible from Sigurd’s dining room window where we were sat, had interrupted us or drawn the conversation elsewhere. But we had finally resettled on Sigurd’s project, and, with diagram (Figure 11) in hand, he explained the following information to me…

![Diagram of G83 connections](image)

**Figure 11:** The diagram Sigurd showed me when describing the G83 connections (T1-11.03.14)
A G83 is a type of connection to the national electricity grid that only allows for a constant input of up to 3.68 kilowatts (kW) of electricity per phase. These phases can be thought of as connection points to the national grid. Most of the world’s electricity grid systems are based on a ‘three-phase’ system, through which electricity currents are alternated throughout the stages of generation, transmission and distribution; however, single and double phase connections also exist. Commercial wind turbines are made to produce a wide range of kilowatts, a range that directly corresponds to their size. Most of those on the smaller scale connect via a single phase, but as their size and kW potential increases, they often switch to a two or three phase connection. This full range was present on Orkney. Scattered across the archipelago there were over 400 turbines made to produce between 5kW and 900kW. As stated earlier, the ownership of these turbines in Orkney also ranged. While many of these turbines were owned by individuals, a couple of dozen were also owned by communities and townships as well as by companies and commercial enterprises, such as SSE. Sigurd’s G83 project was aimed at individuals who owned turbines at the smaller end of the kilowatt scale.

The standard connection for all wind turbines is a G59 connection, issued and recommended for connections that are over 3.68kW per phase. By 2012 SSE had stopped granting permission for these connections because the grid was too ‘saturated,’ it had reached the capacity for electricity input. However, what Sigurd and some others had established was that, in reality, SSE did not stop all connections. The paperwork SSE issued banning further connections was only for the G59s. Permission for connections only inputting up to 3.68kW – that is, G83 connections – were legally still open for application and acceptance. In fact, as Sigurd told me, at this particular point in time you didn’t even need permission from SSE for these low kilowatt input connections.

Like the other turbine contractors, Sigurd still had clients to whom he had sold turbines, but who still did not have grid connections. The G83 connection project was a viable way of getting around SSEs implemented restrictions to limit input and, therefore, securing these clients’ connections. Moreover (also in line with the other turbine contractors), Sigurd wanted to keep his job selling turbines in Orkney. The main incentive to purchase wind turbines was the promise of stable long-term revenue from the feed-in-tariff, the profit that comes from inputting electricity into the national grid. As such, wind turbines were primarily seen as an investment
opportunity, one further incentivised by the support of the national government, itself motivated by the UN’s 1992 Kyoto Protocol and proceeding developments (UNFCCC 2014). At the time of my fieldwork the Scottish Government and various funding bodies were encouraging this kind of investment with grants and schemes, some of the best of which were available to farmers. Orkney farmers were also especially well positioned to obtain wind turbines because they had enough land on which to both strategically and legally erect these structures.

Sigurd’s project involved a fairly large family farm and a 20kw turbine; it was to be the model that further G83 connections would be pitched. The farm already had most of the groundwork set. Like most houses in Orkney, the house and other buildings were warmed by oil that passed through radiators. Like most farms in Orkney, this one produced its own slurry. And like most farmers in Orkney, this farmer kept his cows in a lit barn over the winter, to protect them from the wind, cold and rain. In Orkney the hours of darkness can reach up to 18 in winter and barn lights are usually left on for most, if not all, this time. As Sigurd explained it to me, the heating, lighting and slurry could all be either powered or improved by utilizing energy produced from the 20kw turbine. The oil burner would be replaced by an electric hot water tank, which would run hot water through the radiators instead of oil. Heating water is also a great storage for energy, as (if insulated) water can hold its heat for extended periods of time. Electricity produced from the turbine would also power the lights for all buildings, including the barns, and could be used to aerate the slurry. While not a usual practice in Orkney, aerating the slurry “makes it better,” Sigurd told me; it “gets rid a’tha methane” and other unfavourable chemicals.

“I guess, as you said earlier, you’ve got to see the opportunities…. Or continue to see the opportunities when they’re there…” I interjected, continually towing the line between being cautious of leading the conversation and wanting to provide stimulation to enable it to continue.

“Well that’s exactly it,” Sigurd responded. I had hit chord, but then there was a long pause…

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46 Slurry is cow excrement. Slurry is often stored in a slurry pit or tank to convert into fertilizer.
Exploring ‘Attitude’

This was not our first conversation. In fact, Sigurd was the first person I knew in Orkney, my ‘gate keeper’ as some would say. By the time we had that interview I had been in Orkney for over 4 months, having visited the islands twice before I moved, and having met up with Sigurd on one of those visits. I also joined the Orphir Badminton club upon Sigurd’s recommendation a few weeks into my move. The club met in Stromness, despite being affiliated with the township of Orphir, about 10 miles down the south coast of Mainland, east of Stromness. Both Sigurd and I lived in Orphir. Like most of the townships, Orphir lacked the facilities for most sports and leisure activities available in the main towns of Kirkwall and Stromness, although it did have a primary school, a church, and a small hotel with a pub and restaurant, which doubled as the post office. Knowing I had come to Orkney to study ‘renewables in Orkney,’ Sigurd suggested I come along to the badminton club he attended, as there were quite a few employees from the marine renewables industry there. From then I went to his house for tea a few times, he gave me a driving tour of East Mainland and was always someone I could talk to at renewables events (conferences, symposiums, the OREF AGM etc.). This is to say Sigurd and I knew each other relatively well and in a variety of capacities. Sigurd was also familiar with my research interests. Therefore, his compulsion to tell me about the G83 connection and repetition of ideas surrounding attitude could be read in two ways. The first is that these topics hold particular relevance to Sigurd and his life. The second is that he believes that these topics may hold particular relevance to my own research.

When Sigurd told me about the G83 connection, he was as extrovertly excited as I had come to know he could be. This excitement didn’t register on his face (despite the occasional smirk), the intensity or volume of his voice, nor in his hand gestures. Rather it lay in his persistence to relay the idea to me, the detail into which he went and the speed of his delivery. I could tell he took pleasure in explaining the project. There was a subtle, composed joy in the “we’ve found”s and the “we’re going ta do it anyway”s and the “they’re [SSE] not going ta be happy; we won’t be able tado this forever, but right noo they can’t stop us”s. Sigurd and his friends were making it happen, confronting the problem and squeezing out the last drops of electricity connection they could out of the grid, not to mention the last bit for profit

47 The OREF Annual General Meeting, where new members are elected and positions revisited.
available at this time. It could be said that they were ‘seizing the opportunity’, even that they were, as will become clear as this chapter continues, acting with a certain ‘attitude’. After all Sigurd did say, “it boils down ta attitude…” didn’t he?

It is also significant to note that while I came with a set of questions, to help the interview along, Sigurd played a huge part in leading our conversations. We had last seen each other two weeks earlier at SSE’s ‘Grid Consultation,’ an event SSE held to present a history of Orkney’s electricity grid, its current state of capacity and to speak with those who attended about the issues they faced because of the delayed cable. The event was held in the Kirkwall town hall over two days at the end of February 2014. While I started the interview by asking Sigurd about his life history, within less than five minutes we were talking about the delayed cable. To a large extent, that’s what the G83 connection was all about: negotiating the constraints caused by the delayed cable. But it was also about much more.

The last thing Sigurd discussed before he first mentioned the G83 connection was two anecdotes. The first was about how his grandfather built his fortune and the second was about the ‘multi-skilled’ nature of Orcadian workers. At the end he included a comment suggesting these were examples of ‘this island attitude to life.’

_Tha_ navy moved in
_an’ a lot of people made a lot of money oot -a it._
Including _me_ grandfather.
He made a lot of money at _tha_ time.
_An’ that was just spotting _tha_ opportunity._
_An’, uh, what I said about using _tha_ skill set._
There’s a guy that use _’ta_ –
an Irish guy –
that use _’ta_ be a contractor here told me that _tha_ best –
_an’ he’d started off Ireland _an’ worked with lots a ’Irish guys, _an’ ya_ think…
_ya think -a these people as being_
_sort-a, labourers of _tha_ world, _ya ken._
_An’, uh, involved in all these construction jobs._
He said _ta me _tha best guys he’d ever employed were Orkney farmers’
sons.
_B’cus_ they could do anything.
_Ya ken_, they could drive machines, they could repair _tha_ machines,
they could work with concrete, _ya ken_, they could…
he said, he said, just _bout anything _ya asked them _tado_, they _c’d_ do it.
_An’ that’s… again_
just this island
attitude to life.
Sigurd is talking about a certain capacity for Orcadian workers – in this instance, farmers and farmers’ sons – to be multi-skilled. “They could do anything,” Sigurd remarked, relaying to me what the Irishman told him. He had also made the anecdote about his grandfather, about how he had seized the opportunity. Here Sigurd is talking about this attitude as the willingness to use what you can get your hands on and take advantage of opportunities that come your way. At an earlier point Sigurd dwelt on the geographical motivations for this “attitude,” which I suspect is the point he was referring to when he said, “an’ that’s… again”. When discussing the decrease in population in the isles of Orkney, Sigurd told me…

… there’s a depopulation issue.
An’ I see renewables as a way ta…
stop that. Not stop it, it’s just another source a’ income for tha islands.
…
It’s no so apparent on this island [Mainland] …
but when you live on islands
ya gotta…
make your living out ’ta whatever becomes available – whether it’s fishing for lobsters, or farming

Taking into consideration what Sigurd said later on the topic, this ‘attitude’ is also about having a wide skill set and the motivation to be able to deal with a variety of problems and opportunities when they arise. So what does ‘attitude’ have to do with the G83 connection?

While the link to why or how this comment relates to Orcadians being multi-skilled is less obvious, it can nevertheless be inferred. Following the same reasoning that Sigurd relies on, the geographically determined uncertainty of opportunities and resources could possibly lead the necessity of being able to “do anything”. Or rather, this uncertainty could lead to a particular mentality in which one is prepared to figure out the solutions as they go along and to fill in the gaps in labour when and where they arise. Again, while not explicitly laid out, I would argue that most of these links instead exists in the sequence of the conversation. Were Sigurd and his friends employing skill sets they weren’t necessarily trained in? Most probably, but these were not made clear to me. What was clear was that these two anecdotes, about Sigurd’s grandfather and the Irishman’s comments must have reminded Sigurd of the G83 connection, as they preceded his mention of the project. When Sigurd referred back to his anecdote about the geographical motivations for this ‘attitude,’ he also set
up a connection between the ‘island attitude’ he expressed there and his later comments.

The connection between the G83 project and the first anecdote was far more obvious. Sigurd and his friends were ‘spottin’ tha opportunity,’ just like his grandfather had during World War I and II. However, this time the opportunity was a loophole in the grid access permission. In fact, as Sigurd said himself, tapping into renewable energy in itself could be seen as ‘spottin’ tha opportunity,’ as well as part of the larger ‘island attitude ta life.’ Even his in-depth understanding of the technicalities could be seen as taking advantage of the opportunity the demand for wind turbines opened up.

Sigurd does not describe ‘attitude’ as a compact entity, one with perfectly clear links between all the facets that comprise it. Nor is it explained as an answer to a specific question. Rather, my understanding and Sigurd’s explanation of ‘attitude’ developed over the course of our conversations, present in anecdotes spread throughout a larger discussion about renewable energy in Orkney, one particularly dominated by the current issue of the grid’s capacity. These anecdotes were personal and reflected Sigurd’s own history and technical knowledge. However, while not expressed as one compact entity, a complex understanding of the notion of ‘attitude’ was overwhelming present. As Sigurd expressed it, this ‘island attitude’ is about seizing the opportunities that come your way and about having the practical skill set to face problems as they arise. The G83 connection can be seen as a prime example of this attitude in motion. As such, the project was as much about the technicalities of G83 connection as it was not. Underpinned by notions of belonging and identity, the project was specific to Sigurd’s own knowledge and understanding, all encapsulated in the concept of ‘attitude’ – a point I will continue to address both within this chapter and throughout the rest of this thesis. The fact that Sigurd is discussing this attitude speaks to his perceptions of my own research intentions, but it also speaks to the importance this idea holds within his own understanding of both the situation and his larger world or reality. As Orkney figures largely in this reality, it could be said that this ‘understanding’ is of the place of renewable energy in Orkney and even of Orkney as a place in the larger global shift towards the generation and use of renewable energy. Here, renewables energy once again provides a mobilising force for notions of identity and belonging. However, when Sigurd refers to this ‘attitude’ he does so broadly by calling it an ‘island attitude,’ with the link to Orkney existing
only in the specific examples he references in his anecdotes. I will continue to explore this final point apart in a following section.

Connecting the Chapters

Here two themes return from the last two chapters, the reality of the myth and its use both for the promotion of the renewable energy industry and in the everyday sense-making of those involved. Unlike Alexander’s comments about openness and collective working in Chapter 4, “It’s In Our History”, and Tom and Mark’s discussion of collaboration and how Orcadian people ‘get things done’ in Chapter 5, ‘Working Together’, I could not tell how intentional Sigurd’s focus on attitude was. It was certainly a subject he wanted to discuss and had thought about, but the links between what he was presenting were not as clearly defined, it was not a pattern of sense-making that had completely been made sense of.

“Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun,” a famous quote by Clifford Geertz reads (1973: 5). Geertz takes culture to be this web, or these webs, rather. However, myth can easily be seen to emanate from a similar source. What is myth other than a pattern, or vehicle for communicating a pattern, of sense-making? Here world-view can be seen as the bubble of reality in which these patterns of sense-making come into being. The pattern of sense-making is the message, communicated through myth, as speech with a message. However, it is an important message. Myths, like that of openness, find grounding in real life, but also help in the presentation of and identification with a particular way of seeing the world. In our conversation Sigurd was in the process of unfolding this myth, showing me the nuances of the not so neat pattern of sense-making that lay beneath.

The Source?

Wanting Sigurd to continue and elaborate… I pressed on. “It reminds me of something Bob and Karen were telling me about…”

“Oh yea, Bob’s a long relation -a ‘mine…”

“Oh really?” We discussed their connection for a bit, until I was reminded of my original question: “Well, they [Bob and Karen] told me about how they would
get cards in the mail from clients saying ‘it was your can-do-attitude that made this possible!’ He said this was because they had asked him to try something different, or something the machine had never done before. He’d say, ‘Interesting… never tried that before. I can give it a go, but I can’t promise you anything…’ Do you think this has anything to do with what you were saying about spotting the opportunities? About people being multi skilled, and interested in solving problems?’

While my above question to Sigurd had set him up to elaborate on the possibility of a conceptual connection I presented to him, it was a connection I had picked out of comments he and others had made. Bob and Karen had mentioned the ‘can-do-attitude’ in relation to what clients had said about them. Tom had also mentioned this when giving his talk at the E. Harbours conference: “Orkney has a very can-do-attitude towards innovation. The council embraces change and new opportunities. There is space here for inspiration” (EH-25.02.14). Tom was an Englishman who had lived and worked in Orkney for almost 30 years and who was head of an environmental consultant agency there, one that played a pivotal role in promoting renewables in Orkney. Another force in renewables industry – Mark, also originally English and managing director of the company responsible for leasing the various sites in the waters surrounding Orkney to marine renewable energy research and development companies – had said something similar at the conference, “this is actually a community that gets things done!” later following it up with, “See Orkney has the habit of using what it’s got”.

In the end, Sigurd did not answer my question about whether ‘spotting the opportunity’ linked to other aspects of ‘attitude’ he had spoke of. Or, at least he did not give an answer by agreeing or disagreeing. Instead he started telling me about when he first started installing turbines. At this time Sigurd and his partner were doing quite a few ‘farmer’s evenings,’ during which they would talk about the wind turbines from the company they worked for. The evenings were to gauge how receptive people were to these devices in different regions of the Highlands and Islands in Scotland. As Sigurd tells it, his partner, originally from Islay, was the one to initially mention the difference.

*An’* [he] said to me, at some point when ‘e was in Orkney, he said, “Orkney’s completely different *fae* all other islands”.

*An’* I said, “How *da ‘ya* mean?”
An’ he said, “Well… ya’ve got better infrastructure… there’s more a’ this ‘can-do-attitude’ and tha dynamics -a’ Orkney’s just different fae tha rest a’tha islands”.

Sigurd followed by telling me about how he then noticed the difference. “I just didn’t have tha success rate in Lewis I had here. An’ a lot -a’it boils down ta attitude, no question about it”, he said again. Sigurd’s next move was to read up on the history of Lewis. He told me he had needed to go back a bit in time, but when he did he could see why this difference in ‘attitude,’ had happened. There have been various types of property management and ownership in Scotland over the centuries. Sigurd explained that for a long time most of Scotland was divided into estates, under a feudal system. Others also talked about land management in Orkney when discussing what set Orkney apart from the rest of the Highlands and Islands. As one person explained, Orkney actually had an udall48 system for many years, not a feudal system, and the difference lay there. Sigurd didn’t mention the udall system. Instead he attributed the difference to the military presence in Orkney and the use of Scapa Flow as a naval base during the World Wars. “People started ta make money, an’ some -a’that money was used ta help buy [their land]…. an’ tha [feudal] system began to break down a bit”, Sigurd told me. “In tha Western Isles it didn’t happen like that at all. An’ they still have crofts, which are all rented”.

Again, as with the terms ‘working together,’ ‘collective working’ and ‘collaboration’, there seems to be a difference between ‘attitude’ and ‘can-do-attitude’. This difference is not of meaning, nor is it the audience, but again the difference is who is speaking. Sigurd primarily used the term ‘attitude’ only using ‘can-do-attitude’ when describing a comment someone from outside of Orkney made. The same point can be made of Bob and Karen’s use of ‘can-do-attitude’. Tom, not originally from Orkney, also used the phrase ‘can-do-attitude”. It is this difference that first pointed me to the issue of where the source of this part of the myth of cohesion originates. The origins of myths, this pattern of sense making, are hard to track. I cannot say for certainty whether or not the idea of a ‘can-do-attitude’ was introduced externally or internally. There does seem to be a general theme in

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48 As explained to me, udall law stipulates that after a number of years of working a piece of free land it becomes yours, not unlike the homesteading system in America. The udall system differs from the feudal system, implemented in most other areas of Scotland, in that small farmers were able to own their own land by right of working it and often did not have to pay rent to a laird, although lairds were present in Orkney.
Sigurd’s and Bob and Karen’s comments of an external introduction. Similarly, Noel, current professor of the Sustainably Development course University of the Highland and Islands’ Orkney Campus and board member of OREF, noted:

I have ta watch I’m no being biased here…
but…
there’s a real…
…
an ability –a willingness an’ an ability ta solve problems,
ta look for solutions
in an industry that’s just daveloping.
…
One of tha
pieces -a ’evidence, I suppose that I use, that can support this system is
I’ve heard
external people, people who come here ta work for other industries are
able ta compare tha attitude -a people here.
Business people,
entrepreneurs, doctors, whatever,
an’ comparing tha attitude here ta other similar parts -a ’tha UK.
They do, it does seem ta strike them as this
get-up-and-go attitude rather than
sit back an’ wait for somebody else ta help you.

Noel is also Orcadian; his family originally comes from Stronsay, one of the outer isles. While Noel doesn’t use the phrase ‘can-do-attitude’, he does highlight the external origin of a similar phrase.

However, it does not necessarily have to be one way or the other, either externally or internally introduced. Sigurd’s words are helpful here. After his colleague mentioned the difference Sigurd told me he became “sort of curious”. This curiosity led Sigurd to seek out and internalise his own understanding of this difference based on a history of land management and the population increase in Orkney during the World Wars. Sigurd had a particular fascination with Orkney’s role as a naval base, with books and photos laying around is house, so it does not surprise me that he went to what has been written about this point in time to find his answers; it was a time that already held great significance for him.

Sigurd did not merely accept the externally imposed idea. He first had to make sure it aligned with history, with what had already been written about Orkney. I would also say that if this colleague’s comments did not align with the way Sigurd already saw Orkney, he would not have gone to further investigate. There had to be some resonance for the idea to take root.
Defined by Difference

Next Sigurd was reminded of his university days in Aberdeen, when he made friends with quite a few guys from the Western Isles. “I noticed then”, he told me, “their attitude was a bit different from ours, an’ they were all crofters, or crofter’s sons”. Interestingly, now it is Sigurd who is the one who noticed the difference, even though this moment in time came a few decades before his conversation with his colleague. The following passage of text is the story Sigurd told me of how this difference manifested itself in a recent interaction he had with one of his old friends from this time.

An’ I kept in touch with a few -a these guys,
but I really, kind-a, lost touch with ’em a bit until I went back there,
an’ then I went an’ looked up some…
old friends, an’ this one guy was gunna put me up,
an’ he thought “a turbine’s’a great idea!”
This guy was a teacher…
an’ he stopped teachin’ an’ became a weaver,
an’ we had rented this place tado tha farmers’ evenins
an’ his wife actually ran this place in Stornaway,
this place called ‘Tha Woodlend Centre’.
So I got in touch wi’ him, went an’ looked
an’ said, “oh, yea, ya cu’d get a turbine here”
But they never actually did it
And…
They went ta tha bank ta ask for tha money
an’ tha bank just said no.
an’, uh, I said ta them,
I said, “I’m sure yu’ll get tha money, but ya might,
yu gunna have ta talk ta somebody who knows a bit more ‘bout renewables, so
why don’t ya ask tha guy in tha bank, ta talk ta somebody in an Orkney bank?”
So, ya see, this guy’s croft was only 8 acres,
so ’magin’ tryin’ ta live off 8 acres -a poor land in Lewis,
a hundred years ago,
it must -a been bloody… almost impossible
so…
I said ta him…
“Put your land up for security”.
So he went back ta tha bank, and they said, “No, no, ya can’t do that, cus it’s
crofted”
I said, “Oh ya don’t own tha land…?”
“Oh, no, no, no”…
I said, “Well can ya buy it?”
“Oh, yea, yea… ya can buy it’for’a token rent”.
He could buy this 8 acres for 15,000 pounds…
an’ I said, “Well, just buy it, for security”. Well, he didn’t come back ta me for a while, an’ then I phone him up an’ I said… he said, “Well, if I buy it, that’s means” His son might build a hooos’ there in tha future… an’ he would no longer be able ta get a crofter’s grant. It’s just a totally different way -a thinking. Well, I said, “Well that wouldn’t matter, because…” I said, “Hoo much is tha grant?” It was 19,000… And I said ta him, this guy… Willux is his name, Well that’s his nickname, I said, “But, Willux, tha turbine will earn ya that every year” “Oh, I never thought -a that,” he said. … But anyway, he’s just one example. Tha thing I found oot there was they take forever ta come back ta ya, ya ken, they do things at a totally different speed, an’… they’re just much less dynamic. They don’t see tha advantages tha same, an’ they just don’t… get “oot [of] tha bit” – as we would say in Orkney. They just don’t… get going. In Orkney at least 50% -a ‘tha people I’ve spoken ta ‘ave just said ‘Okay’. Ya ken? Ya give, ya give them tha right presentation, an’ they’ll just go for it. At one point I think tha success rate was something like 80%. It has dropped since then, because tha grid situation an’ other factors, but, tha attitude in tha Western Isles is just totally different. … Willux never bought the turbine.

Although Sigurd explicitly repeats the phrase ‘island attitude’, it quickly becomes clear this isn’t just any island attitude to life, but an Orkney island attitude. The same qualities that support Sigurd’s earlier argument for the ‘island attitude’ are reiterated when contrasting Orcadian workers from those in the Western Isles and Ireland. The occurrence of external comparisons of ways of being, especially when within rural areas in Britain, have long been recognised by anthropologists as an important means of the dialogical construction of identity and belonging. This tradition most notably begins with the Cohen’s (1987) seminal work on symbolism and the boundaries of identity and belonging in Whalsay. As Cohen notes, while often presented as united and cohesive, a clear boundary of distinction, ‘identities’ are instead convoluted, processual, constantly being elaborated on and reconstituted.
It is change and the encounter of difference that motivates the representation of unity.

While Sigurd never associates ‘attitude’ with identity, he presented me with a particular understanding of a group to which he belongs: “I noticed then their attitude was a bit different from ours”. Here, the motivation could be pinpointed to his colleague’s initial comment, but this comment does not speak to the myth of the general presence of cohesion within discussions surrounding renewable energy in Orkney. All elements of this myth unify Orkney with a clear boundary of distinction, that is, particular defining qualities. The comments made about the openness of the people, their willingness to work with new people and new ideas, to solve problems and use what they have at hand, to work hard and be dependable, can all be rooted in very specific stories that stretch throughout time. Could renewables be seen as the change motivating these distinctions? Possibly. However, as Alexander and others point out, numerous other moments in Orkney’s past exist where change and interaction has occurred. Furthermore, the difference has not caused people in Orkney to define themselves in opposition to this difference, but rather in line within it. The only place or people I heard Orkney people define themselves in opposition to was the Western Isles, at least in the context of renewable energy.
Conclusion to Part Two
Chapter 8

In Part Two, I established, discussed and analysed the myth of cohesion, the communication of a particular way of seeing Orkney, Orcadian’s and Orkney’s history that was called upon by individuals involved with renewable energy in Orkney to explain the industry’s current presence. The myth of cohesion was also employed in the public promotion of the industry. Again, I use myth intentionally to describe a particular type of discourse, to highlight its narrative characteristics and, to breakdown the fictive connotations of the word. In the first chapter I discussed the use of history in establishing this cohesion. Here ‘history’ reveals itself not as historical investigation, but rather as a pinpointed time of particular events aimed at promoting a particular kind of future. This reveal, however, is not a revelation, as we see through comparison to the work of Daniel Knight and Nicholas Argenti (2015), who describe local farmers’ reactions to government sanctioned solar energy farms in Greece; Jeannette Edwards (1998), who discusses the role of history in the shaping of the future in the anonymous northern English town of Alltown; and Sue Lewis (2002), who considers how history can be an unending dialogue between the past and the present in the Isle of Man. The specific case of Orkney does, however, reveal the motivations influencing individuals, in this and other areas on the periphery, to join with development forces. In my conversations with individuals from Orkney, and especially with those in the renewable energy industry, people expressed the belief that ‘if you don’t push forward you won’t just stand still, but you will regress’. Furthermore, by emphasising that Orkney has always been a place for innovation, change and new encounters, the occurrence of these events reinforces a sense of a strong local population. Following Ginzburg (2012), Edwards (1998) and Carr (via Lewis 2002), I established that this current representation of history exposes the current enactment of these aspirations.

In the second chapter of Part Two I examined the process of simplification that is involved in the promotion of the renewable energy industry in Orkney by focusing in on one particular quality of the Orcadian people many proclaimed bolstered the industry: working together. This process of simplification applies to the myth of
cohesion, but also to the dissemination of information. In analysing the different phrases used to speak about the propensity of Orcadian people to work together, I found that ‘working together’ was used in more informal situations by local people; ‘collaboration,’ on the other hand, was used in more formal and promotional situation by high-up industry members. This difference also points to a slight difference in meaning behind the terms, with the former often allowing for a degree of messiness and the latter not. Interestingly, when placed next to one another in communication, the two stand up as equals. Here I have argued that while the speaker and audience make a difference, as Anthony Cohen declares, the presentation of the message is altered to get across the same message, showing that different levels of collective presentation do not necessitate different forms of that collective. In this and the following chapter, the cohesion is not only with history, but exists among the Orcadian people and the skills and work ethic required by the industry.

The final chapter of Part Two turned to another quality of the Orcadian people held to be particularly valuable to the renewable energy industry. This quality is a particular attitude, one that favours opportunism and an ethic of hard work, one facilitates learning many skills and the ability to use those skills to solve new and different problems. I mainly focused on one long conversation with Sigurd, an Orcadian man who shifted from selling farm machinery to wind turbines in the early 2010s, drawing in quotations from conversations with other individuals where relevant. This conversation with Sigurd revealed the muddled and messy process of sense-making I could only assume was behind the other more pristine presentations of the myth, of other qualities of the Orcadian people and the history that are employed to explain the current presence of renewable energy in this northern archipelago. I argued that myths can been seen as the means of communicating a particular pattern of sense-making, again not necessarily fictive, rather both based in and supporting the reality of particular people and places. Finally I dwelt on the difficulty of pinning down the source of the observations that influence the patterns of sense-making, which in turn have led to the myth of cohesion as I encountered it.

In the final chapters of this thesis, contained in Part Three, I will begin to shift my focus back out again. This move reflects the development of my own movements and encounters throughout my fieldwork. I will question who are the ‘we’ my interlocutors have been referring to in their descriptions of Orkney and their
representations of the openness, collaboration and attitude on people in Orkney. Then I will shift attention to other representations of ‘we,’ other sides of the Orkney renewable energy story. Finally I will consider the nature of the data that informs this thesis.
Part Three

Expanding Back Out
In the past chapters there has been a heavy emphasis on a collective ‘our’. “It’s in our history”, Sigurd told me (T1-26.11.13); “It’s in our culture”, Rognvald will echo in the following chapter (B4-29.09.14). Similarly, Alexander started off by discussing a ‘we’: “We all want ta work together… because we’ve done that in tha past” (S1-10.03.14). “We’re a community within a community”, Colin Cameron, also employed the term ‘we’, suggesting two different colloquially understood collectivities through his double use of the word ‘community’ – one existing within the other (M1-10.11.13). These pronouns by themselves are far from unique. We use them every day, and in many languages. These words belong to the grammatical case of first person plural. Most often the collectivity referred to is implicit, their use suggests the audience knows what groups these ‘we’, ‘us’, and ‘our’ stand for. The words can assume a multitude of meanings and refer to various collectivities, ones the speaker inherently includes herself in through their use. This is exactly where the use of such pronouns gets interesting. In the quotes above Sigurd, Rognvald, Alexander, and Colin all recognise particular collectivities they are a part of. The question I address here is: what are these collectivities?

In the previous three chapters I referred to two main overlapping groups. The first, a group of people involved in the generation and production of renewable energy in Orkney. The second was a historically local population, commonly referred to as Orcadians. This latter category of belonging predominantly manifested itself in the various utterances of ‘we’, or possessively ‘our’, one that held claims on a local history and culture, as seen above in the re-quoted comments of Sigurd and Rognvald. These chapters have primarily drawn on people who exist in the overlap of these two categories, locals and Orcadians who were making claims about the legitimacy of the renewables industry from their position within it. However, there were also voices of others, non-Orcadian renewable industry members, who echoed the claims of those within the overlap. Both entities called upon this ‘we’ and ‘our’, as seen in Tom’s statements at the E. Harbours conference: “collaboration: that’s how we work, that’s how these islands work”. In some situations these mentions of
‘we’ by industry members suggest inclusion in the local population. Building on this information, this chapter tackles three main issues concerning the two prominent categories of ‘we’, that is, the renewable energy industry – in which I include both wind and marine – and the Orcadian population. What do mentions of ‘we’, ‘us’, and ‘our’ mean when spoken by different people? And how might the understanding of one – such as what it is to be Orcadian – allow for the inclusion of the other?

What is it to be Orcadian?

A whole thesis could be devoted to this section’s heading; I can only claim to wrestle with some of the complexities here. In fact, a whole thesis and subsequent published ethnography has already been devoted to this subject: Michael Lange’s The Norwegian Scots: An Anthropological Interpretation of Viking-Scottish Identity in the Orkney Islands (2007). Here Lange looks at the performance of narrative in the maintenance of identity. I read Lange’s work after exiting the field, and found the similarities in our experiences striking, as I also found to be the case when reading Laura Watts’s work. In many ways this performance of narrative is, to some extent, what I have been discussing in the previous few chapters. Lange also discusses a number of issues not covered here, primarily the avoidance of being ‘bigsy’, a concept I only encountered once, when speaking to a friend of Lange’s who grew up in Stromness. This section will instead focus on how the category of Orcadian was revealed in my fieldwork, how people expressed and communicated their inclusion in this category. Here I will draw on all my fieldwork interactions and not only on those with individuals involved in the renewables industry.

When I first encountered the label Orcadian it led me to think of other words used to describe a person who lives in a particular place, like ‘Seattleite’ or ‘New Yorker’. However, in Orkney there is no such term to describe the mass population of residents who live there. Orcadian instead refers to a long-standing local population. As such, although an increasing modern phenomena, the term Orcadian is nestled among a number of other terms that signify the degree of a person’s association to this northerly archipelago. Some have said to be Orcadian you must have at least three generations in the kirkyard, i.e. the cemetery (Lange 2007). I have

49 That is, being boastful about yourself and your accomplishments. Lange argues the avoidance of being bigsy allows for the maintenance of equality and egalitarianism (2007).
also heard people say that incomers must live in Orkney for at least three years before locals consider you a true resident. There are already at least three terms here, Orcadian, local and incomer, all of which have to do with the degree of belonging one can associate with Orkney as a place.

In my experience the terms local and Orcadian, although sometimes interchangeable, have their own meanings, their own degrees of belonging. Local was sometimes used to refer to a broader base of residents, one that included people who had made Orkney their home, had lived there for a number of years and possibly a generation or two, but whose family did not originally come from Orkney. Orcadian, as suggested in other chapters, can often refer to an even longer, deeper heritage, often one that stretches over hundreds of years. Incomer is quite self-explanatory, although it is important to note that I rarely heard the term incomer outside of formal interviews. Its absence was sometimes filled with the more colloquial phrases ‘ferry looper’ or ‘from doon sooth’, the first of which is a specific term for the people who move to Orkney after a holiday ferry trip to the islands. The second term is more general, and can be used to refer to anyone from the mainland of the United Kingdom, although there was often a hint of sarcasm when this term was used to refer to people from Caithness or Sutherland, both mainland counties in the very north of Scotland. I have, however, over simplified these categories greatly here for the sake of clarity. When discussing the specific differences between local, Orcadian, incomer, ferry looper etc. it is important to note that the definition for each is far from straightforward, especially that of Orcadian.

Despite the commonly quoted ‘three-generation’ rule, I found the term Orcadian was actually quite flexible. At its most specific ‘Orcadian’ signifies a long family history in Orkney. It could suggest one’s family stretched back as far as any connection could in this archipelago. Such deep-rooted belonging was often expressed by the statement: “I have Viking blood in me!” (T1-26.11.13). This statement was recently justified in a study by (Goodacre et al 2005), which tested the genetic makeup of the residents of Orkney and may indeed have sparked off this heightened focus on blood and bodily fluids. Sigurd, Thorfin, Sander, and Inga all claimed such a history. However, as Thorfin once claimed, “Orcadian’s are a muddled race” (A1-11.01.14). While many people could trace their heritage in Orkney to Viking times, I never came across anyone who claimed a ‘pure’ ancestry. Family histories were mixed with people from various areas of mainland, stretching
from Caithness and Sutherland down to The Boarders and into England. Such introductions mainly came about when Orcadians moved away for work or education and fell in love before moving back with their new partner, an occurrence that was still true at the time of my fieldwork. There were also the now much celebrated genetic influences of the ship-wrecked Spanish Armada off the coast of Westray in the 1700s.\textsuperscript{50} There were also the decedents of Inuit brides, who were brought home to Orkney by Orcadian men who joined the Hudson Bay Company in the 1800s.

While the long duration of family connection played a big role in establishing who was Orcadian, belonging was also established through a personal connection in and to the region. This personal connection was based on experience and knowledge. Such knowledge and experience was expressed through stories and anecdotes. When spending time with the friends I made in Orkney, I would hear of what it was like to grow up in South Ronaldsay in the 1960s, to listen to your grandfather tell you stories by the fire every night in Dounby, to win the Ba – the no-rules ball game played between the ‘Doonies’ and ‘Uppies’ of Kirkwall – to wait for the bus after school on this corner or to run away from the school bully only to have him fall into a ditch over there. These experiences turned memories created intimate knowledge of almost every nook and cranny of this place. Some were more personal than others, but more often than not, they overlapped, both creating and tapping into a stock of knowledge and particular life experience this group of people shared.

Anthony Cohen also speaks about the importance of a ‘shared stock of knowledge’ in the creation, maintenance, and elaboration of a sense of belonging and identity (1986). In Whalsay in particular Cohen notes how through stories, or \textit{yarns}, the past is ever present, with current place names conjuring up stories that stretch back hundreds of years (1986: 3). It is through this continual referencing of the past, often a connected past of one’s family history, that Cohen argues “a sense of rootedness, of belonging” is created, “as if people were immovably and inherently part of the island as the very features of the landscape” \textit{(ibid)}. While in my experience of life in Orkney these \textit{yarns} were less frequent, especially among the younger generations, they were still present, still enacted in a way that reinstated a sense of belonging among individuals. As seen above, the experiences that

\textsuperscript{50} I was told that the Spanish influence was not discussed even up until one woman’s grandparent’s generation, as the women who slept with the Spanish men never married them and intercourse out of wedlock was thought to be shameful. Times have clearly changed as by the time of my fieldwork many young women (aged 17-21) often had children out of wedlock.
maintained and elaborated on this sense of belonging and identity did not have to come in the form of stories, however, it was through their retelling and their re-experiencing – an adaptation or continuation of Kathleen Stewart’s (1996) writings on representation, mimicry and the constant story telling we and humans engage in – that similarity and familiarity was and is recognized. Familiarity could thus be felt not only between players who played in the same Ba, but also between all those who have ever played in it.

While the passing down of stories and experiences was abundant there was a particular fascination and recurrence of stories about one’s family history. It was this same emphasis on stories about family history that Cohen refers to in the quotes above. Other anthropologists who have worked in Orkney have also recognised this connection between the people and the place. Laura Watts notes that in Orkney “place and people are entwined, inseparable, a particular natural-cultural landscape that makes stone circles and renewable energy devices, and is made by them” (2008: 6). For Michael Lange (2007) the connection between people and place, as landscape, is less important. He instead focuses on the performance of identity, the constant act of communicating through stories, and how personal and collective pasts are brought into the present through these enactments. “I went to Orkney to find out what the people there thought about the place”, Lange says in his introduction (2007: 9). However, what he finds is a place defined primarily by the people who lived there. Indeed, the people I spoke with affirmed this finding when they claimed, “It’s the people who make this place”, or implied in the statement, “well we don’t live here for the weather!” (M2-05.03.14). My experience of the stories told about family history echoed the findings of Cohen, Watts and Lange, although the landscape featured more proximately for me. Stories not only included people, but also specific places, so that – similar to Cohen in Whalsay – knowledge of the land became intimately tied up in both one’s knowledge of Orkney and one’s personal connection to place. It was through the experience of hearing and the following experience of retelling these stories that this knowledge and the above discussion of a deep-rooted sense of belonging were established in the present.

An example of such a story comes from when Josie, a twenty-eight year old farmer, and I were driving past one of the houses her family used to own. “Ya ken that story about tha press gang I told ya?” I nodded. “That’s tha hoos”, she said pointing to a now stone relic on the hillside (A1-31.08.14). The story was about her
great-great granduncle who was angry about being cut out of his inheritance and extremely jealous of his younger brother who had received the entirety of their father’s farm. It was also the time of the Press Gang, a recruitment service for the British Army at the time of the Napoleonic wars. When news came that the Press Gang was soon to be in Orkney the man came up with a plan that would not only allow him to escape the Press Gang and their future forced recruitments, but also to get back his family fortune. He had to make the killing look like a suicide, so as not to attract the unwanted attention of the authorities. That night the man lured his brother down to the beach. After knocking him out with a rock, he tied his brother to a large stone with a hole in it and placed him far out towards the water, which was now coming in with the tide. The man sat on the beach to wait, but after an hour his brother regained consciousness and managed to free himself. The man ran after his brother and hit him over the head again. This time he would not fail. The man dragged his brother to his house, swapped their clothes and identification papers, tied a rope around his neck and left him to hang. The man lay low on a nearby island for a couple years before returning to his father’s home, pretending to be his now murdered brother. The press gang was often portrayed as a dark period in Orkney’s history and there are many stories of the evasion tactics Orcadians employed at the time (Marwick 1991; MacKay Brown 1994; Ferguson 2011: 6). However, this was surely one of the most sinister.

Less sinister, but still full of haunting mystery, another friend told me of how he recalled sitting as a little boy with his grandfather and his grandfather’s friends late one night on the isle of North Ronaldsay (L3-17.12.14). They were huddled next to the peat fire sipping whisky and talking, but the boy could not understand a word they said. He now believes they were speaking old Norn, an offshoot of the now dead Norse language. I often heard stories at least twice, either told to explain or bestow knowledge or told among friends, fellow Orcadians, who were all swapping stories, enacting and reinforcing their shared, but varied belonging to this place. Both Cohen (1987), explicitly, and Lange (2007), implicitly, make a point of the variety that exists beneath the surface of a shared identity, or shared stock of knowledge. Both discuss the variety of perspectives and individual experiences that make up the collective the individuals they are writing about ascribe to, with Cohen further recognizing “the skin drawn over the dynamism” (1987: 3); the dialectical relationship, in which one enriches and informs ideas of the other, that exists within
the constituent parts of a the whole – the community (*ibid*: 59); and that “the commonality of knowledge is often more apparent than real” (*ibid*: 64). Indeed, even when two people share the experience of the same Ba, the same wedding, the same story told around the peat fire, each person’s experience is particular to them, filled with the nuances of their own framework of understanding (Ingold 2011). More obviously, the different stories told and swapped may represent wildly different relationships, moments in time and aspects of past life in Orkney, but are compared based on the similarities they share.

As a contrast to the stories above, small anecdotes of personal experiences, often gave humorous snippets into young life in these isles. These nostalgic re-enactments may not be unique to Orkney; rather it is through the re-enactment of past events, as well as through the retelling of stories, that the particular experience of being Orcadian is established. This experience is one of connection or belonging to a people that stretch back through time, as well as a familiarity with the place and people currently in Orkney. Often when I was with a group of friends who had grown up together the group would break out into thick high-pitched Orcadian accents, mimicking feuds and memorable moments between them. “Mrs. Rendal! John heedbutted me!” or the frequent “she’s pootsin’!” – children exclaimed this when another child was in a bad mood, and often elicited the defiant response, “I’m no pootsin’!” The Orcadian accent in these anecdotes – normally weaker in the twenty to thirty year olds I met compared to those of older generations – was often exaggerated compared to their normal speech. The spontaneous breaking out into a thick Orcadian accent was probably one of the most unique expressions of identity and belonging I experienced. This seemingly sporadic re-enactment of accent in the establishment and re-establishment of belonging and identity would be an interesting area for further study.

One friend confessed to me that they were often concerned their accent wasn’t Orcadian enough when they were growing up, despite being someone who could probably claim Viking blood. This same person told me how some children with English accents were bullied for being different, something that stands in stark contrast to claims about Orkney’s historical ‘openness’ or welcoming nature. Whether this is part of a larger trend or merely part of children figuring out their place in the world I cannot say. While the Orcadian accent was, in general, weaker in the younger generations, there are specific iconic words I heard this younger
generation also emphasise, this time in daily speech. These words included *peedie, bairn, kirk, yarn, natter, morn's morn, sooth, doon, fither, mither, hame, pleep, cloot, gansey, ahint, plitter*, and the list goes on.\(^5\) There are some obvious influences from the Scots dialect here, as well as Norse. However, while the Scots influence was often recognized when brought up, it was the Norse influence that was emphasised or drawn attention to in conversation. As such, it was through the use of and discussion about the Orkney dialect that a particular sense of belonging associated with being Orcadian was also enacted, established, and elaborated on.

While the undertones of the Orcadian accent was always present, accents also changed depending upon the situation. Some would broaden when speaking to family and, paradoxically, when in a new situation, suggesting that their accent was not only something people felt comfortable speaking in, but something that it emphasised their own sense of self in the face of difference. However, this was truer among the younger generations than the older, who often had to soften their accents when speaking to people not from Orkney. One man, a farmer from South Ronaldsay in his seventies, told me he had his normal voice and his ‘BBC’ voice, although I must admit it took a couple weeks of intense listening and focus to become adjusted to even this later rendition (A2-20.12.15). While the broad accent of older generations seemed to be a given, it seemed to be a choice for the younger generation, one emphasised in the extremes of relations, i.e., in times of intense familiarity and times of intense newness or strangeness. In summary I found that it was through shared experience, connection to place and the emphasis of a particular way of speaking that belonging to the category of Orcadian was established and maintained.

**Belonging and Familiarity among the Renewables Community**

Despite the varied nature of individuals and positions, there was also a clear sense of unity and similarity among those who were involved in the generation and development of renewable energy in Orkney. In short, there was a sense of a ‘we’. This ‘we’, however, was not always the same ‘we’, and ranged to include all people involved in this type of work – from the perspective of large organizations, such as

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\(^5\) See glossary for definition of all these terms.
OREF, EMEC, and OIC, to individual companies and individual developers, as well as a collection of companies and organizations, like the promotional trio or the marine renewables industry. Indeed, the same could be said for the understanding of the ‘we’ of the Orcadian people. What enabled this sense of cohesion among such a varied group? And how was this cohesion established and enacted? While some of this has been discussed in Chapter 2, ‘Entities of Renewable Energy’, this section will take these questions further, with the intention of describing the process of cohesion and this group of individuals is incorporated into the larger body of Orkney residents.

The first enabler of cohesion among what some have called the ‘renewables community’ in Orkney is that of ‘practice’, following Etienne Wenger’s use of the word in his ethnography *Communities of Practice* (1998). The fieldwork that informs this ethnography was conducted at an American claims processing company, which he calls Alinsu. Wenger defines practice as “a way of talking about the shared historical and social resources, frameworks, and perspectives that can sustain mutual engagement” and community as “a way of talking about the social configurations in which our enterprises are defined as worth pursuing and our participation is recognisable as competence” (*ibid*: 5). However, it is in the implied definitions of these terms where their real meanings lie. Wenger argues, “We all belong to communities of practice. At home, at work, at school – we belong to several communities of practice at any given time. And the communities of practice to which we belong change over the course of our lives” (*ibid*: 6). Here Wenger is simply speaking about social groups, or social units. While he specifies that these social groups are distinct because they are predicated on co-action and inter-action, it seems to me most social groups are predicated on such principles, whether in the inter-action of living and dwelling together, or the inter-action of working towards a common goal, which I go on to argue is the second enabler of cohesion among those who work in renewable energy in Orkney.

Wenger describes the processes and boundaries of establishing relations within said communities of practice. He argues that through participation in these groups – through the negotiation of problems and differences, through completing tasks and interacting on a regular basis – that we form our identities in relation to these groups, as we simultaneously foster our sense of belonging within them. The similarities between Wenger’s communities of practice and Cohen’s (1987) understanding of
identity and belonging are astounding. There are also echoes of Tim Ingold’s (2011) theory of a ‘taskscape.’ Wenger’s focus on the enactment of these communities as a new concept, albeit an ubiquitous process, allows him to draw on the already established theories while establishing his own, predicated on his particular experience of this practice in the claims processing company where he conducted his fieldwork. While a useful concept to employ when discussing the renewable energy industry in Orkney, I would be cautious of using the phrase ‘communities of practice’ for all units of social interaction, as the word community carries its own very specific history, especially in the discipline of social anthropology; it could suggest more of a sense of togetherness than may actually be present.

If we look back at Chapter 2, ‘Entities of Renewable Energy’, it is not surprising that the ‘we’ of the renewables community takes different forms in different situations. Individuals come together through their work in a number of different ways, from the daily interactions of officemates, to the more interspersed periods of interaction, such as joint projects, work contracts, conferences, and even the periodic evening social. The sense of belonging and familiarity such interactions bring is similar to that of the shared experience discussed above.

It is also helpful to look at the enactment of relations all residents engage in when examining how the renewables community fits within the wider community of residents in Orkney. However, put this way – “how it fits within” – gives the wrong impression, as in reality this already nuanced renewables community almost completely dissolves when one begins to look at it in terms of these other spheres of sociality. While occupations, origins, and current relationships all help in the placing of individuals, I found that in most other activities, these categories were not the primary focus. When rock-climbing Joe was just another climber, not a data analyst at EMEC. When playing football he was just another teammate. At home he was a father and husband. Some may know him in multiple capacities, others just one. Some people carry particular associations with them into other or all spheres of relations they enter, placing those associations at the forefront of the person they present to others. However, such intentional presentations of self were rare, and when they did occur, they were almost immediately noticed by others.52 Of course concepts like gender, age, and to some extent origins (unavoidably present in each

52 This lack of overt self-presentation may link to what Lange calls the avoidance of being ‘Bigsy’ (2007).
person’s accent), were always present. So while Colin Cameron notably described those individuals involved in the generation and development of renewable energy in Orkney as a “community within a community”, it was not to the extent that they were a distinct entity, separated by their involvement. Rather they were a “community within a community” to the extent that this collection of individuals – drawn together through their continued and frequent, but varied, interactions – coexisted as part of the larger collection of individuals (i.e., all residents of Orkney), who themselves were drawn together in a similar manner.

Returning to Orcadian-ness

To add to the complexities of the Orcadian category of belonging and identity, a number of people I spoke with recognised that there were some Orcadians who were really not Orcadian, as well as some individuals who might be recognised as incomers, but who were regarded as Orcadian. Lange (2007) discusses this point and in my research, Sigurd was one of these people who recognised these discrepancies. We were talking about a friend of his from one of the outer isles, and how different this man’s attitude was to that in Orkney. Sigurd continued…

An awful lot-a locals ‘ave left tha North Isles, 
an’ they’ve been replaced by mostly English people, 
not all English people, but mostly. 
Some Scots an’ some Irish an’ some…
Americans…
an’ ya do find that they don’t ‘ave that attitude. 
An’ a lot -a these people 
are living on benefits an’ not contributing a hell -a lot ta society. Not all –a’em, 
but some -a them.

But interestingly…
we are noo in tha stage where we are getting second generation. 
An’ like Craig – I don’t know if you ken Craig, but he lives with me daughter – 
his mother’s English, 
his dad’s Orcadian, ya ken. 
An’ he talks like an Orcadian, but he’s half English 
an’ he talks about these bloody English, ha, ya ken? 
So, an’ his uncle, Daniel, who’s got a turbine, 
Dan Yell, in fact, 
If you ever go ta Stronsay, ya should go an’ visit this guy. 
He’s got a C&F turbine in Stronsay. 
…
Really nice guy…
but he was born in Stafford or… 
born in England. 
But he’s like an Orcadian, in that…
He’s got this ‘can-do-attitude’
*an’* he’ll farm, he’ll fish, he’ll do building work,
cus that’s what you’ve got *ta* do on an island.
So he’s just become like an Orcadian
even though he’s got an English accent…
with…
serious Orcadian undertones, *ya ken.*
He uses words, he…
*ya* can just tell when *ya* talking *ta* him, he considers himself an Orcadian
cus he’s spent most’a his life here.
So that attitude does develop within *tha* people…
Whether they’re indigenous or not.

(E1-11.03.14)

These comments suggest that being Orcadian is not just about family heritage and a
collection to the place but also a quality of person, an attitude, as discussed in the
previous chapter.

Orcadian-ness was also experienced by those with very little family history in
the area and with a far less tenuous link to the place. Such individuals included
Finoula who was born in Aberdeen, with a family history from Aberdeenshire, but
who had spent most of her life in Orkney. When she went away to university back in
Aberdeen she became terribly homesick, and returned to finish up her higher
education at the UHI’s Orkney campus. Once, when Finoula, and I were
chatting about her involvement in the renewables sector, I asked: “So when did you first
become interested in renewable energy?”

I actually don't know what got me interested in
in *tha* environment...
I would like to think it's just my
potential *fae* social responsibility?
Em,
I do think,
it's easy for me to say, because I'm Orcadian.
Living here
when you're
living in the country
*an’* surrounded by
beautiful oceans and
beautiful scenery
that
possibly gives you a
good understanding of, or appreciation *fae tha* environment,
but…
I'm not saying that people who didn't have that up bringing don't
have that either.

(M6-12.09.14)
Again, this passage brings to light more than I focus on here, such as Finoula’s understanding that it was the beauty of Orkney that led her to become interested in the environment and social responsibility, which further led to her interest in working with marine renewable energy. Indeed, it is also fascinating that this same recognition of beauty leads some residents of Orkney, from all backgrounds of belonging and association, to reject renewable technologies as a positive presence on the landscape. For now I would like to focus on Finoula’s self-recognition as Orcadian. She was not born in Orkney, nor was she born to Orcadian parents, but she did grow up in Orkney and does identify as Orcadian. She even became so homesick when she left Orkney that she had to return.

Familiarity and acknowledgment of similarity that one Orcadian may have for another can also extend to others, namely to people who had grown up there without a long family history in the area, as well as to those who may have grown up down south to one or two Orcadian parents. One such example comes from a wedding of a friend of a friend I attended while in Orkney. The man getting married had grown up in Edinburgh with his sister and two Orcadian parents, often returning with the family to spend a couple of weeks in Orkney every summer. My friend, Sander, the groom’s best man was Orcadian; the two had met at university. During his best man’s speech, Sander recounted:

The reason I have so much dirt on this man is because we were in tha same class at uni, we lived together in halls an’ then went on ta share a flat. I met Danny in tha first few weeks -a university. I was sitting in tha common room -a our halls an’, without introducing himself, tha first thing he ever said to me was… “I think we’re related!”

[At this point the whole room, but mostly the Orcadians in attendance, burst out laughing… suggesting some understanding of this kind of occurrence]

From that moment on I became very suspicious. Who was this person? How did he know we were related? Has he been stalking me? An’ what was my father up ta in 1985? I wanted to know more. It turned out ta be one of those typical Orkney connections. Danny’s father Tom is Orcadian and his cousin, Allan, is me uncle through marriage.

To set the scene, I had just left Orkney, my home for 18 years, an’ now I had a friend that knew about tha place I had grown up. Having this connection made tha move ta Glasgow a lot less alienating to me.
While the above example also brings up many interesting points of anthropological inquiry, such as kinship, it is the extension of Orcadian-ness passed the boundaries of this place that I would like to focus on. The feelings of familiarity and comfort that Sander established and associated with Orkney resurfaced through his connection with Danny. While not necessarily Orcadian himself, Danny did not grow up in Orkney, Sander still felt a certain degree of intimacy by knowing Danny’s parents were Orcadian and that Danny had spent time growing up there. Of course, there was their kinship relation, but their friendship was not predicated on this, and instead remained as an incidental and humorous fact. In the time that I spent with these two friends I did not encounter the same kind of recollection of a shared history that I did when Sander was with other local Orkney and Orcadian friends. Instead, other stories of their time at university popped up most of the time, as well as discussions about current jobs, relationships etc. However, there was one point about Danny that Sander impressed upon me on more than one occasion: Danny was reliable. If you needed help, Danny would be there, something Sander also commented on about folk in Orkney. So while the reinforcement of a shared (short and long) history re-establishes connections of familiarity in Orkney and among Orcadians, it seems that the same sense of familiarity is once again established through the recognition of a common attitude.

It was Sander’s knowledge of Danny’s family history that initially put him at ease; this history was a sign of potential likeness, one that was legitimized through their own experiences together as well as through Danny’s reliability, one Sander recognized in fellow Orcadians. Furthermore, this knowledge of potential likeness was based on the reality of what Sander called an ‘Orkney connection,’ a phrase I heard numerous times throughout my time in Orkney to signify both unexpected family relations in and beyond Orkney, as well as the long term personal connections temporary visitors make. In the latter situation the short visits, only intended to be temporary, extend or become repeated visits due to the strong friendships and relations people make during their initial time in these isles. While neither of these two types of ‘Orkney connections’ could be seen as markers of Orcadian-ness, I argue
that they signify the extension of Orcadian-ness beyond both Orkney and the surface definition of the category.53

An Opening for Others

The category of Orcadian identity is primarily established through deep personal and historical connection to Orkney. However, the understanding of an associated attitude allows for openings through which others can access, or even ascribe to, this category. It is also helpful to return to Alexander’s comments about a historical openness. Whether or not incomers to Orkney throughout the ages have truly felt this historical openness, the current affirmation about the quality of the local people creates this openness in the present, particularly within the renewables industry, where these claims are made and promoted. When the two – an openness to new people and a particular acceptance of those who uphold qualities of collective identification – are taken together, it becomes evident how people in Orkney are able to maintain a sense of a collective identity in the face of change. Here Orkney serves as an interesting contrast to Whalsay, as described by Cohen, with the acceptance of change in Orkney becoming a vital part of the identity being preserved.

53 This point is also made in Paul Basu’s 2004 article, My Own Island Home – The Orkney Homecoming.
The Pickaquoy Gym offered the best gym rates I’d ever seen, especially if you were a student. For £15 a month I had full access to the gym and the swimming pool area, which included a sauna, steam room, and hot tub. These warming amenities were a welcomed indulgence in a place where the sun only shone for six hours a day in the darkest of winter. It was here, in the Pickaquoy sauna, about two months into fieldwork that I heard my first outright objection to renewable energy in Orkney. I started the conversation, keen to speak to anyone I could. I asked the man if he was from Orkney, and he replied that he was in a broad Orcadian accent. Following the conventional sequence of introductory conversations of this type, the man then asked where I was from. “American, I see, well what brings you all tha way up here?” the man said (FN-12.20.13). “I’m doing a research project on perceptions of renewable energy in Orkney”, I replied. This was enough to get the man started. He told me of how the wind turbines were ruining the landscape, how it was primarily the energy companies benefiting financially from marine technology development, and how the whole issue showed the incompetency of the local council. His comments presented a completely different situation than the one I had encountered through my discussions with individuals involved in the development and production of renewable energy.

“It’s a silent majority, I tell you”, the man said. Soon more people came into the sauna and we stopped talking. I was getting too hot, so I left, showered and drove home. I never saw the man again. It was an abrupt and odd experience that left me wondering about all those people I wasn’t speaking to in Orkney. Soon after this experience I was offered an internship at one of the companies involved in the renewables industry. I was still quite set in my desire to speak and work closely with those in renewable energy, a desire motivated by my own beliefs about the ‘right’ way to solve issues of anthropogenic climate change and energy security. It is also this desire that led to my fascination for the narratives of historical and cultural cohesion discussed in the previous chapters, narratives that support the production and development of renewable energy in Orkney.
Despite my desire and efforts to make my fieldsite the renewable energy industry in Orkney, a series of choices and occurrences – the isolated location of my home, my initial inability to find work and the time limit of the work I did find, and my own compulsion to fill my ‘spare’ time with other activities – meant that my experiences, and, therefore, fieldsite extended far beyond this particular network of relations. As I continued with my work at the renewable energy company and interviewing various individuals involved in renewable energy, my awareness of the diverse array of perspectives grew. Towards the end of my fieldwork I shifted my attention to speaking with different identifiable groups of individuals, farmers, fishermen, artists, RSPB workers, to broaden my knowledge of these perspectives. Looking back on my fieldnotes there exists the same divide in attention between the amassed volume and detailed attention concerning the myth of cohesion and increasingly present fragments that document comments, perspectives and viewpoints that did not fit in. It is the latter half of this divide I will turn my attention to now.

Nine Commentaries on Renewable Energy

The following segments will be dedicated to representing conversations with nine different individuals, each of whom expressed their own personal perspective on the current presence of renewable energy generation and production in Orkney. The segments will vary in format depending on whether or not the text came from taped interviews or was adapted from fieldnotes jotted down after spontaneous conversations. The first segment is representative of the myth of cohesion discussed and analysed in the previous four chapters. The last segment stands to represent a number of conversations I had with individuals who declined comment. Finally, the reader will have to excuse my blunt sectioning out of ethnographic excerpts and analysis, and for the sheer volume of the excerpts included below. There is intent in the process, one that will be revealed as the chapter evolves.

Rognvald

We had met through the Orkney Renewable Energy Forum (OREF); Rognvald sat on the board of OREF. He grew up and continues to live in Orkney. Moreover, Rognvald is Orcadian; he has ‘generations in the kirk yard’. In the early 1980s
Rognvald began his apprenticeship with a local company of trade engineering. It was at this time that two companies, Howden and Wind Energy Group, were setting up trials for three different wind turbine devices at the Burgar Hill site, in northwest Mainland. The company he was apprenticed to was involved in putting the Howden machine together and commissioning it out. Rognvald is currently the head of Orkney’s main supplier for construction materials, as well as a large range of services. The company supplies ready-mix concrete, blocks, precast, quarrying, haulage hire, truck and plant services, plant/container/accommodation sales and hire, waste management, and skip hire; on top of this they are also registered scrap metal merchants. The following comments come from an interview we had in the meeting room of headquarters in Hatson.

When I see tha bigger [wind turbine] machines… they look… really substantial, really powerful – look like they do a good job.

…

tha smaller machines ta me look like… a desperate attempt ta do something, they’re sort-a… flying around very quickly… at high speed an’ I don’t particularly like them.

Quality. There’s not tha quality about them. An’ I think tha local people like a bit of quality. That’s what our culture is about… ya ken. … When you go ta Skara Brae… it’s been here for over 5,000 years. So! I think… historically, locally, here things have been built ta’ last… So I like tha ones that are built ta’ last.

(Br-29.09.14)

Julia

One day at yarn spinning class I was chatting with Julia. Born in England and now in her sixties, Julia had lived in Orkney for almost thirty years. While we were chatting I decided to ask why she moved up to Orkney. She replied by telling me of how crowded it was down there, in the south of England, how it took forever to get anywhere and how you always had to drive, often through traffic. She had wanted to move away, not only from the number of people, but also from what she felt was the stifling nature of miles and miles of cement roads, the twisting network of row houses and shops, big-business; the speed and the “drive”, as she called it. In short, Julia wanted to “get away from it all”. I was interested to see what Julia’s thoughts were on the presence of renewables. When I found her alone fixing one of the wheels
during the tea and coffee break I began by telling her a bit about my research, a brief that usually consisted at first of broad statements, such as my interest in ‘the social side of renewable energy in Orkney,’ or sometimes just ‘renewable energy in Orkney.’

“Well, this is sure the right place for that” she replied.

“What are your thoughts on it all? …I mean, renewables here…” I asked.

“They’re terrible, the [wind] turbines, that is,” Julia responded.

“Oh really? Why so?” I probed a bit further.

“They’re a blight on the landscape. This is exactly the kind of thing I moved up here to get away from. This sort of… industrialization of the landscape”.

(H1-15.07.14)

Sam

From a discussion about the decision made by one of the outer isles to buy and install a community turbine:

There was a[n older] woman [from the island] who was against tha [community] turbine at tha start and during the vote. But after it was installed she started ta see it differently. She saw how it was benefiting tha community and would continue ta. Afterwards she wanted ta take down her dyke so that she could see it turning. She isn’t around noo, but her children an’ grandchildren are. That’s part -a it, ya ken, it’s about succession.

...

The locals have a different mind-set. They want ta know tha island and community has a future, not just for tha next year, or even for tha next ten, but also for the next 100 years… Locals have lived through development, they have seen that is what happens an’ that is what makes your life better.

(S-27.02.14)

Thorfin

Over the previous six months a number of people suggested I speak with Thorfin when I said I was looking to hear alternative perspectives. Since I was about
to leave Orkney, I thought I should probably get in touch. The day was rainy, but without too much wind. I walked through the open-plan office where Thorfin worked and found him seated, working in his private office towards the back. The room was dark, with one small window, mismatched chairs, and random stacks of paper covering the desk. As I found with Alexander, the councillor I quoted in Chapters 3 and 4, I barely had to ask any questions or any provide material for the conversation. Alexander had a lot of thoughts on the subject of renewable energy in Orkney and was happy to share. Our conversation lasted for over an hour, and covered a number of related topics. Thorfin led by establishing he was anti-exponential growth,

We cannot base economics on exponential growth; earth is more finite an’ smaller than you think; we need to start recycling everything on board if we are going to survive. We cannot have continual development and expansion, but instead address our finite resources an’ use of them.

Thorfin believed in a number of principles in support of renewable energy generation and development in Orkney, which had also been expressed to me by others. However, he remained critical because all the current measures were being implemented to support continued growth, the physical manifestation of which he saw as a threat to Orkney.

It’s all about the perception. The most beautiful an’ rugged coastlines here are being industrialized. Tha beauty is important in itself, but we also rely on tha beauty… -a Orkney. We rely heavily on tourism. So… tha visitors’ perception of Orkney is very important to a great number -a people here… I’m not so concerned about tha tidal developments. They seem to have a better system worked out. But I am concerned about tha wave devices. Tha testing areas are right next to national scenic areas. Tha wind devices aren’t great either.

Thorfin told me some had labelled him as a “NIMBY-ist”, but I was assured he was not anti-renewables and that people just placed this label on him because “it made it easier for people to organize [him], an’ put [him] up on a shelf”. Thorfin also commented on employment within the renewables sector.

There are very few locals running the scene. But don’t get me wrong; it’s great that there are a lot -a local people employed in renewables. It’s just that

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NIMBY stands for ‘not in my back yard’, and is a common label for people who are in support of reduced reliance on fossil fuels and alternative measures, but who object to the implementation of these measures in the areas and spaces they inhabit.
a lot –a people not from here end up speaking for Orkney. An’ we’re way too polite to point it out. We have our indigenous rights too.

Finally, when I asked Thorfin to describe what he saw when he looked at the devices, he replied,

I immediately associate them with industry an’ dvelopers; people who don’t give a shit about Orkney. It represents being owned by big power companies; they’re going to get whatever they want.

…

It not only annoys my eyes, it annoys my brain. The consultations\textsuperscript{55} take up my time, takes time away from my family, my three-year-old daughter.

(P\textsubscript{1}-28.09.14)

Grant

“It just seemed like the right move to make”, Grant answered. I had just asked him why he started the renewable energy management course at ICIT. “What do you mean ‘right’?” I probed further. We were sitting in the upstairs bar of the Stromness Hotel at one of the handful of ‘Friday Night Socials’ I attended. The nights were organised by one of the environmental consultant agencies and aimed at getting people together from the different companies. Grant took a sip of his beer and replied, “Well there’ll be more jobs with all the government funding set aside for the development of infrastructure and technology… you’ve got to be smart about the choices you make. And it’s something I can get behind; you know, clean, responsibly sourced energy”.

(FN-21.02.14)

Inga

From an interview with a woman whose family has been involved in the fishing industry for generations:

I see naive optimism in some, worthy idealism, and cynical exploitation of public money for personal gain…When I see one actually working that produces a net benefit in terms of carbon footprint and loss to the indigenous food security activities of the isles I may be persuaded to change my view.

Turbines at present simply confirm the status quo of energy resources being in the hands of the wealthy and of foreign owned multinationals and will have no bearing on the fuel poverty issues of islanders unless the ability to heat your

\textsuperscript{55} Here Thorfin is talking about environmental consultation documents, intended to provide a space for public comment and input.
home becomes a human right, which the state upholds through nationalisation of
the energy companies.

(M3-14.08.14)

John

“I just miss them out”, John told me, referring to the presence of wind turbines
in the landscapes he paints. “I guess you can call me anti-wind, I’ve always been pro-
wave and tidal though”, he clarified unprompted. I came to speak to John because I
knew of his involvement in the Orkney Skyline Campaign. I spoke first with his
cousin, who told, “I’ve said all I have to say about that”, and that was the end of our
conversation. John was more willing to talk and offered an explanation for his
cousin’s silence on the matter, “As for the wind, we feel… what’s the word…
impotent; most of us have given up. You’ll have gotten that from Roger”. He painted
as we talked; his activity put me at ease, deformed the interview and made me
feel that I wasn’t intruding. “Do you think it has been a big area of conflict?” I asked.
“There are a lot of upset people”, John said, “it’s the lack that gets me… You just get
to feeling like what you say doesn’t count”. He paused to look out of the large
windows of his studio, dipped his brush, changed colour and continued…

“Sometimes you’re talking to people and you find out they have shares in
something. Then you just try to avoid speaking about it more. We have a variety of
businesses here, and while there’re a lot of us, we’re quite close, ya ken, we need to
get along with people. But it’s just like politics. If you notice where the conflict is,
you just avoid that”.

(G4-29.09.14)

Karen

From a discussion with an Orkney based employee of a government
funded project supporting community energy across Scotland:

For me it [the production and generation of renewable energy] is about
necessity, and economic development; renewables development, yes, but
community development as well. For a lot of these small isle communities it’s
about filling a gap and stopping depopulation. The council has to be a regulator,
but the Community Development Trusts attempt to deliver – enabled by revenue from the turbines – is what these communities are not getting from the council, what is justified, but not supported. In Rousay they’re proud of theirs. In Shapinsay there were some tensions at the beginning, but most of the people who were initially against it have come around, their perceptions have changed. [Wind] Turbines are a means to an end. But they do dominate the landscape. Your eyes are always drawn to them. But I don’t think there are any nice options left. And I, and most people, will tolerate them because we want a certain standard of electricity.

(W3-02.10.14)

Fiona

I met Fiona through the running club my friend Mary had started, originally just for the sake of the activity, then as a training group for the Hoy Half Marathon. Fiona and I ran most of the 13.1 miles together, with Fiona breaking off ahead up the final mile and a half incline to the finish. It was an unusually hot, stuffy day and this was the longest distance either of us had ever run. We ran the majority of the way in silence, with the occasional motivational comment to keep us going: “that’s one-Scapa left!” Many of our training runs had been a three-mile loop that started at the Kirkwall Youth Hostel and then circled down past Scapa Bay beach and back up towards the town. A barbeque was held on the beach after we all finished the race. The others ran off with Mary and her two girls to inspect some jellyfish they found on the beach. Fiona and I stayed on the rock and looked out at the sea. Fiona never really spoke much and when she did she kept it short and chose her words carefully. “Will you keep up with the running group?” I asked her. “Oh, aye. I think so”, she said. We sat in silence for a few more moments, “Will you?” Fiona then asked me. “I’ll actually be leaving soon”.

“Oh really... is your course done?”

“Well this part, now I have to go and write up”.

“I see”.

“It’s been an interesting year though... I’ve been able to speak to a lot of different people about the renewables stuff going on...” Adding on information about my research, always in the hope it may inspire more conversation on the subject.

“Aye, this is the right kind of place for that”.
For number of seconds the only sounds were the waves, the cries of seagulls and
guillemots and sandpipers, and the distant chatter of voices. I spoke once again. “I’m
always looking for comments… if you have any particular feelings… one way or the
other?”

“Oh, I’m not the right person to speak to”.

“I’m not looking for anything in particular…”

Fiona’s lips curved into a nervous, appeasing smile, but offered nothing. I didn’t want
to push the conversation any further so stood up, “Shall we go help inspect those
ejellyfish?”

(Making Sense of it All)

I could have included numerous other samples of text above, each ranging from
slightly to vastly different perspectives on the presence of renewable energy in
Orkney. Furthermore, I left out many nuances from many of the conversations, the
multiple sides and perspectives presented to me by each person, as seen in Thorfin’s
commentary. But what does all this mean? What does it show us? In my first attempt
to ‘make sense’ of the diversity represented in this material I turned to the
phenomenological approach towards landscape in analysing how the comments of
Rognvald and Julia were representative of the way each other saw Orkney as a place,
perspectives that were intimately informed by the personal histories of each person
(Friend 2016). In this same paper I discussed how Sam’s story of ‘the woman who
changed her mind’ represents the processual and interchangeable nature through
which experience and perception affect and build off each other.

The phenomenological approach to landscape can be firmly located in the
works of Barbra Bender (1993, 2002), Tim Ingold (1993, 2011) and Christopher
Tilley (1994), although many others have since built on this work (see Hirsch and
O’Hanlon 1995; Flint and Morphy 1997; Olwig and Mitchell 2009). Three main
points come from this body of work. Firstly, the breakdown of the nature/culture
dichotomy. Although difficult to completely erase the opposition as it is present in the
very words available for any discussion, Bender, Ingold and Tilley all argue against
this distinction on the grounds that we are as much a part of our surroundings as our
surroundings are a part of us, each exists alongside and is fundamental in the making
of the other. The second point is that experience and perception are interactive and
processual. This is to say they affect each other in continuous progression. I am
tempted to include ‘action’ alongside experience and perception, as this third noun
helps relate the second point back to the first. A Tilley quote sums up the connection
between these points perfectly; “the world and the subject reflect and flow into each
other through the body that provides the living bond with the world” (1994: 14). Here
it is crucial to understand that one’s knowledge of the world is rooted in one’s
practical engagement with it, which brings me to the third and final point. Experience
and perception are resoundingly personal; the common world in which we all live is
always only subjectively known. While as humans, we can collectively experience the
same event or similar ways of life, or while we can confer on perspectives and gather
data on observable experiences and occurrences to test the validity of any one thing,
the world is always known and, therefore, exists individually for each subject. The
above describes my own particular interpretation of the phenomenology of landscape,
which informs my use of this theoretical approach in this thesis.

For Rognvald, his relevant practical engagements include membership to a
recognised collective group, i.e. the Orcadian people, his involvement in the 1980s
Burgar Hill test site and his means of subsistence. Much like Orkney farmers – the
majority of whom have readily taken to renewable energy generation in the form of
individually owned wind turbines – I would argue Rognvald sees the Orkney
landscape as a working landscape. His livelihood can be generally equated to the
construction business, providing materials and services for a built and worked
landscape. Furthermore, there was a particular standard for the work that was carried
out, one that represented a long history of human habitation in this archipelago. While
unique to his own personal history, Rognvald’s comments align with many expressed
in Chapters 3 & 4; they associate the current presence of renewable energy in Orkney
with its historical narrative and the nature of the local population. This incomplete
alignment begins to hint at a point exaggerated by the collection of perspectives
included above: each perspective reflects a very particular experience of Orkney.

Julia, Thorfin, Inga and John, all expressed what could be termed as less
favourable perspectives of renewable energy in Orkney. Julia actually moved up to
Orkney without having ever visited the place. This move could be seen as an escape,
“I wanted to get away”, she told me. With no prior lived experience of the area I would argue that for Julia – as Rebecca Ford suggests is true for many people in Orkney (2013) – Orkney was and still is an imagined location. The presence of renewable energy, primarily the wind turbines, seems to have brought what she was trying to get away from here, to Orkney. Such a presence has created a disjuncture between the imagined Orkney and her lived reality of the place. Thorfin and John are both painters and both identified as Orcadian. As children, they spent time and enjoyed playing outside, a comment most people from Orkney made. As they grew older both picked up painting, an activity that requires repeated detailed attention to one’s subject of focus; the Orkney landscape and skyline features frequently in both Thorfin and John’s work. In recent years both were involved in their own way, in speaking out against the placement of particular wind turbines. Their objections are based on the obtrusive visual presence of the turbines.

Thorfin’s experience of the presence of renewable energy in Orkney is intimately tied up with his own relationship to the land and landscape of Orkney, as it is with John. The particulars of their comments represent the particulars in their experience. For Thorfin, the general generation and development of renewable energy, regardless of the type (wind, wave, tide), also represents the destructive human desire for progress, something Julia’s comments also suggest. Growing up Thorfin spent a great deal of time on the Yesnaby coast, “one of the most beautiful and rugged coastlines on the island”, he told me. “I’ve taken girlfriends out there to show them what is important to me”. He also told me how all his great heroes, such as Stanley Curister and Ian MacInnes, painted this landscape. In the 1970s, when Thorfin was just a boy, he carried a coffin that read “Orkney” in a demonstration led by the successful campaign to stop the proposed uranium mine near Stromness. As a teenager Thorfin read an article by the American based economist Kenneth Boulding (1996 [1966]) that criticized the economic model of exponential growth. Boulding’s words resonated with Thorfin and he began incorporating this perspective into his own work, often employing the figure of the cowboy to represent the modern capitalist looking out on to a horizon of limitless possibilities. Finally, Thorfin’s current work supports the tourist industry, one he sees as firmly rooted in the ‘natural’ beauty of the archipelago, and one he sees threatened by the presence of the renewable energy devices. Therefore, his own livelihood is threatened.
Thorfin’s current objections to renewable energy in Orkney can be traced through this life history, or at least this was how he presented his position to me. For Thorfin, the proposed wind farm on and current placement of wave devices beyond the Yesnaby coastline posed and poses a direct threat to a place that is very personal to him and one that supports his continued existence. Furthermore, the presence of what he sees as ‘big industry’ in the form of the renewable energy industry represents the corporate pursuit of exponential economic growth, one he has spent his lifetime speaking out against.

Most other people I spoke did not have as much to say as Thorfin. When I asked John about his life history he only briefly told me about how he spent a lot of time playing outside as a child, without much elaboration. John did not have the same kind of concerns about the industry as Thorfin, or at least he did not voice them to me. John mainly talked about his concerns for the visual landscape and the feeling of being ignored, which he was left with after most of the turbines he objected to went up anyway. Inga, like Thorfin, did express concerns about ‘big industry’. However, her issues primarily concerned the vitality of the fishing industry that generations of her family have worked in. A few individuals from the renewables industry told me that when EMEC was just starting up there had been some confusion over fishing zones, mainly due to incomplete consultation. Inga echoed this saying the initial wave and tidal test sites were designated without consultation and in areas that infringed upon traditional fishing grounds.

Instead of supporting the indigenous industries, they’re willing to sacrifice them… for what they see as a new, modern industry.

I asked if Inga’s main issues were with the marine industry, as opposed to the wind, to which she answered…

Yes, but I think what, if ya talk ta anyone… – an’ I say this meaning tha indigenous community – who has been born an’ grew up here, we don’t see ourselves as, single-issue people. Ta live in an island, you have ta be multi… multi-skilled. That’s always been a condition -a living here.
So, although I, me,  
I’m qualified in certain things.  
I turn my hand at lots -a different things,  
a make a living.

(M3-14.08.14)

There are distinct alignments and overlaps between the Julia, Thorfin, John, and Inga’s perspectives. Many see the generation and development of renewable energy as just another aspect of ‘modern progress’, an imposition on the landscape and in the seascape. These were not comments I expected to hear having spent a majority of my time with people who were involved in renewables. As such they represent a particular experience most likely shared by others with similar objections, but foreign to those in support of renewable energy in Orkney.

However, to divide these perspectives in units of positive and negative is reductive, and it glosses over the intricate specificities expressed by each person. Furthermore, it glosses over the alignments between the perspectives that may be labelled as opposite. In Part Two, I discussed a particular narrative within the myth of cohesion, one that made sense of the acceptance of renewable energy by linking it to a particular attitude among the ‘local people’. This attitude was one that welcomed a challenge, took advantages of the opportunities, and was rooted in the same reasoning that living on islands makes you multi-skilled and resourceful because you need to make the most of what you have, the same logic Inga also presents above. On a more general scale, many of the people speaking out against and in favour of renewable energy invoked a sense of the local; renewable energy either fits in with or threatens local or indigenous life. For Inga renewable energy posed a threat to indigenous ways of life, while for the woman in Sam’s story, renewable energy became a means for continued existence.

The perspectives included in the previous section also show that for some people issues like employment, financial stability, depopulation of small community and the global environment influence their decisions. Grant’s involvement was primarily motivated by self-interest. Sigurd also prefaced the economic opportunities when I asked him how he first became involved. For a director of one of the major renewable energy companies, Orkney was a place where progress in the renewable energy sector could really happen, and with local support (K1-10.04.14). I did not include comments by this man above, but I will briefly introduce him here. Jeremy
grew up on the South coast of England. He told me he first got into ‘green energy’ in the 1970s after watching a television show about a family that was in the process of converting their house to be more energy efficient. Each week they tackled a different topic: insulation, solar panels, wind power, etc. It was around the same time that there were rolling blackouts because of the oil crisis. “It made me appreciate energy, it wasn’t invisible to me”, Jeremy told me. When Jeremy was at school he built his own wind turbine, solar panels and a solar heater. At university it was ‘unfashionable’ to be interested in energy, but Jeremy and some of his friends joined the “Friends of the Earth” group. After university Jeremy became a municipal engineer for the next few decades.

Jeremy’s first trip to Orkney was in the early 1990s; he had come up on a diving holiday. During this trip he had become particularly fascinated with the tides that used to run through the gaps between the south isles, now blocked by the Churchill Barriers. After the trip Jeremy took out a patent for a tidal power station that would be built into the barriers, but he never told anyone. A decade later, Jeremy heard about a conference being held in Orkney called “Renewable Realities,” and decided to return.

I went to it, and was
absolutely blown away
by the...
how articulate people were about the whole energy picture.
They just got it.
In a way that I had never seen anywhere else.
People were just on the ball.
The things I'd been arguing for, for years,
people were talking about as if they were just happening,
and it was just like...
feeling like coming home.

(K1-10.04.14)

Jeremy has now lived in Orkney for over a decade, working as a key member of the renewable energy industry. He is a well-respected man by all those involved in the industry and often speaks at public events promoting the presence of renewable

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56 The Churchill Barriers are a series of four manmade causeways that connect the mainland of Orkney with islands of Grimsholm, Lambsholm, Burray and South Ronaldsay. The causeways were laid in the 1940s as defensive barriers to protect the waters of Scapa Flow, where a large part of the British Naval fleet was stationed, from German U-boats. Roads were laid across the Barriers allowing travel between the listed islands.
energy in Orkney. For Jeremy, Orkney is a place where global problems can and are being solved, a place that aligns with his particular set of values and work ethic.

Returning once again to the phenomenological approach to landscape, we can see that the above perspectives 1) are rooted in each person’s practical and imaginative engagements with Orkney, as both a place and locality; and 2) are resoundingly personal. The point about experience and perception building off each other is not as obvious, except in the case of ‘the woman who changed her mind’. By witnessing and, therefore, experiencing the benefits of the community wind turbine, the woman changed her mind about the turbine. She went from not wanting it at all, to taking down her dyke so it could be a visible presence in her everyday life. Some may argue that I am using the phenomenological approach to landscape too loosely here. I have often included thoughts and the emotional act of witnessing experiences while the phenomenological approach usually prefaces actions, physical engagement with the land or one’s surroundings, as expressed in the Tilley quote above. However, there is physicality in the experience of thoughts and emotions expressed by the acceptance of or objection to the visible presence of the various renewable energy devices in Orkney. Some feel repulsed, agitated, or annoyed, others feel pride or importance as individuals, and as part of the Orkney population; others still don’t feel much at all, whether this is because they have little interest, as suggested by Fiona’s comments, or because they have given up caring, as expressed by John. I am left with the question: how do all these emotions and experiences exist alongside each other and how do these perspectives remain valid for each person?

The diversity of emotional and perceptual field may not be surprising to scholars of space and place; space is never neutral or innocent, but depends upon who is experiencing it and how (Bender 1993; Tilley 1994). Again we are confronted with the very individual nature of perception and experience. Every one of the perspectives above, and throughout this thesis, offers a unique viewpoint, but also a unique Orkney. While one single geographical place, the comments above represent perspectives informed by individual inhabitations of this place. As such, I would argue Orkney also exists as a multiple. The multiplicity of place is another argument made within the theory of the phenomenology of the landscape and is one that can help make sense of the variety present in Orkney. I am not arguing for some extreme

\[\text{57 Fiona’s comments could also be due to her not wanting to get involved, regardless of her opinion, a point I will discuss in the following chapter.}\]
form of relativism, the worlds are not untranslatable, just individual. After all, “difference is an individual property” (Rapport 2012: 4), is it not? It follows that commonalities between perspectives may point to overlapping inhabitations or patterns of habitation of this one geographical space.

**World-Views**

Another way I have looked at the variety of the perspectives above is through the idea of ‘world-views,’ informed by Nigel Rapport’s (1993) use of the term. Although operating within a different theoretical framework, I have come to see Rapport’s discussion of ‘world-views’ compatible with the analysis above. Based on fieldwork in the English village of Wanet, Rapport provides a detailed analysis of his interactions with and the discourse employed by two of his closest interlocutors: Doris and Sid. Rapport began to see patterns emerge through his routine interactions with these individuals. These patterns were closed-loops of thought, which held their own unique combination… or, rather, their own “world of people and events, of values, norms, and constraints” (Rapport 1993: 79). These closed loops can be seen as speech acts, inspired by particular speech events or particularities. Through witnessing the discussion had between Doris and Sid in particular, Rapport found numerous world-views operating at any one given time. In fact, the discussions often seemed less like discussions and more like soapboxes on which each individual was voicing their own way of seeing a particular occurrence, issue or interaction. Once again, ‘world-view’, ‘way of seeing’, and ‘perspective’ are different but relatable, all either defined by or constituted by the particular combination of people, events, values, norms and constraints discussed above. Through this avenue of analysis the differences between the varieties of perceptions of renewable energy could come down to a difference in speech communities that establish or support particular world-views.

**Sense-making & The Flow of Meaning**

*Homo sapiens* is the creature who ‘makes sense.’ She literally produces sense through her experience, interpretation,

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58 See footnote 50 for a description of the difference between ‘world-view’ and ‘ethos’, which supports Rapport’s use of world-view.
contemplation, and imagination, and she cannot live in the world without it.

(Hannerz 1992: 3)

The final way I have considered the variety of perspectives presented above is through the process of sense-making, or making sense. While closely related to the communication of meaning through production, maintenance and elaboration of symbolic forms, I will focus first on the process as a fundamental aspect of the human capacity. As Hannerz (1992) argues, making sense of people, occurrences, events, and interactions – or, in short, the world we inhabit – is an unavoidable part of human life. We do not just move about and interact to constantly co-create the world we live in, but we also constantly interpret that world. This act of interpretation is present in all the comments above and in my own analysis, in the very purpose of this thesis. What is anthropology but a heightened and crafted practice of sense-making? Taken alongside the principles of phenomenological experience outlined above, i.e., that the experience of life and therefore the knowledge of the world are both resoundingly personal, it is understandable that the act of interpretation that informs this knowledge is also resoundingly personal. Making sense is the process of internal discourse through which world-views, ways of seeing and perspectives come to be. Motivated by the search for meaning, making sense is the missing link between the body and the mind, or at least the mind as it exists at any given moment.

The process of sense-making helps make sense of the variety of perspectives I encountered in Orkney; however, it can also make sense of the overlapping cohesion, where present. As with the myth of cohesion, elements of individuals’ perceptions or world-views align to support a collective perception or world-view. The same could be said about the idea of an Orcadian collective. Here external discourse is paramount. Individually interpreted meaning is communicated through common forms or symbols, i.e., words, objects, even terms of collective identification. However, to turn this analysis over again, while the use of common forms allows for a certain degree of consistency, it does not necessitate the same consistency of meaning (Cohen 1978, 1987). Orcadian culture and indigeneity are employed in processes of sense-making that both support and reject the presence of renewable energy in Orkney. The term ‘Orcadian’ itself is used by a number of different people at different times to mean different things.
We now have two ways to understand cohesion among variety, variety being the fundamental reality of the lived-experience and interpretation of human life. The first is through the overlapping spheres of experience and inhabitation, which would also include spheres of discourse. The second is through the use of common forms that present cohesion where there may be complexity. Turning to Kathleen Stewart (1996) once again, I would suggest it is because individual experience and perception can never be fully translated or communicated to another that newness, individuality, and alterations emerge among a seemingly cohesive whole. It is within the gaps in meaning and the passage of time that the flow of meaning is possible.
The Nature of the Data
Chapter 11

So far this thesis has discussed and described how people talk about and express their perceptions of renewable energy within Orkney. It has placed great emphasis on one particular way of seeing Orkney, held to be true among many individuals involved in the generation and development of renewable energy. I have also included a chapter that begins to challenge the ubiquity of this way of thinking, which I have referred to as the myth of cohesion. This chapter reflects a range of opinions expressed to me both within and outside the networks of the renewable energy industry in Orkney. Before the Conclusion I would now like to discuss the nature of the data that informs the previous ethnographic chapters, both those that discuss the myth of cohesion and those that challenge it. I will consider a number of criteria, asking questions like: Is this data ‘front-stage’? Is it inclusive? Is it influenced by demographic categories of class, gender, age, locality, occupation, or religion? Is it situational, influenced by my relationship to the person providing the information or the spaces in which interactions occur? As I make my way to these later questions I will re-confront my own transitions through fieldwork.

Is the Data Front-stage?

What do I mean by ‘front-stage’? The most common understanding of this term comes from Erving Goffman’s dramaturgic analysis of social life in his *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (2008 [1959]), which I discussed in Chapter 1, ‘Situating the Research’. To paraphrase, Goffman suggests that a great deal of social interaction can be understood as a performance or front-stage interaction.

When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude toward them, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc. Although some of this information seems to be sought almost as an end in itself, there are usually quite practical reasons for acquiring it. Information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him. Informed in these
ways, the others will know how best to act in order to call forth a desired response from him.

(Goffman 2008: 120)

It is through this type of interaction that we perform our social roles – a reality that Goffman would argue further informs the information we both present and seek out. A backstage exists as well, one Goffman analyses by looking at corporate settings, Disney Land, parties, etc. Using Goffman’s dramaturgic analysis of social interaction, my data can be considered a mix of front and backstage.

Much of my initial data came from first time interviews, moments of formal interaction I constructed for the purpose of data gathering. In these interviews the roles were very clear, I was the ethnographer or researcher, and the person I was speaking with was the designated information giver. For the majority, these individuals had been signalled to me as the ‘right’ people to speak to. Many were already in positions that required particular skills in public relations, positions that required presenting a ‘public face’. So not only was the interaction structured in that roles were easily defined, but the people I spoke with were very comfortable in their role as information givers, many of whom had much to say. Such individuals could also be labelled as ‘front of house’ speakers. I spoke with Managing Directors and Marketing Officers at renewable energy companies and Orkney Islands Council employees whose jobs primarily involved bringing and keeping current marine energy technology developers to Orkney. I spoke with marine technology developers who were well trained in pitching their company’s purpose and place in the industry and archipelago. I spoke with wind turbine contractors whose jobs relied upon selling their companies turbines to individuals and communities and members of the local supply chain who relied upon the business of renewable energy technology developers to sustain their companies. And finally, I spent a few months working at one of the renewable energy companies where the promotion of renewable energy was also a major aspect of my duties there.\(^59\)

My position changed slightly, as I became intern and then employee as well, working from within the industry and with those around me for a common purpose. Here I was privy to what might be called more backstage interaction. However the message did not change much. The myth of cohesion still existed, albeit more

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59 I.e., helping set up pop-up exhibitions of the history of renewable energy production or scoping out funding possibilities for an electric bus scheme.
quite). There was increased discussion of more technical issues concerning the renewables energy industry and, when prompted by myself, the recognition of the importance of the story and the image in transmitting the message, that is, that renewable energy in Orkney is good; it employs people, it boosts the economy, and helps the world.

I was not only initially pointed to the ‘right’ people within the renewable energy sector, but also to the ‘right’ people who would express an alternative perspective. As such, many of the interviews I had with individuals outside the renewable energy industry were those who held quite strong views against the presence of the devices in the sea and on the land. In all these conversations, regardless of opinion on renewable energy, I was speaking with people who had thought deeply about the answers to the questions I asked: “What do you think about the generation and development of renewable energy in Orkney?” “What do you see when you see the physical devices?” I was not always seeing the process of thoughts and positions being made and mulled over. Nor was I always experiencing the full range of perceptions I later became aware of. Instead, I was receiving well-crafted viewpoints implicitly rehearsed in what must have been numerous other conversations or internal debates. I was seeing front-stage presentations.

This brings me to another point I have begun to think about in relation to front and backstage interaction, that is, the presence of the well-crafted myth of cohesion or other viewpoints versus the inclusion of the dialogue that shapes such perceptions. Can one be labelled as front-stage and the other backstage? The presence of a well-crafted viewpoint is overtly present in the conversations that inform my discussion of the myth of cohesion, the narrative about Orkney and the Orcadian people that easily lent itself to the presence of renewable energy. The repetition of points in this narrative both served to solidify my understanding of its acceptance within a particular circuit of individuals and suggests there had been some intersubjective exchanging of ideas, in which the narrative was expressed by one person and accepted by another or others with whom the logic of the narrative resonated. I do not mean to suggest that this myth is any less valid than one that pits renewable energy against the success of the indigenous population, a point expressed by one fisherman, or that the absence of a message about the place of renewable energy in Orkney delegitimises those present. Here, ‘ethos’ may be a better expression than ‘myth’ to avoid the semantics of ‘crafting images’ and ‘rehearsing narrative’, which
suggest a conscious fabrication. While these well-crafted narratives presented themselves as front-stage interactions, they were presentations of lived realities, and part of the world-view each person expressing them inhabited.

However, as I continued through my fieldwork I was able to see more dimensions to the encounters and individuals I was speaking to. Throughout this time I began to find individuals who, on first encounter, presented more complex images than others. I have not quite worked out one question: do these initial presentations of complexity mark a welcoming into the backstage? Or are they – can they – still mark front-stage interaction? There may be a problem with the idea of front and backstage here – or at least regarding the point where they transition.

While not all interviews felt like a transmission of knowledge, the interview context seemed to afford more performances than intersubjective exchanges. Such differences in interactions did not seem to come down to the formality of the interview, but perhaps included other factors such as the space in which the discussion occurred or the personality of the person being interviewed. These differences could have also been influenced by the way I was seen; to some I was maybe a young woman who wanted to chat, and to others I was researcher. Cohen’s fieldwork in Whalsay led him to argue that audience make the biggest impact in determining front and backstage interactions, with the preservation of community still weighing in - even on intercommunity interactions (1978, 1987). The most prominent example I have of the shift in interaction, from front-stage presentation to backstage complexity and processual discussion, is with my now fiancé, William.

We met in Orkney at the beginning of my shift of focusing on to interviews. He was working, and still works, as an engineer for a one of the marine energy technology development companies. I had passed around flyers about my research and my wish to interview people who worked in the industry and Will was one of the few who replied. In our interview Will talked about his company’s community outreach, and about how the renewables industry has helped ‘stem the brain drain’ in Orkney, and his own wind turbine; he also showed me a photo from the early 1900s of his ancestors using a wind driven mill on the now uninhabited island of Swona, proof of Orkneys long energy history. He was upfront about the diversity of opinions surrounding renewable energy, but he was clearly in ‘professional mode’, something I only came to see later. I first began to know him as a friend and then, much later towards the end of my fieldwork, we began to see each other romantically. In these
other contexts, hanging out with friends and family, William was not first and foremost someone who worked in the renewables industry. As I observed with others in the various activities I was involved in, these occupational personas were often left at the office. William was good friends with people, or at least people whose parents, were against the mass production of renewable energy in Orkney, but his employment had no effect on their relationship primarily because he was not that person in these contexts.

**Withdrawing from the Stage**

Not everyone I spoke to in Orkney wished to comment on the topic of renewable energy when I brought it up in conversation or asked to interview them. A large number of people withdrew from the complex of the stage altogether when I approached them. Many people I spoke to would, upon hearing my research focus, say for example, “Oh this is the right place to study that”, but then deflect further conversation by saying “I’m not the person to speak about that”, after a substantial silence led me to ask follow up questions. In the previous chapter I suggested this could be because the person, Fiona in the example, did not have strong opinions one way or the other. While this could be true, I’d also like to suggest another possibility, which draws again from the dynamic of the stage.

Michael Lange argues that the lack of willingness to comment he found in Orkney could be linked to the avoidance of being ‘bigsy’ (2007: 90), a concept briefly discussed in a footnote in Chapter 7, ‘We, Us, Our’. To refresh, being bigsy, simply defined, can be equated with being boastful.

The easiest way to avoid being labelled bigsy is to keep quiet and hold a stoic demeanour toward the world. The balance between being bigsy and being stoic is played out in many aspects of life in Orkney. At its most basic, it means that Orcadians tend to be shy and reserved.  

(Lange 2007: 86)

Rebecca Ford also discusses how people avoided being ‘bigsy’ by playing down accomplishments or by employing humour to belittle themselves in her 2013 Masters Thesis. In these contexts bigsy avoidance acts as a check on non-egalitarianism, with people who act bigsy often made to feel socially awkward (Lange 2007; Ford 2013). Interestingly I never encountered the word ‘bigsy’ during my time in Orkney, that is, outside of my interactions with Mrs Ford. That said, people would often agree and
elaborate if I asked about conflict avoidance in Orkney, usually saying it was more of a thing in the past. Some individuals would reference Facebook and the ‘media’ as factors in the decrease in prevalence.

Anthony Cohen also acknowledges the presence of conflict avoidance as associated with the reserved nature of the people in Whalsay (1978, 1987). However, while it could be argued that Cohen is also making a point about the maintenance of egalitarianism, it must be recognised that this maintenance is primarily motivated and informed by a maintenance of the collective to which these individuals belong.

The public persona is a burden, but it is outwith the control of individuals... Yet its imposition, and its disparity with the private sense of self, would not seem to culminate in any unusual frequency of neurosis. One must conclude that the people tacitly accept the burden as part of the cost of belonging to the community. There is a sense that the [public] persona is acknowledged... and that it is not confused with the deeper reality beneath... There is evident in this restraint people’s awareness for self control.

(Cohen 1987: 64)

The restraint here is in the name of continued cohesion. Such reasoning could also apply to those I spoke to, or failed to speak at length to, during my fieldwork. However, it’s more probable that there were numerous and shifting motivations prompting people to remove themselves from the dialogue about renewable energy. John and his cousin Roger felt their opinions made no difference and had given up talking about the situation for that reason. Of course, it could be argued there is some sort of conflict threshold, in which people act up to a point and then retreat in the name of cohesion and getting along.

It is in this last point that I suggest the avoidance of discussion in Orkney connects to the above arguments by Cohen and Lange. By deflecting questions and avoiding being placed on any ‘stage’ those people who refrain from commenting on the situation or declined outright avoid contributing to a point of possible tension – the presence of renewable energy, a break in the presentation of cohesion – among the wider community of residents. It is this cohesion that motivates front-stage and backstage interaction. Of Whalsay, Cohen argues that the community could take on many forms depending upon the situation. Viewed from within an internal complexity emerges; from without the public face of cohesion masks this complexity to preserve a sense of distinctiveness (1978: 453). This dichotomy of internal versus
external presentations aligns well with Goffman’s description of front and backstage interactions. However, as discussed above, Cohen also found the mask of cohesion was present in internal encounters and negotiations, a presence he argued was compelled by the same desire for cohesion in the face of external difference.\textsuperscript{60}

The presence of renewable energy in Orkney provides an interesting entry point into the types of internal/external and front/backstage presentations of identity and self that Goffman and Cohen discuss. Considering that Lange’s ethnography of social life in Orkney was based on fieldwork prior to the current presence of renewable energy development and generation, it is possible that this new industry has brought the internal complexities among Orkney residents to the forefront of social interaction. That said, while individuals in Orkney held a range of opinions that many were willing to share, the topic was rarely present in any public conversations during my fieldwork, with the exception of Facebook, a point I return to soon. All of the conversations where individuals expressed their viewpoints were face-to-face: exclusive. One woman’s comments summed up the situation for me. I had been told this woman had also been active in the Orkney Skyline Concern campaign to restrict the planning policy concerning wind turbines in the early 2000s. However, when I asked if she would be interested in talking to me about the generation and development of renewable energy in Orkney, like Roger she asserted, “I’m done talking about that”. Her own concerns had motivated her enough to act, but now the campaign was over and the planning policy had been decided, the effort was not worth it. There were no gains to be had, so she removed herself from the stage of interaction she had entered into. The avoidance of conflict, the removal of

\textsuperscript{60} Cohen’s analysis allows for a deepening in the complexity of Goffman’s dramaturgical analysis. Through his years of fieldwork in Whalsay, Cohen was able to observe the internal complexities that arose primarily within roles of “work” or “labour”, i.e., fishing, peat cutting, farming, equipment fixing, etc. Cohen also speaks about how these complexities were woven into communal understandings of kinship networks and individual personalities. Here Cohen finds that traditional roles within these categories were publicly discussed and allocated despite the underlying complexity. For example, Joe may be publicly known as the best peat cutter, not necessarily because he is the best, but because a proficiency in this skill helps others place him within pre-existing networks of social knowledge. One’s roles and positions must be upheld in order to uphold the underlying symbols of the community and further preserve a sense of collective distinctiveness (1987: 60-66). As such, the compulsion for identity can be motivated by external difference as well as internal difference. In Whalsay, both external and internal forces may bring on the public face, but this does not mean the face being presented in these instances is the same. These are not the only two levels, as Cohen describes how different individuals take on different roles depending upon the situation and group of people they find themselves in. The main point here is that while there may be a ‘public face’, this does not mean this face is singular, challenging the dichotomy of Goffman’s dramaturgical analysis.
oneself from the stage of interaction on a particular topic, may help make sense of why many bubbles of opinion and perspectives still exist concerning renewable energy.

As a final note on the primarily front-stage nature of my data, I would like to return to Cohen’s discussion of the preservation of distinctiveness, a point I will continue to address when I speak about the generational articulations of my data. Cohen asserts that the preservation of distinctiveness through an effective defence of disintegration is a by-product of our compulsion for identity:

As individuals we recognise our sense of identity as the premise, the *sine qua non*, of all social interaction, and its loss is pathological. Why should not the same be true for groups of individuals also, especially since their individual constituents so obviously relate their own sense of their selves in some way to the collective sense? (Cohen 1987: 17)

The wording on the final sentence of this extract is a bit confusing, but I think Cohen is trying to suggest that as the individual sense of self is so intimately tied to the sense of collective association that by preserving a sense of collective distinctiveness one is able to preserve one’s own sense of self. As Cohen describes, it is this compulsion of identity – the need to maintain a sense of self – that motivates the presentation of a cohesive self in front-stage interactions, whether that be at the individual or collective level.

The compulsion for identity and preservation of distinctiveness that Cohen discusses is also helpful in understanding the majority of front-stage interactions I encountered. In Orkney I found the preservation of collective distinctiveness motivated both those who were in support and those who were against the generation and development of renewable energy. “It [marine renewables industry] has put local jobs and ways of life in jeopardy”, expressed one Orcadian woman who worked for the fishing industry. “It [the acceptance of newness that renewables represents] is in our history,” the Orcadian councillor in charge of development told me. Even those who were not Orcadian, but who presented a pristine image of the way they saw the situation, phrased their view-points in terms of ‘preservation’. “It’s an industrialization of the landscape”, the English woman who had been living in Orkney for thirty years told me; her use of ‘industrialization’ was in contrast to the
natural beauty Orkney possessed, which this industrialization was threatening.\footnote{61} All of this ‘front-stage data’ was motivated in one way or the other by the logic of preservation, even if, as in the case of those supporting renewable energy, the preservation was one of continual change and adaptability.

**Is the Data Inclusive?**

There are a number of ways this question could be approached. To start with, this data is inclusive in that it is representative of the entirety of my fieldnotes. Chapters 4 through 7 accurately represent my fascination with a particular way of seeing Orkney that many individuals who were involved with the generation and development of renewable energy expressed. The last of these chapters, Chapter 7, ‘We, Us, Our’, draws primarily on conversations with the same set of individuals to further investigate the logic of inclusion presented in this way of seeing, this myth of cohesion. For this chapter I also began to draw on conversations and other forms of speech I was privy to in non-renewable energy related situations to understand how the ‘we’ of the renewable energy industry fits within the ‘we’ of the Orcadian people. Chapter 8, ‘Alternative Perspectives’ opens up to alternative views held by other residents of Orkney, ones I both sought out and came to see naturally as I made a life for myself in Orkney. The layout of this thesis can be seen as the outcome of the way my fieldwork and my relationship with my data and material evolved over time, first confronted with and intrigued by the myth of cohesion and then increasingly aware of the other perspectives that existed.

The question of whether my data is inclusive of the entire Orkney population is much more complicated. In the introduction I made the point that this thesis is based on my experiences within my fieldsite, one that consisted of the particular encounters I had and places I moved within. This fieldsite is not all of Orkney. As such, the data I have presented in this thesis should not be taken as an inclusive representation of Orkney. My initial intention to work with people within the renewables industry influenced the heavy emphasis on this group of people in this thesis. While I was in Orkney I was told that approximately three hundred people were directly employed by marine renewable energy; this number does not include the individuals,\footnote{61 It is important to note issues of visual impact and the landscape were not confined to incomers, but transcended the incomer/local dynamic and everything in between. In fact, many of the issues transcended this dynamic, the logic behind which I discuss in Chapter 7: We, Us, Our.}
communities and companies who own or otherwise benefit from the approximately four hundred turbines installed across the archipelago. However, the total population of Orkney exceeds 20,000, and I did not speak to or meet a great majority of these individuals. Even as I progressed through my fieldwork and I began to engage with individuals not directly involved with the generation or development of renewable energy, I still only interacted with a fraction of this population.

The types of people I engaged with can also be considered in terms of demographic categories, such as age, gender, class, race, religion, locality, and occupation. The ages of the people I spoke to in Orkney for this research ranged between late twenties and early seventies, with an estimated average of around fifty-five. This average was also the majority for Chapters 4 and 5. In the beginning of my fieldwork I was primarily speaking to men. Men were in the top positions at most of the renewable energy companies when I arrived in Orkney. As these individuals were the most visible, they were also the ones I approached first. When I consider all aspects of renewable energy and development in Orkney, it is fair to say this sector is male dominated, but possibly less than other technical fields. The gender balance was more equal in consultancy agencies and the non-research-and-development side, including the ‘promotional trio,’ OREF, OIC, and community energy. There was one transgendered woman employed in renewables. The wind energy side of the renewable energy industry in Orkney was also heavily male dominated; all of the wind turbine contractors were male. The gender balance was far more equal in the community development trusts that managed and owned the various community turbines positioned throughout the northern isles. Outside of those involved in the generation and development of renewable energy I spoke with both men and women. My data is reflective of these gender dynamics.

During my time in Orkney it was not always easy to recognise class distinctions, so determining how inclusive the data is of all classes is difficult, a point I will return to later. Orkney is predominately White (Scottish/English), although race, like class, did not seem to be a major discerning factor\(^{62}\) in my encounters. Individuals from other racial and ethnic boundaries were not often British, but had come to Orkney from their home countries for employment purposes. Religion was also not a major discerning factor, at least not in the conversations I was having.

\(^{62}\) I.e., made a point of or made overtly present in social interactions and conversations.
Orkney is historically Christian and this religious affiliation is prominent for a number of the residents, but it did not come up in the conversations I was having about both renewable energy and Orcadian identity as it related to understandings and perceptions of renewable energy.

Locality and belonging was, on the other hand, a discerning factor, but it was not a major discerning factor. By this I mean that locality was not a point of contention while I was in Orkney—as I have found it often is when represented in anthropological texts—, rather it was merely present. I spoke with people with all kinds of relationships to Orkney: those whose Orkney heritage can be documented over hundreds of years; those who know from a recent genetics test carried out in the area that their ancestry is Viking; those who grew up elsewhere, but to Orkney parents or grandparents, and have moved back; those who have parents who grew up elsewhere, but who themselves have grown up in Orkney and feel a very deep connection to the place and people or consider themselves Orcadian; those who have no early childhood or prior connection with Orkney, but have lived in the area for decades; those new to Orkney; those who were just visiting; and Orcadians who moved away from home after school and now live elsewhere. Finally, I spoke with individuals from a range of occupational backgrounds, but as there are many in Orkney I cannot say the data here represents all of these backgrounds. I can say I spoke with individuals who work in all the major industries in Orkney: the council, farmers, people involved with renewable energy, and lastly fishermen, to whom I spoke the least.

Another way my data may not be inclusive is that to a large extent it is based on initial encounters, as well as front-stage interaction. In many of the interviews I was meeting the person for the first time. Even if I did get to know some of the individuals better, much of this interaction was in one particular scenario – work, knitting circles, etc. There were exceptions: such as William, or the time that man from rock climbing saw the piece about my research in The Orcadian and invited me to his house for dinner with his family and to speak about renewables. At his home personal opinions were revealed that would almost never come into conversation in

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63 By this I mean that religion structures their lives and informs their perspectives.
64 This is not to say belonging was not a point of contention in the past. Unlike the narrative of ‘openness’ discussed in Chapter 3, I heard a number of stories where individuals were harassed or bullied, usually as children at school, for having an English accent. This period of time followed that in which the Orkney accent was actively suppressed in school education.
our original place of interaction, the climbing gym. The initial encounters and front-stage interactions allow for a different level of communication and for different kinds of conversations, as discussed above. Such intricacies of fieldwork relationships beg the question: how inclusive can any ethnographic study be? We as ethnographers enter into our fieldsites through relationships with individuals, our gatekeepers and informants. These relationships direct our attention in particular ways. So while my data may not be entirely inclusive, it is specific, it hones in on a particular way of seeing and then seeks to contextualise this way of seeing within the larger field of relations and array of perspectives present. As such it is also authentically specific to my personal experience of Orkney.

**Is the Data Inflected by Demographic Categories?**

I have already considered how a range of demographic categories informed the inclusivity of my data. Here I am more concerned with how the data is inflected by these categories, how variations in the categories may reflect the insularity or crosscutting nature of the ideas expressed. As my data is on the way people speak about and express their perceptions of renewable energy in Orkney, this question can be read as how perceptions of renewable energy are inflected by demographic categories.

Among the general population I experienced a slight age bias when it came to perceptions of renewable energy. In the middle age and older generation, aged forty and up, a wide range of opinions existed. If I were to generalise these in terms of positive and negative perceptions I would say these two perceptions were equally present. As for the younger generation of adults, age twenty to forty, renewable energy was more positively perceived on the whole. Again, these observations rely on the make-up of my fieldsite and may not be subject to the standards of statistical research, but they do suggest a generational bias. However, when I consider the age of people who contributed to the data included in the core three chapters – which discussed and analysed the ethos of inclusion in the renewable energy sector – I found the older generation was far more likely to provide and promote the particular ethos discussed there. The younger generation of individuals involved in renewable energy from all backgrounds were far more practical, entering into global environmental discourse and referencing the socio-economic impact.
It has long been observed that differences in age often reflect differences in perception and opinion, as well as experience and world-view. In anthropological texts such differences often manifest themselves in tensions between ‘traditions’ and ‘modernity’ or ‘change’. A generational analysis could help make sense of why the generation and development of renewable energy in Orkney has, in my experience, been more widely accepted by the younger generation, who generally use a different discourse to support their perspectives and opinions. In fact, it is this discourse – the verbal reasoning and language used – that shows the generational distinction in Orkney more than the difference in perspective or opinion. They myth these individuals invoke relies far more on anthropogenic climate change than the openness of the Orkney people now and throughout time. While the younger generation explores ideas of what it is to be Orcadian or express the importance of place and collective association, they don’t express the same logic of preservation discussed above. A generational analysis would say that such differences could be made sense of by looking at the particularity of each person’s life and the progression of time (Mannheim 1952, Edmunds and Turner 2002).

Life is a complex network of experience and perception, each folding into and influencing the other (Ingold 1993). Some experiences are very individual, others affect different levels of collectivities: families, towns, cities, countries, or anyone alive to experience the particularities of a spatio temporal unit.⁶⁵ Therefore, a differentiation of experience exists between members of different spatio-temporal units, i.e. generations. As perception and experience are intimately tied, we can take the analysis a step further and say that this difference in spatio-temporal experience makes sense of the difference in perceptions, a concept I find synonymous with ‘world-views’, between generations.

In Orkney this difference expressed itself in the presence and absence of a discourse of preservation. The discourse was not about the preservation of one tradition, as is often the case in generational divides, but about preservation itself. Even when the discourse of preservation is about the continuity of change and interaction, its presence still marks a difference with the younger generation who phrased their perceptions of renewable energy in terms of socio-economic and global

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⁶⁵ This list could be expanded to include non-geographical entities such as sexual orientations, races, genders, but the point is more about the spatio-temporal units of experience, i.e. a unit of time and space.
environmental benefits. I should also say the pervading discourse of one generation was not completely absent in that of the other, it was just not the pervading discourse. The differences in the pervading discourses reflect an anthropological trope of generational differences, in which the older generation is more concerned with preserving traditions and customs of the social group, while the younger generation does not express the same concern (Turner 2009). Such a widespread commonness in generational concern and perception suggests a correlation between age and a heightened awareness or concern for continuity and maintaining links with the past. The older generation, regardless of opinion, more often than not oriented their perspective in terms of local preservation, while the younger generation tended to focus more on environmental conservation, although the desire to preserve can be located in other forms of interaction, as discussed in Chapter 7, ‘We, Us, Our’.

In general gender did not factor into diverse perceptions of renewable energy. Neither did race or religion. Class, however, factored increasingly. Orkney, like Whalsay and the wider region of Shetland, has been labelled as an egalitarian society (Cohen 1987, Lange 2007). In both there has been research that suggests checks and balances exist that level the social playing field, preventing class distinctions from forming, or at least forming in a visible manner. In the context of Orkney, economic background may be a better term than class. Orkney does not appear to have major class distinctions, an observation supported by many of the residents I spoke to. Economic background was and is not necessarily relevant to social status. Indeed, both Cohen and Lange used the term egalitarian to describe the lack of a social hierarchy in both Whalsay and Orkney. However, during my time in Orkney the relationship between economic background and renewable energy was increasingly present. One man with a turbine on his land described how his neighbour’s objections to his wind turbine came down to jealousy. He could afford the turbine and, therefore, reap the financial rewards it provided through the feed-in-tariffs, he was less likely to be annoyed by its presence. For him the swish of the turbines blades and the flicker of light it sometimes let off represented the influx of capital, while for his neighbour these same occurrences signalled economic inequality.

Two unrelated individuals who lived in the towns of Kirkwall and Stromness expressed the other side of the above assumption regarding jealousy. This man and
woman both thought it was unfair that only individuals with land and money could reap the rewards of installing wind turbines. A local friend, Becky Ford, who was waiting to start her anthropology Ph.D. on dialectical relationships in the marine renewable energy industry in Orkney, told me she saw these observations as the breaking down of egalitarianism, described by Lange (2007). Taking into consideration these comments it could be said that the renewable energy devices were providing visible demonstrations of wealth and the social and economic opportunities afforded to those with a particular level of wealth and property. The intricacies of this observation would be an interesting to research more thoroughly.

The issue of whether locality inflects the data supporting this thesis is complex. In Chapter 8 I discussed the comments of an Orkney dwelling English woman who considered that the generation and development of renewable energy in Orkney was industrialization, a concept she framed as a negative impact on the landscape and something she moved to Orkney to get away from. This woman’s understanding of Orkney was framed in opposition to her experience doon south, which had led to an idealization of this northern archipelago. The Orcadian woman who told me the story about the elder woman’s mind changing, also in Chapter 8, mentioned that it was mainly the English incomers who objected to the proposal for a community turbine, mainly for reasons similar to those the English woman above had given me. The Orcadian woman was not critical, angry, or judgemental, she held a jovial disposition throughout the interview, so I do not believe the comment reflected a point of contention, but it was another point to back up my observation about the English woman; that is, that the idealisation leads to the wish to preserve the ideal and therefore more negative views on turbines.

Islands and island life are often romanticised and idealized, as I found in my undergraduate fieldwork in the San Juan archipelago of Washington State, USA. However, it was not only incomers who wished to preserve the visible landscape. Orkney is a highly imagined place, for those who were born and grew up there, as well as for those who visit or move there later in their lives (Lange 2007; Ford 2013). On the other hand, a number of Orcadians claimed renewables ‘fit’ within their history and culture, pointing to less romanticised aspects of life such as hard work, interaction, and change to explain their point. Such claims were also backed up by incomers. It would be wrong, therefore, to represent the division of opinion on renewable energy in Orkney as one dependent upon locality. In my experience there
were as many locals as incomers, and all those in between, who expressed across the spectrum of perspectives and opinions. So while locality may have inflected my data about the perception of renewables in Orkney, it did not determine it.

I found occupation a far greater inflector of my data, to the point where I argue that occupation was the greatest determinant of one’s perception of renewable energy. The reasons that individuals in Orkney became involved with renewable energy range almost as widely as the opinions on renewable energy in Orkney. There are those whose energy consciousness and concern for energy production, a viable human and environmental future is the primary motivator; this distinction crosses the demographics of age, gender, race and locality. There are those who saw the business and or educational opportunity. There are those who saw renewable as a benefit to Orkney. There were even those who agreed that the turbines interrupted the landscape and were not visibly pleasing, but felt there were no attractive options left and this was the best option for the continued production of energy and the continuation of life on the planet. Often individuals discussed a combination of all three, with the last opinion only expressed by one or two individuals. The main motivating factor is hard to discern, but all those involved in the development of renewable energy in Orkney saw it as a positive endeavour, both locally and globally. Whatever their motivating factor, all had a predisposition for seeing the development and generation of renewable energy as generally beneficial and a worthy cause.

Farmers also generally accepted and supported the production and generation of renewable energy in Orkney. The potential for their support can be looked at in terms of predisposition, or compatible mental framework or world-view, one that fits in with the logic of the phenomenology of the landscape (Bender 1993, 2003; Tilley 1994, 2006; Ingold 1993, 2011). Ninety per cent of the land in Orkney is farmland (OIC 2014). While the feeling of ‘nature’ is palpable, it is a working landscape, possibly even an industrialised landscape already – a point that contrasts the English woman’s comments above. While not a farmer, the comments made by Roger, the construction company manager, in Chapter 6 can also be termed as predisposition, one that factored in his locality. Roger told me he thought renewable energy, particularly the large devices, ‘fit’ within the Orcadian culture because they were

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66 I do not have enough data to justify including class or religion.
durable, like other products of Orcadian work (i.e. the 5000 year old Skara Brea and, presumably his own profession). Although his comments highlight his Orcadian identity, they seem primarily motivated by a predisposition towards quality of work.

The majority of artists I spoke to, on the other hand, were against the development of renewable energy in Orkney. Many told me the devices were ‘a blight’ on the land- and seascape. “When I paint now, I just miss them out”, one woman explained. This opposition could be analysed in terms of the dichotomy between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, in which ‘human’ or ‘culture’ is seen in opposition to ‘nature’, although I do not think the situation is as straightforward as that. While many artists in Orkney focus on the flora and fauna, the ‘nature’ and the wildlife, many also focus on old dwellings, Neolithic architecture and symbolism, and the stone alleyways and open harbours of Stromness and Kirkwall, among other more human-centric focuses. Again the idyll comes to attention, a fixation that does not seem to have any room for these new turbines. Once again the idealization is of a particular image of Orkney, pre-renewable energy, but not pre-human. Instead it is the obvious and sudden nature of the turbines that is shocking and displeasing, that resists a preservation of what ‘was’, as explored above in relation to age. By exploring these artists’ perspectives, however, I wonder if the compulsion for preservation is not a desire for Orkney to remain the same or to stand still, but for life in Orkney to move at a slower pace, an observation that needs more analytical work. Finally it should be noted that the artists I spoke to were primarily painters and of the older generation. There are a number of young artists from Orkney who I knew, mainly through friendships made towards the end of my fieldwork, but with whom I did not speak about renewable energy.

I cannot make any definitive statements about the attitudes of fishermen and those involved in the fishing industry. I only spoke to two people in this occupation, but I can speak to these people’s views, one of which was represented in the previous chapter. A man, the other person, I spoke with explained that renewable energy was a threat to indigenous Orcadian life and livelihoods, referencing the restrictions placed on fishing zones and threat this had to the fishing industry. He also spoke about how the production and generation of renewable energy in Orkney was putting local
welders out of business. Of course, many individuals I spoke to from other occupations, especially those within the renewables industry, saw the industry as part of an ‘indigenous’ way of being, although this term was never used. For the man involved in the fishing industry above, renewables was threatening his Orkney, a point that could be said about the artists and the English woman. The reverse, that renewable energy was supporting personal visions of Orkney, could also be said about those in favour of its production and generation. By this I mean that for each of these individuals it is not just that one’s personal history affects how he or she will perceive renewable energy, but how he or she perceives Orkney itself.

There are many other occupations to consider, however for most I do not have the data to do so. I can speak about council workers and councillors, however, I found their opinions to ranged widely and I did not speak to enough to determine a majority. Follow-up research could look into this final point, as well as the statistical data on other demographical categories. The pairing of the statistical data with the ethnographic research could either solidify or turn over theories I have presented above.

Perception of renewable energy can be analysed in terms of demographic categories. While gender did not seem to play into people’s perceptions of renewable energy, age did. However, while age did to some extent inflect upon the positivity or negativity of perceptions, age played a far bigger role in the way individuals from different generations phrased these perceptions. Class is revealed as an increasingly important factor in both the perception of the renewable energy devices, as well as one with increasing presence in the everyday lives of the Orcadian people. Occupation, which may not play a large role in social interactions outside of work, does inflect individual attitudes, an occurrence that could be related to the ways in which occupations mediate people’s interactions with Orkney. This final point may have more, however, to do with how particular life histories either set individuals up for particular professions, or how one’s profession builds into one’s life history and provides a base for future interpretation.

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67 A number of individuals involved in renewable energy also told me that when the renewables industry was beginning – in the early years of EMEC and technology development – the fishermen were not consulted properly. Many worried that this initial disruption in the relationship between the two has and will continue to have lasting impacts, even if proper consultation is conducted in the future.
Is the Data Situational?

Is this data situational? By this I mean to ask if my data is affected contextually by the particular relationships I had with individuals and the spaces in which the encounters with these individuals occurred. The two, relationship and space, are intertwined. Often it was the relationship that dictated the space of interaction. Interviews were held in more private settings, I often saw acquaintances in public spaces where we met for the purpose of shared activities, and the relationships I created with close friends afforded their own sense of private space even when in public. As such, space will primarily play a secondary role to relationship in this section.

Throughout my time in Orkney I experienced and was a part of a variety of relationships and encounters. The variety of these relationships and encounters can, in part, be put down to the role I was – and, of course, the other person or people were – occupying at any given time. As might be expected, I knew very few people when I first arrived in Orkney in October of 2013. Most fieldwork adventures start with a similar beginning. However, I felt particularly removed, having changed fieldsites a month before coming to Orkney. I knew my initial contact, Sigurd the wind turbine installer, but we had only spoken a few times and this relationship was still being built by the time I arrived. Other than Sigurd, I had not set myself up in any networks of interaction. I was very much an external, unknown entity to those whom I met. In those early days I walked around the largely empty town centres of Stromness and Kirkwall and felt completely removed from the paths of movement and activity everyone else seemed to be involved in. It seemed everyone else had jobs to fill their time during the day, obligations that put them into necessary interaction with others. Soon I began to briefly dip into these cycles during the evening: badminton on Thursday, on Monday a Book Club of newcomers who met through our various initial stays at the local Youth Hostel, other evenings of the week I would go to the gym, plug my headphones in, run on the treadmill or use the elliptical, navigate the other unknown bodies going about their routine and look out either on the novice swimmers below or into the pitch black darkness beyond the streetlights illuminating the car park of the Pickaquoy Leisure Centre. In these early months I was primarily concerned with finding a job that would put me in the circles
of conversation that would facilitate this research, making meetings with individuals from companies I knew were involved with renewable energy.

My eagerness to be a part of this new field of relations was matched by my eagerness to be privy to discussions about renewable energy in Orkney, one of my main research foci that I expressed openly. Therefore, in these initial encounters I was not entirely unknown; I was new, but was known by my research agenda; I was ‘Sara the anthropologist interested in renewable energy in Orkney’. Furthermore, the individuals I was meeting were primarily defined by the roles they occupied, ‘development manager of X company’, ‘technician at Y university’. If there was any point in my research when front-stage interactions were most present it was in these initial encounters, which did – albeit not in such concentration – extend throughout my entire fieldwork. I joined the first activity, badminton, with my fieldworker hat on as well. Sigurd was an active member and had invited me along, saying there were a number of people in the club who worked in renewable energy. While I entered into this particular space of relations with the intention of finding more people to talk with about renewable energy, my attempts to bring this topic into conversation always felt forced.

As I later found with the other activities I joined, renewable energy was just not a topic that naturally came into conversation. At badminton and rock climbing, which I joined in mid-February of 2014, the sport consumed most of the verbal interaction. It was only in the occasional car rides I shared with individuals to and from the venues of these activities that other topics, such as my or the other person’s reason for being in Orkney, came up. I also joined a number of fibre crafts groups – one spinning class and two knitting circles – and a running group. At the fibre craft groups the specific craft took up a large portion of the conversation, but also subjects such as personal health or family life often came up. The same subjects came up while running with the running club. For both, conversation concerning these topics was as much a part of the activity as the physical act we were meeting together to enjoy.

Unlike badminton, I had not joined rock climbing, the running group or any of the fibre crafts groups for research purposes and, after a few initial and awkward instances of trying to bring my research into discussion, I let my skill (or lack thereof) and interest in the activity define who I was in these situations, as others did. Likewise, the relationships and encounters at these activities were primarily defined
by the activities themselves. The above observations might suggest that in these settings people were, for the most part, internally defined and accepted. The relationships made in these settings were primarily based on shared interest in the activity. Therefore, the conversations were limited to the extent of this relationship. However, it might be helpful to return to the notions of egalitarianism discussed above. While all of these activities usually involved between five and twenty people, they occurred in what I would consider public spaces. Like renewable energy, politics rarely influenced verbal interaction. Only on one occasion did politics enter into conversations at any of the activities I attended: at a knitting circle two weeks before the Scottish Referendum one day there was an unusually low attendance. The topic was introduced with the caveat that it was not something usually talked about and less than five minutes later, after a few others had reticently and boldly chimed in their points, was ended with the same woman who introduced the topic saying she was happy that they discussed it and that was enough. The point I am trying to make is that in these public spaces of group activity, topics of potential conflict and difference were avoided, a point that relates back to the above discussion of front-stage and backstage interactions.

There were, however, other public spaces where personal opinion or potential areas of conflict could be and were often voiced. The first space that comes to mind is the anonymous ‘post-bag’ segments, published weekly in print in the local newspaper, *The Orcadian*, and read aloud weekly on BBC Radio Orkney. The ‘post-bag’ segments provided a space for people in Orkney to anonymously state their opinions on topics of their choice. As Radio Orkney puts it, “If you have an opinion or a comment, or if you just want to moan, pleep or gurn, then try the post-bag. Taken once a week it’s bound to make you feel better”. Although The Orcadian’s post-bag was not always anonymous, the option for anonymity in this arena allowed for fewer consequences when opinions were expressed. I never heard post-bag segments concerning renewable energy during the year I lived in Orkney, another indication that all had been said.  

While there was the potential for conflict surrounding renewable energy in Orkney, I never saw this conflict arise. Prior to my arrival there had been public debates concerning the planning permission for wind turbine placement, but by the time I arrived public discussion was over. People’s positions on the subject were known; to paraphrase the woman who refused to comment, all had been said. I cannot say whether or not the debates concerning the planning permission of wind turbine placement
Another public space where personal opinions were expressed was Facebook (Figure 12 and 13). Often Facebook posts by individuals in or about Orkney provoked a stream of comments, often voicing various sides of an argument concerning the issue: land use, tourism, politics, etc. Renewable energy was not exempt from this list, but it also did not feature any more than other topics. When renewable energy was the topic of discussion, the comments were usually about a particular photograph or article that had been posted. The tendency for individuals to express strong views in arguably the most public and quotable of places, but resist the same expression in face-to-face public interactions, creates an interesting conundrum. Such findings reveal direct online contact as a new dimension of interaction, one that despite its direct and identifiable confrontational potential does not seem fit into the rules of face-to-face communication. Perhaps the physical distance between interlocutors provides a sense of security? This question could take on its own thesis, and is one some anthropologists have already begun to explore (Dalsgaard 2008). The point I would like to make here is that, once again, renewable energy was no exception to the rule in this sphere of relations.

The final space I found perceptions and opinions concerning renewable energy were safely expressed was within well-established friendship groups and family units. This is not to say renewable energy was frequently discussed topic, even among friends and family units where one or more individuals was involved with the development and generation of renewable energy. However, it was in these relational networks that I experienced the most intricate intersubjective exchanges I spoke of above, discussions debating issues of Orcadianess, and how elements of renewable energy fit or did not fit into the physical and historical landscape. It is also important

entered into the public spheres of group activities or stayed within the more formal arenas of public expression, i.e. on Facebook posts or the Orcadian’s and BBC Radio Orkney’s ‘post-bag’ segments.
to note that my observation of and contributions to these exchanges did not occur until I was nearing the end of my fieldwork and had entered a close network of longtime friends and begun a romantic relationship with one of my closest friends in this group. These relationships were not situational – i.e., based on shared activity or workplace interaction – but intimate, based on a shared history of interactions throughout the formative years of one’s life. While friendship and family relations were quite different, it was the security of long-term connection and common ground that allowed for the openness of the discussions had.

Figure 13: Screenshot 2 & 3 from Facebook, post about wind turbines in Orkney
Taken 13 July 2014

As a stark contrast, it is probably unsurprising that my time spent working with the renewable energy sector was characterised by talk about renewable energy. For much of the time I was in an office set apart from the main complex of renewable energy hub, either working by myself or with one other person. However, even in my own tasks of creating an electric-bus funding scheme, then of fielding e-mails, and of creating a pop-up exhibition about the history and current state of renewable energy in Orkney, there was a common thread. This thread was a sense of working together with others towards a mutually envisioned future: the continuation of renewable
energy production and generation in Orkney and the reduction of harmful fossil fuel emissions on the global scale. The ‘working towards’ is key here, as there was a sense of urgency to continue, to keep going and progress into a better future that, at the very same moment, was being crafted.

The sense of ethically motivated progress added another dimension to the normal working relationship established by working together in pursuit of a common goal. Returning to Etienne Wenger (1998), Wenger argues it is through this process of working together that micro communities, ‘communities of practice’, form within our everyday lives. Similar to notions of intersubjectivity discussed above, Wenger notes that:

> Being alive as human beings means that we are constantly engaged in the pursuit of enterprises of all kinds, from ensuring our physical survival to seeking the most lofty pleasures. As we define these enterprises and engage in their pursuit together, we interact with each other and with the world and we tune our relations with each other and with the world accordingly.

(Wenger 1998: 45)

It is through our interactions with others and the world that we learn and develop our mental and tactile knowledge of the world. The location of the process may be individual, but it is through interaction with others and the world, through collectivities and groups, that this knowledge is constituted. While Wenger’s primary focus is on the communities of practice within the medical claims processing centre where he conducted his fieldwork, his findings reach to all units of social experience. As such, Wenger’s theory of communities of practice provides a useful bridge between the development of individual consciousness and collective consciousness.

All of the above relationships I have discussed should be seen as different relational networks. Each relational network existed for a purpose, one that defined the types of interaction and discussions had. The majority of my time was spent in initial encounters, then increasingly in activities and at the workplace. I also observed the more anonymous and public arenas of expression and have begun to experience the intimate long-term relationships established between individuals and families. In each of these networks of relationships different types of conversations could be expected, a point that indicates my data was most certainly inflected by relationships. While there were outlets for discussions about renewable energy in some of these networks, the probability for discussion in each network provides
insight into the movement of information concerning renewable energy in Orkney. Both public and private discussions concerning renewable energy were most common among those already working with or involved in its generation and/or development in Orkney. The topic of renewable energy followed a similar pattern to other topics of potential conflict or dispute – it was almost completely absent from public face-to-face encounters and was more likely, although often not present unless provoked, in isolated discussions, whether this isolation came from the limited number of people involved, the security of physical distance, or the safety of intimate relations.

**Conclusion**

The above discussion primarily serves to break down the type of data that supports and informs this thesis. This data is particular to my experience of Orkney. However, due to the varied nature of my experience, the above discussion reveals a range of information crucial to any social scientist intending to carry out research in this archipelago. It can take time—months even—to get beyond initial front-stage interactions. Some of the front-stage presentations seem to pervade the front and backstage dichotomy, as seen in the promotion of the renewables industry. While it is difficult for one's data to ever be fully inclusive, this is especially true for large populations, such as the residents of Orkney. Despite having a strong and unified public identity, there are infinite ways this cohesive whole can be broken down; a reality not unsurprising considering Cohen’s early work was rooted in this very point. In Orkney this reality manifested itself in the pull between specificity and generality; there was always another perspective to gather, another angle that might help me better perceive the whole, but at the same time complicate this whole. The variety of demographic categories is a way to go about pinning down this variety. This analysis revealed that some categories – such as occupation, to a certain extent locality and age, and increasingly class – made a differences in perception of renewable energy in Orkney and that others – such as gender and ethnicity – did not. In doing so this analysis also revealed what may be the most influential factors in each person’s perception: that is, personal connection to the landscape (via occupation or locality); understanding of the current global situation in relation to the importance of preserving local identity and livelihood; and finally, an increasing
sense of unfair advantage, or lack thereof. Some of these differences, such as age, did not always affect the negativity or positivity of the perception, but rather the way in which either perception was phrased. Finally, I asked, ‘Is this data situational?’ Finding ‘Yes, it is’, but only to the extent that relationship and context moderate how much information is revealed.
Conclusion to Part Three
Chapter 12

The first chapter in Part Three followed up on one particular avenue of inquiry from Part Two to this point left un-analysed, while also beginning the process of widening out as promised in the Introduction. That avenue of inquiry was ‘What is it to be Orcadian?’ Referenced both explicitly and implicitly throughout Part Two, here I explored what belonging and association to this socially, geographically and historically located group means. I also looked at what belonging and association to the renewable energy industry in Orkney means and how this ‘community within a community’ is intertwined with the larger population, local or otherwise. Through further exploration into how individuals describe the category of ‘Orcadian’, I also looked at how an opening for others does exists – not necessarily in the acceptance of newness as Alexander, Sigurd and others claim – but in the flexible nature of this category of identification. The ‘we’ itself is a flexible descriptive category, lending itself to both the ‘we’ of the Orcadian people and the ‘we’ of the renewable energy industry. The ambiguity allows non-Orcadians in the industry to speak of a ‘we’ without risking inappropriately including themselves as Orcadians, while still attributing elements of Orcadian identity to the industry. Through such attributions, and through the integration of local and incoming workers, the industry has established itself as an integral part of the present day story of Orkney and the myth of cohesion.

The second chapter in Part Three introduced various other perspectives on renewable energy in Orkney, encountered primarily through the clubs and groups I also joined, as well as the connections I made at these activities. It was important to include these perceptions as they represent the sheer variety in opinion that exists in Orkney, one I argued represents an equal variety in world-view, sense-making and life-history. This variety stands in contrast to the unified message of the present day story of Orkney and the myth of cohesion mentioned above. There exists a lack of communication between these worlds, these realities, which represent particular networks or nodes of interaction. I agree with others – drawing from Clifford Geertz (1973) Anthony Cohen (1985, 1987), Ulf Hannerz (1992), Tim Ingold (1993) here – that while individual experience forms the basis of all knowledge and interpretation,
it is through overlapping spheres of experience and inhabitation that the collective is built. The two constantly pull against each other, individual experience pulling in the direction of variety and collective experience in the direction of cohesion. Such conclusions help make sense of the contesting perceptions of renewable energy in Orkney, each one a result of the compulsion to make sense in their own right. However, at the time of my fieldwork in Orkney there existed a compelling force behind one particular iteration of collective experience. With the council, industry workers and individual investors promoting the industry through promoting myth of cohesion they – as discussed in Chapter 5, “It’s in Our History” – this particular present and future was enacted more that others.

The final chapter in Part Three interrogated the data that informs this thesis. It placed further attention on the various nodes of activity and experience, arguing that occupation was a determining factor in the individual perception of both the renewable energy devices and the industry and that age was a determining factor in how these perceptions were expressed. I discussed where conversations about renewable energy occurred, a discussion that provided insight into how the spheres of realities and nodes of interaction surrounding renewable energy have come to be. Renewable energy is not often discussed in face-to-face public settings, instead occurring most often among those who are involved in its development and generation, and sometimes in private settings with friends and family. Discussions about renewable energy also happen on social media sites such as Facebook, where individuals seem less restricted in voicing opinions. So while conflict-avoidance could be seen as a motivating factor limiting public discussion, renewable energy is not often discussed because it is just not relevant to the conversation, an indicator of its importance and lack of importance in various nodes of interaction.

The following conclusion will be devoted to re-interrogating my use of myth in the context of Malinowski and Lévi-Strauss’s theories of myth. I will also highlight some of the contradictions of both the myth of cohesion and the various forms of representation that support it. How might Kathleen Stewart’s understanding of the gaps that form in the representation of reality help? How are contradictions resolved? This line of questioning will open up for areas for future research and clarify what this thesis has to add to anthropological discussions on representation, the multiplicity of lived reality and the analytical category of myth.
Conclusion
My research broadly set out to investigate perceptions of renewable energy in the Orkney Islands. The data that resulted from this research maps out two major areas of inquiry. First was the narrowing in on a particular discourse within the renewable energy industry, that is, what I called the ‘myth of cohesion’. The second was the broader array of perceptions within which this first exists. As a whole, this thesis has explored how through collective affirmation individual experience and perception becomes understood as collectively true; how gaps in communication result in nodes of interaction in which spheres of reality are allowed the space to grow; how simplification of a complex whole is utilised in the communication of this reality; and, finally, how the presence of renewable energy in Orkney has provided a mobilising force, an impetus for discussions of self and other, of identity and belonging, of the importance of place, and of the relationship between the past, present and future. In short, this thesis on renewable energy has transformed from a thesis on perceptions of renewable energy into a thesis on the realities of an ‘Orkney way’. Here I say an ‘Orkney way’ rather than an ‘Orcadian way’ because the former speaks more to the variety of voices from Orkney included in this thesis. While a major force, not all the voices were Orcadian, but they were all Orkney.

This thesis also serves to further cement the study of energy as a crucial and important area of social research. Adding to the growing stock of literature already on the subject, this thesis explores the motivations compelling the support of local renewable technology development and energy generation in a peripheral archipelago in the United Kingdom, the promotion of this support as ubiquitous and the complexity of perception that lies beneath the surface. Here, support by key local members of the larger population of residents, including members of the local council, and a very vocal and public industry, have paved the way for internal success. Motivations for this support include the number of jobs renewable energy has provided for local and incoming residents, and how the boost in employment and global attention on the industry has ‘put Orkney back on the map’ and out of risk of regression. Simultaneously, the current presence of the development and generation
of renewable energy is incorporated into aspects of an ‘Orkney way of being’, the two feeding off and legitimising the other.

Myth as ‘speech as a message’ was a helpful tool for analysis here, especially in highlighting the particular reality being conveyed in cohesive representations of both renewable energy and this ‘Orkney way’. Indeed it was Barthes’s simple yet wide reaching description of myth that I first employed in my stages of writing. This notion of myth stands apart from discourse because the particular speech acts being discussed are not only commonly practiced and nestled in a specifically situated social environment, but they are meant to explain, to communicate a part of a particular world-view, and in this case a narrative. The elements of identity and qualities of the Orkney renewable energy industry – openness, working together and attitude – weave a story – the myth of cohesion – and, in doing, so represent and support a particular ways of seeing the world, a particular reality. ‘Narrative’ and ‘story’ here do not equate to myth, but are particular kinds of speech, connected events that often communicate a particular aim. Myths on the other hand may have narrative features to them, but stand out because of their importance in the creation and maintenance of a particular world-view or ethos emblematic of a particular culture or society. So far I have resisted analytically using the categories of ‘culture’ and ‘society,’ especially as culture came up so nicely as an ethnographic concept – not that the two cannot be one in the same. Ethnographically culture was presented to me as an uncomplicated unified thing, like history. However, I found there to be a multitude of world-views existing in that one Orcadian culture. Sure their difference may appear less vast if you widened your scope to look at different areas, cities, other parts of the world, but they were multiple. So while culture was employed ethnographically to call up a notion of a unified Orkney people with a unified past and current outlook, what we find is a society – a social unit, here geographically defined – with multiple world-views. This is not a novel concept for anthropology, but nevertheless important to highlight.

Uncomplicated presentations are sort of the hidden theme of this thesis. The first encounter is the uncomplicated presentation of Orcadian history as a pinpointed timeline of Orkney success stories. The next were Alexander and Sigurd’s conflicting comments about how the openness and attitude of the Orcadian people both developed over time and were always the same. To rationalise, what had always been the same was understood this pattern of development and change. Other
instances include the positioning of Orkney as simultaneously peripheral and central, the representation industry as an uncomplicated success, and the print media’s echoing of this uncomplicated success story. How are all these contradictions resolved? To begin I would argue these are presentations of a collective self that exist in the front stage, where complexities are rarely presented. I also want to draw the readers attention back to how presentations of self, and reality, are at the same time constitutions of self, and reality (Edwards 1998; Lewis 2002), as explored in Chapter 5, “‘It’s in Our History’”. These uncomplicated presentations help propel people and places forward; they are actions. This is not to say that dwelling in complexity cannot be an, or at least lead to, action as well. Rather, dwelling in complexity I would argue is dwelling in the present; it takes a harder look at the multiplicity of interests, slowing down drastic leaps forward in order to consider all sides. By pushing forward, uncomplicated presentations – like generalisations – risk leaving out other aspects of the reality in any one place in time, but are also often required in the face of regression. “If a culture is a living one… there is an inherent tension between conservatism and innovation – a tension that offers creativity and dynamism whilst maintaining a sense of cohesion” (Maddrell 2006: 133). Inhabited places, some more palpably so, are always caught between the past and the future, with the present acting as that fragile tipping point.

Some contradictions, like some acts of forgetting, are never resolved. Others – like with the stories of regression in Chapter 5, “‘It’s in Our History’” – one needs only ask a few more questions and the complexity emerges. Indeed part of how the existence of complex shifting realities is worked out is through forgetting the existence of complexity, forgetting the tensions and contradictions. This act of forgetting is not unlike the power of obliteration Lévi-Strauss ascribes to myths. The past is brought into the present too, but they are particular moments – one of the many ways time and history is obliterated. Indeed, not all can be remembered, nor can all be called to attention at one time; moments and time are often collapsed. This is how I understand the presence of gaps and contradictions; they are natural processes, albeit ones that can be used and abused for certain means and to fit certain

69 Here reality stands apart from reality or realities as reality is all the realities of any one group of people in place and time. The tension between one overarching truth and the multiplicity of many truths – or the tension between relativism and universalism – is present here, but not worked out. As the sphere of reality gets larger, the harder it is to work out, at least in the present. Looking back has its own problems too, as I have discussed in detail.
ends. Here we can recall the discussion in Chapter 6, ‘Working Together’ on the necessity of the myth, or the necessity of watering down reality in the representation of it. Kathleen Stewart makes similar claims about gaps and representation, but does not focus her discussion on ‘watering down’ (1996). Instead she argues that gaps in representation occur because mimesis is never complete or exact. Similarly contradictions in representation occur because there is never one simple reality to represent. Likewise, history is forgotten and time is collapsed because the process of sense making calls for clarity and not complexity; so does moving forward. Again, Lévi-Strauss comes to mind as he discussed the obliteration of history as an equilibrilising force.

As I have already likened the myth of cohesion and the representation of reality to both Malinowski’s and Lévi-Strauss’s theories of myth, let me now turn to a deeper analysis of the similarities and differences. The myth of cohesion can be likened to Malinowski’s theory of myth as it can be seen as an important story, a story important to the particular reality being woven. There is no magic in the myth I encountered, but to limit Malinowski’s understanding of myth to this feature would be reductionist.\(^7\) If I ask the question, ‘what is myth to my interlocutors?’ besides the answer of an important story, the myth I encountered also colours and gives meaning to the landscape (Malinowski 2014 [1922]: 496). In a way it even acts upon a certain group of people, the uncomplicated presentation propels forward. For my interlocutors there did not, however, seem to be the same distinction between a current reality and a mythic reality, as the two flowed into each other through the experiences present and recently passed generations. On the other hand the myth of cohesion can be likened to Lévi-Strauss’s theory of myth because it obliterates time, however to say it obliterates history may be a bit too far. It calls upon an uncomplicated, unexamined history, with large gaps left out to make a particular point. Furthermore, while the myth of cohesion may not be as strongly structured as the stories Lévi-Strauss writes about, there is structure to the timeline of events. Similarly this structure reveals an equilibrating force, albeit one that recognises development as a constant. Finally, I myself have taken an active role in the knowledge constitution of this myth through this very thesis, as Lévi-Strauss would argue is true of ethnographic research.

\(^7\) Indeed, taking magic to be an elemental part of myth would make this comparison fall apart.
For Malinowski myth acts to reproduce a society and culture as it is. For Lévi-Strauss myth masks the changes in a society, appearing throughout time, fitting the shifting present into its underlying constant structure and message. Would it be so crazy to argue that both are true? The two anthropologists employ their theories of myth to constitute what have been seen as two wildly different approaches to the discipline; each sought to create their own new anthropology. Malinowski’s functionalism promoted relativism and anti-historicism at their extremes. Lévi-Strauss reintroduced history as a credible anthropological interest and sought to uncover commonalities in human sociality, the underlying structures of human thought. However, as Peter Gow argues against critiques of Lévi-Strauss, the search for the common underlying structures of human thought does not negate the possibility of the multiplicity of histories, to which I would add the multiplicity of realities (2001). Theories and approaches to anthropology that have followed have also draw attention to the symbolic nature of communication, the writing culture, the ontological turn, the intersubjective constitution of personhood, the phenomenological constitution of place and people. Indeed many are rooted in the same questions and influenced by the same philosophers of these early approaches. However my aim here is not to discuss the influence of these approaches, but rather to explore what my discussion of myth can add to those of Malinowski and Lévi-Strauss. What we find here, in these two theories of myths and in these two approaches to anthropology, is a tension fundamental to social life. This tension is between opposite forces that must reconcile themselves in the present through everyday interaction; these forces include the past and the present, the individual and the collective, the world and the subject and similarity and difference. These are the tensions that fuel social life throughout the world that become apparent in representation and communication, of which myth as the representation and communication of a particular world-view plays a crucial role.

Some of what I have found most interesting about reading Malinowski’s and Lévi-Strauss’s theories of myth has been how points made by each can be taken to support the discussion of myth in this thesis. I have already discussed this to some extent above. But how is this possible? Can you just pick and choose from theories aimed to promote vastly different approaches to the study of social life? I would argue yes, when those points speak to a broader reality. Malinowski’s argument that myths serve to act on society and culture is true not because they (always) serve to
reproduce bounded units of sociality, but because the act of telling a myth meant to reflect a particular reality and is also simultaneously an act of promoting that reality, unless, of course, intentionally told in a way that dispels that reality. Myths are important stories through this understanding of their utility. This utility can also collapse time, as seen in Sigurd’s and Alexander’s assertions that “it has always been the same”. This point of picking and choosing keys into one of my biggest gripes with Social Anthropology, that is, the need to revolutionise, to find a completely new approach that solves all the problems of any previous approach. Yes, examining the differences in approaches is crucial, but I think it is even more crucial to do so with the intention of understanding how these differences might coexist.

Before I wrap up this conclusion I would like to note the limits of comparing my research and analysis of myth to Levi-Strauss’s. Without historical data from archives, discussions with people of the older generation of Orkney about how Orkney has been talked about in the past, or a widespread survey of how people across the Highlands and Island region of Scotland talk about their geographically and historically distinct social groups, I am hesitant to make any strong claims about the similarities between Lévi-Strauss’s theory of myth and the myth of cohesion I found in Orkney. Therefore I am left with an incomplete theory of myth, one that can only be furthered through further research and writing.

If anything, this thesis is only a beginning. That is to say, this thesis opens up many opportunities for follow-up research. Some I have already highlighted, such as further research into performance study. Statistical, quantitative follow-up research into the demographic categories discussed in Chapter 11, ‘The Nature of the Data’ could add another dimension to my qualitative research. Other areas include the weather and the presence of collaboration, or lack thereof. First, the weather in Orkney has an overwhelming presence. The normative extremes of wind and rain make even the absence of such extremes palpable. (The extremes in seasonality adding another dimension to the weather.) It is the weather that fuels the renewable energy industry. In my fieldnotes most references to the weather were pragmatic: ‘Well of course the industry is being born here, this is where the energy is’. Maybe it was the sheer pragmatism that caused me not to explore this aspect of my research analytically. Seasonality and the weather remain areas for further exploration, possibly via the work of Tim Ingold. Such research could look at the ways in which the range of people I have already spoken to speak about these aspects of life,
including an emphasis on how people communicate perception and experience. Second, the focus on collaboration in Chapter 5, ‘Working Together’ currently leaves out a discussion of collaborative anthropology. As I did not intend to employ a collaborative methodology and often questioned the extent to which my research was really ‘collaborative’, I have not included a discussion of what Paul Sillitoe (2015) has called an ‘epochal’ shift in the discipline. A retrospective exploration of the unintended but necessary collaboration in my research of and work with the renewables industry would draw on and add to the current debates about collaboration in anthropology.

However, the most compelling areas seem to be those I have just finished discussing. These areas would include further ethnographic research that takes a deeper look into the documented and oral histories of those in Orkney as well as research that takes a wider geographical scope and further library research that takes a deeper look how other theories might match up. Also, how might the literature on phenomenology and the ontological turn, or on symbolic anthropology a la Cohen, further my theory of the need for retrospective comparison of anthropological approaches? Further research into Geertz’s description of the difference between ‘ethos’ and ‘world-view’ would also be beneficial in teasing out how myths represent and propel forward particular versions of reality. Finally, it would be worth conducting research in different areas across the world to further analyse how uncomplicated representations propel people and places forward, while dwelling in complexity promotes dwelling in the present. What does this tension mean for anthropology and other disciplines rooted in dwelling in and teasing out complexities?

To close I would like to quote Clifford Geertz. “Whitehead once offered to the natural sciences the maxim ‘Seek simplicity and distrust it’; to the social sciences he might well have offered ‘Seek complexity and order it’”. Geertz continues: “Having sought complexity and, on a scale grander than they ever imagined, found it, anthropologists became entangled in a torturous effort to order it. And the end is not yet in sight” (2000 [1973]: 34). In this thesis, I have opened up one such entanglement: an entanglement of history and identity, of resource, place, and interaction. For me, as for the amorphous anthropologists Geertz speaks of, the end is not yet in sight. However, as we attempt to untangle it, the world is constantly weaving itself in new threads. This does not make the job of the anthropologist a
futile one: the exact opposite. The end may never be in sight, but in the act of untangling, we may hope to not only document but also come to better know the sheer diversity and underlying similarities present.
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University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee

13 September 2016
Sara Friend
School of Philosophical, Anthropological and Film Studies

Dear Sara

Thank you for submitting your ethical application, which was considered at the Social Anthropology Ethics Committee meeting on 5 September 2016 when the following documents were reviewed:

1. Ethical Application Form

The Social Anthropology Ethics Committee has been delegated to act on behalf of the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC) and has granted this application ethical approval. The particulars relating to the approved project are as follows -

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<th>Approval Code:</th>
<th>SA9871</th>
<th>Approved on:</th>
<th>7/3/14</th>
<th>Approval Expiry:</th>
<th>7/3/17</th>
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<td><strong>Project Title:</strong></td>
<td>The Renewables Industry in the Orkney Islands</td>
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<td><strong>Researcher(s):</strong></td>
<td>Sara Friend</td>
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<td><strong>Supervisor(s):</strong></td>
<td>Dr Mark Harris and Professor Nigel Rapport</td>
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Approval is awarded for three years. Projects which have not commenced within two years of approval must be re-submitted for review by your School Ethics Committee. If you are unable to complete your research within the 3 three year approval period, you are required to write to your School Ethics Committee Convener to request a discretionary extension of no greater than 6 months or to re-apply if directed to do so, and you should inform your School Ethics Committee when your project reaches completion.

If you make any changes to the project outlined in your approved ethical application form, you should inform your supervisor and seek advice on the ethical implications of those changes from the School Ethics Convener who may advise you to complete and submit an ethical amendment form for review.

Any adverse incident which occurs during the course of conducting your research must be reported immediately to the School Ethics Committee who will advise you on the appropriate action to be taken.

Approval is given on the understanding that you conduct your research as outlined in your application and in compliance with UTREC Guidelines and Policies (http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/utrec/guidelinespolicies/). You are also advised to ensure that you procure and handle your research data within the provisions of the Data Provision Act 1998 and in accordance with any conditions of funding incumbent upon you.

Yours sincerely

Convener of the School Ethics Committee

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Social Anthropology Ethics Committee
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