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ARCTIC ECOLOGIES: THE POLITICS AND POETICS OF NORTHERN LITERARY ENVIRONMENTS

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by

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ABSTRACT

Allison K. Athens

"Arctic Ecologies: The Politics and Poetics of Northern Literary Environments"

This dissertation examines the lives of humans and animals in the North American Arctic and the types of narrative modes used to describe them. My project seeks to elucidate the poetics of place, or how language creates and shapes the specificity of social and ecological environments in the north. This poetics is not neutral, however, as language, chiefly the language of writing but also that of film, is political in its enactments of or prohibitions on ways of engaging with the world. Thus, my project begins with administrative discourses such as legal statutes that govern hunting, fishing and subsistence activities; congressional documents such as the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act; and state and federal mandates that create (and sometimes destroy) wilderness parks and recreation areas in Alaska. Furthermore, given that these governing directives often obscure the prolific contemporary written and visual art of Alaska's native peoples that represent a very different view of place, inhabitation, and northern identity, my project engages the concurrent critical and creative work of northern indigenous peoples. I divide my dissertation into four chapters, each featuring an iconic creature of the north: polar bear, seal, caribou, and salmon. I choose these animals for their prominence in stories about the environment, economy, and culture in the Arctic. They are also important for being at the center of disputes involving laws enacted either to protect them from

human exploitation or to aid in their harvesting for personal or profit-motivated use. Finally, I explore the stakes of undoing and redoing these contested spaces and discourses and ask how they might coexist, if one idiom (the language of linear economic development) were not to colonize another (the language of a multidimensional ecology). Reading an alternative epistemology through the lenses of ecocriticism, feminism, and postcolonial theory allows me to confront an archive that first figures, then legalizes, wilderness as empty, species as vanishing, and history as linear and progressive.

DEDICATION

To my grandmothers:

Jean Bayer Kauvar

March 6, 1918 — November 17, 2012

Mary McMahan Athens

November 14, 1920 — April 11, 2002

Precisely because one is not one's forebears, one experiences one's time as a gift, the proffering of one's own existence from out of the bodies and lives of the beings who preceded one. One in turn offers this gift to those who come after one.

–James Hatley (61).

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INTRODUCTION

> Lives are nourished by others, not only members of one's own group, but by others as well. All living things owe their lives not only to their forebears but also to all the other others that have nourished them again and again, that nourish each living creature during the duration of its life.
> –Deborah Bird Rose[1]

"Arctic Ecologies: The Politics and Poetics of Northern Literary Environments" is about the lives of humans and animals in the North American Arctic and the types of narrative modes used to describe them. My project seeks to elucidate the poetics of place, or how language creates and shapes the specificity of social and ecological environments in the north.[2] This poetics is not neutral, however, as language, chiefly the language of writing, but also that of film, is political in its enactments of or prohibitions on ways of engaging with the world. Thus, I begin with administrative discourses such as legal statutes that govern hunting, fishing and subsistence activities; congressional documents such as the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act; and state and federal mandates that create (and sometimes destroy) wilderness parks and recreation areas in Alaska. Given that these governmental directives manage the lives of people and animals in Alaska and northern Canada, I

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[1] "Multispecies" 130-131

[2] "North" can be a slippery term depending on perspective, situation, and location. In discussions of post-imperial power relations, the "global north" is the developed world with economic, political, and social power over the underdeveloped, but resource-rich, "global south." Although there is a relationship to hemispheric placement, a country in the northern hemisphere may actually be less developed than a country in the southern hemisphere, signaling that this is more of an ideological formation than a natural division. "North" is also a cardinal direction, yet the closer one travels to the magnetic north, the less one can rely on a compass as an accurate guide to location. My use of "north" critically engages both understandings of "north," although it must be noted that power relations in the North American Arctic reverse the hegemonic relations of the global north and south. Political, economic, and cultural power that determines and then manages lives and livelihoods in the north is centralized in southern cities; nonetheless the point of this dissertation is to destabilize entrenched modes for engaging the north in order to discover new guiding coordinates.

then ask what kinds of representations, social relations, and political histories inform the dominant discourses of management that these documents exemplify. As an example in a slightly different, but no less relevant context, scientific research has collected a wealth of data on the north, yet many of the findings rely on literary figures—such as metaphor and analogy—and gendered language to communicate what the gathered information means. I am interested in what other meanings besides demographics, distribution, or sex-selective habits these figures convey. Accordingly, I focus on how a given investigative or administrative domain organizes power relations through narrative devices and how literature (storytelling, fiction, and poetry), film, and photography also play a role in the institutionalization of some relationships and not others. I divide my dissertation into four chapters, each featuring an iconic creature of the north: polar bear, seal, caribou, and salmon. I choose these animals for their prominence in stories about the environment, economy, and culture in the Arctic. It is no less relevant that each of these species is also governed by often-contentious laws enacted either to protect them from human exploitation or aid in their harvesting for personal or profit-motivated use.

When I started my project in 2009 there was little critical work on the north from a humanities perspective. The three main pillars of humanist scholarship on the North American Arctic were (and remain) Lisa Bloom's *Gender on Ice* (1993), Sherrill Grace's *Canada and the Idea of North (*2001), and Susan Kollin's *Nature's State: Imagining Alaska as the Last Frontier* (2001). All three are motivated by the concerns of cultural studies as they interweave feminist critique, discursive analysis,

and postcolonial theory in their efforts to reframe how the north is understood and experienced as an idea and as a place. Another foundational text in northern studies, Francis Spufford's *I May Be Some Time: Ice and The English Imagination* (1999), tracks the north in British literature as an ambiguous, but potent, signifier that fluctuates with time period, global politics, and cultural norms.

Rounding out the archive when I first began research were a few critical studies: on Inuit literature (Robin McGrath's 1984 *Canadian Inuit Literature: The Development of a Tradition*), Knud Rasmussen and his legacy as a northern explorer-ethnographer (the 1988 special issue of *Etudes/Inuit/Studies* "The Work of Knud Rasmussen"), and the Arctic as a destination to visit and imagine by such cross-over socio-scientific-literary writers as Barry Lopez (*Arctic Dreams* [2001]) and Rudy Wiebe (*Playing Dead: A Contemplation Concerning the Arctic* [1989]). In Alaska, there was a brief increase in interest in modernized legends (Velma Wallis' *Two Old Women* [1994] and *Bird Girl and the Man Who Followed the Sun* [1996]; Loretta Outwater Cox's *The Winter Walk* [2004] and *The Storyteller's Club* [2005]). Except for this short surge the literary scene was limited to the ever popular memoir or meditation on nature, the classic examples and most popular being John Muir's *Travels in Alaska* (1915); Bob Marshall's *Arctic Village* (1933), Margaret Murie's *Two in the Far North* (1978), and Jon Krakaur's *Into the Wild* (1996). More contemporary works by Alaskan authors, including Seth Kantner's *Ordinary Wolves* (2005), Nancy Lord's *The Man Who Swam with Beavers* (2001), and Sherry

Simpson's *The Way Winter Comes* (1998), are avidly read within Alaska and are now finding audiences outside the state.

While northern communities have long been producing creative and intellectual work, as evidenced by the above texts, in the last five years there has been a veritable explosion of critical, creative, speculative, and transformative artistic work. These texts, films, and studies are being done in both northern and southern institutions in an effort to comprehend what exactly north means, and how and why it now needs to be understood for global politics, trade and economics, planetary health, environmental justice, and futures for people, other species, and endemic northern cultures. However controversial Sarah Palin was to the Alaskan and national political scene, her meteoric rise to national consciousness in 2008 has been a marker of a revitalized interest in the north and ideas on and from the north. Until the recent influx of reality television shows set in the north (*Ice Road Truckers*, *Alaska State Troopers*, *Deadliest Catch*, to name just a few), the long running comedic drama *Northern Exposure* (1990-1995) was the lone program depicting life in a small Alaskan town. The increased interest by northern and southern people about life in the north fuels the development of these popular dramas while at the same time opening up a space for more critical reflection by scholars of northern topics. Kollin continues to think about the tropes of masculinity and adventure in Alaska ("Survival, Alaska Style" [2007]). Grace keeps writing about the conflicted discourses of the north that figure it as barren yet full of untapped resources, empty of people yet the site of successful indigenous political organization, malevolent and hostile to life and

culture yet the home of thousands of people with a rich creative history ("From the 'Hand of Franklin' to *Frobisher*: Opera in the Canadian North" [2010]). While continuing to write about their own northern context, researchers in Norway have started reaching out to the English-speaking population of northern studies with a recent volume called, appropriately, *Arctic Discourses* (2010).[3]

Adriana Craciun's "The Frozen Ocean" in *PMLA* (2010) and Lowell Duckert's "Glacier" in *Postmedieval* (2013) are examples of recently published critical work from pre- and early modern scholars. Prominent historians such as Dipesh Chakrabarty are writing about the melting of polar ice caps caused by climate change, and the physical and intellectual implications this will bring to those living in the south ("The Climate of History: Four Theses" [2009]). Serious, fantastic, and sentimental novels and films located in northern regions are becoming widely popular in places that are quite geographically removed from the north (thrillers *The Terror*, a 2007 novel by Dan Simmons, and the 2012 film *The Grey* starring Liam Neeson; Dominique Fortier's 2008 French-Canadian historical novel *Du bon usage des étoiles*; Dana Stabenow's on-going Alaska crime fiction series; the successful 2003 Inuit language film by Zacharius Kunuk, *Atanarjuat, The Fast Runner*). Keavy Martin's work on Inuit literature (*Stories in a New Skin* [2012]) focuses on the literary

[3] In other academic fora, conferences on northern topics once rare now happen frequently: "Mapping Northern Places," a conference convened by the international research group, *Imaginaire du Nord*, held at the Université du Quebec à Montreal in 2012; "Environment, Culture and Place in a Rapidly Changing North," an Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment's Off-Year Regional Symposium held at the University of Alaska Southeast in 2012; "Alaska Native Studies in the 21st Century: Transforming the University" hosted by the University of Alaska Anchorage in 2013. Special topics seminars and panels are also included in established conferences such as ASLE and the MLA. Museums also engage the "new north" with contemporary art exhibits (The Anchorage Museum), Inuit Studies conferences (The Smithsonian), and interdisciplinary installations (The National Maritime Museum, London).

assumptions that previous scholars from the academy have taken to the Inuit archive. Re-inflecting this previous work with the modern political gains of the Inuit, she finds in northern indigenous communities a dynamic, lively, and irrepressible cultural vitality. She argues that modern Inuit literary texts have been largely illegible to scholars with turn-of-the-century assumptions about the north. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century relationships to the north, Martin argues, were formed when it was an almost inaccessible place where imagination and desire structured reflections more than sustained contact with another's worldview. Martin's archive draws from the ethnographic interest in the north from anthropologists and explorers such as Diamond Jenness, Knud Rasmussen, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and Therkel Mathiassen. Recent work by anthropologists and historians such as Ann Fienup-Riordan, Julie Cruikshank, James Clifford, Xavier Blaisel, Jarich Oosten, and Bernard Saladin d'Anglure continues to build upon these earlier ethnographers as it enriches and challenges the archive. Only recently have northern indigenous scholar-activist-artists started to "decolonize" the ethnographic record themselves, reclaiming, re-interpreting, and re-presenting their stories in writing, on screen, and on the stage (the films of Kunuk, the critical and poetic works of Rachel Qitsualik and Jeanette C. Armstrong, the respective theatrical works of Jack Dalton and Allison Warden are some examples).[4]

[4] Kunuk's films—including his award winning "Inuktitut trilogy"—can be found at his website devoted to promoting indigenous art and political causes (isumatv.com); Qitsualik is the author of several books, short stories, and poems as well as numerous articles addressing issues faced by contemporary Inuit; Armstrong is a poet and an activist from the Okanagan region of British Columbia; Jack Dalton is a performer, playwright, and educator from Anchorage and Bethel, Alaska;

When I began my project, the practice of environmental literary criticism, or ecocriticism, was still finding its academic credentials. According to Greg Garrard in his definitive introduction to the field, *Ecocriticism* (2006), until recently, ecocriticism was seen as a still somewhat apolitical meditation on how to take more seriously the environments that were often treated as background to plot, character, gender, or socio-political concerns in a given text (4). Ecocriticism then transitioned from an almost exclusive relationship with Romantic poetry and nature writing to a "broad range of cultural processes and products in which, and through which, the complex negotiations of nature and culture take place" (Ibid.). Much of the skepticism towards ecocriticism, Garrard explains throughout his study, came from scholars in fields from which ecocriticism built its critical practice: ecocriticism, these scholars argued, had pretensions to "science," but few ecocritics were trained in the ecological or biological sciences; it was perceived as perhaps too interested in the material, the so-called "real," and not interested enough in language, authors, or canons; it was often celebratory of an ahistorical nature, sometimes promoting an activism that failed to address real power dynamics in race, class, and gender. Taking these criticisms seriously, early proponents of an ecocritical methodology such as Garrard, Cheryl Glotfelty, and Joni Adamson have formed alliances across the literary spectrum with feminists, queer-theorists, postcolonialists, and indigenous literary and cultural theorists. Richard Kerridge explains ecocriticism's relevancy to various cultural domains in the British study, *Writing the Environment*: "The ecocritic

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Allison Warden is a performance artist and musician who incorporates new and alternative media to address questions of gender, identity, and land claims in Alaska and the circumpolar north.

wants to track environmental ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate which seems to be taking place, often part-concealed, in a great many cultural spaces" (5).

The Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE), boasting a membership of over 1300 individuals from 30 countries with satellite associations in Canada, India, Japan, Australia, Korea, Taiwan, and the UK, has become a critical force in the academic study of literature.[5] Concurrently with ASLE's rise to prominence in the literary study of environments emerged the project of the environmental humanities. The study of literature and the environment is just one aspect of environmental humanities, which invites conversations in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities around care for the world, developing "the insights of earlier critical movements, ecofeminists, social ecologists and environmental justice advocates seek[ing] a synthesis of environmental and social concerns" (Garrard 3). Projects in environmental humanities include care for diverse and unevenly enfranchised human groups, other species, and the ecosystems that should allow the survival of all plants, animals, and microbiotic others. As the editors of the open-access journal, *Environmental Humanities*, write:

> The emergence of the environmental humanities is part of a growing willingness to engage with the environment from within the humanities and social sciences. While historically both fields have focused on "the human" in a way that has often excluded or backgrounded the non-human world, since

[5] "About Us"

> the 1960s, interest in environmental issues has gradually gained pace within disciplines, giving us, for example, strong research agendas in environmental history, environmental philosophy, environmental anthropology and sociology, political ecology, posthuman geographies and ecocriticism (among others). Indeed, in many of these fields, what have traditionally been termed "environmental issues" have been shown to be inescapably entangled with human ways of being in the world, and broader questions of politics and social justice. (Rose et al. 1)

The environmental humanities project thus not only echoes Garrard's definition of ecocriticism ("the study of the relationship of the human and the non-human, throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term 'human' itself" [5]), but also expands the field of inquiry beyond the literary to rethink the knowledge projects that inform literary, cultural, *and* scientific productions.[6] Other than critical attention to "the human," what unites most of the projects in environmental humanities is a concern for "ecological crisis." The Anthropocene is one of the most prevalent theses put forth by those engaged in environmental science and humanistic work.[7] While maintaining some distance from an endorsement of an

[6] Not only are scholars being recognized for their interdisciplinary and collaborative work, but programs across the United States and in other countries have started offering degrees in "Environmental Humanities:" Stanford, UCLA, ASU, and Princeton are some of the big name universities, but are by no means the only institutions to offer a program meant to provide "a forum for an interdisciplinary approach to environmental issues" ("Environmental"). The Environmental Humanities Project at Stanford, for example, "foregrounds recent work of humanities scholars in disciplines such as cultural studies, history, literary studies, philosophy and anthropology that has engaged with environmental problems, and explores how this research contributes to current discussions about ecological crisis" (Ibid.).

[7] The Nobel winning chemist Paul J. Crutzen, and his collaborator marine science specialist Eugene F. Stoermer, proposed the term "Anthropocene" in 2000. In a short statement, they said,

epochal shift from the Holocene, Chakrabarty suggests that humanity has become a "geologic agent," which is to say, an agent that is the "main determinant of the environment of the planet" (209). The warmer Holocene allowed the extensive adoption of farming, gave rise to food surpluses, settled communities, and produced the political and social regimes of an "industrial-agricultural way of life" (Chakrabarty 218). Chakrabarty continues: "In other words, whatever our socioeconomic and technological choices, whatever the rights we wish to celebrate as our freedom, we cannot afford to destabilize conditions (such as the temperature zone in which the planet exists) that work like boundary parameters of human existence" (Ibid.). While the natural world has been an agent all along in human history, Chakrabarty and environmental humanists suggest the world has now been so irreversibly affected that soon not only will "nature" have been destroyed, but the human as well.

In a recent call for proposals for an edited book collection to be published by the University of Alaska press, Sarah Jaquette Ray and Kevin Meier write:

> Concerns often associated with the North—melting icebergs, oil development, and indigeneity, for example—are overwhelmingly approached from perspectives in the natural and social sciences, making questions about the truth of climate science, the validity of traditional ecological knowledge, or the cost-benefits of oil development projects dominate our thinking about the

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"Considering…[the] major and still growing impacts of human activities on earth and atmosphere, and at all, including global, scales, it seems to us more than appropriate to emphasize the central role of mankind in geology and ecology by proposing to use the term 'anthropocene' for the current geological epoch" (qtd in Chakrabarty 209, originally appearing in "The Anthropocene," IGBP [International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme] Newsletter 41 (2000): 17).

> region. This book seeks to add an environmental humanities perspective and thereby challenge prevailing assumptions about Northern concerns, and even what counts as "the North" to begin with.[8]

Critical Norths: Space, Nature, Theory (as the volume will be titled) encapsulates the direction I envisioned for my project when I first began to write. Ray and Maier perceive the north as "a dynamic, transnational, connected and contested space where natures, identities, histories, and politics constantly intersect" (Ibid.), and identify it as multiple in nature (the "norths" of the title). Furthermore, they crucially identify the promise of environmental humanities for critically engaging the myriad discourses that make the Arctic a vibrant and living—yet contested and failing—northern ecosystem. Instead of leaving the "north" to scientists, social theorists, politicians, and oil companies, environmental humanities offer a forum for bringing all these players—and those who have been disenfranchised in the process—to the conversation. The northern effects of the ecological crisis previously identified in environmental humanities' projects also motivate Ray and Meier. In the introduction to their project they write: "Melting glacial ice reminds us of the North's role in global climate change. Detritus from the 2010 Japanese tsunami reveals the ring-of-fire traffic of economies, risks, species, bodies, and waste. Environments and communities in the North disproportionately bear the costs of the planet's dependency on oil" (1). In the words of James Balog, a photographer of melting

[8] Personal communication (1).

glaciers, the north is the "canary in the coal mine" signifying the Earth's precarious health.

Environmental humanities, with its emphasis on the nonhuman world and the effects of a long-standing "human exceptionalism" linked to the current ecological crisis, has particular ties to animal studies, another growing critical field within the humanities connected to the life sciences. Animal studies grows out of scientific research that increasingly points to the incontrovertible fact that animals are complex biological, emotional, and social beings. Research with great apes, canines, parrots, and many other species continues to dismantle the myth of the exceptional human, the only species with "language" or "sign systems" or "history." Elephants have shown that they have historical memory and rituals surrounding birth and death; chimpanzees are known to use tools in the wild; parrots use human language to express interiority and affect; and dogs were not so accidental in their design to be domesticated (although, perhaps, Derrida's cat might refuse the question altogether).[9] Shifting the research paradigm away from the study of the difference between human and nonhuman animals, ethologists such as Marc Bekoff and philosophers such as Vincianne Despret ask: what capacities do animals possess in their own right, and how do humans and animals make subjects out of each other as research companions to ask more interesting questions that might lead to more remarkable results?

[9] For studies of elephant memory and the effects of trauma cf. Bradsahw et al. 2005; for studies on chimpanzees and tool use cf. Boesch 1990; for language and emotional work with African Grey Parrots, cf. Pepperberg 2009; for studies of domestication including canines cf. Ratliff 2011 and Phillips 2002; for discussions about the French philosopher Jacques Derrida and his thoughts on animals (particularly his relationship to his cat) cf. Derrida 2006.

Combining the work of these pioneering animal behaviorists and philosophers with the decolonizing motivation of postcolonial studies, Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, authors of the influential study *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*, remain attentive to the decolonization of nations, knowledges, human populations, and now the environment, including nonhuman species. Postcolonial ecocriticism, they argue, foregrounds issues of inhabitation that excludes and marginalizes all other claims to a place in settler-colonial writing. Entitlement in these texts is a powerful settler discourse upheld by legal mechanisms even as it is more than the product of an institution; it is also an expression of affective connection with its own local history. Huggan and Tiffin extend postcolonial critiques of entitlement (that only focus on human access to recognition and reparation in legal and governmental structures) to animals and the environment. Colonial and exceptional thinking are based on binaries, crucially the self/other dichotomy, but this human-centered hierarchy is inflected with other hierarchical oppositions: male/female, human/animal, citizen/foreigner, rational/irrational. The ways the left side of the term maintains its powerful position of authority differ, however. Laura Smyth Groening, in *Listening to Old Woman Speak*, points out that for Canada, the binary of settler/indigenous is hardly stable, with the value of each side of the term changing, alternately being praised or denigrated according to what the political structure needs. She writes: "By the time we reach contemporary writing, we find that the categories remain fixed but that they have been revalued: what we might call the colonized side of the dialectic is positioned as 'good' by the Euro-Canadian writer

who, 100 years earlier, would have identified with the side of the colonizer" (71). By foregrounding the self/other divide that lies behind the human/animal separation, postcolonial ecocritics have demonstrated the complex mechanisms of liberation and recapture that characterize literature's ability to imagine and enact the processes whereby some groups break through the binaries of colonial hegemony, but others, such as the animal other or the ecological system, do not.

What I find useful and enabling about situating my work in the rapidly multiplying crossroads of postcolonial ecocriticism, animal studies, comparative circumpolar analysis, and the environmental humanities is that these frameworks offer a certain capaciousness for incorporating traditional critical and legal thinking while also asking new questions. These new questions concern inhabitation (in a place undergoing rapid change), companionship with other-than-humans (who may or may not be domesticated), and the stratified and uneven access to what is termed "knowledge" (who has access to it and how it is used for some projects and not others). As Val Plumwood argues, in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993) and *Environmental Culture: the Ecological Crisis of Reason* (2002), none of these projects that critique binary structures—postcolonial theory, animal studies, or ecocriticism—are mutually exclusive of any other practice that recognizes imbalances of power. Connecting environmental studies to feminist critiques of power relations, Plumwood proposes a critical ecological feminism that can

> provide a basis for a connected and co-operative political practice for liberation movements. We need a common, integrated framework for the

> critique of both human domination and the domination of nature—integrating nature as a fourth category of analysis into the framework of an extended feminist theory which employs a race, class and gender analysis…[feminism is a] vital contribution to a more complete understanding of domination and colonisation. (*Feminism* 1-2)

The binary logics of postcolonial ecocritical theory (human/non-human, colonizer/colonized, male/female, natural/artificial) are useful to identify even as it is important to leave a "third space" open.[10] Grace argues that authors concerned with themes of embodiment and environmental connection—such as Margaret Atwood—use the "third way" to re-embed humans within the environment in a process that is dynamic and dialogic. The term "third way" re-imagines the space between dichotomies as a dynamic process rather than as a system of power (3).

Feminist theories and reading practices, especially those influenced by poststructuralist or anti-foundationalist thinking, necessarily interrupt dominant discourses and modes of perceiving and producing knowledge. In her study of Canada and the "idea of north," Grace writes about the intersection of language, male subject formation, and knowledge production in northern narratives:

> The discourse of this subtext [the "passionately articulated, real and imagined territory of the north"] is heavily masculinist, even today; it assumes an objectifiable feminine Other in the physical terrain that can be (indeed, must

[10] For further reading about deconstructing binary logics and political engagements enacted in the "space between" cf. Gayatri Spivak's *Death of a Discipline*; Joni Adamson's *American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice, and Ecocriticism*; Sherrill Grace's "Articulating the 'Space Between;'" and Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*.

> be) penetrated, revealed, put to use, tamed, and controlled. It also assumes and reiterates the male author's first-hand physical and intellectual *knowing*, experience, and expertise, a knowledge that circles back to confirm his masculinity. (*Canada* 48, emphasis in original)

The dominant discourses structuring engagements with the north seem to follow these masculinist modes of linear constructions and modes of knowledge production that construct women, animals, and the environment as marginal figures to be mapped and known, on the one hand, and as entities available for male penetration and control, on the other. Following Grace's reading, I "isolate for study those sites where the relations of power and knowledge work to construct identities over time and in a certain real and imagined space" that is the North American Arctic (27). Alongside projects of disruption are those of construction in the form of narrative's relationship, or mediation, between bodies and other material and semiotic world(s).

I situate iconic northern animals at the heart of my project, because the human/animal hierarchy and its relation to the environment is deeply ingrained in northern cultural practices, such that all other operating dichotomies (male/female or settler/native) are produced through and around this central one. Animals and the environment make the north legible and livable in ways that are important to understand and engage if one is to also think about the construction of masculinity and femininity in northern texts, the role of subsistence game hunting in indigenous cosmologies and political activism, and the production of some areas as pure wilderness and others as degraded. I could have chosen other species to tell these

same stories. The snowy owl and the lemming come to mind. In northern Canada the lemming is known to scare away much needed shore ice if he exits his burrow at the wrong time—an ecologically encoded narrative linking seasonal patterns of animal behavior and weather conditions. The hoary marmot population in North America is in rapid decline due to a lack of cold temperatures in the winter that are needed for critical hibernation periods. Assemblages of insects, birds, and tundra plants would also tell a relevant story. But in the end, I chose the northern icons of polar bears, seals, caribou, and salmon for their legibility; these creatures are familiar enough through popular culture, and yet they remain somewhat exotic and elusive through their distance from most of the world's population. In the following pages, I hope to bring new knowledge to the conversations already in process about the future of the north and the futures of the northern creatures, people, and desires that make up the liveliness of polar spaces. I also hope the destabilization of some discourses and the making of new ones can be productively taken into other spheres of living in the world.

Like Margaret Atwood in her poem, "The Animals Reject Their Names and Things Return to Their Origins," I start with bears in the first chapter, "'It Was the Bear Who Began It:' Ice and the Metaphorics of Climate Change." But what did the bear begin? For Atwood, the bear initiates a rebellion against human imposed categories through naming practices. My discussion follows a polar bear whose story of cross-country travel set the human world to thinking more complexly about adaptation, migration, boundaries, and the effects of an outside (in the form of

industrial pollution) coming so shockingly into a home long characterized as pristine and natural. I analyze representations of polar bears and sea ice in scientific literature and popular culture in order to examine how analytic studies of climate are affected by popular feelings about polar bears. The heart of the matter, however, is an incident that occurred in the spring of 2008 in the Athabascan community of Fort Yukon, in Interior Alaska. The community became the unexpected site for a heated public discussion among different indigenous populations, wildlife biologists, international organizations, environmental activists, and representatives from the petroleum industry when a young female polar bear wandered some 300 miles south from the Arctic Ocean. Shortly after her arrival, she was shot and killed by a Gwich'in hunter along a trapline near the community. This event is an ideal case study for analyzing how different fields translate a material event into narrative form. For example, a legal reading of the event focuses on the bear as a protected entity under the Marine Mammal Protection Act; an ethnographic study invokes the symbol of the fearsome "ice bear" in Gwich'in oral narrative; an environmental impact statement assesses the ice conditions that stimulated the bear to travel south; and a political history notes the uneven enfranchisement of Gwich'in in Alaskan legal codes compared to their coastal neighbors, the Inupiat.

In the world of the Gwich'in, the haunting presence of the polar bear reveals a general state of anxiety. A manifestation of the global changes that affect the region in the form of climate change, NGOs teaching "good farming practices," environmentalists studying the decline of salmon and caribou populations, and oil

companies pushing to drill in traditional hunting grounds, the polar bear cannot represent herself; rather, she becomes an allegory of the changing world. The narratives of climate change, of change in general, ask us to rethink our understanding of inhabitation and migration in a radical re-envisioning of the politics of knowledge production, seen here through the eyes of a polar bear. To fully comprehend the implications of the bear's arrival, her narrative "after-life" must be reinserted into a context that includes humans, nonhumans, ice, and ecosystems. Putting together the narratives that traffic around polar bears—including Coca-Cola's Arctic Home campaign and Disney's *Earth*—with the story of this particular bear functions to "vitalise traditional concepts of ethics, care and virtue" (in the words of the editors of *Environmental Humanities*). Taking seriously each story from domains usually separated by disciplinary boundaries—including, perhaps, the one the bear herself is unable to tell—offers possibilities to enact connected and supportive, rather than anxious and suspicious, positions in the world.

I follow the stories that trail after this bear as she opens new spaces for dialogue about what is appropriate for animals when they disturb carefully crafted biological descriptions. I then argue that crafting different narratives about the journey helps identify the anxieties of humans who have relied for so long on a certain relationship to the world and the present world's inability to conform to those relations. Taking seriously the different subject positions of those who care for the bear (wildlife biologists, indigenous hunters, environmental activists, politicians) and what her movement might mean, I argue that to think of the bear as merely an

endangered species or as a climate refugee is to disentangle her from her network of stories that are as productive for her meaning as her ecosystem. To understand the ecological figurations of a migrating bear, one also must think of the bear as a multiplicity—a being living numerous lives depending on the perspectives from which she is narrated. Furthermore, which stories are listened to and taken forward matter to the bear (or her afterlife), to humans and human communities, and to the environment.

My second chapter, titled "'Making the Way Clear:' Becoming Worldly with Seals," similarly discusses how an arctic creature comes to be represented in global environmental discourse. Rather than focus on an animal that has become an icon of a changing world, I move back in time to think about another species that captured global attention before climate change ruled arctic understanding. In this chapter, I track seals across Greenpeace manifestoes, Yupik and Inuit oral narratives ("The Boy who Went to Live with Seals" and "Arnaqtaaqtuq: The One who Gets a Mother"), contemporary films by Inuit activists (*Atanarjuat, the Fast Runner*, "Tungijuk: What We Eat"), and European Union Directives. My goal in this chapter is to re-think the figural dimensions of seals in Yupiit and Inuit storytelling practices alongside debates around over-harvesting, competing global interests, and animal rights. I suggest that focusing on practices of care rather than commodity circulation reframes the relationship of humans and seals beyond binary systems of interpretation that make humans subjects (with "culture") and seals objects (in "nature"). Articles on seal biology, Inuit stories, legal statutes, and environmental conservation rhetoric all

appear to be different, if not contradictory, types of narratives. Nevertheless, when read together, they reveal a shared ethics of care for the wellbeing of the seal. This care, I suggest, momentarily frees the seals from their entrapment in what I call an "economy of use."

The commercial hunting of harp seal pups galvanized animal rights in the 1970s, culminating in the banning of sealskin products in Europe and curtailment of trade in the United States. The plight of the seal pups captured a global following that was already primed from many other consciousness-raising events that reconnected people with the natural world. Protests against pesticides, nuclear waste, clear-cutting, and industrial pollution began movements for the rights of animals and the planet that started in participatory activism (chaining to trucks, covering seal bodies, marches and blockades) and has moved into the stage of knowledge formation in the academy. While these movements necessarily draw attention back to the earth as the material basis for all life, the seal is not so easily categorized in one body of knowledge or cultural system. The seal in animal rights discourse is one type of object that needs saving in the form of protective measures to keep her safe from the rapacious greed of capitalism. However, in indigenous discourse, the seal is another relative, a relation whose presence makes all certainties about hierarchy, use-value, moral exemption, and human exceptionalism impossible. The seal, these stories argue, makes us human, but what does it mean that we then eat her? The thorny abyss of killing and eating in animal studies and environmental humanities are questions at the heart of a practice of care that is always in the process of negotiation that may be calculated, but not in a

model of capitalist accumulation. Instead, the ambiguous nature of the seal models a way humans can take the risk to connect to others when the outcome for the self is uncertain.

My third chapter, "Reading for the Trace: Tracking Caribou Across Arctic Literary Landscapes," further develops human and animal relations in a contested, politicized environment. In the first chapter, I raise the question of how to figure the Subarctic in conversation with discourses of the Arctic. The Subarctic has long been climate change's (and arctic studies') lonely and neglected stepchild. While the "sub" in subarctic refers to a climatic zone between the arctic and temperate zones with some aspects of each (vast areas of trees, large mammals, cold temperatures), "sub" is not just a marker of climate, but also carries overtones of lesser, beneath, secondary, inferior. The Arctic profits from a long history of a western love affair with ice and the sublime rhetoric of explorers, poets, sailors, and armchair travelers, even if this framework proves problematic for a sustained political and ethical engagement with the more messy everyday work of living in and with the north. The Subarctic's rhetorical construction is muddy, vast, empty, and confusing to an eye trained to recognize certain stories that the landscape might tell. John Muir is particular adept at reading the placement of large trees, vast glaciers, and coy islands in his popular travelogue, *Travels in Alaska*. Likewise, Charles Wohlforth, in *The Whale and the Supercomputer*, is able to discern a narrative coherence to the subarctic landscape, but only once roads and pipelines bring a framing device to a landscape that otherwise cannot be narrated properly. The inability to write the Subarctic has a direct

correlation to the inability to figure caribou. Caribou have the added difficulty of being a collective—when speaking of caribou, one never talks about just one. Polar bears are often iconic in their solitariness, although recent work is being done to promote the image of the "family bear" (a female bear with cubs) instead of the powerful—even aggressively violent—lone male. And seals, while also congregating in nursery groups or small collectives, are also always written as singular in nature. The relationship between humans and seals is between a single human and a single seal with ties forged across generations through rituals of hunting, eating, and narrating. But caribou are migratory herd animals. They are prey and not predator. They are not individual in nature and, perhaps most importantly, they will not stay put! Athabascans are also tied to the subarctic landscape, a landscape that is crisscrossed with stories left around like caribou trails for those with an eye for reading and understanding them. As collectivities, caribou and Athabascans both face an inability to fully be a participant in political negotiations over the status of wilderness. This chapter works through the problems of representing caribou, problems that even more firmly tie the Athabascan people to this migratory collective.

The binary structure of gender is relatively latent in the first two chapters where I lay a foundation for a discussion of the human/animal opposition and how it is operative in northern conceptions of identity and relationships to place. In contrast, in the third chapter, the human/animal separation appears along gendered lines, with women writers and activists rallying behind caribou in a discursive pattern that is

markedly different from that of their male counterparts. At least part of the reason for this difference, I argue, has to do with the narrative structure that has typically governed northern writing, with its emphasis on the sublime, heroic, masculine, and adversarial. Teresa de Lauretis, in "Desire in Narrative," gives us some clues as to why caribou are illegible to a certain extent in northern literature. She writes:

> Opposite pairs such as inside/outside, the raw/the cooked, or life/death appear to be merely derivatives of the fundamental opposition between boundary and passage; and if passage may be in either direction, from inside to outside or vice versa, from life to death or vice versa, nonetheless all these terms are predicated on the single figure of the hero who crosses the boundary and penetrates the other space. In so doing the hero, the mythical subject, is constructed as human being and as male; he is the active principle of culture, the establisher of distinction, the creator of differences. Female is what is not susceptible to transformation, to life or death; she (it) is an element of plot-space, a topos, a resistance, matrix and matter. (119)

Women write a different north. Some, like Margaret Murie, focus on domesticating the wilderness in a move to bring more women into the conversation. Or others, such as Leanne Allison, highlight emotional attachment as a prerequisite for an ethical and political alliance with caribou. Velma Wallis writes a strong female character into her story of an inhabited wilderness that was full of connections—and histories—of people, place, and caribou, before the passing of the Wilderness Act of 1964 that claimed wilderness as a place empty of human inhabitants. The Wilderness Act and

the soon-after creation of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge had serious implications for Wallis' Gwich'in people, an Athabascan group whose opinions about and use of the landscape were illegible in the forums that preceded the making of the Refuge. In the popular press and imagination, the controversy about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in northern Alaska seems to hinge on a discourse of politics (domestic vs. foreign oil, state vs. federal land mandates, frontier vs. environmental wildernesses). I argue instead that geopolitical borders and politicized landscapes can only account for a small subset of relations in the Arctic. Taking up the Norwegian literary scholar Henning Howlid Wærp's interest in the transformation of geographic boundaries into literary ones, I analyze how geography is also mediated through gender and genre in stories revolving around caribou.

The last chapter, "Queer Fish: North Pacific Salmon and Gendered Desire," focuses on salmon ecologies and economies in Alaska and the Pacific region. It is my most southern chapter, and it reaches out most materially to transpacific and even global connections. Salmon, like caribou, are rarely singular in nature, and instead most forcefully mark their presence in astounding numbers. These numbers, however, are becoming fewer and fewer. Salmon in the North Pacific are a beloved creature—a companion species for First People, a food staple for many coastal populations, a rich textual figure of return and renewal, a worthy and intelligent opponent for sport-fishers, a highly profitable commodity. Salmon are so beloved we are killing them. Even more than polar bears, seals, and caribou, salmon are completely dependent on their environment. Because a liquid environment is so alien to human understanding,

salmon, by association, become a species that is completely other, and to make attachments and engage a practice of care, salmon first have to be brought into human symbolic systems. David James Duncan is perhaps the most famous novelist for his care of salmon. Also an advocate and activist against dams in the Columbian Watershed, Duncan has written profusely on what salmon mean for people who live in river systems. Using imagery and symbolic systems from Christianity, Duncan attempts to refigure salmon not as alien, other, or unknowable, but as a species that is the very essence of life. The creaturely connection of salmon, he argues, should mobilize a moral sentiment for their sacred place within a trinity of water, humans, and fish. Other male writers also invoke the sacredness of salmon while highlighting the admittedly awe-inspiring finality of the salmon procreative process—the spawn. For these writers, the spawning cycle is a "soupy mix of sex and death" that fires their imagination, and they write this end chapter of the salmon life-cycle as its most important.

Other authors offer an alternative epistemology for living with salmon. Eden Robinson does not mention a single salmon in her story "Queen of the North." The Queen of the North, however, is an open ocean troller that docks and departs at the beginning and end of the story; what happens in between is very much related to a displaced people lacking access to the salmon who once gave them an identity. Gender is again the screen for what makes these salmon relations visible—and legible—to a reading public with the capacity to rise to action for salmon. While some authors write their care for salmon in terms of a highly normative understanding

of gender and sex, other writers (and even biologists) focus on the fluidity of salmon sex. Salmon have two different types or morphs of male (hooknose and jack, both capable of reproduction) who enact different strategies in life, equally to the benefit of the species as a whole. It is reductive to only focus on one male form (the big purple "swain" of Duncan), as it reduces the possibilities for connection across a spectrum of engagements. By only focusing on the procreative potentialities of one sort of male and one sort of female, the ambiguity and openness of what a connected practice of living and engaging the world might look like is never fully realized. The salmon and her companions (bears, humans, trees, soils, ocean trash) are left swimming in their own lone circles without the connective tissue of an expansive practice of care.

In the following project, I hope I offer kinds of reflections and engagements that modulate the mode of crisis. Of course, the creatures I focus on are all iconic in the debates that arise from perceived crisis—climate change, northern identity politics, global economics—but the big stories of global consequence often overlook the small stories of local connection that these creatures also have to tell. Lopez has written that the Arctic is a "long, unbroken bow of time" at odds with the "holler of contemporary life, that constant disturbance" (172). Cultivating what Matei Candea calls "inter-patience"—an actively passive attunement to the desires of nonhuman others—offers another possibility of response to a shared responsibility for the world (249). The poetics of listening to an arctic creature is an exercise in unlearning, adaptation, and taking seriously some very weird modes of speaking. It is a thought

experiment, but like most imagined scenarios, there is always a grain of truth about the knowledges at stake in the outcome of how we participate, and who we invite along with us.

CHAPTER ONE

"IT WAS THE BEAR WHO BEGAN IT:" ICE AND THE METAPHORICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE[1]

It's my turn
With the spotlight burning a hole
But my bird-heart's turning cold
As the temperature rises all around
To the sound of a ticking bomb
And then it's not just showing off here
You know there's something going on here
–KT Tunstall[2]

In 30 years we have actually got to change our lifestyles. I don't know if human beings have the capability for the kind of change that is necessary. Yet, maybe there is a chance. It is down to the messenger, the narrative, the story, to make change possible.
–David Buckland[3]

The white polar bear swims powerfully through the clear water, dodging small fragile-looking ice floes and even, sometimes, swimming under them. Splashing is the only sound heard as the camera focuses in on his huge paws and head dipping into and back out of the water. After a few moments, the camera slowly zooms out, widening the field of vision until the sea becomes endless, threatening black water; there is no land in sight. From this vantage point, the lone polar bear, his white flanks heaving, is just another fragile speck of white, soon swallowed by the depth of the "great immensity" of the Arctic.[4] This is the "rare sight" of a swimming polar bear

[1] The first part of the title is taken from Atwood "The Animals."
[2] "Uummannaq Song"
[3] "Climate is Culture."
[4] The Civilians' theatrical production, "The Great Immensity," documents the struggle to understand climate change on a global scale from a local perspective.

caught on film by the BBC production team of the *Planet Earth* series.[5] David Attenborough, the narrator, remains carefully minimalist in his voice-over, telling the viewer that what she is witnessing is the spring break-up of the ice pack, when male polar bears swim out to sea in search of food, while female bears stay on land with their cubs. Although the connection to a warming world is not made in his speech, the implication is there: a feeling of loss permeates the cinematography. The encounter between film crew and bear, Attenborough and audience, is a meeting to say goodbye.[6]

The chapter begins with bears out of place and, potentially, out of time. The geographic aspect of the story follows a polar bear who has wandered away from her home in the northern arctic to the southern, or sub-, arctic community of Fort Yukon, Alaska where conventional and traditional wisdom about polar bears agrees she does not belong. The bear who wandered down from the north was a disturbing presence in the subarctic territory of the Gwich'in Athabascans, who are more used to grizzly bear encounters. Furthermore, her arrival had the unsettling effect of calling attention to the psychogeographic parameters of the Gwich'in homeland, affective borders that are constantly being negotiated in contemporary political and environmental administrative practices. For Attenborough, the Gwich'in, and many people who view the polar bears' struggle to adjust to a warming planet as indicative of human failure

[5] As explained in the Collector's Edition interview with the cameraman ("Great Male Polar Bear…Collector's")
[6] "Great Male Polar Bear"

to care for the world, bears out of place reveal the crisis at hand: human-induced climate change has just about made the planet unlivable.

Discussions and projects that address the psychic and material effects of climate change reveal a world that has turned upside-down and out of ecological balance (James Balog's film *Chasing Ice* is an example of this narrative in human-ice relations; *Growing Up Arctic*, a film aimed at a younger audience, writes this narrative through human-polar bear and walrus connections).[7] The only reason for a polar bear to migrate south, these narratives explain, is because the ice on which she depends is fast disappearing. Ice is part of the meaning of polar bear, it is what differentiates a polar bear from a grizzly bear.[8] Through the loss of ice, the geographic certainty of what "polar bear" means is being erased. The bear, in climate change stories narrated in the apocalyptic mode, becomes an allegory of impending catastrophe and loss.

Narrating in the mode of crisis is effective (as seen, for example in Al Gore's film concerning human induced climate change, *An Inconvenient Truth*); the threat of

[7] Several Disney and other film companies' productions and documentaries also depend on the trope of loss to tell the story of climate change. See *Growing Up Arctic*, *Arctic Tales*, and *Happy Feet* to name a few. Another production of some note aimed at sparking a world-wide discussion is Coca-Cola's "Arctic Home" campaign. "Arctic Home" focuses on drawing audiences into a multi-faceted engagement with the polar bear in her arctic "home" via the Internet. Coca-Cola has teamed up with the World Wildlife Fund to fundraise for the acquisition of a "last home" for the polar bear. According to the website of the initiative: Coca-Cola and the WWF are "working with Arctic residents and governments to develop a plan for the future of ice-dependent animals including the polar bear—a plan built around a natural 'safety net' of ice high in the Arctic archipelago of Canada and Greenland that will likely persist longer than anywhere else in the world. This Last Ice Area could cover about 500,000 square miles-an area twice the size of the state of Texas. WWF is working to better understand the area's dynamics, how animals and people currently use it and how it may be used in the future" ("Coca-Cola").

[8] The OED defines "polar bear" as "A large white bear of Arctic regions…which lives mainly on pack ice and is a powerful swimmer feeding chiefly on seals." The chief attributes of polar bears that differentiate them from other bears are their whiteness, swimming abilities, and icy homeland.

catastrophic apocalypse rendered in the stark binary terms of the jeremiad makes people pay attention, ask questions, debate, and seek ways to address the role of humans in shaping global ecological change. Narratives of crisis present the world in a binary fashion: either there is a crisis and through change, it can be averted, or there is no crisis and business can be carried on as usual. The world is divided into believers and nonbelievers, doers and not doers, those who care for the world and those who do not. While incredibly effective in the initial stages of mobilizing to confront social, political, or ecological problems (such as uneven political access, educational reform, harmful living conditions, and environmental degradation), the binary world of the jeremiad cannot address messier conflicts, such as those that appear in the psychic and material world of the Gwich'in; the polar bear is not simply an allegory for the global threat of climate change. She is also the instantiation of the multiple forces from outside the Subarctic that seek to control the futures of the Gwich'in: the state of Alaska, the federal government, the advocates of uninhabited wilderness, and the oil industry.

What happens when the same story of change is told in the form of a travel narrative, a story not of the finality of the bear's death (and she does die in the home of the Gwich'in), but as a migration story, a story of movement, return, and transformation? Change in this mode of narration is not simply the destruction of all that is known and protected; the outcomes of change cannot be known in advance. Stories told in the mode of crisis threaten that a complete loss of species and environments is imminent, and that it is almost, or is, too late to rectify the situation.

If it is too late, however, why should one engage the difficult process of ecologically-minded change at all? In contrast, an attention to micro-stories and alternative story-telling paradigms suggests opportunities for continued relationships with polar bears and northern ecologies, even if, in a not-too-distant future, they exist in an altered form. By acknowledging and being open to transformation, the messy micro-connected relationships of the here and now may offer other ways of inhabiting and caring for the world. The bear's physical trek across the formidable terrain of Alaska is also a trek across domains of signification. In one environment (the northern arctic coast of Alaska), she is a white bear that inhabits a marine ecosystem, a predatory mammal dependent on the ocean for her prey (seals) and the snow and ice for her hunting techniques and denning sites. When she travels south, what is she? And what is the geographic signification of the new landscape; can polar bear and subarctic co-exist in the same narrative system? Do the rhetorical strategies of figuring polar bear break down when she moves south to the often swampy, muddy, grassy, boreal forest? Following the polar bear across narrative modes and material landscapes situates the Arctic as a space that is variegated, micro-relational, contingent, and locally produced.

In this chapter, I start with the story of the bear, but in telling her story through a framework of care, I also remain attentive to her specificity as she wanders through different geographic and symbolic systems.[9] I include in my focus the bear's

[9] For a discussion of the origin of feminist care ethics cf. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (1982). The ethics of care as a practice has since been taken up in ethnographic studies of women and fertility (the "choreographies of care" in the work of Charis Cussins [1998]) and in animal ethics (*The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, ed. by Josephine Donovan and Carol Adams [2007]).

arctic habitat (which is also the home of the Inuit) and the Subarctic, which has long been the home of Athabascans. Polar bears and the planet's climatic system are situated within structures of knowledge and practices of care inflected with the expectations and desires of many: Inuit, Gwich'in, scientists, children, oil-rig workers, and artists. Concurrent to the project of following a bear on the move is an effort to understand the narrative mode of climate change and the rhetorical force of the polar bear allegory in the presence (or absence) of ice. I review some of the current literature of climate change and offer some alternative modes for engaging, embodying, and caring for the world as it changes. These initiatives seek new adaptive strategies that take their inspiration from the bear's circular life history; polar bears have begun to re-adapt to life on land and more southern horizons in the shape of hybrid polar bear-grizzlies.[10]

The following exchange, reported by Tim Mowry in the *Fairbanks Daily News Miner*, is framed in terms of the wilderness debate (which is similar, but not coterminous with the climate change debate). The contentiousness of whether or not to designate critical caribou habitat along the northern coastal plain as "wilderness" has antecedents in the historical relationship between the Inupiat and the Gwich'in Athabascans. Their relationship has often been conflicted and antagonistic, only to be exacerbated through the imposition of new forms of governance through the

[10] The editors of Northern Arizona University's webpage for Tribal Professionals links the arrival of the polar bear at Fort Yukon with new developments in the study of polar bear genetic history, drawing attention to the migration of the bear as a return to her boreal ancestry. Polar bears evolved from brown bears to better live in the icy marine conditions of the coastal arctic and are capable of interbreeding with grizzly bears when the chance arises ("Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals").

American legal and political system.[11] Morgan Solomon, an Inupiaq elder from Barrow (on the northern coast of Alaska), states: "Too much government is no good for Alaska…We've been controlled under the U.S. government for a long time. We have an opportunity to develop oil and natural gas on the North Slope. You can't restrict that land for wildlife only. Human rights have the same opportunity as wildlife." However, Sarah James from the Gwich'in Athabascan community of Arctic Village (situated on the southern border of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge), counters: "Wilderness to us is leave it the way it is, the way the creator created it…That's how we've lived for thousands of years. This is a human rights versus oil [rights]. Oil is not our way of life. We are caribou people."[12]

The issue at stake for both Solomon and James is the same: human rights. In this strategic use of human rights, it is the right of the Inupiat to court oil companies, because the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has consistently denied Inupiat access to their ancestral hunting grounds, limited subsistence hunting through quotas and permits, and listed certain species as endangered and off limits through international treaty negotiations that did not include the Inupiat at the table. It is also the right of the Gwich'in to maintain the herds of caribou that form their identity as a people. The caribou become the last line of communication for making the Gwich'in legible as a native people with sovereign rights in a discourse not of their choosing. Caribou and

[11] Iggiagruk William L. Hensley, co-founder of the Alaska Federation of Natives, alludes to this history in his introduction to Velma Wallis's *Bird Girl and the Man who Followed the Sun*. He writes: "As an Inupiaq, I was at first distressed to see my people portrayed as the villains…Stories told to us, however, portrayed the Athabaskans as stealthy and untrustworthy…In modern times, it has been remarkable to see the cooperation between the Inupiat and the Athabaskans as they have fought a common fight for their ancestral territory" (9-10).

[12] "Opinions Mixed"

their health are more legible to white modern lawmakers than a native person's claim as a valid recipient of "human rights." Deborah Bird Rose succinctly identifies the nexus of indigeneity, wilderness (or nature), and western culture and colonialism: "Starting with the initial premise that conquest was always meant to be complete, we know that the conquest of Indigenous peoples, like the conquest of Nature, was undertaken in a mode of replacement" (*Reports* 2).[13] The replacement, in this case, would be cultivated land for "wild" nature and white settler colonists for the indigenous inhabitants already located in the "new" lands. Hugh Brody, in *The Other Side of Eden*, expands this point in his indictment of "the curses of Genesis:" the history of European civilization (which is also the history of agriculture), and the "combination of settlement, large families, and movement has resulted in a more or less relentless colonial frontier. An agricultural people can never rest…in one place. They love home, but they also love the leaving of it. They celebrate stability and security, and yet they are committed to movement" (86). Brody identifies a paradox often glossed over in literatures of farming and hunter lifestyles: farmers appear to be settled, yet they are continually moving into new lands to cultivate. Hunter-gatherers appear to be unsettled wanderers, yet they have complete reliance on a bounded area, returning to the same sites over and over across generations.

[13] Cf. Groening concerning this idea in a Canadian context. She writes: "[T]he story of New World colonialism begins with a dream of transformation. Transformation encourages a dialectical conception of the new land: progress will 'reclaim' the land from nature. As trees are cut down to make way for agriculture and settlement, wild animals and Indians…will vanish" (71). Groening follows Canadian founding myths of settlement, triumph over U.S. aggression, and multrculturalism as they transform across the Manichean binaries of self/other, colonized/colonizer, civilized/savage. She concludes by noting that on which side of the binary Canada's aboriginal people fall does not indicate a change in ideology, but a strengthening of a world view in which the "aboriginal" continues to function as "other" to white Canadians.

What do these discussions of wilderness and the position of indigenous people within or against it have to do with climate change, ice, and polar bears? As the polar ice shelf melts and less ice forms later in the winter along the arctic coast, more coastline is open to off-shore drilling and more sea is open for shipping lanes, expanding the famed Northwest passage of Sir John Franklin and other doomed English explorers for use and exploitation.[14] With the loss of ice more development is possible in the north, bringing the promise of economic and political independence for the indigenous peoples of the Arctic. Development that improves the lives of the disenfranchised, however, is the same development that will hasten the decline of ice and bears. If these contentious areas are not designated "wilderness," the Inupiat assert they will pursue oil development to have more control of their economic future. With more oil extraction and the development of oil infrastructure, it is likely there will be an even greater loss of bear (and caribou) habitat.

In a recent article about climate change in the Canadian Arctic, Rod Nickel writes for Reuters: "The Arctic is considered a type of early-warning system of climate change for the rest of the world" (1). In essence, the Arctic, or at least arctic ice, like frogs and fish, can be figured as an "indicator species" for the health of a given ecosystem; in this case, of course, the ecosystem is the entire planet. Similarly,

[14] Cf. Craciun for further elaboration on the problems and possibilities of a frozen (and unfreezing) ocean. She writes: "learning to drift with the 'mountains in motion,' as Fridtjof Nansen did in 1893 and as the Russian ice stations did beginning in 1937, illustrates the progressive moral of adaptation and scientific progress relative to this unique ocean space. But failure to adapt the Arctic Ocean to terrestrial, Eurocentric dimensions also illuminates how oceanic universals continue to shape our thinking. Writing, walking, working, and building on the ocean were ephemeral, sometimes comical possibilities—misguided and arrogant, but also wonderfully speculative, gesturing toward the fragility of all sojourns on the Frozen Ocean" (700).

photographer James Balog calls glaciers "the canary in the coal mine," warning us about the planet's state of ill health (*Chasing Ice*). Nickel's article observes that, with the rapid decline in ice and the warming of the north, species of plants and animals endemic to the northern polar region are failing to reproduce, while other species are moving across previously ice-locked areas and finding new niches. However, as Charles Wohlforth has pointed out in his study of "the northern front of climate change," there is no "farther north" to migrate for those already inhabiting the Arctic.[15] Like the polar bear, they must swim, or drown. Nonetheless, Nickel's article helpfully clarifies the constellation of interests that comprise the intense debates about the Arctic and climate change involving the disappearance of some species and the movement of others, habitat change and loss, and the disruption of familiar or traditional ways of relating to the environment. The economic disruption could be ameliorated somewhat, however, by "the wider Arctic [becoming] more accessible to ships and mak[ing] drilling in more areas possible" (1). Although not much more than a press release about Canada's current engagement with climate change in the Arctic, this report highlights the players with the most interest in the Arctic, from microcosmically local flora and fauna to macrocosmically global corporations and patterns of weather.

Instead of saying my own farewells as I follow the travels of polar bears and ice, I challenge the discourse of loss that currently structures how the north is figured

[15] "If the ice ever disappears entirely, its ecosystem will likely disappear, too. With world ecosystems migrating toward the poles, the ecosystem nearest to the pole would be pushed right off the planet" (Wohlforth 263).

in climate change narratives, looking to the interstices of stories of connection and adaptation for alternate narratives. Integral to this project is understanding the role of ice, along with polar bears, in climate change stories. How might either be described if one or the other were to disappear, if ice in the north could be conceptualized without the presence of polar bears or if polar bears could live without ice? Ice, as a figure, has been an important metaphor in literature, often connoting the limits of the rational, marginal or primitive space, purity of mind, and even death.[16] The symbolic language used to describe the Arctic and those who live in it helps shape a connection to the region and the response—even responsibility—the public feels towards its continued existence. Although frequent stories tell about chunks of the polar ice cap collapsing, glaciers shrinking, and permafrost melting causing the release of methane gas, the most iconic and provocative images and testimonies are rarely about the material or symbolic history of ice.[17] Rather, they are about the ecological future of polar bears as the *Planet Earth* segment so movingly documents.[18]

In Margaret Atwood's narrative poem, "The Animals Reject Their Names and Things Return to Their Origins," the bear, who is the first to reject her name, is also the one to "renounce metaphor" and state: "I take back what you have stolen, / and in

[16] Some examples from canonical texts: in *Frankenstein*, an exploratory voyage to the Arctic is the frame tale to the story of Victor Frankenstein and his creation; Marlow dreams of polar exploration before turning to other "blank spaces" on the map in *Heart of Darkness*; and even Humbert Humbert of *Lolita* takes a trip north in an ironic attempt to "freeze" his obsessions. See also Spufford's *I May be Some Time*.

[17] Increasingly there is a rise in "ice advocates" including photographer James Balog, musician Paul D. Miller, journalist Elizabeth Kolbert, and writer Gretel Ehrlich. These projects target an older audience while polar bear stories still dominate the climate change rhetoric for younger audiences. Cf. Wohlforth; Cone; and Miller for the measurable effects of climate change on arctic and Antarctic ice.

[18] Another affective engagement with polar bears meant to connect people and a northern environment were the many stories and videos that came out of the hand-raising of Knut, the orphaned polar bear at the Berlin Zoological Garden.

your languages I announce / I am now nameless" (78). The bear becomes a "growl," a speech act that claims not to be a metaphor, but rather an unequivocal signifier of both presence and power. However, even as she goes nameless, she cannot escape announcing her new onomatopoeic name *in language* and in the poem, both of which rely on metaphor to communicate and connect across difference. Atwood's bear has a point about the naming—and containing—function of language, when through metaphor she is called "child-stealer, shape-changer, / old garbage-eater," and she goes on to pronounce that "you can stuff / simile also: unpeeled, / I am not *like a man*" (78, emphasis in original). Dead, skinned, lifeless, stuffed. Without power, the ability to tear and dig and growl, *like a hairy man*, the bear points out what happens when language is used to control, contain, and eventually eradicate. She therefore insists that she is neither a *man* nor *like* a man as she de-centers the privileging of a human viewing subject of a viewed object.

Metaphor, however, *is* a tricky shape-changer; the etymology of metaphor includes the Greek verb "to bear" ("Metaphor"). Atwood's bear is the figure of metaphor; however much she wants to claim herself as a thing-in-itself, her very presence in language is the act of carrying, transferring, and witnessing the movement of language between and across difference. "The bear" and "to bear" resonate together across grammatical difference as they take on companion identities, subjectivities, desires, and wish-fulfillments and bear them along across gulfs of silence and incomprehension within Atwood's poem. Atwood's play with meaning signals difference while making connections across the ontological domains that

language creates between humans and non-(or in-)humans. The bear who begins it is a testament to a connection that cannot escape the binds of meaning. Language's ability both to separate and bring together disparate ontologies—words and presences signaling otherness—carries humans and nonhumans over into relationality across and with difference.

John Muir also relies on the poetic function of language in his realist account of glaciers in his travelogue, *Travels in Alaska*. He demonstrates, in the recounting of one of his earlier excursions into what will later become Glacier Bay National Park in Alaska, how metaphor becomes the connecting tissue that allows proximity to the majestic and foreign, more evocative, perhaps, than facts and numbers. Muir reproduces the type of dialogue he frequently has with travelers who are seeing a glacier for the first time:

> Is that a glacier…And is it all solid ice?
>
> Yes.
>
> […]
>
> You say it flows. How can hard ice flow?
>
> It flows like water, though invisibly slow.
>
> And where does it come from?
>
> From snow that is heaped up every winter on the mountains.
>
> And how, then, is the snow changed into ice?
>
> It is welded by the pressure of its own weight.
>
> Are these white masses we see in the hollows glaciers also?

Yes.

[…]

What made the hollows they are in?

The glaciers themselves, just as traveling animals make their own tracks.

How long have they been there?

Numberless centuries. (45-46)

Like the bear who becomes "growl," the glacier's infinite movement, although happening in the physical world on a timescale of "numberless centuries," is made present to the viewers through metaphor. Metaphor, in fact, functions as a template from which to engage the unknown. The glacier becomes legible just *like* an animal's tracks, by someone knowledgeable about the natural processes and histories of glacial formation and retreat. The metaphor that equates the glacier's terminal moraine to animal tracks does not domesticate the glacier into human knowledge about animal sign systems; rather, it mediates the scale of the glacier in order to open the viewer to the liveliness of what was before an inanimate natural formation. Metaphors, then, instead of signaling an unapproachable difference between disparate entities, actually function as a mediating practice.[19]

Calling for new forms of writing that can connect people and places with the temporality of change, Ursula Heise, in *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet*, articulates "a cosmopolitan awareness that links the ecological and the technological

[19] Cf. Cruikshank, "Melting Glaciers" for further discussion of the metaphors that mediate First Nation relationships to the dynamically changing (environmentally and politically) landscape of the Wrangell St. Elias Mountains.

across a diversity of cultures, and a utopian kind of human collective that erases neither the individual not the small community but links both to a global ecological self-awareness" (85). Heise finds this type of community in the imaginative work of science fiction novels, but several cultural initiatives that fall under Heise's call for such an awareness are currently in process. These initiatives create a space for dialogue and change through humanistic means in the mediums of theater, poetry, song, film, fine art, and storytelling—often alongside more scientific and ethnographic projects. The initiatives I focus on here include The National Maritime Museum's collaboration with The Cape Farewell Project, "High Arctic: Future Visions of a Receding World," Kunuk and Mauro's film *Qapirangajuq: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change*, and Subhankar Banerjee's ClimateStorytellers.org. These projects use multimedia (including the internet), conventional modes of engagement such as conversations or eye-witness accounts, and more radical forms such as collage, mixed media, and layering the objective (science) with the subjective (representation) in an effort to encompass the ever-expanding reality of what change is and what change means for "a future vision of a new world."[20]

Cape Farewell's "High Arctic" and Banerjee acknowledge that global warming motivates their efforts to mobilize change in human modes of living in the world. Rather than rely on the tragedy of loss felt on a global scale, they offer a glimpse at how local and personal relationships to spaces and species are adapting to

[20] Three other projects of note include Miller's *The Book of Ice*, the action-oriented theatre troupe The Civilian's project "The Great Immensity," and photographer James Balog's photographs and documentary film *Chasing Ice*.

new modes of care and inhabitation. “High Arctic” and *Qapirangajuq* deal directly with the Arctic as a space characterized by its relationship to ice and the polar flora and fauna that make the Arctic legible as a north polar region—“High Arctic” was inspired by a trip to the islands of Svalbard and *Qapirangajuq* includes testimonials from the world’s most northern inhabitants, the Inuit of northern Canada. My discussion of Banerjee’s project reflects the thematics of his work: it acts as a bridge between the different treatment of the Arctic and Subarctic in discussions of climate change. This difference, I argue, is not on account of privileging the most destructive effects of a warming planet (loss of arctic ice, polar bears): the Subarctic is also melting and the region’s flora, fauna, and culture are under threat of irreversible change. Rather, the figural language that has produced “north” in the literary imagination has not had room for the muddier and less iconic subarctic. Banerjee’s photographs and testimonial work in the Subarctic reveal a space as contested and transformative as the north coastal plain.

Cape Farewell is an organization dedicated to human impact, whether it is negative impact on the environment or positive cultural impact on changing perceptions of humans in nature. The Cape Farewell initiative brings together “leading artists, writers, scientists, educators and media for a series of expeditions to hot spots of climate change.” Buckland writes, “Together they have mapped, measured and been inspired by this awesome environment and have endeavoured to bring home stories and artworks that tell how a warming planet is impacting on the wilderness and us” (“Climate is Culture”). In an embodied practice of climatic

experience, KT Tunstall wrote the epigraph to this chapter in "Uummannaq Song" from her album *Tiger Suit*. Tunstall visited Uummannaq, a town in northwestern Greenland located on Disko Bay, as part of her Cape Farewell tour of the north. Tunstall's interest and activism contribute to the narrative landscape and representational force of artistic engagements with climate change. Another artistic outcome of an expedition was the installation "High Arctic: Future Visions of a Receding World" held at the National Maritime Museum in London.

In the exhibit, the *Noorderlicht*—"Northern Lights" in Dutch—a 100-year-old wooden schooner, greets visitors with the sound of her creaking when they enter the long tunnel leading into the gallery space. On the nondescript wall to the left, names and dates are painted in white, just visible in the low light. They seem random, the dates are not in identifiable increments and the words range from personal names to abstract nouns (2100 *The Future*; 2073 *Methane*; 2003 *The Ice Core Sample*; 1999 *Sheila Watt-Cloutier*; 1928 *Nobile's Terrier, Titina* on down to 530 *Saint Brendan* and 4th Century BC *Pytheas*). Waves lap, wood groans, and seabirds call—one enters the future of climate change as envisioned by Matt Clark and Nick Drake, two artists "embedded" in the 2010 Cape Farewell project to study the effects of a warming world on the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard. The town of Spitsbergen is located on Svalbard, and it is also home to most of Norway's polar bear population. The questions the exhibit poses include: "It's 2100 AD and the Arctic landscape we once took for granted has changed forever. How will we choose to remember our Arctic past? Is it possible to travel somewhere that no longer exists? Set in one of many

possible futures High Arctic conveys the scale, beauty and fragility of our unique Arctic environment" ("High Arctic"). Drake's poem, "The Future Says," is an address from the "Future" to "mortals" that disrupts a linear progression of time. The "Future" states: "you are in my hands / And I am in yours. / We are in this together, / Face to face and eye to eye; / We're made for each other" (47). The poem makes the adage "the future is in your hands" more complex by avoiding the ethical claim "do it for your children;" instead, it places human mortals as one among many species with a stake in the planet's future.

The exhibit uses ultraviolet lights to "unlock hidden elements, constantly shifting patterns of graphics and text that react to visitors approaching" ("High Arctic"). White columns of various heights and groupings fill the room; on each is a name that represents a "real glacier in Svalbard" and the gallery is a "seamless canvas of light, shifting in intensity and colour," an endless horizon (Ibid.). This description accurately portrays the space of the exhibit, but leaves out the importance of sound—aural cues that transport the visitor back to the austere splashing of the *Planet Earth* polar bear. The gallery fills with the voices of a man and woman reading poems by Drake about each date and name listed on the wall of the entrance. The ultraviolet flashlight used to read the names of the glaciers and to set the different floor panels in motion is an interesting choice; in the Arctic, ultraviolet helps and hinders. The electromagnetic radiation of ultraviolet can cause snow blindness in humans, but for reindeer and caribou whose color spectrum includes ultraviolet, it aids in their detection of predators (Hogg). One of the measurable effects of climate change—a

thinning ozone layer—is leading to an increase in levels of ultraviolet reaching earth. The floor panels across the exhibit are generative, changing to the motion of each visitor's strokes with the ultraviolet flashlight. There is one that looks like a topographic map; the light changes the position of the coordinates like the magnetic north's effects on a compass. There is another where the light breaks up squares into triangles that are reminiscent of ice floes and sends them scuttling to destruction (Drake's poem echoes: "With your greed and your kindness, / And your hearts like broken toys; You carry fear with you everywhere / Like a tiny god"). At a third, the light works in reverse—instead of appearing as "light," the ultraviolet light brings a dark pollution-like cloud over the space, swirling around small, isolated glacier panels. The first panel is perhaps the most metaphoric; the ultraviolet light appears as a circle across the floor, focusing one's awareness on the spot. It is as if the light highlights how attention to some events and not others leaves important pieces of the overall story in the dark.

Although speaking about the collaboration that became the book *Unfold* (2010), the following also encapsulates the work of Cape Farewell and the High Arctic exhibit:

> Each artist witnessed firsthand the dramatic and fragile environmental tipping points of climate change. Their innovative, independent and collective responses explore the physical, emotional and political dimensions of our complex and changing world stressed by profligate human activity. This body of work addresses a new process of thinking where artists play an informed

and significant role through creating a cultural shift, a challenge to evolve and inspire a symbiotic contract with our spiritual and physical world.[21]

For those involved in Cape Farewell, documentation as a mode of witnessing guides their work. Like the logs kept by ship captains who crisscrossed the arctic oceans in search of whales, passages through the ice, and Ultima Thule (the ever distant and always receding northern horizon), every word is given a time and place.[22] Buckland, for example, in the year 2005 at 78°N 11.2°E describes the motivation of his initiative: "We intend to communicate through artworks our understanding of the changing climate on a human scale, so that our individual lives can have meaning in what is a global problem."[23] These initiatives engage artists and other cultural workers in the project of re-envisioning climate change—what it means, whom it affects, and how one talks about it. Cape Farewell enlivens the terrain and the conversation as it tests new forms, symbols, metaphors, tropes, and modes of inhabitation and engagement with the world.

Expanding on the embodied commitments of The Cape Farewell initiative, I now turn to the micro-knowledges of the film *Qapirangajuq: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change*. The film illustrates how interpretative practices matter as

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[21] "Media"

[22] Kirsten Hastrup critical study of the works by the renowned Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen is written in response to Rasmussen naming his Greenlandic trading station "Thule." She explains that "Thule" is a poetic, even a legendary name, one that always points across horizons, a place where only imaginations can travel. Moreover, she describes the political aspect of this poetic naming practice: "Ultima Thule as a concept for the far North means engaging with particular horizons and perspectives. Horizons reflect peoples' concerns with both openness and closure that determine what we experience and how we interpret what we experience. When a horizon and whatever lies beyond it are given articulate form, they freeze our view of the reality that immediately confronts us" (790).

[23] On the website explaining the initiative ("About Cape Farewell"), the quotations from those involved with Cape Farewell change on each viewing of the website, engaging the visitor with a new experience to explore each time he or she visits.

mediations between words and political and cultural engagements in an effort to tell "what we think is the truth."[24] *Inuit Knowledge* is a collaborative project between the award-winning Inuit filmmaker Kunuk (*Atanarjuat: the Fast Runner*) and Ian Mauro (*Seeds of Change*).[25] The two filmmakers conceived the project when it was discovered that not a single Inuit community received funding from the considerable sums awarded during the International Polar Year's drive to understand and document climate change.[26] The film uses interviews, voiceovers, and archival and contemporary footage to showcase Inuit knowledge about climate and their sophisticated understanding of how climatic conditions have changed over time. While this is the film's argument, it is never explicitly stated as such.

In the film, speakers emphasize direct, sensory observation: told as children "go out, look around you," Inuit grow up watching their elders watching the world around them. The film reveals an intimate, lived knowledge of the environment and the increasing frustration from the lack of knowledge about changing environmental conditions. Through interviews interspersed with images that depict the topic at hand, viewers are told that animals previously handled by biologists (such as polar bears darted with tranquilizers and radio-collared) are thereafter more aggressive, or fearful, or less healthy; the sun has shifted position (and the world has tilted); and the wind

[24] Haraway writes: "Stories are not 'fictions' in the sense of being 'made up.' Rather, narratives are devices to produce certain kinds of meaning. I try to use stories to tell what I think is the truth—a located, embodied, contingent, and therefore real truth" (*Modest_Witness* 230).
[25] Mauro was an instructor for the Pangnirtung Bush School (University of Manitoba) program's environmental science and Inuit ecology classes and screened a rough copy of the film during the program. I attended the program in 2010. The film is available for viewing, downloading, or purchasing from IsumaTV.com.
[26] Mauro, personal communication.

has shifted direction, coming from the south laden with pollution and toxins. Acutely aware of the dubious status of "anecdotes" compared to scientific knowledge, Kunuk and Mauro refrain from comparing or confirming Inuit knowledge with "science."[27] Wohlforth finds the same reluctance among the Inupiat of Barrow in his study, arguing that for Inupiat, "[f]irsthand knowledge about nature isn't [about prestige, competitive skills, and worth], but [is] personal and even intimate. It can be the irreducible imprint of experience, inaccessible to rational dissection, the sensual contact of our physical selves with the real world" (184). Knowledge in this practice is a kinetic experience between the body and the world transmitted through language. Fact is a questionable position from which to build ontological connection, because it seems to be disembodied rather than the privileged experience of a subject. At issue, then, is who counts as witness and how the legibility of that witnessing can be shared.

Starting from a point of assumed connection and compatibility with his research subjects (or partners), Marc Bekoff, a prominent ethologist, consistently questions scientific practices that reduce the capabilities and knowledges of those who collaborate in the production of "data." In short, Bekoff states: "The plural of anecdote is data" **(**47). Bekoff's position recognizes knowledge as a process that is both objective (quantifiable) and subjective (knowledge is displayed in a variety of manners).[28] In the film, Kunuk and Mauro markedly refrain from either "data mining"

[27] Wohlforth discusses one scientist working with indigenous peoples; in the end, he writes, all the scientist could say of the experience of eliciting traditional ecologic knowledge from his research area: "Other than anecdotal stories, I don't know if we could say we've benefited from it" (185).
[28] Cruikshank reiterates the unevenness of eliciting traditional ecological knowledge for all parties: "At issue here are diverging notions of agency and interpretation. One key difference between Athapaskan oral traditions and scientific discourse is that elders' narratives merge natural and social history,

or fact-checking by not corroborating any of the personal observations told by the Inuit with knowledge gained from scientific studies conducted in the Arctic or from laboratories down south.

In one interview, Mary Simon points out: "scientists [from the south] talk with studies on pollution and toxins, whereas Inuit discuss the effects as they occur within our lives." After a series of images of (presumably) southern white scientists conducting experiments in the Arctic (one appears to be a wildlife biologist roughly handling a dead seal, another releases a balloon into the atmosphere), Noah Metuq explains that southern scientists dislike working with Inuit hunters. With some understatement, Metuq points out that hunters have valuable information about what is happening during all the months the scientists are not in the Arctic. Metuq concludes that this breadth of ignorance leads to "policies [made] without thought that make our life difficult." Reflecting on how one might productively generalize indigenous embodied knowledge and western scientific knowledge into a practice of care, Helen Verran combines the analytical framework of collective memory with the type of work she calls "evaluative witnessing" (752). For Verran, the collective memory of the ecological science community is expressed in tables and graphs and kept for future generations in books, while for the Yolngu community of Northern Australia, collective memory is stored and enacted in song, dance, and stories.

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whereas scientists assessing environmental change describe one of their objectives as disentangling natural from cultural factors. Elders, for instance, cite the folly of 'cooking with grease' near glaciers, lest this excite either the glacier or the being living within such a glacier den. Food should be boiled, never fried, in the presence of glaciers and no grease should ever be allowed to escape from the cooking vessel. Inevitably, such explanations fall out of most contemporary studies of 'local knowledge,' because they neither fit easily with contemporary scientific understandings of causality nor contribute to databases" ("Melting Glaciers" 361).

Despite the marked contrast in how the data is expressed, both knowledge regimes require "disciplined-bodies-in-place" to conduct evaluative witnessing. Western-trained scientists and Yolngu enact practices of engagement through ritualized performances that may be incomprehensible to those outside the scientific or indigenous collective.

Verran calls the encounters between the seemingly disparate knowledge traditions of the scientists and Yolngu, "postcolonial moments." These messy engagements "abut and abrade" power relations, "redistributing authority in hope of transformed contexts for the exercise of power" (730).[29] However, postcolonial moments are not about "retrieving a lost purity by overthrowing and uprooting an alien knowledge tradition" (Ibid.). One such postcolonial moment in *Qapirangajuq* occurs obliquely and relies on an understanding of Inuktitut, the Inuit language. Mauro told his students during an early screening of the film that Inuit observational knowledge of the sun having moved is, in fact, scientifically accurate and has been confirmed by NASA: the point of refraction of sunlight through the atmosphere has changed due to atmospheric thinning. The result of the change in refraction is that where the sun rises and sets appears to have shifted—an observation that western scientists did not, initially, take seriously because it was an anecdote told by Inuit ("the sun has moved") and not "hard" scientific or measured fact.

[29] Similarly, Anna Tsing's "heterogeneous and unequal encounters" open the possibility for the formation of new arrangements of culture and power between representatives of the state and local inhabitants (*Friction*, her "ethnography of global connection").

Although the revelation of NASA's confirmation was purposefully left out of the film, the title of the film, in fact, designates the effects of atmospheric thinning. The Inuktitut word *qapirangajuq* means "to spear strangely," as in, when plunging a spear into water, refraction breaks up the eye's line of sight. A seal hunter must make the cognitive adjustment necessary for a successful outcome, using visual cues, memory, inference, and deduction. The title of the film points directly to the sophistication of Inuit knowledge about refraction and the earth's atmosphere, while also privileging the embodied experiential understanding of how these have changed. Yet, without a language that can describe the "postcolonial moment" at hand—Inuit and scientists both enact care for the world, but they use different vocabularies and modes of witnessing—for non-Inuit who do not speak Inuktitut, this point will be utterly lost and the interviews could potentially seem like nothing more than related anecdotes that rely on vague and inaccurate terminology.

In contrast, Verran's engagement with scientists and Yolngu allows each to retain particular terms but generalizes them into a "universal" understanding of practices of care for the environment. When generalized together as arising from an enactment of communal memory through evaluative witnessing, scientific and indigenous practices of care have points of intersection that draw the seemingly oppositional communities into relationships that are still fraught, but have overlapping interests for "getting on in the world together." As Haraway pertinently points out: "[We] need an earth-wide network of connections, including the ability partially to translate knowledges among very different—and power-differentiated—

communities" (*Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* 187). Sophie McCall suggests that a practice of "partial translation" functions as a politics within literary and cultural projects by people in historically stratified and marginalized encounters. She writes: "By deploying strategies of incomplete translations in the subtitles and the bilingual screenplays [of the film, *Atanarjuat, the Fast Runner*], the filmmakers [Kunuk and Norman Cohn] explore the uneven relations of address both within Inuit audiences and between Inuit and non-Inuit audiences" (27). Kunuk's films illustrate that the evaluative witnessing mobilized in the different storytelling practices of climate change are not mutually incomprehensible; rather they are different practices of care.

Contemplating the history of humans and ice, Banerjee discusses the need to represent global warming in as multifaceted and democratic a way as possible. He writes about the history of the impetus for his online project, ClimateStorytellers.org:

> Last year, I wrote an article, "BPing the Arctic?" to help stop Shell's oil–and–gas drilling plan in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas of Arctic Alaska. Thanks to Tom Engelhard, the piece first appeared in TomDispatch on May 25, and then in numerous other progressive Internet media around the world, reaching millions of people. On May 27, President Obama suspended Shell's Arctic drilling for 2010. With that modest victory, I realized it would be nice to have a gathering place on the Internet for in–depth stories on all things global warming.

While Banerjee's implication that his editorial directly influenced Obama's decision to suspend drilling may seem an exaggeration, his work as a documenter of climate

change in the Arctic has had national coverage. As a photographer and writer, he persistently pursues a multifaceted, multidimensional, and multigeneric approach to the Arctic—perhaps the only approach that can represent the variegated, complicated, and conflicted area.

Banerjee's engagement with the Arctic on his website is described as beginning in 2000, "with a desire to live with polar bears in the wild. Over the years his many romantic ideas were shattered, and his vision has since evolved into a visual exploration of the Arctic's connection to larger global issues such as, resource wars, climate change, toxic migration, and human rights struggles of the northern indigenous communities" (*Climate Story Tellers*). Banerjee offers a new frame for imagining north beyond the cliché of the romantic sublime; he exemplifies his inclusive approach of "land as home" through a discussion of "ecocultural rights."[30] Ecocultural rights encompass an understanding of lived environments that includes a human right to a flourishing life (often used in the argument that indigenous communities need extractive resource-based economies in order to survive in the dominant political and cultural system), and the rights of other species, systems of land, seas, and watersheds. In short, it is an eco-systemic approach that takes into consideration the fact that humans—and human culture—shape the understanding and ability to live on and with the land, but that land is, fundamentally, necessary for human life and culture. This formulation identifies and attempts to rectify what is

[30] Banerjee discusses his model of inhabited practice in his essay "Land as Home" (2007). Banerjee first brought up the concept of "ecocultural rights" in his plenary address at ASLE 2010 in Bloomington, IN.

troubling in the invocation of a human rights discourse alone in pleas for indigenous recognition of homeland and economic and political security. Karl Jacoby, in his epigraph to Banerjee's essay, writes: "We need, in short, a history that regards humans and nature not as two distinct entities but as interlocking parts of a single, dynamic whole" (1). Banerjee's essays and, most particularly, his photographs enact "land as home"; he frames people, animals, and landscapes interacting and moving through "stories" together. His lively photographs create contexts and spaces for engagements that are not predetermined or determining, but evoke wonder, melancholy, nostalgia, passion, and love from viewers, whether it is a picture of a herd of caribou, a mother polar bear with her cubs, the proverbial "empty" landscape of a tundra hillside, or an indigenous hunter gutting and skinning a caribou.[31]

In discussions about climate in Alaska, the debate is almost always reduced to the argument for or against drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and in the adjacent coastal plain. Even Wohlforth, who writes in detail about climate change in the high Arctic (most particularly about the science of snow and ice, and the repercussions of melting temperatures for the Inupiat inhabitants of the liminal zone of arctic land/ice edges), also deals with the subarctic area of the Refuge and the effects of drilling pads and pipelines on caribou herds.[32] Tellingly for the Subarctic, Wohlforth reports, after a conversation with an environmental scientist working at the

[31] See Figure 1. For more examples of Banerjee's photographs cf. "Gender on Ice Gallery."
[32] I once used the acronym ANWR to name the place "Arctic National Wildlife Refuge" in a conversation with a retired Fish and Wildlife biologist and family friend and he responded with the observation about what reducing a place to a cute sounding sound bite acronym does to the discussion. He proffered the analogous reduction of all politicians to their initials. The reduction of a name to convenient letters, this position suggests, reduces the significance of the area described.

University of Alaska's Toolik station in the foothills of the Brooks Range, that "ANWR was just more wet tundra and mosquitoes, the same swampy terrain that stretched for hundreds of miles east, west, and north of us…[the graduate student scientist had] expected special nature to be more scenic" (213).[33] Highlighting the environmental movement's strategy for invoking the uniqueness of a region as a reason for its preservation, the graduate student—when actually within the landscape—is unsure what to feel when her expectations are unmet. The graduate student's experience questions whether aesthetic language can ever adequately be used to engage with the world, whether sentiment can be the basis of political and ethical action. Unlike the glaciers which Muir metaphorizes to bridge the gap between human and other, the swampy subarctic of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge remains an illegible wilderness, a space, to echo Gertrude Stein, where there is no "there," there (289).

The Subarctic of Interior Alaska lacks a legible narrative structure. Of Alaska's awe-inspiring temperate rainforests filled with grandiose glaciers and hidden forested islands, Muir writes, "Viewed one by one, they seem detached beauties, like extracts from a poem, while, from the completeness of their lines and the way that their trees are arranged, each seems a finished stanza in itself" (14).[34] With the help of

[33] The "subarctic" is a climatic region generally situated between 50°N and 70°N latitude. It is characterized by boreal and black spruce forests, muskeg, permafrost, and animal species such as beaver, moose, grizzly bears, and tree squirrels. However, "sub" has its own connotations; given that the subarctic lies below the arctic zone, suggestions of "lesser," "unimportant," "substandard," and "deficient," suffuse discourses involving comparisons of the two regions.

[34] Although the First People living along the Gulf of Alaska protest the geographic orientation of designating the area "Southeast" Alaska, currently Southeast is the term used to describe the political zone of Alaska's Maritime climate region.

metaphor, Muir explains a relationship to the landscape; moreover, it is a landscape that only needs itself to be complete. For Wohlforth, however, the "landscape's story" of the Subarctic only gains "a beginning, middle, and end" when the Dalton Highway and the Trans-Alaska pipeline add "a unifying theme" (202).[35] The Subarctic only makes sense through a framing device and narrative closure; land, and ways of viewing it, are made into a closed book. In these descriptions of northern landscapes, each viewer attempts to know what it is he sees through a literary genre—epic, novel, poetry—and yet, the description continually calls for new relations, new images, new language in order for a unifying theme to emerge from which to engage with the "inhumanness" of the land's geologic temporality. While metaphor can connect points of view across ontological difference, metaphor, and indeed, language, is often cited as the medium of failure for communication for both sides of the debate about climate change.[36]

Wolforth and the graduate student-scientist cannot find a frame of reference from which to make sense of what is being viewed or experienced in connection with the subarctic landscape. While the scientist is expert in her field of microcosmic botanical identification and tundra plot analysis, the larger scene is both overwhelming and underwhelming: it cannot be narrated. Banerjee, through the

[35] The Dalton Highway runs approximately 500 miles north-south from Fairbanks to the Prudhoe Bay oilfields; the Trans-Alaska pipeline runs some 800 miles bisecting the state from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez.

[36] Although the effects of a changing climate are hardly debatable, the language used to frame the discussion about what the effects (hurricanes, droughts, tornadoes, blizzards, high and low temperatures) might mean always refers to it as "the climate change debate." One can point to public hearings in Alaska on the collapse of salmon fisheries, film footage of drowning polar bears, the emaciated corpses of whales, seals, and walruses washed up on beaches, and a lack of snowfall combined with early thunderstorms that produce severe forest fires. Cf. Hayasaka for a detailed study of the effects of climate change on forest fire patterns in Alaska.

framing devices of his photographs, offers a way to come to terms with vast space while simultaneously acknowledging, and refuting, the standard tropological framework that governs how non-arctic people perceive arctic and subarctic landscapes. He reframes the Arctic and Subarctic through the lens of inhabitation (rather than emptiness, loss, or waste), bringing the two climatic regions together through how people and animals live in the world together.

Banerjee's work in the Subarctic demonstrates care for the world while it undergoes dramatic transformation, and it opens up possibilities for reading the story of the Fort Yukon polar bear as something other than the tragic loss of a climate refugee. In the early spring of 2008, an incident occurred outside the subarctic village of Fort Yukon, a Gwich'in Athabascan community located on the confluence of the Porcupine and Yukon Rivers in the interior of Alaska. Situated over two hundred and fifty miles inland from the arctic coast and between two mountain ranges, the Brooks Range to the north and the Alaska Range to the south, the village became the epicenter for a dramatic conflict involving history, the social imagination, colonialism, the petroleum industry, and environmental activists. A young female polar bear wandered across the Arctic plain and over the northern mountains and then was shot and killed by a Gwich'in hunter along a trapline near Fort Yukon. Crossing the Brooks Range is no small accomplishment, given that the mountains not only divide the landscape, but also function as a physical, psychological, and cultural barrier between the Inupiat Eskimos who live along the arctic coast and the

Athabascan Indians who inhabit the subarctic tundra.[37] The historical tensions that exist between the Gwich'in (Athabascan Indians) and Kaktovikmuit (Inupiat Eskimos), recently exacerbated by a colonial governing system and disagreements about oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge are pertinent to the discussion of this polar bear.[38] Each group, furthermore, seeks a modernity that does not rely on continued subservience to government practices that are anathema to each group's understanding of itself as a historical *and* modern people.[39] History, how it is narrated and how it is read, is integral to understanding this wayward polar bear, who is not only a being in the wrong place at the wrong time. In her very physicality, the bear also becomes the figure upon which the effects of climate change and a fight for political legibility turn.

The tension created by the bear's arrival in Fort Yukon can be seen as a nodal point between different collectives that entered into, and thus created, the event. It seems that everyone had something to say about the polar bear. "Biologists are Baffled" one headline read.[40] Environmentalists invoked the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Several Gwich'in wondered if the meat was edible. The polar bear said nothing.[41] The event reached publics outside of Alaska, and the editors of

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[37] The Brooks Range is part of the continental divide that separates the flat, "barren-ground" coastal plain with north running rivers from the black spruce forested interior with rivers that run south and west.

[38] See Berger for a complete discussion of the use of terms such as "Eskimo" and "Indian" to refer to the native peoples of Alaska. These are, in essence, colonial and modern politco-legal descriptions, not what the people so designated prefer to call themselves.

[39] The Gwich'in are categorically against it while the Inupiat favor drilling in the Refuge, but oppose offshore drilling.

[40] Mowry "Why Did the Polar Bear Cross the Brooks Range?"

[41] I happened to be visiting the community when the polar bear was shot. Part of her story includes her body on display in the hunter's home. While this action may seem to be the ultimate expression of

Northern Arizona University's website for the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals noted (NAU):

> According to biologists of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the answer to "why the polar bear crossed the Brooks Range" is as clear as mud. Polar bears typically do not stray far from their saltwater ecosystem. However, in March of 2008 an individual was shot dead in Fort Yukon, Alaska, 250 miles from her Beaufort Sea habitat. That this happened in March, a foraging time for this northern marine mammal that preys on seals, makes the incident much more unusual.

This polar bear, endemic and iconic mammal of the Arctic, is, as Lopez has written, "a creature of arctic edges: [s]he hunts the ice margins, the surface of the water, and the continental shore" (79). The arrival of the bear reveals a persistent haunting of historical violence in the home of the Gwich'in. The violence in the encounter is not because the meeting was an interruption to a stable ontology; the violence is already enfolded in the routine processes of everyday life. The event of her appearance in the subarctic village of Fort Yukon, then, is more of a disruption of the center by a margin, a stranger coming violently and uncannily into the home. Thinking about the figurative language of the encounter is helpful for understanding how the productive dimensions of multiple and coexisting temporalities of human and nonhuman

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domination, the puzzled and troubled questions that floated around her head pointed to other sentiments that connected the hunter and the bear. Around this time in Canada's Northwest Territory, an Inuvaluit hunter killed a second generation hybrid—the offspring of a polar bear-grizzly hybrid and a grizzly bear ("Bear Shot in N.W.T."). In 2006, an American sport hunter in Canada shot a hybrid and was cited, given that he had a polar bear permit, but not one for grizzly bears ("Hunter Shoots Hybrid Bear").

histories are continually in motion. What happens when the "ice bear" of Athabascan cultural imagination comes from the margins of Eskimo ice to the center of a world in which such a bear usually exists only in story? Was the bear simply lost or was she "wandering with purpose?"[42] And how can she be accounted for as both physical bear and symbolic incarnation of historical antagonisms and current uneven political and economic relations between diverse peoples and their histories (Indian, Eskimo, and White)?

One textual framework that provides a reference point for the Gwich'in when involved with bears acting oddly is the story of the "ice bear." In one version of the Athabascan "ice bear" narrative, the bear demonstrates foreknowledge (of both time and environment) revealing his "capacity for the new." In Moses Peter's version of "The Ice Bear," the bear, or "*ch'atthan* as the Kutchin [Gwich'in] Indians call it" is

> a grizzly bear that doesn't hibernate in winter like other bears. When he doesn't hibernate, he knows he's in danger, so he goes down to some open water and dips himself in. He dips himself in again and again to make a thick armor of ice all over his body. It is hard to kill a bear like that because of all the ice on his fur. (8-9)

Lopez attempts to account for "events" within biological life in these terms: "We are sometimes at a loss in trying to describe such [unaccountable reactions in predator-prey relations] because we unthinkingly imagine the animals as instinctual. We are suspicious of motive and invention among them" (63). The "we" of course, is the

[42] Lopez characterizes polar bear movements in the world as anything but random, although to human perception, the intentionality may be difficult to discern (98).

western scientist-observer. However, the ice bear story reveals another way of fashioning understanding between humans and nonhumans. The bear must react to an unperceived event, the inability to hibernate. The young hunter must also adapt to a novel situation while he decides, in the midst of his encounter with "the thing" drawing ever nearer, what is worth saving for some sort of future. In an effort to return to his village to warn of the ice bear, the hunter sacrifices his friend to the bear, escapes from the bear through divesting himself of his material possessions (arrows, shirt, ax), and finally, on reaching his home, himself. He cries out "'There's an ice bear! A ch'atthan!' That was all he had a chance to say, for just then blood started pouring from his mouth. He must have frozen his lungs from running. He died right there" (18-19). The bear is a thinking, rational being with intentionality who takes action in the world and when he does, both bear and humans are changed in the encounter. Although both die, the relationship between bears and Gwich'in lives on in the story. With the knowledge gained from the other, from the radically different yet relationally equal, what is unknown can be mediated through an already established connection for the future. The story of the ice bear provides Gwich'in Athabascans a structure for accommodating novel situations like the polar bear's arrival near Fort Yukon; a relationship created and maintained through narrative is acted out with and between material bodies.

Robert Brightman, in his analysis of Rock Cree and animal relationships, highlights the ambiguity of relations that give rise to discrepant, ambiguous, and shifting modes of narration when humans kill the animals to whom they have deep

levels of attachment.[43] Individual stories of human encounters with animal nature often provide little meaning for the anthropologist, but when connected to larger cultural patterns of living with other humans, ancestors, traditional sites of inhabitation, and local animal species, the narrated events and encounters reveal a recognizable pattern of ecological belonging. Although recognizing the pattern of belonging in the world with other species does not resolve the conflict at the core of killing and eating, it does establish on-going relations enacted through the anxious need to continue to narrativize the relationship. Brightman writes of the Cree and hunting:

> The question of whether Crees believe one or the other model [benefactive—where the animals give themselves to the hunter—or adversarial—where the animals need to be coerced or dominated] to possess greater validity is exceptionally difficult to address. The same individuals will say and do things suggesting that they take account of both…the two ideologies are *not* reconciled in Cree thought…they provide disparate solutions to the identical moral and practical questions. (200)

Stories about human and animal relations form a tissue of connectivity that has personal manifestations. Personal relationships with certain animals result in dietary restrictions—eating these near relatives is akin to cannibalism. Brightman explains:

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[43] Brightman explains that Cree "refers today to a continuum of culturally and linguistically related native people inhabiting the subarctic boreal forest from Quebec on the east to British Columbia on the west" (4). While Cree speak a dialect of Algonquin and have had some historical disputes with Athabascan speakers living north and west to their traditional homelands, certain cultural features unite these boreal inhabitants, including the trickster hero of a long story cycle—Vasaagihdzak in Gwich'in Athabascan or Wisahkichak in Cree Algonquin.

> [E]xamples from narrative and autobiography concern[ing] individuated relationships between humans and particular species [result in the renouncing of the exploitation of a being that has rendered the hunter a service]. [The cannibal metaphor] is developed most visibly…with respect to bear meat…the logic of [a sizable minority of Cree men and women's] abstention was articulated…matter-of-factly that bears resemble human beings too closely in appearance and behavior to be edible. (204-205)

Bears and bear stories elicit a profound ambivalence about the nature of human-animal worldliness, because the "signs of the covert infra human animal" are most visible in the bear (205).

A common Gwich'in storytelling invocation describes human and nonhuman communication: "In the ancient days, when all of the people could talk to the animals, and all of the animals could speak with the people." The Gwich'in hero, Vasaagihdzak, is a case in point: "Vasaagihdzak was a famous man," relates Katherine Peter in her written rendition of the oral tale. "He was famous for helping people. He also helped animals. He could speak to each animal in its own language. He could even speak to the trees. This is how he helped the people." Vasaagihdzak's relationship with the animals demonstrates a communicative reciprocity whereby humans are connected to the animals that make life possible, as it also illustrates how symbolic narrative systems transmit, or even produce, relationships in real life encounters. As the anthropologist Julie Cruikshank observes in her study of the "social lives of stories," stories, narratives, and the languages of facts and fictions

mediate, order, disorder, and reorder the world. She writes: "Narratives provide a range of viewpoints from which to interpret the discrepant meanings we encounter both in human history and in daily experience. Through narrative plots, both chronological sequences and recognizable patterns are revealed" (111).[44] However, the day after the arrival of the polar bear in Fort Yukon, the pastor of Arctic Village—a Gwich'in Athabascan settlement just north of Fort Yukon in the foothills of the Brooks Range—had something revealing to say at the church service: "I hear there is a polar bear in Fort Yukon. Things are changing, you can see. All of you have to be careful. Don't let your children go out by themselves. The animals are no longer the same. They are getting wild. They behave strangely. Watch out for the bears. They don't listen to us anymore."[45]

The descent of the polar bear into the Subarctic could easily be "biologized" and directly linked to global warming and to the disappearance of resources in the Arctic, which pushes the bear to migrate towards new horizons where survival is more favorable. This particular story, in fact, is the official version that circulated through Euro-American Alaska. The Gwich'in responded in the same rationalizing narrative mode, which was to say that the bear was interfering with a trapline and posed a danger to the inhabitants of the village. However, the tension and the internal conflict brought by the bear's appearance cannot be so easily dismissed and her presence resonates within the social imaginary of the Gwich'in, whether she becomes

[44] See also Hayden White's *Metahistory* (1973) where he argues for reading history like literature; the meaning of history is, in other words, produced through its reliance on narrativity rather than objective observation.
[45] Personal communication with Nastassia Martin, an anthropologist visiting the community of Arctic Village when the polar bear incident occurred.

"ice bear," Eskimo, or white intruder. To fully comprehend the implications of the bear's arrival, her narrative after-life must be reinserted into a general context that includes all living beings, human and nonhuman. In the world of the Gwich'in, the haunting presence of the polar bear reveals a general state of anxiety. A manifestation of the global changes that affect the region in the form of climate change, NGOs teaching "good farming practices," environmentalists studying the decline of salmon and caribou populations, and oil companies pushing to drill in traditional hunting grounds, the polar bear cannot represent herself; rather, she becomes an allegory of the changing world.

Rather than zooming out like the BBC camera crew, the NAU writers resist the mode of elegy as they focus on new forms of inhabitation:

> Climate change may indeed be a piece of [the polar bear] puzzle. As the climate and ecosystems of the north change, so do the behaviors of living organisms. Is this a bear that is adapting to the changing environment? Polar bears, being bad terrestrial hunters, will need to find a new way to exist as the amount of sea ice decreases. Human beings may have to adapt along with the bears and realize this [kind of encounter] may become a frequent occurrence. (Ibid)

The polar bear in the narrative of NAU is not seen as dying out and in need of saving by the intervening powers of, for example, Coca Cola's campaign called "Arctic

Home."[46] Rather, the authors underscore the bear's agency as she changes her habits to fit a novel situation. Humans, like this bear, are not exempt from the need (in Barry Lopez's terms) to "test the landscape" and adapt to changes in the world. Some forms of connection and ways of living may come to an end, but this is hardly a death sentence. Rather, new forms of existing—together—in the world can be found. As the NAU piece concludes:

> According to natural history, polar bears originally descended from brown bears. This species started moving north and so began to evolve a different shape of snout, hair color, as well as different hunting strategies in order to adapt to its new habitat. Perhaps one day this species will come again to where it began, completing its circular life history.[47] (Ibid)

The passage does not put the bear in the realm of "nature" while reserving "culture" for the human species also implicated in the event of the encounter in Fort Yukon. Both species are part of a web of movement that sees adaptation not as a biological imperative (evolve or die; only the fittest survive), but as a learning process, passed one to another in a culture of exchange. Perhaps, even, the rediscovery of some old

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[46] The motivation of the project is "So the Polar Bear Always has a Place to Call Home." Furthermore, "Together with WWF and people like you, Coca-Cola is helping to establish a place where polar bears and people can thrive in the Arctic - a goal that will require working with local communities, governments, supporting research and carrying out additional conservation work. As part of this initiative, Coca-Cola has created Arctic Home, our biggest effort to date to help protect the polar bear and its habitat. Coca-Cola has committed $2 million over the next five years and has raised over $1.8 million to date in consumer and matched donations for the project."

[47] Brendan Kelly, a marine biologist with the International Arctic Research Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, cites climate change as the motivation for new species arrangements and adaptations: "We're taking this continent-sized barrier to animal movement, and in a few generations, it's going to disappear, at least in summer months…That's going to give a lot of organisms — a lot of marine mammals in particular — who've been separated for at least 10,000 years the opportunity to interbreed again, and we're predicting we're going to see a lot more of that" ("Bear Shot in N.W.T.").

forms of technology (such as language in the form of storytelling) would allow a "completion of a circular life history" for the Gwich'in as well as the bear. Temporality is an important aspect of this process. Climate change is often described as a linear movement towards extinction for some species, loss of habitat for others, and the eradication of traditional forms of living. This is the temporality of a single human life—sometimes extended into the future through an appeal to the Earth that children will inherit. However, if the story focuses on epochal or geologic time instead, the narrative of climate shifts.

The story of ice and polar bears is not just an "Arctic tale;" it is also deeply felt in the Subarctic through the wandering of our hero, the polar bear. In my telling of the story of climate change in Alaska, the Arctic and the Subarctic are brought together to more fully grasp the implications of using the polar bear as the icon of climate change. For the Subarctic, which until recently has had no polar bears, the entry point into climate change forums revolves around the impact of the oil industry, definitions of wilderness, and the importance of caribou to cultural well being.[48] What happens when new species arrive not in the north, as Wohlforth suggested at the beginning of the chapter, but in the south?

In 2007, the United States Geological Survey published a press release in which it had documented a high rate of change in denning sites for female polar bears from a preference for ice to that of land. Alaskareport.com reports: "A 20-year U.S.

[48] My third chapter, "Reading for the Trace: Tracking Caribou Across Arctic Literary Landscapes," looks more deeply at the complex interactions among caribou, oil industries, indigenous histories, and opposing ideas about wilderness.

Geological Survey (USGS) study documents that recent changes in the quality and availability of sea ice in northern Alaska are the most likely explanation for a decrease in maternal polar bear denning on sea ice and an increase of denning on land."[49] The report cites as reasons for this change: "Arctic pack ice has formed progressively later, melted earlier and lost much of its older and thicker multi-year component. Together, these changes have resulted in pack ice that is a less stable platform on which to give birth and raise new cubs." For the twenty years of this study, which must include quite a few generations, female bears have been testing the world for new places to live. While ice is an integral component of what a "polar bear" is believed to be, NAU's editorial and Alaskareport.com make clear is that the term "polar bear," like Atwood's "bear," is a metaphor. "Polar bear" describes in language the being that within a given time and spatial arrangement exhibits certain characteristics, such as preying on seals, living on ice, being colored "white." But what if "polar bear" renounces these trappings? The polar bear is an uneasy bearer of human reaction to climate change. While the whiteness of the bear may slowly change to brown, it may be precipitous to begin to eulogize the polar bear. Disconnecting responses to climate change from the tragedy of losing "polar bear" opens the possibility of micro-connections to local changes and the stories that relationally do not fit into conventional wisdom, but are experienced nonetheless.

The Fort Yukon polar bear is not the only polar bear to have traveled south and away from ice in Alaska. In July of 2010, a polar bear was spotted at the mouth

[49] "Polar Bear Denning"

of the Yukon River outside of the village of Emmonak. The predominately Yup'ik village is about one hundred air miles south of Norton Sound (usually the most southerly range of polar bear habitat in Alaska). The Yup'ik villagers responded very differently to the bear than did the Gwich'in, the news report is at some pains to point out; community members came from far and wide to *look but not touch*. Marilyn Charles, the article states, saw a "friendly bear" that she "watched…for about an hour, [and] she said…'It wasn't mean.' After she was gone, she heard, the polar bear disappeared in the brush along the river."[50] However, according to Thomas Evans, a USFWS wildlife biologist specializing in marine mammals, bears not on ice usually end up meeting the same fate: "Those [bears] separated from the sea ice often die…They're shot for becoming problem bears or may burn through their fat reserves and starve."[51] The ghost of the Fort Yukon bear haunts the margins of these events of bears out of place, bears who do not conform to how polar bears ought to inhabit the world.

Lopez believes the polar bear to be a "creature of arctic edges." What does it mean to live on the edge? The world's edge, of course, is Ultima Thule, the "no-man's land" between the real and the fictive, the known and the not known, history and mythology. The narratives of climate change, of change in general, demand a rethinking of relationships to the world, preconceived notions of what it means to inhabit a location, and what it means to know. This is not only true for the polar bear; when invoking the polar bear as the figure of climate change, she acts like the

[50] "Polar Bear in Yukon River"
[51] Ibid.

indicator species of global sentiment about the changing world. Anxiety about losing the metaphor of north reveals local responses to a global phenomenon; for the Gwich'in particularly, but everyone more generally, climate change is the uncanny arrival of a discontinuity with place that disrupts thinking of "land as home." However, to view the polar bear as only a metaphor for what is believed to be the truth about ice is to limit the possibilities for her responses to and in the world. I am not arguing that we should not care about the loss of ice or polar bears in the Arctic. I am not advocating the position that humans are not the cause of climate change or that we should do nothing to reverse the trends. Instead, I argue humans will also have to learn to adapt to new ways of thinking about their position in the world. The alternative modes of engagement I have been exploring rely on an examination of how life is reordered around the projected desires of the human. A more ecocultural extension of rights to animated beings previously denied consideration (bears, ice, glaciers, to name a few) will perhaps, one day, bring all species to where they began when they had languages that spoke across difference, in a completion of circular life histories.

FIGURE 1:

Examples of Subhankar Banerjee's photography. Banerjee's work can be found on his personal website, websites of galleries and museums, and in archives of newspapers and journals.

Caribou and Calves Crossing Kokolik River (Coal and the Caribou 2006)

"Polar Bear cubs and mother play near their den on Canning River Delta along the Beaufort Sea coast, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge" (Banerjee 2002).

Caribou Tracks on Coal Seams II (Coal and the Caribou 2006)

Charlie Swaney & Jimmy John (Gwich'in and the Caribou 2007)

CHAPTER TWO

"MAKING THE WAY CLEAR:" BECOMING WORLDLY WITH SEALS[1]

> The *angalkuq* [shaman], observing the ways of our ancestors, compelled a young person to go with the seals out to sea. He was a young person just like you. He lived with the seals for a whole year. Then at the end of the winter, he finally came back. He was a young child like you, and he was the only child of his parents.
> –Paul John, Toksook Bay[2]

The photograph of one of Greenpeace's founding activists, Bob Hunter, with *Sea Shepherd* captain Paul Watson, a baby harp seal, and a stalled sealing vessel, came to represent the global environmental and animal rights activism of the 1970s.[3] Along with the Greenpeace action of "bearing witness" in protest against the nuclear tests on Amchitka island off the coast of Alaska, the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the passing of the Clean Water Act, the successful ending of the Canadian whitecoat seal hunt marked a turning point in environmental consciousness, action, and, ultimately, achieving environmental justice in the United States.[4] As Ursula Heise has pointed out, the American environmental movement, while "intensely engaged with questions of the local"—such as contaminated community water supplies from radioactive material—nevertheless had stretched this local to include global environmental concerns (8).

The Canadian seal hunt was one of the largest commercial hunts of seals in the world, killing up to 300,000 animals a year. Although the action of

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[1] The first part of my title I take from Fienup-Riordan (*Boundaries*) and the second is from Haraway (*When Species Meet*).
[2] Quoted in Fienup-Riordan *Boundaries* 3.
[3] See Figure 2 (Moore *Greenpeace Founders*).
[4] A "whitecoat" is a harp seal under two weeks of age.

environmentalists in the 1970s and 1980s greatly reduced the hunt of seal pups—eventually leading to their protection—and the European Economic Union Directives banned the importation of sealskin products in 1983, nonetheless the early part of the twenty-first century saw a return to seal hunting as a commercial endeavor in Canada (with markets expanding in Asia). Almost concurrently, new additions were added to the seal-ban directives aimed at protecting some rights of the Inuit to hunt seals. Heise suggests that for understanding a more complex engagement with notions of inhabitation and ecological frameworks, one must remain attentive to "how cultural frameworks…might condition quite divergent perceptions of what the local ecology consists of, what it requires from humans, or what an appropriate way of responding to it might be" (44). In order to understand the complexity of seals in global environmental activism, Inuit culture, and legal statutes, it is important to disengage the seals from the boundaries of the photographic frame and re-entangle their lives within narratives that account for the long history of the interrelations of seals and humans.[5] Through my reading of the Yup'ik story, "The Boy who went to Live with Seals," and the Inuit story, "Arnaqtaaqtuq: The One who Gets a Mother," I will demonstrate in this chapter how an indigenous articulation of local ecology is embedded in the narrative tradition of First Peoples of the north and offers a fuller, more worlded grasp of environment and environmental justice. A close reading of

[5] Although this chapter focuses on Inuit and Yupiit relationships with seals, they are not the only people with a narrative history of human and seals that encodes an expansive and complex multispecies ecological perspective. The selkie, or seal woman, in Scottish and Scandinavian folklore is a dynamic, shape-changing creature that traverses and connects the worlds of land and sea, human and animal. The modern Scottish relationship to seals is as complex and conflicted as that of the Inuit. In 2012, a seal cull was reinstated in order to protect the fish stock on northern European fish farming operations, a move that displeased many in the international community.

these texts may offer one way to arrive at a more complex understanding of the ecological systems that support humans and seals.

Paul Watson and his anti-sealing vessel, *Sea Shepherd*, have been on the front lines of saving immature harp seals from the commercial hunt since 1976. Watson blocked sealing vessels with his body, cuffed himself to ships, endured tear gas and physical assaults, and was imprisoned and fined multiple times in an effort to alert the international community to the slaughter of the young seals. In addition to his direct action, Watson, Greenpeace, and other activists developed harmless dyes that ruin the marketability of the pelts and recommended non-lethal alternatives for the sealing industry; in effect, "to replace the club with a hair brush."[6] Given that seals molt several times before they become adults, Watson and crew were able to collect enough hair from juveniles to turn the harmlessly cast-off hair into a clothing line. The lengths that the *Sea Shepherd* crew have gone to protect seals from northeastern Canada to Scotland since the mid-1970s are considerable. The Canadian government's mobilization against the activists in protection of the sealing industry—at the height of the protests it is estimated that the government spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on measures to protect the sealers against activists, including military escorts—reveals a deep level of interest in the continued functioning of the trade in sealskins. While some have argued that the animal rights activists and the European legislation banning sealskin products are directed at the sealers and their

[6] "History of Sea Shepherd"

ability to engage in a market economy, the involvement of the government on such a level rather points to more political, or nation-based, issues at stake.

Nicole Shukin, in her study of "animal capital," argues that different bodies (human and animal) have uneven access to political power and animal bodies, especially, are made materially powerless in the commodity circulation of late capitalism. Shukin's analysis of the "material unconscious" that are animal lives in symbolic and monetary economies—that drive capital both intellectually and physically—is helpful for understanding how nonhuman lives are caught within human-centric systems of late-capitalist circulation of wealth and goods. She explains: "'Animal capital' simultaneously notates the semiotic currency of animal signs and the carnal traffic in animal substances across [the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries]. More accurately, it signals a tangle of biopolitical relations within which the economic and symbolic capital of animal life can no longer be sorted into binary distinctions" (7). Shukin identifies how animal bodies can be exploited materially (the North American trade in beaver pelts for example) and figurally (symbolic animals—such as the beaver for Canada—are used in the promotion of an idea of national unity).[7] While the beaver functions as "animal capital" for broader national interests, the seal as commodity and sign does similar work for including those on the marginalized edge of Canada's national

[7] Shukin writes: "Instated as Canada's official emblem in 1975, the sign of the beaver was deployed as a tool of affective governance to involve Canadians in a project of national identity building and unity. The move consolidated the economic and symbolic capital accumulated in the sign of the beaver over three centuries of Euro-Canadian traffic in North America, presenting it as a natural, self-evident sign of the nation" (3).

consciousness.[8] Contemporary markets that rely on animal semiotics (rather than animal skins), Shukin argues, obscure histories of material exploitation. Promoting representations of beavers as a synecdoche of Canada or Canadians (or the seal trade as the economic and cultural identity of the northern provinces) occludes the fact that Canadians were the ones that hunted the beaver to near extinction.

While the St. Lawrence sealers, like the Inuit, are also on the frontlines of preserving an economic structure that allows them to stay in their communities, the Canadian government's efforts seem to be aimed at maintaining a market that is cost-effective for the geographic and climatic conditions in which it takes place, rather than seeking alternative industries or economic opportunities. It is a thorny and complex issue: if Inuit are to retain rights to hunt seals, why should non-native hunters be punished for engaging in the same practice?

The differences between the St. Lawrence sealers and the Inuit are not straightforward and cannot be reduced to race. Both groups have been marginalized in mainstream Canadian culture and both live in environments that are not conducive to many forms of industry and agriculture. If the Inuit are permitted to earn a living from the practice of hunting seals and trading seal products, why deny this right to other groups? Watson and his crew point to some possibilities for understanding, if not resolving, these questions. One is the method of killing. Commercial sealers target harp seal pups that are congregated together in "nurseries" during a period of

[8] Canadian seal hunts typically occurred in the Gulf of St. Lawrence on the northeastern edge of Canada. While sealers from Newfoundland and Labrador also participate in the hunt, the majority of operators are from Québec.

time when they are unable to swim away. The seals are clubbed over the head so as to protect the coat from damage. Hundreds of thousands are killed in a season for the international clothing market (whitecoat pelts are soft and easily dyed and are therefore desirable in the clothing industry). Inuit generally do not hunt either adult or immature harp seals, because they are not a species of seal that is eaten. Instead, hunters focus on species such as ringed and bearded seals that are a food staple and whose skin is tougher and more durable for arctic winter wear.[9]

I suggest that a focus on the practices and ethics of care in the animal rights activists' direct action, and also on narratives of human and seal co-constitution in northern indigenous stories, reframes the relationship between humans and seals beyond binary systems of hunter and hunted, producer and commodity. Articles on seal biology, Inuit stories, legal statutes, and environmental conservation rhetoric all appear to be different, if not contradictory, types of narratives. Nevertheless, when read together, they reveal a shared ethics of care for the wellbeing of the seal. This care, I suggest, momentarily frees the seals from their entrapment in what I call an "economy of use," best exemplified by the commodification of their bodies in international trade. We need to re-think, if not reconstruct, this teleology that focuses our attention on the end result of a seal's death and that overshadows other ways of envisioning how seals might fit into a human economy of trust and interest. What might it mean for humans to "be" or "become" with seal? It matters how we construct

[9] There are six arctic seal species: Ringed seal (Phoca hispida), Bearded seal (Erignathus barbatus), Spotted seal (Phoca largha), Ribbon seal (Phoca fasciata), Hooded Seal (Cystophora cristata), and Harp Seal (Phoca groenlandica) ("National Marine Mammal Laboratory").

this history, because to focus only on the end result (a seal is killed by the hand of a human), is to avoid problematic yet expansive paradigmatic alternatives.

In this chapter, I explore narrative practices that "create and maintain the boundaries and passages" between the worlds of seals as biological creatures and their role as figures in diverse and often contentious human meaning-making systems.[10] I examine how seals are, in Lévi-Strauss's terms, good to "think with," and how they are also good (in the words of Vinciane Despret) to "be with" and "become with," given that "becoming" encodes potentiality and possibility for active relationships.[11] By rethinking the figural dimensions of seals in Yupiit and Inuit storytelling practices next to the stories of commodity capitalism and wildlife protection, I hope to push this discourse beyond the binaries of human/animal, subject/object, culture/nature, actor/acted upon, and eater/eaten.[12]

The current ecological, political, and social controversy that surrounds the ban on the importation of sealskin products into Europe and the United States has direct bearing on the ability to "become worldly" with seals.[13] The summer of 2012 saw one of the greatest losses of ice in the Arctic thus far, and if global warming trends continue, the loss of ice will have a serious impact on species of seals that rely on ice

[10] Fienup-Riordan *Boundaries* 7.
[11] In her essay, "The Body We Care For," Despret argues that trust is another name for love, and "trust links together" humans and animals in practices of care that propose new identities for each participant: "becoming with a horse [or seal]" and "being-with-a-human" (122).
[12] Although this is also part of the project, there are already fascinating and knowledgeable books on this topic—cf. Fienup-Riordan (1994), Laugrand (2010), Pelly (2001).
[13] Donna Haraway explains "becoming worldly:" "The kinds of relating that these introductions [of different stories of human, animal, microorganism, and environments] perform entangle a motley crowd of differentially situated species, including landscapes, animals, plants, microorganisms, people, and technologies…Whether grasped two-by-two or tangle-by-tangle, attachment sites needed for meeting species redo everything they touch. The point is not to celebrate complexity but to become worldly and to respond" (*When Species Meet* 41).

for breeding and pup rearing.[14] While most species of seals taken in subsistence hunts are not of interest to commercial hunts (and vice versa), all seal species are caught together in the administrative structures that legislate not only their lives, but also the lives of the people who are integrally bound to them.

The 1983 European Economic Community Directive to ban seal products states:

> [T]he exploitation of seals and of other species, depending upon their capacity to withstand such exploitation and with due respect for the balance of nature, is a natural and legitimate occupation and in certain areas of the world forms an important part of the traditional way of life and economy…hunting, as traditionally practised by the Inuit people, leaves seal pups unharmed and it is therefore appropriate to see that the interests of the Inuit people are not affected…[15]

The directive is clear that it only covers "products not resulting from traditional hunting by the Inuit people." Later renewals of the directive (1985 and 1989), continue to protect traditional hunting, although "there are increasing doubts with regard to the effects of non-traditional hunting on the conservation of harp seals in the East Atlantic, the Barents Sea and the White Sea, where [the seals] are, in addition to hunting, also affected by the depletion of prey fish species and entanglement in nets

[14] Cf. Zelman and Gerkin for a discussion of recent losses in arctic ice.
[15] The Seal Ban directives can be read in full at EUR-lex: Access to European Union Law.

along the Norwegian coast."[16] The updated ban of 2009, which went into effect in August 2010, reads:

> The placing on the market of seal products which result from hunts traditionally conducted by Inuit and other indigenous communities and which contribute to their subsistence should be allowed where such hunts are part of the cultural heritage of the community and where the seal products are at least partly used, consumed or processed within the communities according to their traditions.[17]

Article 3 of the same document clarifies the terms for the above measure:

> 1. Seal products resulting from hunts by Inuit or other indigenous communities may only be placed on the market where it can be established that they originate from seal hunts which satisfy all of the following conditions:
>
> (a) seal hunts conducted by Inuit or other indigenous communities which have a tradition of seal hunting in the community and in the geographical region;
>
> (b) seal hunts the products of which are at least partly used, consumed or processed within the communities according to their traditions;
>
> (c) seal hunts which contribute to the subsistence of the community.
>
> 2. At the time of the placing on the market, the seal product shall be accompanied by [an] attesting document.

[16] "Council Directive 89/370/EEC"
[17] "Commission Regulation (EU) No 737/2010" clarifies the rules for the implementation of regulations involving the trade of seal products.

These directives attempt to include the presence of Inuit as harvesters of seals with a cultural dependence on this hunting practice. The language of the directives, however, dictates the terms for how the seal is brought into a relationship with the hunter of an indigenous community with "a tradition of seal hunting in the geographical region." While the biopolitical sign of "seal" has not been appropriated to the extent of "beaver" to promote Canadian values and commodity circulation, the seal and Inuit identified in the directives are circumscribed by identity, location, and activity.

The Inuit relationship to seals—predicated on the fact that they appear to hunt and kill seals *like* western commercial seal hunters—always presented a difficulty for the anti-sealing campaign. Animal rights activists chose to treat Inuit seal hunting similarly to commercial hunting, because the Inuit used—and use—modern technology such as guns and motorboats. According to George Wenzel in his book about the conflict between Inuit hunters and animal rights activists, *Animal Rights, Human Rights*, the claim was that since Inuit did not live or hunt "traditionally" anymore, they therefore had no legitimate claim to hunt at all (94).[18] Wenzel makes an important distinction between Inuit and commercial hunts that is only partially legible in the language of the ban. The language of the ban uses the term "traditional" to identify a cultural relation that pre-dates western contact; it does not stipulate that a harpoon and dog-team must be the only technology used in a seal hunt. Animal rights activists, however, interpret "traditional" as a temporal category that designates that

[18] Inuit use modern rifles, motorboats, and snowmachines to access areas to hunt seals and other animals. Although dog-teams are still used by Inuit, "traditional" technology such as bone harpoons and stone knives are rare. In the conflict that Wenzel studies, animal rights activists suggest that post-contact technology invalidates the Inuit right to hunt a "traditional" food source.

the technology of the hunt must pre-date contact. Wenzel insists that both these positions fail to encompass how Inuit actually hunt: they may use modern technology, but the technology is incorporated into the fabric of the culture, not the other way around. Having a high-powered rifle and a boat does not necessarily guarantee even a single kill for an Inuk hunter and many trips end empty-handed. The commercial seal hunt, by contrast, proceeds from large ships, which land on ice floes with the targets of young seal pups that are unable to escape into the ocean. With the help of Shukin's analysis, in this example, the high-powered technology of the commercial hunt is very much part of the culture of exploitation.

The legibility of Inuit hunting practices that looks like the exploitation of animal capital is at stake when Inuit present themselves within administrative discourses at international forums. In defense of their ontology, the former students of the Inuit Studies Program of Nunavut College presented their paper, "The Seal: An Integral Part of Our Culture" to the Third International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences (in Copenhagen, 1998). The Arctic College students talked about biology, ecology, technology and Inuit history in relation to seals, pointing out that "[the hunter's] obligation was to share the seal with the people of the camp…[sharing] the seal ensured that there would always be seals to be caught;" "Between 1800 and 1894, the Europeans came into contact with Inuit [and over] the years, many new things began to be introduced such as schools, Christianity, [the Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and the system of buying and selling or trading furs and skins in exchange for general merchandise" (168, 171). When the Nunavut college students

presented their paper, it was not a plea for the international community to stop killing seals or to preserve seal habitat so that their numbers might increase; it was, instead, to advocate for the right of Inuit to continue to hunt seals. I have been outlining the clash of worlds between conservation and Inuit discourses about hunting seals in order to identify how some practices of care for the seal have not been legible in the forums designated to legislate the life of the seal. While it is true that seals have a commodified existence in which they are worth more dead than alive, the end of the story about seals and humans does not wrap up quite so well. In the previous chapter, I discussed the multiplicity of a polar bears life in the various stories one tells about her. Similarly for the seal and Inuit, I argue that the legibility of Inuit-seal co-implication matters for not only the Inuit and their ability to hunt seals, but for an understanding of seal that is more than her biopolitical commodification. My reading of the stories "The Boy who went to Live with Seals" and "Arnaqtaaqtuq: The One who Gets a Mother" offers another translation of Inuit and seal mutuality into a recognizable genre for an international legislating body alongside the Nunavut College student assessment.

In 1959, Edmund Carpenter published a collection of Inuit songs called *Anerca*. Based on an appreciation of the poetic qualities of the songs previously collected by several anthropologists, Carpenter not only engendered a new forum for the reception of these poetic works, he also inaugurated a tradition of arctic literature that takes seriously the work of indigenous artists who describe "images powerful enough to deny [the] nothingness" that is the Arctic. Excising the songs and stories

from their ethnographic frame and placing them into an established literary tradition, Carpenter could ensure that they would reach a wider audience. Fifty years later, Keavy Martin reflects on the status of the Inuit literary archive, asking, in an essay published in *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, "Is an Inuit Literary History Possible?" Working through the ethnographic record and the Carpentarian literary tradition, Martin seeks to activate a literary history for Inuit that remains attentive to the cultural and political specificity as well as the struggles of the north's indigenous people, a literary history that is, itself, both indigenous and modern.

Although Carpenter's legacy led to an increase in interest in the literary value of Inuit narrative, the literary tradition he generated by anthologizing and adapting Inuit cultural work was, and still is, largely absent of actual Inuit voices.[19] Martin, in contrast, offers a methodology for decolonizing Inuit textual history in a southern classroom, focusing on the vibrant tradition that is contemporary Inuit verbal performance, including spoken-word artists such as Taqralik Partridge and Mosha Folger; hip-hop sensations Tumivut, Nelson Tagoona, and DJ Mad Eskimo; and musicians Lucie Idlout, Elisapie Isaac, and Beatrice Deer, who entertain audiences across the Arctic and in the south.[20] Martin takes issue with the convention of calling Inuit stories and songs "poetry," arguing that if

[19] Including Carpenter's *Anerca*, several other anthologies of Inuit poetry and song use source material from ethnographers from the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century (Rasmussen, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and Dimond Jenness), rather than contemporary Inuit productions: *Beyond the High Hills*; Lewis' *I Breathe a New Song*; Lowenstein's *Eskimo Poems from Canada and Greenland*; and Colombo's *Poems of the Inuit*.

[20] Martin traces a literary history for Inuit propelled by the resurgence of cultural pride along with political and social activism on the part of indigenous North Americans in the latter part of the twentieth century. Through the writer and critic Craig Womack (Oklahoma Creek/Cherokee), she

> one is looking for Inuit poetry…one should perhaps turn to this performative body of "texts;" after all, given the song traditions out of which Inuit poetry emerged, it is hardly surprising that Inuit poetry continues to be chanted and sung, rather than written and read…[C]onnotations of textuality [in poetry] may be inappropriate for the predominantly-oral Inuit tradition.[21]

Martin traces characteristics of Inuit intellectual discourse from traditional songs through contemporary performance in order to adduce methodologies for analysis from the texts themselves.

Following on Martin's practice of situating Inuit poetic forms in their historical, cultural, and artistic context, I look at how moments encoded in the stories themselves point to their own wordly situatedness in time and space. Even while they are still considered "traditional," these texts record a rich and recent history of Inuit and Yupiit environmental and social knowledge. For example, in Paul John's version of "The Boy who went to Live with Seals," the first attempt by the shaman to turn the boy into a seal was supposed to involve slitting his throat, something the father found himself unable to do. The story of a father sacrificing his only son for a higher power echoes the Abraham and Isaac story (*Genesis* 22:5 and 22:8), situating this version of the story as coming after the introduction of Christianity to the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in the mid-1800s. It is important to note that while in *Genesis* an angel of God halts the sacrifice and substitutes a ram in the place of Isaac, the father of the boy

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argues for the need to read "Inuit-ness"—that is tribal specificity, identity, and tradition—against the assimilative practices of the nation-state for even the possibility for Inuit sovereignty over their traditional lands as well as over their image in a southern imagination.

[21] Martin "How Do You Say 'Poetry' in Inuktitut?"

eschews the sacrificial structure altogether. In effect, when the boy comes through the door of the men's house in a manner analogous to a seal rising to the surface of the water to breathe from a hole in the ice, the father "put his arm down. He hesitated to strike his neck with a knife because he was his son" (35). Not only is the son not sacrificed in his position as "seal" in the story, the sacrificial structure that can replace a human with an animal is also called into question and, ultimately, discarded from the human-animal interface that makes up Inuit cosmology.[22]

Another important encoding of modernity in "The Boy who went to Live with Seals" is found in the action of the spotted seals. The boy was supposed to "enact" seal in his performance of coming through the *qasgiq* door like a seal moving through a hole in the ice; but the "people sitting right below the platform on the floor" perform another identity. These people had "sores on them. They didn't sit still. They continually scratched [their bodies]" (39). These "people" are spotted seals who have the appearance of a person infected with smallpox. Diseases that spread through contact with Russian traders, sailors, and missionaries had a devastating effect on the Yupiit in the mid-1800s. Ann Fienup-Riordan remarks: "Entire villages disappeared. As much as 60 percent of the Yup'ik population…were dead by June 1838…The effects of the smallpox epidemic of 1838-39, combined with subsequent epidemics of influenza in 1852-53 and 1861, produced not only a decline but also a dispersal and

[22] Fienup-Riordan argues that the "the relationship between humans and animals has been as central to the construction of value by Eskimo peoples as gender relations have been to the peoples of Melanesia and descent to the herders of Africa…[In fact, for] Alaska Eskimos, and perhaps Inuit generally, I would argue that…one root metaphor…is 'animal as guest'. The Eskimo construction of the relationship between humans and animals is characterized by all the ambiguity, generosity, and potential for conflict that characterizes the relationship in Eskimo society between host and guest" ("Iconography" 9-10)

shift in population" (*Boundaries* 29).[23] While a "first-telling" of the story is impossible to pin-point, Paul John's telling of the story for a group of students in 1977 highlights the story's dynamic possibilities as a repository for Yupiit to record and teach historical events in a format designed to instruct, delight, and preserve cultural and environmental knowledge.

Seals are particularly potent signifiers in northern stories.[24] Stories about seals do not, in and of themselves, constitute a particular genre in Inuit narrative, such as the brother-sister story, the orphan story, or the only-child story. Nonetheless, the presence of seals in a story or song most often suggests a type of knowledge for understanding the world and how to act in it. Seals function as an archetype in narrative that marks what is at stake when one encounters difference, otherness, and ambiguity. Stories about seals and humans reveal what it is to be human, but the human in question remarkably resembles a seal. In order to understand these stories about seals, one must know a little something about actual seals, given that the figural seal is never very far from her material self out on the ice. The northern seals

[23] Fienup-Riordan also notes, "Following a dramatic decline in the population brought on by the epidemics that accompanied the arrival of non-natives, the present population has grown to surpass its aboriginal number" (*Eskimo Essays* 29).

[24] Seal hunts are uncertain activities centered on the ambiguously natured seal. Seals are one of the animals created from the finger joints of the Mistress of the Sea, sometimes called Sedna or Nuliajuk, a temperamental figure who holds back game if displeased. However, it is not just traditional stories that encode uncertainty, danger, and liminality around human interactions with seals. Recent films utilize the ambiguous nature of killing your closest relative (the seal) to, in fact, staging the problematic of killing your closest (human) relative. The comedic portrayal of a seal hunt in *Nanook of the North* (1922) is reframed in Zacharias Kunuk's 2002 film, *Atanarjuat, The Fast Runner*. Kunuk's film has a doubled hunt, a successful seal hunt alongside a welcomed pregnancy as well as a failed seal hunt at an *aglu* (seal breathing hole) that ends in the death of the group's leader by the hand of his son. Most recently in the 2011 film *On the Ice*, by the Inupiat director Andrew Okpeaha MacLean, it is the activity of going on a seal hunt that ends in the death of a young man that sets the stage for the conflict on and off the ice.

represented in these stories are most often bearded seals, spotted seals, ribbon seals, and ringed seals—all species that depend on ice at some point in their life-cycle, whether for a pupping den or to haul out of the water for periods of rest. In Inuit narrative, seals, like polar bears and seabirds, are figures of liminality, given that their life is spent on the edge between elements the borders of which are generally strictly enforced through prohibitions on eating or working the skin of a land animal during sea hunting seasons or scraping and sewing sea mammal skins when hunting on land. Seals are creatures of the sea, but they are also mammals who nurse their young. They spend quite a bit of time in the water, but they also depend on the stability provided by the edges of ice floes where they make snow dens like polar bears and, sometimes, like humans. Seals, then, can instruct one in the crossing of boundaries, because to traverse worlds (sea/land or seal/human), one needs passages. In the two following stories about seals and humans, I explore narrative practices between the worlds of seals as biological creatures and as figural beings. Working at the edge of the ice floe is a practice in negotiating what might at first glance appear to be an opposition between human and animal or subject and object. But on closer inspection, one finds paths of connection, contagion, and mutuality.

These two stories come from opposite sides of the North American Arctic: one originates in Toksook Bay on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta of Alaska and is known as "The Boy who went to Live with Seals" or "The Boy who went with the Bladders." The other, "Arnaqtaaqtuq: The One Who Gets a Mother," was first recorded by Knud Rasmussen in an Iglulingmiut community of northeastern

Canada—a community later to become the settled inhabitation, Igloolik, of Nunavut Territory. The residents of Toksook Bay are predominantly Yup'ik Eskimos while those of Igloolik, outside of their community, identify as Inuit. Yup'ik live in an environment that is vastly different from the stereotype of the Arctic: the delta where the Yukon River meets the Kuskokwim is a flat, marshy plain crisscrossed with water "highways." The region is below the Arctic Circle and can be quite hot in summer, up to 80 degrees Fahrenheit. The vegetation and coastal waters are rich and support a variety of wildlife. Yup'ik have never felt the need to build snow houses, but, until recently, lived in large family groups with a central men's house surrounded by smaller, semi-subterranean houses mostly occupied by women and children (Fienup-Riordan *Boundaries* 38). The town of Igloolik, on the other hand, is situated on an island of the same name off the coast of Melville Peninsula, oriented towards Baffin Island. Just above the Arctic Circle, Igloolik experiences much more ice and snow and for longer periods than Toksook Bay. The Iglulingmiut, like the Yup'ik, lived in semi-subterranean houses most of the year, but also employed the ubiquitous snow-huts on occasion.

If these two northern coastal people come from different arctic environments, which presumably helped shape differences in culture, how can we theorize a Yup'ik story alongside an Inuit one? Or, to put it another way, after Martin's diligent work putting specificity back into the northern indigenous literary archive, why risk erasing geographic and cultural difference in order to talk about seals? I offer three reasons.

The first is linguistic and takes us back to the creation of the literary archive of North America's northern coastal people with Knud Rasmussen's journey from Greenland to Siberia along the Northwest Passage by dogsled. From 1921 to 1924, Rasmussen traveled via dogsled "across arctic America." He was the first European to travel the length of the Northwest Passage on foot (or several multiplications of four feet, really). The ten volumes came to be called collectively after the name of the epic journey—"The Fifth Thule Expedition." The purpose of the journey was, in Rasmussen's words, to "attack the great primary problem of the origin of the Eskimo race" (*Across Arctic America* xxxiii). While his musings on origins have been proven incorrect, Rasmussen's most valuable contribution was the successful demonstration that the Inuit of Greenland were linguistically related to the Eskimos of Alaska. Fluent in Inuktitut (the Inuit language) from speaking with his Inuk grandmother as a small child, Rasmussen was able to converse with the diverse groups of Inuit he met during his travels. At one point he remarks: "it would be natural for the language and traditions of the various tribes to have lost all homogeneity. Yet the remarkable thing I found was that my Greenland dialect served to get me into complete understanding with all the tribes" (xxxvi). Rasmussen's legacy, in contrast to that of other northern explorers and ethnographers, was a wealth of written work that stands to this day as the most comprehensive archive of Inuit cultural and oral history. Not only are most of the "poems" in Carpenter's *Anerca* drawn from the *Fifth Thule Expedition*, the contemporary films of Inuit director Zacharias Kunuk (from Igloolik) are also based on stories first recorded by Rasmussen; Kunuk's film, *The Journals of Knud*

Rasmussen, even explicitly includes Rasmussen in the plot's motivation, although the focus is all on Aua, Rasmussen's informant among the Iglulingmiut.[25]

While Rasmussen offers compelling evidence of linguistic and narratologic continuity across the North American Arctic, my second reason is political and provides a much more recent basis on which to read these two stories together: the Inuit Circumpolar Council. On April 28, 2009 in Tromsø, Norway, Inuit leaders from Greenland, Canada, Alaska, and Russia launched a Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Arctic Sovereignty, stating: "[the] Declaration on Arctic Sovereignty emphasizes the unity of Inuit as one people across four countries, and also addresses the unique relationships Inuit have within each respective state."[26]

But the story of the ICC begins over thirty years ago. In 1975, Inupiat leader Eben Hopson (from Barrow, Alaska) declared at the World Council of Indigenous Peoples: "We Eskimo are an international community sharing common language, culture, and a common land along the Arctic coast of Siberia, Alaska, Canada and

[25] The film follows the shaman Aua during a time of change in the mid-nineteenth century: the historical, environmental and social knowledge of the world he lives in comes into question as Aua's powers to live successfully fail him. After a long period of starvation, Aua eventually banishes his familiar spirits so that he may join the increasingly powerful and influential Christian religion. In essence, the quote on the cover of the DVD ("Once a shaman abandons his faith, there is no turning back") is misleading. The film is not about what happens to Aua once he becomes Christian, it is about the moment when "from a shore wind [he] drifted out / In [his] kayak / And [he] thought [he] was in danger" (*Intellectual Culture of the Copper Eskimos* 53). Christianity becomes just another journey, another mode of attention to the world, and a tool for survival. It is not privileged as an all-encompassing conclusion to Inuit history and culture. This theme of displacing the power of "grand narratives" is at the very heart of this film: a written record of Aua and his family persists thanks to Rasmussen and his journals, yet in the film Rasmussen appears for all of thirty seconds. The film is not about Rasmussen's (or his readers') relationship with Aua and Inuit spirituality (a position of privilege), but about contemporary Inuit relationships to the stories of their ancestors and how they managed to survive in an alien social and economic position.

[26] "A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic" (*ICC*).

Greenland. Although not a nation-state, as a people, we do constitute a nation."[27] In the ICC's Charter Declaration produced from the initial meeting, "Inuit" refers to "indigenous members of the Inuit homeland (Inuit Nunaat) recognized by Inuit as being members of their people and shall include the Inupiat and Yupik in Alaska, Inuit and Inuvialuit in Canada, Kalaallit in Greenland and Yupik in Russia."[28] As well as a linguistic connection, the two stories originate with a people who have a shared political affiliation.

The third reason for building an interpretative strategy based on two stories from opposite sides of the North American Arctic is conceptual, specifically the concept of personhood for the Yupiit and the Inuit. Jarich Oosten points out that "[T]he concept of inua [for Inuit, or speakers of Inuktitut] (or Yua) [for Yup'ik] [meaning] 'its person' refers to independent spirits as well as to a particular type of soul. The word is derived from the root inu- 'human life' and is best translated as 'its human being' or 'its person'" (186-7). The term is not species specific; rather, all species and spirits have an inua (or a Yua). In the Yup'ik story, "The Boy who went to Live with Seals," Paul John describes the arrangement of bodies in the men's house. In the English translation it reads: "The ones on the sleeping platforms circling the *qasgi* walls were competent men" (39). This seems like a normal gathering of community members, *except that these competent men are bearded seals*. The boy has joined his bearded seal host and gone to an underwater community that parallels his own. The Yup'ik original does not distinguish competent animals from competent

[27] ICC's Beginnings (*ICC*).
[28] Inuit Circumpolar Council Charter, Article 1 Definitions (*ICC*).

men; both are designated with the Yup'ik term *Yuut*: people. In the story of "Arnaqtaaqtuq," there is a similar use of *inu*; in the Inuktitut, before Arnaqtaaqtuq gets his name at the end of the story, he is called the "inuugami," which Rasmussen translates as "this being who was just born" (42). "Being" refers to neither human nor animal, and may have something of the potentiality of both, an idea the story will work through. For Oosten (and as the two examples make clear), "the yua and the inua are terminologically equivalent in respectively Yupik and [Inuktitut]" (187).

Returning to the word *anerca*—the word that Carpenter uses to title his anthology—for analysis, an indigenous ecologic reading practice starts to take shape. "Anerca" is derived from the Inuktitut word *anirniq*, which means both soul and breath. Carpenter, in the introduction to his anthology, explains: "In Eskimo [sic] the word to make poetry is the word to breathe; both are derivatives of *anerca*, the soul, that which is eternal: the breath of life. A poem is words infused with breath or spirit: 'Let me breathe of it', says the poet-maker and then begins."[29] Carpenter seems to have taken poetic license in his conclusion that Inuit use the same word for breath to mean poetry, given that *pisiit* is the usual term for the personal songs in his anthology. However, if, in following Martin, one rethinks these poems in their original guise as "song"—as words meant to be sung out loud using one's breath—a *topos* integral for the understanding of Inuit literature becomes apparent—the

[29] This "poet-maker" is Orpingalik, a leader of a Netsilik tribe from around Pelly Bay. Knud Rasmussen first recorded his songs and stories during his Fifth Thule Expedition that crossed the Arctic from 1921-1924 (*Across Arctic America* 164).

interrelated and codependent terms "breath-soul-life."[30] Breath, along with an ancestral name and a spirit-form, make up the soul in Inuit cosmology, three aspects of spirit necessary for life. Interestingly enough, in its guise as soul, *anirniq* is the root word for the Christian God introduced in the nineteenth century; and in its connection to breath (that is, air), *anirniq* is the root for words detailing different aspects of the atmosphere.[31] Thus, *anirniq* is a complex site for working out the relationship of inner and outer selves that also encodes traditional and modern orientations to the world.[32]

"The Boy Who Went to Live with Seals" tells the story of a young boy whose parents wish him to grow up to be a great hunter. Following the advice of a shaman, the boy is turned into a ringed seal and goes to live with the other seals in their parallel world under the ice for one year. During his sojourn, the boy learns about human actions that either encourage or discourage the seals from "allowing themselves to be overpowered" and taken by human hunters (Fienup-Riordan *Boundaries* 3). At the end of the year, the boy and his bearded seal teacher find a worthy hunter to be their "host," are taken (that is, killed), and the boy eventually transforms back into a human and returns to his parents when the villagers give the

[30] Inuit songs generally come in three types, or genres: the songs that Carpenter anthologizes are mostly *pisiit*, or personal songs, and these differ from the *iviutiit* (embarrassing songs) and the *sakausiit* (sacred songs) (Martin "How Do You Say 'Poetry' in Inuktitut?").
[31] Inuktitut Living Dictionary. *Anirniq*: spirit/soul and breath
[32] Fienup-Riordan adds another dimension of breath to the matrix. Analyzing the actions of the seabird that breathes out "a fine soporific mist" (the figural avatar of a hunter in a kayak throwing a harpoon), she argues that cloaking the death of the seal in the image of life (breath or *anerneq*), retains the ambiguity, even the contradiction, involved in stating that seals "willingly enter the human world." Not appearing in their true form—as human hunters—shifts the negative implications of the act of killing ("Bird and Bladder" 36).

saved seal bladders back to the sea during the yearly Bladder Festival.[33] The fact that the boy lives with the seals for the specified amount of time of one year is an important detail, encoding both an ecological perspective and a complex biological affinity between humans and seals. Bearded and ringed seals are a staple food source for Yupiit and Inuit; the fact of the boy becoming a ringed seal at the same time his teacher is a bearded seal may have something to do with appearance (bearded seals are the largest of the northern seals and have prominent facial whiskers while ringed seals are quite small and unassuming in comparison). It also has very much to do with biological similarity; ringed seals, like humans, gestate for nine months and the single pup will be weaned after about five to seven weeks. After weaning her pup, the mother will likely mate again. There will then be delayed implantation of the fertilized egg and the seal will give birth the next spring, almost one year later. In order to responsibly hunt seals—that is, to continue to have a future with seals—northern indigenous people have to have an intimate knowledge of seal life cycles.

The hero of the story is the "only child of his parents." This is an important qualifier: his "only child" status locates the boy as especially valued because he is his parents' connection to the future and the past: names, like souls, are finite in number in Yup'ik and Inuit culture, and this fictional boy who is never named for us would have the name and soul of a recently deceased relative.[34] In effect, the boy *is* his

[33] In Yup'ik tradition, Fienup-Riordan explains, seals taken in the hunt and brought back to the home are considered guests and strict rules of hospitality are followed so that the seal will feel welcomed and will let other seals know that these human hosts treat their guests properly (*Boundaries* 6).
[34] Edelman proposes that western kinship models are grounded in a reproductive futurity that assimilates and orients social and political life always in a never-to-arrive future that consistently

namesake, a recycling of matter and spirit that closely resembles the way seals are also always singular in nature, endowed with the knowledge and capabilities of the seal it was before.[35] This is also a recognizable genre of story: orphans and only children are often the heroes of stories that bring new knowledge back to their people, knowledge of geography, physical laws, social mores, and of others—other people, other animals, and other spirits. The children bring new knowledge to their people and the stories bring new knowledge to listeners and readers. John, a celebrated Yup'ik elder and orator, situates his telling of the story that eventually became part of the bilingual volume, *Stories for Future Generations*, as instructional, by designating his audience as "young children," metonymically placing himself in the role of the bearded seal and the listeners in the role of the young boy and the other *Yut'eraraat*, young people and/or ringed seals. While the bearded seal teaches the boy about actions that occur in his world that have consequences in the world of the seal—such as keeping waterholes clear for thirsty seals or shoveling snow from around the houses to keep the paths open for the seals to travel—John's audience learns the same lessons. A person who does not spend a great deal of time thinking, considering, watching, and engaging with the sea during times spent on or off the water, we learn, will appear as if floating through air when out in his kayak to the seals who are always watching, judging, and gossiping with each other (41-45).

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disavows living worldly in the present (*No Future*). The Inuit namesake model offers an alternative, given that it is the past through the ancestors that is marked as privileged.

[35] Laugrand and Oosten write: "A child only became a complete person when it received an *atiq*, a name, usually from a deceased relative…According to Rasmussen (1929, 172), 'A child cries for a name, and when the one whose name-soul is to take up its dwellings in the newly born infant is summoned, care must be taken that all qualities that soul possessed are communicated to the child'" (*Shamanism* 126).

Understandably confused after his transformation into a seal, the boy is reassured when his companions tell him they are returning home. They arrive at a seemingly normal looking *qasgiq* (the large communal men's house) and the boy sees: "The people sitting right below the platform on the floor had sores on them. They didn't sit still. They continually scratched [their bodies]…The ones on the mats were small people, not very big, with round faces and big round eyes" (39). The boy soon learns that "the ones…with sores that they were continually scratching were spotted seals. The small people with the big eyes were ringed seals…[he] saw them in human form" (39-41). The story is about how appearances can be deceiving and shows that the failure of recognition is not the fault of the one who appears different, but with the one perceiving. The word "*cunuwa*" illustrates this point. *Cunuwa* is often used in the story in relation to the boy; it describes both "wonder" and thinking you see something, but in reality you are seeing something else, that is, perceptual uncertainty.

When it is time for the boy to return to the human world, the bearded seal first looks for the hunter whom he lets himself be killed by each year. Death comes as a soporific sleep sent on the wings of a seabird and the boy comes back to his human form after the saved seal bladders are blown up with human breath and returned to the sea in the final point of a ritual exchange.[36] As Oosten explains:

[36] "A metaphor for what it meant to be a real person, according to the Yup'ik conception of reality, can be found in the opposition between sleeping and waking. When a person was possessed of a powerful mind, he was said to be awake to his surroundings. Conversely, a person who paid no attention to the rules and led a thoughtless life was considered to be asleep…this same oppositions between sleeping and waking also characterized animal society. For example, a seal might be killed by a hunter's harpoon. However, if the seal was awake when it was hit, then its soul was said to retract to its bladder,

> [T]he souls of animals are thought to reside in the bladder of the animal…By inflating the bladder a man induces his own human life force into the bladder and animates it. By piercing the bladder (an action metaphorically associated with copulation) he sets it free so that a new animal can develop. Thus the hunter seems to add a crucial element in the regeneration of the game: his breath. (192)

Oosten points to an important vector within Inuit cosmology that provides evidence for the claim of a northern indigenous literary tradition that is more than just an archive of printed stories. A more thorough examination of the *topos* breath-soul-life, in the context of "The Boy who went to Live with Seals," yields a discovery: in order to save the bladders of the seals caught over the winter for the bladder festival held the following autumn, the bladders are first blown up like a balloon; they are filled with breath. The breath, as Oosten points out, is crucial for making new life in the form of a return of seals and the avoidance of starvation for the Inuit and Yupiit. Once dried, the breath stored inside the bladders is released, as when a person releases air to sing. Thus, the ritual storage of seal bladders follows the same action as the making of song. The correlation of the *topos* breath-soul-life, or *anirniq*, with seal constitutes a literary tradition that depends upon a relationship to another, who turns out to be a subject participating in a communicative—and didactic—act, rather than an object or tool for the poet-maker's own self-fashioning. In other words, it is a literary tradition that is multi-species at its core. While literature might depend on the

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where it would lie dormant until, well fed and cared for by the successful hunter, it was returned to the sea to be reborn the following year" (Fienup-Rirodan "Real People" 265-266).

letter, it would be reductive to think that the letter is always a silent one. The literary in my argument about literary tradition is a communicative act that inspires *and* creates—the seals are created anew through the breath of the hunter, the hunter is created anew through the act of breathing, and Paul John and other Yup'ik elders continue to tell the story anew for audiences of young people for the continued life of Yupiit and seals.

John ends his story by repeating the importance of clearing paths: "You know yesterday," he says, "I said that the ones who shoveled entrance ways thought of clearing the paths for their potential catches…That is how long this story is" (57). John ends his story with a traditional concluding phrase that has an apt relevance to this particular story. The story only works if it also acts as a path between worlds, if it teaches how to connect with the others around one. Clearing paths is both a physical act (shoveling snow) and a metaphysical act (maintaining connections to other "persons"—nonhuman animals). Just as paths between houses are important for allowing people to move around in the human world, paths across worlds keep humans and other species together in mutual sustaining ontologies. Like the shaman who finds an alternative to the sacrificial story, John encourages activities that maintain collective cohesiveness for humans and their close relatives, the seal.

For Fienup-Riordan, seals and other animals also fall within the category of "persons," as each group has their own rules, rituals and ways of inhabiting the world, or what we might term "culture." As she explains, "[Yup'ik] did not consider animals a nonsentient resource to be harvested according to the dictates of human need, but

rather classes of persons with whom they had established relationships, complete with mutual obligations" (*Boundaries* 88). Of course, the end result of human and seal interaction in these circumstances is almost always death for the seal. The seal is eaten, the fat (or blubber) is turned into oil, and the skin is tanned and turned into clothing or sold in order to buy more ammunition or boat parts to continue to hunt more seals. However, there is nevertheless something dynamic rather than violently hierarchical in this seal-human relating: "The difference between [animals and humans] is…an 'activity rather than a state'" says Fienup-Riordan. "Boundaries are dynamic and transitional, and passages between worlds are, for better or worse, always a potentiality" (49). This includes the boundary between life and death.

Kunuk's 2002 film, *Atanarjuat, The Fast Runner*, explores the potentiality of birth and death in the chapter "The Family Way." In this scene, as Atanarjuat comes closer, we see that he has a caught a seal "way out on the floating ice" and that his wife, Atuat, is heavily pregnant. While the seal and kayak wait just off screen, a tender moment passes between the two as Atanarjuat kneels down to listen to the fetus kick in Atuat's belly. Atanarjuat's brother and sister-in-law then come down to the beach to help butcher the seal and the next scene is of the ringed seal cut open on the beach and water being put on to boil. In line with Martin's literary nationalism, some critics have viewed this film as "counterethnography" to the staged and "slapstick" nature of Robert Flaherty's ethnographic film, *Nanook of the North* (McCall 29-30). It is, Arnold Krupat writes, a demonstration of "practical social power through oral narrative practice" (607). The film thus privileges speakers of

Inuktitut who have historically been denied any advantage of language or culture within the dominant Euro-Canadian political structure.[37]

To an audience conditioned to view indigenous people as environmentally naturalized (that is, located in natural, non-built up settings) from films ranging from *Nanook of the North* to *Dances With Wolves*, the technologies at work in *Atanarjuat* are often overlooked. Of course, there are the cameras, lighting, make-up and clothing artists, the writers, editors, translators, and all the other overt technologies that go into making a film. But there are also cultural technologies on display that are much harder to recognize and read as technology. In Kunuk's film, these include family structures and displays of kinship (such as the intergenerational relationships between brothers, fathers, sons, and namesakes), seal and caribou hunting (turns in the plot often center around the ambiguous activity of hunting other live souls), cycles of birth and death that connect the human and nonhuman characters, and the storytelling practices evident in the songs (and even in the medium of film itself) that tie these practices together.

My final reading, of the story "Arnaqtaaqtuq: The One Who Gets a Mother," suggests an interpretation for the interaction among Atanarjuat, Atuat, and the dead seal that focuses on the technology of the story being told. Anthropologist Xavier

[37] Sophie McCall argues that this scene, in particular, "creates sympathy for the characters [while] further individualiz[ing] them" (30). However, it is not by accident that Atanarjuat rowing to shore singing after a successful seal hunt is shown directly before the revelation of Atuat's pregnancy. I am not dismissing McCall and Krupat's postcolonial theory-informed analyses of *Atanarjuat*. I think both readings have much to add to our understanding, as a western audience, of the film as placed in a genealogy of relationships with other films about and by aboriginal people. Rather, I want to highlight some of the narrative practices of the film that situate what is most Inuit about it—and this is in the understated (that is to say implicit or non-stated) becoming-worldly relationships of the characters to each other and the world through the human characters' performances of daily practices that involve the living with, and the eating of, other animal species.

Blaisel analyzes "Arnaqtaaqtuq" (which is about a wandering fetus that tries life out as several different species) for how it structures the cosmology of the Inuit and the animals they hunt and eat. Blaisel writes:

> The story shows, in effect, the continuity between the seal killed by the hand of a man and the fathering (or bringing into being) of a human being. This continuity is underlined by the terms employed to designate the wandering hero, rendered explicit by the overlap between the death of an aborted fetus or newborn, hunting at seal breathing holes and the birth of a human being. The story turns on the sacred pact between humanity and prey. This pact supposes a sort of privileged affinity between the seal and the child being born, one that contributes more than just the materiality of the body to the making of a human person.[38]

In the story, a fetus is aborted and fed to the dogs. When eaten, the fetus is re-born as a dog and his dog-mother urges him to eat because he "never gets enough / because [he] was scared" (21). Once he learns how to eat like a dog, he decides to travel through all the animals as a fetus, wandering through a seal, wolf, caribou, walrus, and back to seal.[39] While Blaisel structures his argument purely on the relationship between human and seal, the wandering fetus learns something that is particular to each species—both predator and prey. When he returns to being a seal, the *inuugami* (wandering fetus) lets himself be taken by a human hunter. At the moment that the

[38] All quotations from Blaisel are my translations from the French.
[39] The story emphasizes the degree to which Inuit have concrete and studied knowledge about seals and the other animals they interact with regularly in their specificity and otherness, learning how to eat like a dog at a trash-heap, wandering across the land in a wolf-pack, being easily spooked like a caribou, or staying in a rather smelly bunch like walrus generally do.

harpoon pierces the head of the fetus-seal, the seal and the hunter are transported to the home of the hunter in a paronymous transformation of *aglu* (seal breathing hole) into *iglu* (house). In the original Inuktitut, at the point of this transformation, it is unclear whether the subject of the sentence refers to the hunter or the seal "going home quickly" (24). Blaisel helpfully footnotes this ambiguity:

> The term can be applied to one or the other of the two protagonists. According to informants, the reason for the ambiguity is simple: there is the belief that the breathing hole where a seal is killed by a man functions as a "house" at the precise moment of slaughter.

Blaisel points out that in the story a series of equivalences are set up between actions that are proper to seals and those that are proper to humans. For example, the word for the action of a seal looking at the surface of the water before breathing (*ituatuq*) is used to describe the fetus's movement before his (human) birth. The hunted seal and the human fetus are equivalent beings that descend from the same spiritual circulation, although they end up in different bodily forms (36). The pun of *iglu* (house) and *aglu* (seal breathing hole) is given another level of meaning when the hunter's wife ("who never had any children" [24]) becomes pregnant as the wandering fetus leaves the seal and "prepare[s] to go inside" the *iglu* provided by the wife's uterus, or *illiag*—the little bed. In a reverse of the boy who returns with his seal companions to *their* house underwater, when the seal that houses Arnaqtaaqtuq is killed, he returns to "his house," the womb of the hunter's wife.

Reflecting on the nexus between animals and houses in non-western cosmologies, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, in "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism," writes:

> [A]nimals and spirits see themselves as humans: they perceive themselves as (or become) anthropomorphic beings when they are in their own houses or villages and they experience their own habits and characteristics in the form of culture...This "to see as" refers literally to percepts and not analogically to concepts…In sum, animals are people, or see themselves as persons. (470)

Understanding that the "to see as" refers to the act of seeing—an act always located in a specific body—shifts the perspective from a focus on the metaphoric relationship between human and animal in these stories (the animals as "merely" humans in disguise) to the acknowledgment of the irreducible liveliness of the other that is also like oneself. Human and animal in this cosmology are not concepts with attendant categorical boundaries (such as, humans, and not animals, have language, art, or abstract thought). Rather, humans and nonhumans are relational beings with similar claims to culture, history, and ecological presence. As Viveiros de Castro writes:

> A perspective is not a representation because representations are a property of the mind or spirit, whereas the point of view is located in the body…Since the soul is formally identical in all species, it can only see the same things everywhere—the difference is given in the specificity of bodies…Animals see in the *same* way as we do *different* things because their bodies are different from ours. (478, emphasis in original)

He offers an expansive understanding of "body" as not a distinctive shape or substance, but as "an assemblage of affects or ways of being that constitute a *habitus*" (478). The body, as "a bundle of affects and capacities" is the origin of perspectives. Focusing on bodies and affects resituates the human as one among many, which is why the boy when he is with the seals expresses uncertainty about his position vis-à-vis his hosts. Furthermore, given that there is no ontological difference between humans and animals, there can be no hierarchy from which to enact the exploitation of animals into capital.

David Pelly describes watching his Inuk friend Mikitok perform the traditional method for hunting seals in the spring, connecting the physical and figural dimensions of the seal-human relationship in a bodily practice:

> [Mikitok] lies on the surface of the sea ice on his right side…aligned exactly with the direction of the seal. His body must be precisely positioned. About 300 meters away, a seal is sleeping in the sun. When the seal raises its head and sees Mikitok, he…lies down on the full length of his right side so that he looks like a seal. He then uses the foot of his left leg to scratch the ice. When the seal hears the scratching, it relaxes and puts its head down. Mikitok now lifts his head up, supports himself on his right elbow, and slowly moves a meter or two toward the seal. When the seal looks up again, Mikitok puts his head down and scratches the ice with his heel. This time the seal does not seem reassured, so Mikitok makes a seal-like noise with his mouth. He wants the seal to look at him so that it can decide that he is not a threat. (74-75)

As we can see with Pelly's story about Mikitok, the cosmological order as structured in the narrative is enacted bodily on a daily basis—produces a *habitus*—as the hunter performs "being a human-with-seal" (Despret 122).[40] Mikitok does not just go out on to the ice and lie down in a prone position and hope a seal believes him. Through intense observation, to the point of identification, Mikitok knows that "when [the seal] opens its eyes, it breathes at the same time." Mikitok "has observed this phenomenon when he hunts; he has seen a seal's flank move just as the seal's eyes open. This is especially useful as a way to know that the seal is now looking at you, for sometimes the seal does not raise its head. So Mikitok watches for the light reflecting off the seal's dark skin as it breathes and takes his cue" (Pelly 78). Mikitok communicates with the seal, both vocally (he makes a "seal-like noise") and bodily (he "lies down on the full length of his right side so that he looks like a seal"). Mikitok states: "It's like I am talking to the seal, saying 'Look up' or 'Lie down'" (Pelly 78). The "tactile space" between Mikitok and the seal is charged with their relationship, and each is brought into existence, into the world, through the other.

The story of "the one who gets a mother" establishes the family unit in the wider context of the family group, which includes both humans and others. Blaisel argues that although the story underlines the fundamental relationship between "eater" and "eaten," it does not simply set up a hierarchy based on difference. While the fetus exploits the dynamic passageways between species, the story moves from

[40] Despret's "anthropo-zoo-genetic practice, a practice that constructs animal and human" (122), focuses on domestication—the domestication of both the human by the nonhuman partner and vice versa. Both entities become open to each other through being available (a fashion of being in the world that takes seriously another being's manner of being in the world), and not simply docile to another's command.

incompetent eating (as a scared dog fetus) to competent eating (as a seal-human fetus). The narrative negotiates what it means to eat those nearest to you in a fashion that acknowledges that to "eat well" is to share in the practice of eating. Jacques Derrida articulates the practice in this way:

> The infinitely metonymical question on the subject of "one must eat well" must be nourishing not only for me, for a "self," which would thus eat badly; it must be *shared*, as you might put it, and not only in language. "One must eat well" does not mean above all taking in and grasping in itself, but *learning* and *giving* to eat, learning-to-give-the-other-to-eat. One never eats entirely on one's own. ("Eating Well" 282, emphasis in original)

Learning and giving are both processes that can never be finished, used up, completed. In other words, the sharing of food, of bodies, is incalculable. Seals, humans and other animals "learn to give the other to eat" in exchange for eating well, for sharing in language, subjectivity and gastronomy. By sharing (the seal sharing his body with the hunter, the hunter sharing the seal with his wife, the wife sharing blood and ritual with the harpoon), human birth is staged as a *process* integrally bound up with the life and death of the seal.

In "The Boy who went to Live with Seals," the boy only becomes human through an affective, that is, *bodily*, identification with his seal companions. The boy tells the woman who finds him at the seal-breathing hole "that his companions had left him behind. He told her that even though he wanted to go with them, they said they weren't going to take him and went ahead and left. He cried wanting to go with

them…He became visible in human form at that time" (55). The boy *identifies* himself as seal, not human, and wants desperately to return to his underwater home beneath the ice—as Cruikshank notes, the danger of crossing boundaries to someone else's world is the risk of acculturation.[41] The story emphasizes that humans do not cross boundaries—or invite others to cross—thoughtlessly and without consequences. The boy is transformed in the crossing over, and not only physically. Although he returns to the human world with "special knowledge" gained in the encounter with the world beneath the ice, he also leaves something of himself behind as well, something given freely, whether love or some other emotional attachment.[42] This attachment is what gives the boy, when he grows up to be a "great hunter," his ability: he knows and acknowledges the depth of his relational connection to seals.

What is missing from the otherwise close reading and analysis of this story and other seal-human stories told by the anthropologists that work closely with Yup'ik and Inuit storytellers, is how emotion (desire, love, fear) constitutes and is constituted by these transformations and species entanglements. More clearly, if one examines how emotions like longing, trust, influence, interest, and love intersect with the discourses of biological imperatives, cultural understanding, and traditional

[41] Cruikshank, personal communication. Cruikshank helpfully read an early version of this chapter and provided insightful commentary about stories involving children who cross boundaries and then return with new knowledge. This genre of story can also be read against the history of native children taken from their families and placed in boarding schools or with white families. Concurrently, this type of story might also provide a discursive fabric from which to understand and reach a level of acceptance when the children were taken away and came back with "new knowledge."

[42] Donna Haraway writes: "To be in love means to be worldly, to be in connection with significant otherness and signifying scales, in layers of local and global, in ramifying webs" (*Species* 97). I would read this enactment of love on the part of the Yup'ik boy for both the seal and the world of the seal as a relationship beyond "human exceptionalism" that "makes us face nurturing and killing as an inescapable part of mortal companion species entanglements [which is killing without making a category of beings as killable]" (*Species* 105-106).

practices, might other stories be told that actively enlarge, rather than impoverish, "the range of explanations" given for how humans and seals exist in the world together (Despret 117)? Thinking through a range of explanations rather than looking for *an* explanation opens us to a practice of "becoming worldly," to an inheritance of histories that ethically bind human and seal in these relationships.

Kunuk does not need to translate the relationship between the seal and the human characters in his film, given that the politics and, indeed, the poetics, of a "partial translation" satisfy both western and Inuit viewers of the film.[43] How we read the body of the seal lying between Atanarjuat and Atuat in the midst of their family unit has repercussions for how we, as western readers and viewers, understand the position of seals and Inuit in the worlds of figural representation and international politics. How we insert the story of killing and eating seals into other analytical practices, whether empowering to the Inuit or otherwise, has consequences for the conceptual framework in which both seals and humans exist in the world, how they become worldly together.

IsumaTV's web page for the short film "Tungijuq: What We Eat," reads: "Inuit jazz throat-singer Tanya Tagaq, and Cannes-winning filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk, talk back to Brigitte Bardot and [the] anti-sealhunting lobby on the eternal

[43] McCall's analysis of what she terms "partial translation" in *Atanarjuat* (which contains all dialogue in Inuktitut with subtitles in English), focuses on the opening sequence of the soon-to-be-deposed chief Kumaglak singing his song to a stranger. She writes that the singing of this untranslated song is "a kind of manifesto that shapes the politics and poetics of the film: to respond to and contest the history of appropriation in recording Inuit songs…The incident [the meeting with the stranger who then kills him] suggests that the song's power lies in its performance, and the relations of address cannot be separated from the song itself. Taking the song out of one context and recontextualizing it in another profoundly affects the range of meanings that it can generate" (19).

reality of hunting."[44] However, the film is not so much a "talking-back,"—to *Noonoah*, for example, Brigitte Bardot's 1978 children's book that tells the story of a friendship between a young Inuit boy and a seal that is almost torn apart by commercial seal hunters invading the landscape in tall ships—as it is a re-envisioning of the terms on which the debate rests.[45] In the discourse of the anti-sealing movement, led by organizations such as Greenpeace, and celebrities such as Bardot and Paul McCartney, seals only appear as representative of a wild nature that is in the process of being destroyed by human interference. This discourse does not have room for the formation of other types of relationships between human and seal that are mutually sustaining in both life and death. The rhetoric of this specific form of animal rights discourse emphasizes the finality of the act of killing, as the human enacts dominion over the helpless animal. However, at the core of the displays that encourage humans to view animals as creatures "to be saved," we find a contradiction. In the two most famous photographs from the early days of the anti-sealing campaign, the picture of Bardot with a baby harp seal in her arms and the picture of Bob Hunter and Paul Watson in front of a sealing ship kneeling next to a whitecoat, another discourse is at work alongside the appeal to the environmental consciousness of American and European viewers. The figural resonance of the photographs domesticates the seal within the confines of the frame. The sealing vessel dwarfs the two men who in turn tower over the seal pup. There is a resonant

[44] "Tungijuq"
[45] "Talking back" is a concept, like "moving the center," that is heavily indebted to, and often limited by, postcolonial criticism that forces the discussion to remain dialectical, even as the force of the terms shifts to a new, indigenous, awareness.

dynamic among the figures in the frame. The ship that represents the global commercial harvest—reflecting an antagonism to nature—dwarfs the human practice of care that seems fragile in comparison and the object of that care, the seal.[46]

"Tungijuq" reveals a related set of concerns but mobilizes different rhetorics between human and nonhuman to destabilize these binary concepts and the concepts that include "centers" from which to organize a political engagement. The film opens with a creature that is neither human nor wolf, but rather the representation of the "personhood," or *inua*, that has taken wolf form. This person-wolf kills a caribou and through the act of killing, the caribou's *inua* is revealed and released as she sensually fingers her own cut-open abdomen.[47] The transformed caribou-person staggers to the edge of the ice floe and links the margins of the worlds of land and sea as she falls into the water and becomes a ringed seal. This narrative echoes the cycling of the fetus in the myth of "Arnaqtaaqtuq" through the bodies of different species until he can resume the form of a knowledgeable human. In this feminist version of the tale, the seal-woman is shot and the next scene is of a man (Kunuk) cutting open the seal while a woman (Tagaq) looks lovingly down at the seal's body. When the seal's abdomen is open and revealed in a manner similar to the caribou's, the woman reaches down and, in a gesture that mirrors the caribou-person fingering her wound, touches the seal and gently pulls a piece of the meat into her mouth. The film displays

[46] Read as twin stories of David and Goliath, Watson and Hunter certainly win a respite for the harp seal against commercial interests. And does the seal triumph in the encounter with the activists? In her persistent presence in international conservation discourse that continues to be refined through Inuit political organizing, I think she does.

[47] The wound on the caribou and seal abdomens is the shape and texture of female sexual organs, again highlighting the dynamism between concepts of life and death in Inuit stories about hunting and eating seals.

in a visual register what the story "Arnaqtaaqtuq" narrates: that is, it reveals the complex interaction and interrelationship of humans and their partners in living, whether they be seals, caribou, walrus, or wolves.

The interrelationship of humans and seals is predicated on death: someone dies in the encounter. "Tungijuq" does not disavow the killing of animals; rather, it is very aware that "[k]illing sentient animals is killing someone, not something" (Haraway *When Species Meet* 106). Knowing the subjectivity of the one being killed recognizes what Derrida calls the "becoming-subject of substance" ("Eating Well" 280) that destabilizes the category of "killable," such as produces the baby harp seals in the commercial hunt in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Haraway moves the focus from the finality of death: "knowing this [killing an animal is killing someone] is not the end but the beginning of serious accountability inside worldly complexities" (*When Species Meet* 106). Relationships among humans and between humans and nonhumans are suffused with death, for death is part of the structure of intersubjective relating. Derrida writes:

> [A]s concerns the "Good" [*Bien*] of every morality, the question will come back to determining the best, most respectful, most grateful, and also most giving way of relating to the other and of relating the other to the self…The question is no longer one of knowing if it is "good" to eat the other or if the other is "good" to eat, nor of knowing which other. One eats him regardless and lets oneself be eaten by him…The moral question…[is] *how* for goodness' sake should one *eat well* [*bien manger*]?...In what respect is the

> question, if you will, still carnivorous? ("Eating Well" 281-282, emphasis in original).

The ethical question is not what one should or should not eat, given that everyone must eat (and eating is a symbolic action as well as the bodily incorporation of a substance), but how to incorporate others while being incorporated by others in "the best, most respectful, most grateful, and most giving way." "Tungijuq" explores death and killing from the standpoint of Inuit and, unlike Greenpeace, which sees death as a final ultimate act, Tagaq and Kunuk (the writers of the film) find not finality, but life-giving capacity for the flourishing continuity of relations in time. Seals are not "killable" as a category of object: rather, every act of killing enacts obligations on the part of the human to ensure that each death is singular and marked with an attention to how the death allows both past and future obligations to be performed in the present.

Along with "Tungijuq," "The Boy who went to Live with Seals" and "Arnaqtaaqtuq" are examples of a literary tradition that offers both literary value and a cultural practice of "traditional modernity." Contemporary anthropologists and historians have faulted Rasmussen for his theories about Eskimo origins or his unorthodox and untrained manner of ethnographic collection. Rasmussen, however, is the progenitor of a circumpolar literary archive that acts as a repository for Inuit oral narratives. Although the information about an "exotic" people is screened through a western educated sensibility, Rasmussen's work nevertheless encodes moments of parody and subtle irony to demonstrate what Homi Bhabha refers to as mimicry:

Rasmussen is "the same but not quite" as his educated Danish contemporaries and his western reading public, because he is "the same but not white" (122). The stories collected by Rasmussen offer a way for contemporary Inuit to decolonize the ethnographic record, play with histories of expectation and desire, and, when so much was lost due to intense missionization, national unification, and a push for modernization, use the archive for re-ordering and reflecting on (un)certain pasts for possible alternative futures. The archive, rather than being a static window on the past, becomes open to interpretation, encodes competing readings, and offers a complex mix of desire, nostalgia, and tradition. As Fienup-Riordan has written in the context of her Yup'ik informants, "[the Yupiit] are engaged in a complex process of appropriation, innovation, and encounter. Contrary to the view that would see them as either traditional or modern, the Yupiit are…striving to be both" ("Invocation of Tradition" 81, 86).

I would draw a distinction between Martin's literary nationalism as the homogenizing project of putting culture to work in service of broader political gains and literary tradition as a project that acknowledges the specificity of turning to the past in order to resolve issues of the present. Whereas a history can be programmatic (such as producing a fictional timeline that connects the Inuit to Greek *poesis*), a tradition is always mobile, given that the present's understanding and use of the past informs how that history is read and incorporated. In effect, I argue that human and seal in environmental rhetoric should be read through the matrix of breath-soul-life-*with seal*. "Being-with-seal" offers dynamic potentialities for a critical practice that

allows access to northern indigenous historical and environmental knowledge while remaining attentive to this archive's difference. The narratives under study teach how to be better readers, located in time and oriented towards the ecologies of specific places. Better, more knowledgeable, readers make better or more "worldly" relational companions for all species. In the words of Viveiros de Castro, I am therefore advocating an inhabitation of new bodily capacities that dwell in the perspective of difference marked by the *habitus* of what the literary has to offer. Perhaps the question then isn't so much (or shouldn't be) do Inuit have a literary history (which is really asking if Inuit make poetry *like us*), but does literature have Inuit and seals?

FIGURE 2:

Greenpeace founder Bob Hunter and activist Paul Watson protect a seal during Canada's commercial whitecoat harp seal hunt (April 30, 1976). © greenpeace.org

CHAPTER THREE

READING FOR THE TRACE: TRACKING CARIBOU ACROSS ARCTIC LITERARY LANDSCAPES

> The boundaries one has to break are no longer geographical, but literary.
> –Henning Howlid Wærp[1]

> It was then the caribou caught my eye, grey shapes in swirling white, limbs so obscured their bodies seemed to glide like ships in a gale that had found a calm current. I called Leanne to look and we watched incredulous, as more than fifty animals filed past, some stopping to feed, even bed down, while the purple sun glowed through ominous clouds. We were comforted by their presence and climbed back into the tortured tent to sleep through the rest of the storm. Just another day for the caribou.
> –Karsten Heuer[2]

This chapter is a story about caribou—about caribou, people, and wilderness. Caribou, however, are reluctant heroes. They are shy, humble creatures that mind their own business; they do not go in much for posturing, self-promotion, or attention-seeking displays. Leanne Allison has noted, somewhat pathetically, that caribou prey on nothing but the lowly lichen while everyone else preys on them—from eagle to bear, wolf to human, bot fly to mosquito.[3] The caribou cannot catch a break. How does one tell a story then, when the main protagonist is unwilling to fulfill narrative expectations, to be singular and heroic, to persist against all odds, to

[1] "Fridtjof Nansen" 57
[2] "Trip Diary: May 28-June 14"
[3] *Being Caribou* 2004. To be fair to lichens, they are highly complex organisms that provide a rich and stimulating subject for research. Scott Gilbert, a professor of biology at Swarthmore College, writes: "Animals cannot be considered individuals by anatomical, or physiological criteria, because a diversity of symbionts are both present and functional in completing metabolic pathways and serving other physiological functions…Recognizing the 'holobiont'—the multicellular eukaryote plus its colonies of persistent symbionts-- as a critically important unit of anatomy, development, physiology, immunology, and evolution, opens up new investigative avenues and conceptually challenges the ways in which the biological sub-disciplines have heretofore characterized living entities" ("We are all Lichens").

be iconic? In the story of the caribou, it is rarely the caribou that come to life. Instead, the story becomes about the environment they live in—either the geography or the climate. The caribou become background to a storyline about an economy dependent on oil or the antagonism between indigenous and frontier cultures or the history of wilderness and national parks in the United States. The story in these cases is about population demographics or predation or hunting limits. But it is not about caribou. This chapter might also fail to be fully about caribou, even as the caribou haunt the margins, existing on the periphery of their own story. Perhaps this is the only way a truly attentive and politically engaged story of caribou can be told. My story about caribou will include references to oil economies, indigenous presence in the landscape, and debates about wilderness in the volatile complex known as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. It will also be about masculinities and maps, the problem of borders, the politics of an "empty" landscape, and the dual role of language in making these stories and making them understood.

In the introduction I brought up Teresa de Lauretis' argument about the functionality of opposite pairs in narrative. Various binary structures within a text, she argues, are "merely derivatives of the fundamental opposition between boundary and passage" (119). While the passage between opposites can be traversed from either side (life to death or death to life for example), the mythical hero traversing the boundary is "the active principle of culture, the establisher of distinction, the creator of differences" and, above all, human and male (Ibid.). Female is all that is not active, transformative, or mobile. She (or "it" in the case of nature or landscape) is "an

element of plot-space, a topos, a resistance, matrix and matter" (Ibid.). Ann Fienup-Riordan, however, finds another dynamic at work between boundaries and passages. In the previous chapter, I discussed the lessons to be learned from taking seal lives and deaths seriously through how such stories are narrated. "The difference between [animals and humans] is…an 'activity rather than a state'" says Fienup-Riordan. The boundary between human and animal is "dynamic and transitional, and passages between worlds are, for better or worse, always a potentiality" (49). In the Yupik and Inuit stories about seals, action does not confer gender privilege: while men may do the hunting, women are still active participants who can determine the outcome of the hunt. Rather than the boundaries between male and female, human and animal, life and death acting as stable constructions, they are constantly in motion and the passages that bring humans into animal worlds and animals into human worlds must be given constant attention. While caribou are a resistance and a topos within the following stories (gendered and fixed), they also offer a dynamic potentiality for reconceiving caribou, land, and the cultural and political systems in place to manage such "vibrant matter."[4]

I will start with the first epigraph ("The boundaries one has to break are no longer geographical, but literary"), which, with my use, is now twice removed from its origin. Anka Ryall first suggested the shift from the geographical to the literary for a more complex engagement with women's travelogues, and Henning Howlid Wærp takes it up in a study of the phenomenon of "second journeys" that re-trace, both

[4] Cf. Bennett for a fuller discussion of how the material world—often constructed as inert or passive to human action—is an actant that influences, even directs, human action.

physically and narratively, previous arctic explorations (57). Thinking beyond the confines of the cartographic to the literary strategies that rely on and make sense of these mapped places reveals pertinent connections (for caribou and people) among land, narrative, and physical movement. Although Wærp minimizes the impact of gender in his own study, I argue for the importance of gender as a mediating factor when thinking with caribou in Margaret Murie's memoir *Two in the Far North*, the documentary film *Being Caribou*, and Velma Wallis' novel *Bird Girl and the Man who Followed the Sun*. Each of these texts offers the opportunity for a critical engagement with how the parameters of gender, genre, and geography in narrative inhibit or creatively re-imagine the lives of caribou, people, and place in Alaska.

The first chapter introduced the subarctic people the Gwich'in and the difficulty of their legibility in discussions about global warming, even though they acutely feel the anxiety of change. The press of political, social, and economic relations that the polar bear brings to the forefront is atomized further when the discussion is refocused around the issue of caribou, wilderness, and political representation. Like the Yupi'ik story of the "Boy who Went with the Bladders," the Gwich'in have a popular story that didactically works through inter-human and intra-human relations to arrive at ecologically sustainable patterns of inhabitation. The "Boy who Went to the Moon" tells the story of a young orphan being raised by his grandmother; in another version he is a baby in the care of his parents.[5] In both versions, his people are on the edge of starvation, because the caribou have failed to

[5] *John Fredson* and "Some of the Vuntut Gwitchin Legends," respectively.

come. In one version, the boy's crying for meat instigates the action of the story; in the other, it is the mocking of his shamanistic capabilities by community members that sets the tale in motion. Although some details differ across Gwich'in communities, the basic story remains the same: a stingy community member will not share part of the catch that the boy helped bring to his people, and so the boy disappears with the caribou meat that would have saved the people from starvation. Except for a little meat given to his nurturing relatives (grandmother, parents) that replenishes itself when stored correctly, the rest of the community is about to starve. The boy returns for a final time to teach his people how to live well with the caribou, either always sharing the meat with those less capable or letting a certain number of caribou pass before engaging in the hunt. In conclusion,

> He also said he was going to the moon and live there as long as the earth is still here so don't cry for me. He said if the moon eclipses forward this means the people are going to starve but if it eclipses backwards that means there's going to be lots of meat. He also said when the moon eclipse backwards each person should be happy and carry a little bag of food around with them and give food to the old people and to the helpless.[6]

Like the Yup'ik story, "Boy who Went with the Bladders" in the previous chapter, the story "Boy who Went to the Moon" centers on a socially marginal figure. The outsider/orphan figure crosses boundaries to bring new knowledge to his people for

[6] "Some of the Vuntut Gwitchin Legends"

how to live successfully in the world with those on whom they depend for survival, in this case the caribou. Julie Cruikshank explains:

> In the Yukon Territory one of the underlying themes of "The boy- or girl - who went to live with X", in its many varieties, invariably has a good deal to do with proper disposition of remains of the animal taken for food, the idea being that regeneration of the animal species is a crucial part of human responsibility—part of [the] shared relationship—the pact—between humans and the species they hunt. Humans are responsible for keeping animals returning and this benefits both humans and animals.[7]

In other words, the stories narrate ecological conditions for living in the world together, they produce a framework that encodes practices that have worked in the past to avert starvation, and they create alliances to carry into the future. Moreover, these stories conform to Michel de Certeau's assertion that stories are not simply entertainment, nor only focalizing lenses for power; rather, the very art of diversion is also an ethical art (30, 36):

> In other words, "stories" provide the decorative container of a *narrativity* for everyday practices. To be sure, they describe only fragments of these practices. They are no more than its metaphors. But, in spite of the ruptures separating successive configurations of knowledge, they represent a new variant in the continuous series of narrative documents which…set forth ways of operating in the form of *tales*. (70, emphasis in original)

[7] Personal communication

While the phrase "ways of operating" seems rather programmatic, it is actually much more fluid and subversive. Narratives provide a highly variable fabric for the testing of boundaries, for engaging newness in encounters with others. Certeau explains: "These 'ways of operating' constitute the innumerable practices by means of which users reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production" (xiv). Under the influence of colonial assimilation histories, Gwich'in assert political and cultural relevancy in an increasingly monologic, monovocal, and monopolitical environment that centralizes access to economic and cultural viability. The survival of the stories about the intertwined and mutually supporting lives of caribou and humans located on websites and shared in classrooms demonstrate cultural continuity. These engagements persist despite legislation such as the Wilderness Act of 1964, which authorized tracts of the Gwich'in homeland as being empty of human inhabitants.

While in the popular press and imagination, the controversy about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge may seem to hinge on a discourse of politics (domestic versus foreign oil, state versus federal land mandates, frontier versus environmental wildernesses), I want to argue that the significance for how we talk and write about this region in northern Alaska has antecedents in more general discussions about gender, genre, and geography.[8] Consequently, boundaries are also important to my discussion, even though, when written, these borders continually slip and are

[8] The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service writes: the "Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was established to preserve unique wildlife, wilderness and recreational values; to conserve caribou herds, polar bears, grizzly bears, muskox, dall sheep, wolves, wolverines, snow geese, peregrine falcons, other migratory birds, dolly varden, and grayling; to fulfill international treaty obligations; to provide opportunities for continued subsistence uses; and to ensure necessary water quality and quantity" ("Arctic National Wildlife Refuge"). It is comprised of 19,286,722 acres and was first designated as federally protected in 1960 and it was expanded by Congress in 1980.

"contaminated" by the crossings of human and nonhuman animals. Boundaries exist around the refuge and between the nations of the United States and Canada. Both borders have repercussions for the caribou, who acknowledge no such boundary as they move across the land following more ancient paths—paths that also act as borders—with the mountains, rivers, bears, and botflies acting as limits to movement. What happens when these geographic boundaries become literary ones?

In this chapter, the cultural boundaries that constitute human group dynamics will be further broken down as I also think how the gender of the subject of the stories—along with the gender of the writer—influences what stories are told, how they are received, and to what effect (for political, social, or economic change). For example, in "Wilderness Discourse in Adventure-Nature Films," Salma Monani points out that the protagonists of the film *Being Caribou*, Karsten Heuer and Leanne Allison, "respond to the caribou in a more collective, emphatic way" than their adventure-nature genre counterparts, who "set up hierarchical distinctions between the masculine adventurer and the feminized animal in ways that objectify nature and emphasize it as inherently dichotomous" (110, 108). In effect, Monani identifies the radical repositioning of Heuer and Allison as the film narrative swings uneasily between the adventure "eco-challenge" narrative of masculine dominance over nature and the more diffuse trajectory of feminine engagements informed by empathy, connection, and collectivity.

Intensity, energy, and trajectory are also highlighted in the film, which was written and directed by Allison. These modes of affectivity operate in female

narrative practice and pleasure and they also help one think about movement across time and space. Female-oriented travel narratives have often been circumscribed by formal constraints—about what women can write, how they can write it, and for whom—so as not to disrupt the male-dominated travel writing circuit. Whether female writers choose to disguise their adventures as support systems for their husbands (Josephine Diebitsch Peary), re-articulate their travels as extensions of the domestic (Margaret Murie), or rely on conventional travel tropes to keep an audience raised on male narrative's attention (Isabella Bird), the bottom line is that they are at once conforming to the strategies of a dominant power, while initiating tactics that reveal the constructed and precarious position of the patriarchal super-structure.[9] *Being Caribou*, especially, demonstrates the tension between these two orders of pleasure in narrative as they vie for the viewer's sentimentality and will-to-power; on the one hand, Allison speaks in sympathy-inducing terms when the female caribou are calving, and on the other, the couple are on an adventure quest, pushing their bodies to extreme limits in order to fulfill the mandate of their nature film. The project's motivation is for the humans to live and travel like caribou in order to highlight the precarious positioning of caribou in an oil-dependent culture.

Caribou are an integral species to narratives that are concerned with place, identity, northern ecologies, and global energy extraction. The caribou are more than markers of "local color" in these stories even as they are not fully legible as shorthand for understanding a region (like the polar bear is for the Arctic) or global forces (such

[9] *My Arctic Journal* ([1923] 2011); *Two in the Far North* ([1963] 2003); *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* ([1879] 2009).

as climate change as a global concern). Caribou already function as narrative in important ways before they are even written into accounts of their presence or passing. Like Bakhtin's chronotope, the spatio-temporal reality of caribou lends itself to reading in texts and across landscapes.[10] In the stories to follow, the presence or absence of caribou represents the desire of various characters who are searching for other modes of living in the world (although the caribou themselves desire little in these narratives). The appearance or disappearance of caribou acts as a catalyst for changes in plot and character motivation (even while caribou never seem to deviate from their own path).

Gender, genre, and geography are also critical terms with which to focus on the strategic construction of "indigeneity," a subject position that becomes critical in political forums around protecting wilderness habitats for caribou against oil drilling operations.[11] In terms of thinking about indigeneities, we find the mobilization of strategic identifications in local and global formations, access to economic and political power through diverse networks (oil companies, environmental groups, international indigenous forums, the United Nations, and human rights discourse),

[10] "We will give the name chronotope (literally, 'time space') to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature…In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope…The chronotope as a formally constitutive category determines to a significant degree the image of man in literature as well. The image of man is always intrinsically chronotopic" (Bakhtin 84).

[11] Gender, genre, and geography are useful tools that work to highlight the nexus of critical issues that produce caribou and Gwich'in in discourse, but they are, at times, empty or emptied out, at others overdetermined and determining, asked to carry too much weight or do to much work.

and the manipulation of legibility through dominant discourses.[12] Like seals in the previous chapter, caribous function as nodal points in the collision of discourses, policies, and living practices.[13] And while I trace the caribou through language, I will also take into account the material side of the "material-semiotic" presence of physical bodies, lived histories of colonialism and exploitation, and the pressing contemporary stakes for the living in the discussion.[14] Anna Tsing has emphasized, in her concept of "friction," a mode of analysis that pays attention to the interrelatedness of material and dialogic formations. Tsing recognizes that the relationships between the material and the dialogic, between the real and how it is told, are productive for globalization and "alter" or other globalizations not despite, but because of the presence of intractable differences and "contaminations" at their core (245). Tsing explains the frontier as a "zone of unmapping: even in its planning, a frontier is imagined as unplanned. Frontiers are not just discovered at the edge; they are projects in making geographical and temporal experience. Frontiers make wildness, entangling visions and vines and violence; their wildness is both material and

[12] I use the plural specifically since this is a process and a project, not an essence or a naturalization of a race, group, or type.

[13] In thinking of caribou as "nodal points," I take Schimanski and Spring's discussion of polar bears as "iconized" representations of the Arctic that allow "many Arctic phenomena to be reduced to a few" (33). In terms of how nodal points function, they write: "Because they are empty or sliding signifiers, [nodal points] lend themselves well to having all kinds of different meaning attributed to them…[and] they also fill a key role in providing possibilities of discursive shifts and changes…between different overlapping discourses" (32). I want to emphasize how meaning is *attributed* and not inherent and also the possibilities for change through connections. I acknowledge the use of the feminine pronoun and use it both advisedly and critically.

[14] Bruno Latour is credited with promoting the use of material-semiotic analysis in his Actor-Network Theory, a mode of analysis that takes seriously not only the relations between concepts but those between things as well. It is a useful starting point for other scholars such as Donna Haraway and Karen Barad in that there is not a human point of privilege from which all meaning flows. Rather, humans and nonhumans (dogs, atomic particles, caribou, ecosystems) are all given equal treatment as "agential actors" in the production of meaning and relational practices.

imaginative" (29). The globalization of the frontier—the always-moving frontier of frontier, produces and is produced by the friction of imperial histories, the movement of people, animals, and weather systems, partial translations, and encounters between entities with uneven access to power. The encounters and the outcomes are improvisational and uncertain, like Certeau's "practices of everyday life."

When attempting to tell the story of the caribou, one has also to think the story of north. In the introduction I noted how Sherrill Grace identified "northerness" as a writing and reading practice that bisects material and experiential knowledge, privileging only one subject position, coded masculine. In broader strokes, the editors of the collection *Arctic Discourses* highlight how the Arctic comes to be known, transmitted, and repeated: "representations of the Arctic as a geographical area, as well as the many versions of 'Arctic' as a quality attached to a particular area [are diverse and even conflicting]. [Discourses of the north] all make the Arctic 'readable' in various ways" (xiii). Like the Arctic, which slips and shifts (semantically, figurally, and even, when one thinks of ice and eroding landscapes, physically), language is another powerful, but ambiguously uncertain, force for a "readable" or legible Arctic.[15] In other words, Certeau writes: "Analysis shows that a relation (always social) determines its terms, and not the reverse, and that each individual is a locus in which an incoherent (and often contradictory) plurality of such relational determinations interact" (xi). The Arctic is a region with particular climatic

[15] While both terms reference each other, I want to distinguish the two terms by retaining the trace of "to decipher" for legible and "recievable" for "readable." "Legibility" requires active participation in making the meaning while "readable" merely requires reception ("legible" and "readable").

parameters, landscape formations, flora, and fauna. It is also relational; it is set in discourse, which determines how one views, understands, engages, and desires the material space. The discourses that make up the north are fluid and often contradictory as they "abut and abrade" (to invoke the postcolonial moments of Verran from the first chapter).

Susi K. Frank has compellingly written about the genealogy of the lone male hero in the Arctic, a common topos of Arctic legibility. She traces the figure from Nietzsche's "Übermensch" who is "strong enough to separate himself, to live in isolation apart from the 'warm' community" (107) to the renowned explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson's 1928 remark: "While our time seems to be womanish in most respects, there are still men […] with an innate passionate enthusiasm for the borderlands" (Frank 122). In effect, the making of a "higher type of man," or any order of being, necessitates being singular, alone, and in an "icy landscape" (122).[16] The connections to de Lauretis' "male hero" refashioning himself and the world are clear. While caribou certainly live in an icy landscape (at least, for part of the year), they do not eschew the company of others and, in fact, in Stefansson's terms, they are quite "womanish" in their sociality, in their preference for community. If the discourse of northerness, which regulates who or what is legible in arctic narratives, is predicated on solitude, masculinity, individuality, and whiteness, then where are the caribou? The caribou do not fit into the generic conventions of a lone, masculine,

[16] Leaving aside for the moment the racist trope of the advanced northerner—white in a white landscape—with its apotheosis in the indolent and primitive southerner—dark in an earthy, verdant world—that still manages to find currency the political, economic and social segregation of northern indigenous people, classified as brown and primitive, I turn to the effect of this trope on the caribou.

heroic "north" and there are not many forms for writing a "multiplicity." In "1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible…, " Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari theorize a model of relationships based on energetic transfers between multiple participants that can be human, animal, plant, or mineral (or any combination). Their aim is to avoid the reduction of interaction to the subject-object mode of relating that individualizes participants and valorizes human subjectivity. At first sight, their theory seems promising for describing the multiple non-individuated mobile herd that is caribou; however, they base their argument mostly on interactions between and among creatures with some "bite:" humans, wolves, wasps, and rats, leaving open the question where other organisms fit into this liberatory paradigm. While it is certainly a model for accounting for aggregates, movement, and cross-species alliances without the hierarchy of "arboreal" or genealogical thinking, caribou's herd-like lack nature makes the fit with Deleuze and Guattari somewhat uneasy. Becoming-caribou, like "becoming-animal," "becoming-woman," "becoming-imperceptible," has the potential to be a mode from which one can escape the discipline of dominant power formations in an alliance with other "minorities" in a rhizomatic convergence. However, Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on swarms, packs, and hordes still suggests a very different collectivity from the one formed by the herd.

Caribou, it seems, cannot be figured in narrative as can polar bears or seals or even salmon. Although each of the material-semiotic creatures I have written about in the previous chapters resist iconization to some degree through their materiality or the

generic conventions used in their representations, caribou resist through a process that has much more to do with the act of writing itself—the doubling of lived and written chronotope and the feminine emphasis on affective connection.[17] This resistance to having their story told has repercussions for how caribou enter narrative (fictional and nonfictional) and the political discourses that swirl around them like the storm Karsten Heuer so evocatively describes in the second epigraph. Caribou cannot be discussed in the singular and they cannot flourish divorced from their companions and their environment. It is to that environment and its cultures that I now turn.

The Kaktovikmuit, an Inupiat people of Kaktovik, Alaska, certainly know about borders, boundaries, and edges. They live along the northern coast of Alaska and along the northern edge of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This is a mobile geography: during the winter, sea ice greatly extends the walkable terrain for people and polar bears alike, although neither of these sea-faring folk need to measure their territory by the land. It is also mobile in the sense that climate change has irrevocably altered the ice patterns and the erosion of the coast has accelerated, leaving less to stand on when there is no ice. About living in such close proximity to the Refuge, the Kaktovikmuit write in their "guide for those who would work in the country of the Kaktovikmuit:" "Not only did somebody forget to tell us we were Russian and then [American], which we have been able to ignore or to deal with, but now, they have made us into a wildlife refuge, which we cannot ignore." Moreover,

[17] Schimanski and Spring propose the practice of iconization that arises in the recycling of certain images and terms that come to be naturalized as "arctic" or "north." Their essay, "A Black Rectangle Labelled 'Polar Night,'" reveals the underlying symbolic and semantic order that continues to have resonance in the discursive construction of the north.

the Kaktovikmuit continue, "they then decided, without telling us, that most of that refuge was something called wilderness, meaning, as we read the dictionary, that nobody lives there. And since we do, we were apparently declared nonexistent" ("New Lines" 3). This statement, along with other points made by the people of Kaktovik (such as the perceived respect of oil developers against the disrespect of wilderness enthusiasts for their existence in the lands adjacent to the Refuge), highlights a key position pertinent for understanding how one might go about "presencing" the caribou in narratives of indigenous inhabitation and wilderness.[18] Like the polar bear's presence for the Gwich'in, the concept of wilderness is a limit to the psychogeographic parameters of the Kaktovikmuit. Understanding how and why wilderness becomes a binary division between being "for or against oil development" and "saving wilderness for the psychological health of 'city people'" necessitates centering the present moment without pushing to the coastal edge histories of use value, interest, and control by state and international agencies. Taking seriously the situated knowledges of northern Alaska as they have developed in the contact zone between the Kaktovikmuit and the Gwich'in complicates the structure of United States' imperialism in the Arctic, the state practices of economic control through oil, and the lingering hegemonic effects of wilderness models and tropes of masculinity.[19]

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[18] That is, making their presence in the landscape an active gerund rather than a passive noun. My model for understanding an active presence rather than a passive one I take from Sandra Koelle's discussion of making the lives of turtles count by counting their dead bodies along a road: "In walking the length of the corridor, and collecting carcasses from the shoulder and ditches, the students literally made the lives of these turtles count by counting them" (23). For Koelle, this is a form of witnessing the material presence of turtle-people relationships that does not and cannot become an abstraction.
[19] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges" 188. See also Bauchspies, Wenda K., and Maria Puig de La Bellacasa. Anne Marie Mol states in this interview: "Situated knowledges are great. They counter

The Kaktovikmuit write in a manner reminiscent of the dispersed yet communal nature of the caribou. "In This Place" is a compilation that is both an "unfinished" and an "on-going work" defying authorship, temporal specificity, and singularity. The dedication states: "These papers are unfinished and will remain so forever, to be made better and more powerful with each new thought which goes into them, with each new generation that [uses] them for their purpose, the survival of our people in this place." The manuscript seems to be solely published online, found on the website for the community of Kaktovik. It was written with financial assistance from the North Slope Borough (which includes the Prudhoe Bay oil field) and the state of Alaska. The Kaktovikmuit are Inupiat (meaning the "real people") and were formerly termed "Eskimo," a term that is still used in legal and political forums in Alaska.[20] As discussed in the second chapter, the Inupiat of Alaska are relatives of the Inuit in Canada and Greenland and the Yup'ik of Alaska and Russia who, together, form the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), a major non-governmental organization that "promotes Inuit rights and interests on an international level."[21]

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dreams of generality and generalization. But they come with questions of transport. Where might one be situated? Where are you? Which elsewheres emerge there? And how to not stay put but move around? Imagine transportation devices and modes of transport along with situatedness. Trains. Cold chains. The internet. Walking trails. Broken roads. Bicycles. Slow motion. The way a crow flies. And then remember that you are no crow" (also qutd in Koelle 1).

[20] The Kaktovikmuit write: "Since wilderness is defined as a place without people [cf. the Congressional definition of wilderness 1964], we are deeply insulted by those who proclaim any of this country wilderness, as if we were not considered to be real people. Indeed, that is what our name, Inupiat, means. The real people. Although we now recognize, some of us, that there are other 'real people', we surely do not give up the notion that we are people nor that we are real" ("General Statement" 2).

[21] "Inuit Circumpolar Council"

"In This Place," like the ICC, is an attempt to render the collective legible in a readable genre to enact change.[22] The Kaktovikmuit write about their willingness to encounter and engage those who come to them with respect (such as oil companies and NGOs) and their unwillingness to disappear, assimilate to United States or Canadian cultural norms, or die out:

> We have had to work at it [to lead a pretty good life]…but we have now reached the point where the [oil] industry people come to us to explain their work and to seek our help, our guidance and our approval. Few before have ever done that. Not the whalers, not the white trappers, not the reindeer people, and surely not the Air Force nor the Fish and Wildlife Service nor the hikers and hunters and others who come to exploit our land and bother us. ("General Statement" 3)

Kaktovikmuit encounters with whalers, biologists, hikers, and oil company CEOs have produced tactics for everyday living in this centuries old contact zone. In Certeau's words, "In This Place" is a "microbe-like operation" that proliferates within "technocratic structures and deflect[s] their functioning by means of a multitude of 'tactics' articulated in the details of everyday life" (xiv).

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[22] Oran Young, focusing on three case studies dealing with animal rights in the political sphere noted that the outcomes of conflicts between "consumptive users" and "preservationists" are hardly known in advance. Through a complex, situational, and infinitely mobile political engagement, harp seals became protected, whales continue to be hunted, northern fur seal harvests have lost governmental support, and fur trapping has been largely ignored ("The Politics of Animal Rights" 1989). In conclusion, he writes, "parties desiring to promote their interests in these conflicts must do everything in their power to maximize their ability to operate effectively in political arenas…this means paying attention to organizational details and cultivating a willingness at all times to form alliances with others [who may or may not be allies on other issues]" (55).

The "oil people" come in a long line of those who exploit the country of the Kaktovikmuit for its resources with little thought to the country itself or the people and creatures who have "continuously used and occupied" it for over a millennia ("General Statement" 2). Yet, to the people of Kaktovik, there is a significant difference between the oil people and the other bothersome outsiders: the oil people acknowledge the Kaktovikmuit as living within their own country. They write:

> We know that someday [the oil people] will be gone. Unlike the rest [government agencies, wilderness advocates, scientists], they do not want our country [but] just the stuff underneath it, and when that is all drawn, they will pack up and go someplace else to look. The others seem to have come to stay and drive us back, to put us down, to dispose of us. ("Mind" 2)

While the Kaktovikmuit help me think through how histories of encounters and exploitation in the Arctic determine present discourses and activities between native and non-native people with interest in the Arctic, I want to investigate more of what they term the "third path," that is, being "responsible, as we have always been for the well being of our people and the well being of this country to which we are attached" ("General Statement" 3).[23] And they mean "attached" literally, their "nerves reach out into it" ("General Statement" 4). This "third path" between the oppositional argument "for or against oil development" resonates with Grace's definition for the Canadian author Margaret Atwood's "third way" discussed in the introduction. The "third way"

[23] I want to retain the indeterminacy of the economic and affective meanings of "interest." The Kaktovikmuit do not divide their spiritual/emotional and material connection to the land—their territory gives them an emotional and a cultural identity. However, they now live in a market economy and aspects of the land can be bought and sold to sustain the viability of continued living on and access to the land.

imagines the space between dichotomies as a dynamic process, rather than as a system of power controlling the material effects of the discourse ("Articulating the 'Space Between'" 3).[24] While the "third path," like a passageway, certainly opens up a space for reworking oppositional arguments without one story dominating, making a term or a tactic active does not necessarily revalue it as positive. For example, "frontier" has been an operational tactic for the settlement of Alaska; for most of the region's history, Alaska was managed as an extractive colony for the Russians and then the Americans. Frontiers make margins, edges, others. In Tsing's formulation, frontier is not a "place or even a process but an imaginative project capable of molding both places and process…It is a space of desire…[with its] own technologies of space and time" (32). The operations of the frontier have also forged the Kaktovikmuit into alliances across Alaska and the globe as they have come to shape themselves and frontier through their activity in global political and economic forums. For example, Eben Hopson, founding member of the ICC, with the backing of the North Slope Borough (the regional hub for the Prudhoe Bay oilfields), organized early and effectively to lobby for the continued hunt of bowhead whales, networking across Alaska and the Pacific with organizations and regulators like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.[25] Throughout these discourses producing the frontier, wilderness, indigeneity, the environment, and history, the

[24] See also see Joni Adamson for a literary reading of Native American spirituality and the concept of "the third path:" *American Indian Literature*.
[25] Young 51

living—caribou or bowhead whales—come into being or are disappeared through dominant and alternative discursive apparatuses.

With the frictions of sovereignty, citizenship, industry, oil, and modernity with which not only the Kaktovimuit, but all who are materially involved with and in the discursive constructions of north contend, I once again look for the caribou who traverse this troubled terrain and find myself having to climb one hill further. While the Kaktovikmuit have not convinced me that oil development is the solution in combating economic, social, and political marginalization, I am persuaded that new modes of relating must take into consideration the troubled, combative, and often violent histories of the contact zone. James Clifford, in his meditation on the intersection of the local and the global through travel, migrancy, and attachment sites in *Routes* (1997), brings attention to the "movement[s] and contamination[s]" of people and creatures that (western, imperial) knowledge-making practices were supposed to fix in time and in their pure state (7). Ecologic worlding, or in Haraway's terms "serious curiosity" and "situated knowledges," help configure modes of attention and ways of living in which the Kaktovikmuit have a voice to determine their third path. In order to be a third path, however, there must be an openness to process and change—a dynamic potentiality—that is not overdetermined by the United States' oil consumption and the "energy crisis," biodiversity and wilderness debates, or "new lines" (borders) and governments of nation-states. The Kaktovikmuit present a cautionary tale that reflects on the organization and representation of the movement across and contamination of space and the people and

animals in it: “mapmakers mired in mid-latitude thinking, as their ancestors were in sea monsters and the edge of the world, [show] things that are not [in the north] and [do not show] things that are…Even mountains and rivers, even the ocean—which most of the time you can walk on—may not be quite what they appear to be” (“New Lines” 1-2).

Other than the written text, the other most used technology for rendering the Arctic knowable, at once both foreign and familiar, is the map. Indeed, all the texts under scrutiny in this chapter contain at least one image of a map as well as many cartographic descriptions. Commenting on how one might connect the map to a discursive reading practice based on power and knowledge, Anne McClintock writes: “The map is a technology of knowledge that professes to capture truth about a place in pure, scientific form, operating under the guise of scientific exactitude and promising to retrieve and reproduce nature exactly as it is” (28). However, when thinking about maps and the geography that they purport to portray in the Arctic, there are several problems, such as the difficulty of mapping a dynamically freezing and liquefying ocean. Ryall, Schimanski, and Wærp identify the problematics of geographically bounding the Arctic:

> According to geographers, the Arctic includes the Arctic Ocean and parts of Canada, Greenland, Russia, the United States (Alaska), Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. One often used boundary is demarcated by the Arctic Circle (at 66° 33’N), which is the approximate limit of the midnight sun and the polar night. Other definitions are based on climate and ecology, such as

> the 10°C (50° F) July isotherm, which roughly corresponds to the tree line in most of the Arctic. Socially and Politically, the Arctic region can include the northern territories of the eight Arctic states, including (in Fenno-Scandinavia) Lapland/Sápmi, although by natural science definitions much of this territory is considered subarctic. (xii)

It is important to consider, then, that the map one uses is integral to the "becoming-legible" of the Arctic as a place for people and caribou, whether that map is the traces of caribou paths worn into the hillside, the map of seasonal hunting sites drawn from memory, or the map of seismic activity illustrated three-dimensionally on a computer screen.

McClintock proposes a paradigm in which to read the genre of history alongside how women, the colonized, and workers function within imperial discourse.[26] Challenging a historical perspective grounded in such terms as "primitive" and "progress," she proposes the concept of panoptical time as the mechanism by which western colonial discourses display evolutionary progress (modern, advanced, and enlightened man) as a measurable spectacle (other races and cultures are a spectrum leading up to, but never reaching, this state). "Time," McClintock writes, "became a geography of social power, a map from which to read a global allegory of 'natural' social difference…By panoptical time, I mean the image of global history consumed—at a glance—in a single spectacle from a point of

[26] While a timely intervention into postcolonial studies that asks difficult questions regarding colonialism and women's bodies, McClintock's study generalizes a particular moment in British imperialism as being exemplary of all forms of and responses to colonial organizations.

privileged invisibility" (37). The point of "privileged invisibility" is always coded male, white, European, and in control. This figure is the quintessential frontier explorer or wilderness enthusiast (or the previously mentioned Übermensch) who controls the ability to narrate a passive landscape or pastoral scene for consumption by an urban American or Canadian audience.

We can see panoptic time at work in the poetry of Robert Service, a naturalized Canadian of Scottish descent who is popular in Alaska. His poems are often performed as "spectacles" for tourist audiences.[27] In "The Law of the Yukon," he personifies the gold fields of the Yukon Territory of Canada as a vengeful woman who seeks to be both mother and mistress to "men girt for the combat, men who are grit to the core" (120). It is these men she will "take to [her] bosom, them will [she] call [her] sons" (Ibid.).[28] In the sexual overtones of this relationship between Man and the ravishable woman of the north, one can read the conflation of gender, geography, and history. She at once invites *his* sexual exploration, tantalizing his greed with teasing rebuffs, until the poem becomes the wet dream of colonial penetration. The tension resides within the oscillation of a "mother" pulling her sons to her bosom

[27] "At the Malemute Saloon, where Alaska poet Robert Service wrote some of his most famous poems, tourists can swig dark Alaska ale, watch comic skits of yesteryear and toss peanut shells right on the sawdust floor" ("Ester Gold Camp"). However, contrary to this myth, Service did not actually write any of his poems at the Malemute Saloon and he most probably was never in what is considered Alaskan territory at all.

[28] The edition of the poem cited here is taken from an anthology called *The Alaska Reader* that is rather imaginatively organized around an idea of linear progress that situates the discovery of Alaska by Russian explorers at the head of the timeline and ends with "contemporary Alaskan poetry." I emphasize the imaginative nature of this timeline, because, in fact, the editor and later governor of Alaska, Ernest Gruening, does not include any spatial or temporal markers for the original printing of each selection. Rather, each piece is placed according to the time period it discusses, so that Jack London's "Lost Face" (1910) comes directly after "The Discovery of Alaska" (Georg Stellar, 1700s) and a story about "The Era of Aleksandr Baranov" (Washington Irving, late 1800s).

while they simultaneously rape her of her wealth. Only it is the weaker men who are condemned for the act of penetration, because it is they who "rape [her] of her riches, curse her, and go away" (121). Through the active male hero conquering a passive feminized land, the poem displays the gendered and temporal violence that McClintock argues characterizes imperial narrative. Service expands this point:

> Dreaming alone of a people, dreaming alone of a day,
> When men shall not rape my riches, and curse me and go away; […]
> Dreaming of men who will bless me, of women esteeming me good,
> Of children born in my borders of radiant motherhood,
> Of cities leaping to stature, of fame like a flag unfurled,
> As I pour the tide of my riches in the eager lap of the world.
> (121-122)

Service's "men" enter the conveniently uninhabited space of this feminized landscape who waits with her "womb o'er-pregnant with the seed of cities unborn" (121), and through their "good-work" cities, states, and nations are born and flourish. The poem looks to the future in a linear trajectory of progress, even as it elides the violence done to the land and prior people caught within the inevitable march forward. Given that Service was writing in Canada about the Canadian north, it is curious that he is included in an anthology of Alaskan writing. However, when read closely, there is little doubt as to why "The Law of the Yukon" is present in the anthology, *The Alaska Reader*: it functions as a symbolic act of appropriating Canadian territory to the United States. Service is the "poet laureate" of Alaskan tourism, because the

ideological thrust of his poems presents the Arctic as the space in which frontier marches towards progress in the form of capitalist enrichment. The understanding of the project of frontier is then enfolded into the expansionist ideology of the United States in the 1800s that first led to the purchase of Alaska, but continues to influence domestic and foreign policy in the north.

The corollary to panoptic time is anachronistic space, which characterizes imperial fiction's disavowal of the marginalized and chronicles their position as prehistoric, atavistic, irrational, and inherently out of place in the "historical" time of modernity (McClintock 40). It is also how the geographical difference across space is figured as historical difference across time.[29] Jack London often uses this strategy when figuring indigenous people in his narratives. In "Lost Face," London erases temporal markers, smoothes over the specificity of location, and equates buffoonery with catastrophe. He writes:

> [When] encounter[ing] nothing but hosts of savages…[e]ither the gales blew, threatening destruction, or the war canoes came off, manned by howling natives with the war paint on their faces, who came to learn the bloody virtues of the sea rovers' gunpowder…Only had [the fur-thieves] encountered the same impregnable wall of savagery. The denizens of the confines of the world, painted for war, had driven them back from the shores. (27)

Schimanski and Spring explain that by the process of iconization "certain images become metonymical signals of arcticity" (26); for example, "winteriness (*hivernité*)

[29] Cf. Fabian for a discussion of how time becomes a disciplinary conceit; the coeval time of dialogue between anthropologist and informant becomes evolutionary distance between self and other.

has to do with the Arctic being a place of eternal winter: i.e. as a place of cold, ice…[and] snow" and the discursive use of primitivity is a major controlling device to signal otherness in arctic narratives (31). London repeats the terms "encounter," "painted for war," and "savages," signaling the iconic discourse of a meeting between civilized/white and primitive/native. The excessive use of gothic imagery and overwrought sentiment highlights the empty nature of the icon while also continuing to give the images new life in the north. McClintock's spatio-temporal concepts helpfully elucidate the different mechanisms and strategies that are used in the narratives by Murie, Allison and Heuer, and Wallis.

Murie moved to Fairbanks, Alaska from Seattle, Washington when she was about nine years old in 1911, around the time that London was publishing *White Fang*. Her youth in Alaska is remembered in her memoir *Two in the Far North* as delightful, difficult, and one in which every (white) person lent his or her hand to every other (white) person in a nostalgic time of working together to get through hardship as pioneers in a newly settled land. Murie's memoir is particularly remarkable in that she refashions the northern narrative that takes as *its* pioneers the mining and trapping (men)folk of London and Service. Although Murie still peoples her landscape with the same miners, traders, and homesteaders, her narrative more centrally focuses on *domesticating* the north in every sense of the word—Murie's north becomes one of homemaking, camp-building, cooking, and playing with and caring for babies. In short, her memoir chronicles the organization of home in the wild. Murie finds a place for women in the far north by rewriting the lone masculine

narrative of London, Service, Seth Kantner, and Christopher McCandless that occludes women's presence or only incorporates them long enough to reproduce the masculine ideal.[30] In *Nature's State: Imagining Alaska as the Last Frontier*, Susan Kollin argues that Murie should be placed in a genealogy of women environmental activists who were shifting the discourse from wilderness as a "male space, a playground where white adventurers may flirt with the primitive while avoiding the cultural degeneracy they often project onto their geographical Others" to "the world of the everyday, to the manner in which individuals and communities create homes for themselves in environments of their own choosing" (92, 118). Kollin explains that women began inserting themselves within the environmental movement by insisting that access to and enjoyment of nature was an important lifestyle choice, and they began to command influence "by placing their ideas about lifestyle within the rhetoric of domesticity" (118). The first two parts of the memoir focus on her early childhood and her marriage to Olaus Murie, a celebrated wildlife biologist with the federal government. The next two parts chronicle two major field expeditions that Murie undertook with her husband while Alaska was a territory. The last two sections are both "returns" to Alaska after statehood that Murie conducts after her husband's death. Events are narrated chronologically in typical memoir fashion, with snippets of dated diary entries added in to the narrative to more firmly emphasize the feminine, personal, and quotidian.

[30] Seth Kantner is an Alaskan author of the bestselling fictionalized memoir *Ordinary Wolves* and Christopher McCandless is the young man who starved to death in the Alaskan wilderness immortalized in Jon Krakaur's *Into the Wild* (later made into a film of the same name, directed by Sean Penn).

While most critical studies of Murie reflect on her childhood engagement with the "last frontier" and her mature reflections on the meaning of the making of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, I limit my focus to two separate types of encounters she had in the upper Yukon River watershed as she traveled in the territory she helped protect. During National Park and Fish and Wildlife assignments to count animal and bird populations in the territory of Alaska before statehood, Olaus Murie taps into the definitive and objective discourse of science in service to the nation. Margaret Murie's narrative structure and content, however, reside within the interstices of wilderness and frontier models as the diary and memoir mode interrupt the scientific knowledge paradigm, even as she supports that trajectory of power. Kollin, through McClintock, calls Murie "ambiguously complicit" in her capacity as both a privileged (white) and restricted (female) historical player (125). While the generic thrust of the narrative mode places her in a position of power aligned with national interests, there are moments in Murie's text when the fixity of geopolitical borders break down. Murie moves back and forth across the imagined borders that divide Alaska from Canada like the many species of birds, mammals, and fish that cross these boundaries hourly, daily, and yearly.

Animals move freely across borders in Murie's *Two in the Far North*, but humans, other than scientifically trained ones like Murie and her husband, do not belong in this rewriting of the frontier. Murie reconfigures the masculine frontier as written by London and Service as also the space of women, but humans are still alien to the ecological make-up of the landscape. While she and her husband traverse

borders freely through the power of science and race, the indigenous inhabitants the two come across in their travels are consistently figured as stationary and static—the rather unfortunate "sign of man or his structures" (Murie 340). Murie is unable to see, let alone read, the tracks of the Gwich'in Athabascans on the land that reveal multiple histories—the narrativity of everyday life—that contest her understanding of wilderness. Her wilderness is a framework for viewing the land that, however updated, remains binary, divisive, and effacing.

On one of her journeys, Murie segregates people based on race and language as she navigates the threshold from river to land near Old Crow Village, in Canada's Yukon Territory, identifying "one tall young white man and about fifty assorted Indians." The river travelers arrive under the scrutiny of those situated higher on land. Her unease influences her performance before an audience she can only control retroactively through writing. While the young white man is singular and named (Jack Frost) and speaks, the Indians remain "assorted" and their language is a "hum" and "jabber." Murie remarks at one such meeting between her party and the Canadian Gwich'in Indian villagers:

> [Old Crow] is like all the river villages of Alaska; there's no other possible plan, I guess…Here at the top of the bank on the sunny morning of June 26 stood one tall young white man and [a]bout fifty assorted Indians, watching intently as we approached. We all remarked how self-conscious this performance made us feel each time. Jess and Olaus stepped ashore first, amid a hum of Indian talk. Olaus turned and helped me step off with Martin,

> bareheaded, in my arms. Immediately we were aware of a sudden increase of excitement in the voices. (225)

Later, after leaving Old Crow and during her expedition along the Old Crow River, Murie reinforces her difference from the people indigenous to the area she travels freely across: "a human figure coming across the tundra would have been terrifying," she writes, "where wolves and bears would have been excitingly normal" (235).

In contrast to her ambivalent meeting with the other human inhabitants of the north, Murie uses a different language to describe an encounter with caribou along the Sheenjek River in the northeastern of Alaska.[31] She writes:

> [W]e collapsed on a high slope, on the grass, and settled down to look and listen. They were traveling steadily along, a great mass of dark-brown figures; bulls, cows, calves, yearlings; every combination of coloring, all bathed in the bright golden light of this arctic night. The quiet unmoving landscape I had scanned so carefully from the ridge before dinner had come alive—alive in a way I am not competent to describe. The rightful owners had returned…[T]he total effect of sound, movement, the sight of those thousands of animals, the clear golden western sky, the last sunlight on the mountain slope, gave one a feeling of being a privileged onlooker at a rare performance—a performance in nature's own way, in the setting of countless ages, ages before man. (313-314)

[31] Like the Old Crow River, the Sheenjek is a tributary to the Porcupine River—the river that gives its name to the largest herd of caribou in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Murie is in the more ontologically secure position as spectator watching a herd of caribou pass below her than she was as a spectacle. The descriptive technique she uses for the caribou echoes that of her depiction of Frost among the undifferentiated Indians. Unlike the "unnatural" performance of Murie, Olaus, and Jess before the scrutiny of the Gwich'in, when the position is reversed, the travelers who pass through the landscape are privileged onlookers to "nature's own" spectacle. And while the Gwich'in can only be "assorted" and remain attached to their village site, here the caribou are made specific: she mentions age, color, and sex. The caribou—like the Muries, but unlike the Old Crow Gwich'in—move freely across the landscape enacting what Murie calls their "rightful ownership" of place, erasing thousands of years of human presence. Murie continues to insist on "reading" the wilderness as "untouched;" the "decidedly normal" iconic arctic animals of wolf or bear leave the only traces she perceives, and the multiple formations and histories of people, place, and nonhuman others remain illegible.

As she leaves the Old Crow River to head back to "civilization," Murie remarks that they were leaving "at oneness with the untouched" (254). Murie, in Deborah Bird Rose's formulation, has "wholeness hunger"—that which is not already destroyed by civilization and modernity is attributed a wholeness that those fractured by modernity have lost for themselves (181). Murie insists on the segregation of spaces and times to avoid acknowledging a landscape that is already touched by histories of people, place, and nonhuman others. Kollin writes: "Even as her ability to take pleasure in the same pioneer lifestyle that her male counterparts enjoyed seemed

circumscribed, Murie nevertheless extolled the virtues of the region…explaining that the value of the land could be located in 'its absolutely untouched character'" (120). The conventional structure of time that her memoir follows—the beginning narrates the start of her life in Alaska, the middle chronicles her marriage and children, and the end of the book details her life after her husband's death and the lobbying of support for the creation of the refuge—parallels the initial newness or purity of untouched wilderness and then identifies the destruction and decline of nature in a linear, inevitable fashion. Hanna Eglinger, in "Traces Against Time's Erosion," suggests an innovative approach to mapping the spatial and the temporal dimension of literatures of exploration that resonates with Murie's memoir: the parabola. Godfred Hansen and Roald Amundsen, the two nineteenth-century explorers on whom she focuses, each experienced turning points from which they had to make a return. About these narratives, Eglinger writes:

> If "forwards" evokes vigorous vitality and "backwards" ageing and infirmity, then the course of life and expedition turn out to be not of linear-teleological, but of parabolic shape…the itinerary takes its course inside a chronotopical coordinate system, along the axes vitality and time, locating the parabolic angular point, that is life's zenith and the traveller's turning point, in the unreachable void of the object of desire. (14)

When narrativized these spatial orientations are given a temporal cast as the turn, return, or turning away from the goal that follows the chronology of the explorer's own life. The explorer's life after the return and the narration of the "turning-back"

are written in similar terms of decline and diminishment. At the end of her book, Murie recalls her last visit to northeastern Alaska: "When I think about that return to the part of Alaska which has meant so much in my life, the overpowering and magnificent fact is that Lobo Lake is still there, untouched. Last Lake is still there, untouched. Although the instant you fly west of the Canning River man is evident in all the most blatant debris of his machine power" (369). Although Murie wishes for there still to be an Alaska for "the Indian or Eskimo who still wants to live in his village" (356), only camps outfitted for tourists (such as the privately owned Camp Denali in Denali National Park) and scientists (Lobo Lake) are included in her formation of "unmarked space."

Nevertheless, the more radical interruptions of time, in the form of seasons, weather, animal movements, and administrative bureaucracies that seek to manage human time often demand other modes of relationality (and even legibility) in the memoir. Murie's rhetoric about nature and her inability to figure people into the geography of the Arctic is important for understanding the existence of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, a space to give tourists "vastness, magnificence, naturalness, informality of life, happy people, enthusiasm about Alaska, mountains, glaciers, waterfall, great trees, whales, seals, porpoises, birds, [and] all the other wildlife" (356). Because of the tireless work of Murie and her husband, the Refuge exists for Heuer and Allison to travel through with the migrating herds of caribou in *Being Caribou*. These caribou and this refuge are also the same figures of alterity around which the discourse of oil development turns. And this is the Refuge whose

borders, mapped by Congress, overlap the psychogeographies and histories of the Gwich'in Athabascans and the Kaktovik Inupiat, indigenous peoples with differing histories, cultures, languages, and political power.[32]

Forty years after Murie's journey into the Porcupine River watershed, the film *Being Caribou* retraces some of her steps, and while movement is still the operative mechanism for the story, time becomes even more essential than space—in fact, time is running out. In the film, "wannabe caribou" Allison and Heuer "read" the history of the caribou in the landscape for the viewer, interpreting the presence of marks on a hillside as the past-present of the caribou. Allison explains: "Our understanding of reality is turned upside down [through the effort of traveling cross-country 'like a caribou'], yet when I look up and see hundreds of trails etched into the mountainsides they say without a doubt that what we are living now has been happening for thousands of years." Time becomes the mechanism by which history is revealed and, rather than privileging the present, it is the traces of the past that make the landscape meaningful. The "historied" hill stands as a monument to the yearly migrations of the caribou in direct opposition to the aggressively progressive movement of frontier time.[33] These marks, or traces, reveal how landscapes can be read for histories that

[32] Although the film *Being Caribou* does not go into the specifics of Gwich'in "caribou culture" in a modern context, both Heuer's book of the same name and the website about the journey go into more detail. The website states: "Walking the dirt streets of the Yukon village of Old Crow, one feels how integral caribou still are to the Gwich'in way of life, despite encroachments of modern civilization. Beside the satellite dishes are caribou antler fences and drying racks. Behind the techno music on teenager's headphones are the drumbeats of the traditional dances that continue in the community today. Prized caribou slippers sit beside the latest Nike shoes, and stories of a boy's first caribou hunt circulate the streets with concerns of a US-Iraqi war" ("Backgrounders: Caribou People").

[33] The fact that caribou are figured as a herd, or in collective terms, works in the formation of discourses that figure the caribou—that make them legible—or not in administrative practices. In philosophy, especially Nietzsche and Heidegger, animals "cannot die," because they are seen as

might otherwise go unnoticed. This reading practice stands in direct contrast to one Minnesota congresswoman who stated, after a visit to the area, that the "2,000 acre lot that comprises the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is empty, there's nothing there."[34]

The documentary film follows the Porcupine caribou herd from Canada's northern Yukon Territory to the coast of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Heuer and Allison, the two human protagonists, "swim the same rivers, plow through the same snowdrifts, and endure the same clouds of insects, cold nights, and miles of endless travel on an annual migration [as they also] go deep into the life of the herd, encounter the same grizzly bears, wolves, and eagles…and witness the daily struggles that lead to birth and death."[35] Heuer and Allison constantly brush up against their own "humanness," their inability to fully "be caribou," to be part of the collective herd. After one particularly frustrating day, Heuer remarks: "[We're] trying to *be* caribou. We're not *being* caribou. We're *following* caribou…[we're] being *left behind* by caribou." Mixed and conflicting temporalities highlight the filmmakers' grasp of their inability to fully adapt to the caribou, to be caribou in all senses.

Although the film follows the same conventional temporal arc of beginning-middle-end as *Two in the Far North*, within this frame there are multiple moments that interrupt linear movement, such as cuts to hand-drawn maps or news clips that

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collective composites, as a horde so to speak. While an individualist animal like a "lone wolf" or a polar bear can be given a man-like death full of pathos, something that is already spoken of as a collective is given less serious moral consideration; each caribou is all caribou, both plural and singular.

[34] Paraphrased from a quotation attributed to Michelle Bachman, reported in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner, July 2008.

[35] "Why"

happened several years before the journey. Interruptions also come in the form of traces of hair, the trails of caribou from previous migrations, the "nonhuman" temporality of the caribou dictated not by daylight but by weather and predators, and the different effects of time that are felt in the twenty-four hour arctic sunlight. Geography, like "the unbroken bow of time" that is the Arctic in Lopez's terms, liquefies when the caribou come into contact with it as "streams of animals [pour] like some liquid over the hilltops, expanding, contracting, spreading across ridge crests and passes."[36]

Lopez reminds readers, in *Arctic Dreams* (and probably should remind Heuer and Allison as well), that animals "are not on our schedule" (168). He explains that arctic animals can be involved in several migrations at once or in overlapping migrations at any given time, in a continual "test[ing of] the landscape" (161) and "trying [of] things they had never done before, or that possibly no animal like them had ever done before—revealing their capacity for the new" (197). These layers of migratory movements disrupt understandings of the larger movement of caribou driving north from Canada and back south from Alaska. The caribou's movement tracks across the landscape in a model of progress that reads more like a postmodern novel than a memoir or travelogue.

In a moment of species hubris, Heuer and Allison attempt to anticipate the movement of the caribou as they fall behind the herd. The two humans cut across the mountains only to find that they are alone. Allison says: "I think the caribou duped

[36] "Trip Diary: April 22-May 27"

us. Which just goes to show that the caribou don't care where we are." Heuer realizes that their "movements are being dictated by caribou whose movements are being dictated by the bugs who are dictated by the wind. [It's] like coming upon an area on a still day and trying to track the shifting winds of yesterday and the day before. It's pretty impossible." The inability to follow is the tension between being located in a time and place and becoming-in-time, because there is no way to track "the shifting winds of yesterday," to anticipate the movements of the caribou. Instead, Heuer and Allison have to admit, or even submit, to their inability to dictate the herd's movement, and they find an aggregate of 4000 caribou with the help of a satellite phone and a team of biologists.[37] Their relationship is not actually the "being" of the title but a becoming-in-time that gestures toward the possibility of becoming something neither static nor finished; toward the possibility, instead, of a lifetime project of being human and living-with caribou, no matter how eaten by flies, bears, or pro-oil drilling White House officials. Through proximity and movement, the filmmakers enter into the caribou's "flow" with a different conception of time as they draw attention to who is being left behind by whom: the filmmakers by the caribou and the caribou by an oil-dependent modernity.

The failure to "be" caribou, then, is actually a productive failure; for Heuer and Allison's journey is not merely a "thought-experiment." The very physicality of

[37] It is interesting to note that this detail is not in the film, but can be found, innocently buried, on the *Being Caribou* website, under the Trip Diary for June 15th-July 15th: "Then we waited. But they never came. Five days later we received a message from biologists: the majority of animals were moving along the coastal foothills instead of through the mountains. Speculating where they were headed, we swam the Firth River and, in another bid to catch up, set off to cut the corner again." ("Trip Diary: June 15-July 15")

their migration lends insight into what a becoming-with might look like "in real time," how an ethics of care without proximity might find a foundation through organizational networks: the film-makers, Gwich'in elders, biologists, outdoor adventure sponsors, airplane pilots, government officials, and viewers.[38] Although the couple attempts to detach itself from modernity and human settlements and attach itself to the territory and the temporality of the caribou, they return at the end of the film to fulfill their "quest" and conclude the narrative arc of the film.[39] And so, in concluding the film, Heuer leaves it to the "true democracy" of the people to protect the lands of the caribou's migration before time runs out.

Perhaps an anticipatory answer to Heuer and Allison's documentary is Velma Wallis' novel *Bird Girl and the Man who Followed the Sun*, which situates the crossing of lives around a relationship to caribou. Wallis' two main characters, Bird Girl and Daagoo, reside on the edges of their respective Gwich'in Athabascan bands, neither willing to commit themselves to the customs of their people, customs they find constraining, meaningless, and oppressive. Building on the space Murie opened through the inclusion of gendered subjects in the "far north," Gwich'in Athabascan writer Wallis reconsiders women's place in the active, masculine, "empty" ideal of the frontier as she repositions indigenous experiences and histories. Although Wallis

[38] For a more complete account of intimacy, care, and proximity between humans and non-domesticated animals, cf. Jacob Metcalf's essay "Intimacy Without Proximity."
[39] The work of Deleuze and Guattari is also useful for thinking of Heuer and Allison's journey: "deterritorialization" and "reterritorialization" are the processes by which people, ideas, and things are decontextualized and remade. It can be a part of the process of "becoming-minoritarian" through the dismantling of dominant and disciplining frameworks. Part of the process, however, is that in some respect, or some aspect of, the liberation will be compromised and enfolded back into the dominant ideology. It is no less relevant that the couple travel in cyclical, migratory time with the guidance of a Gwich'in elder and hunter, who sees them off and greets them on return.

contests the frontier discursive apparatus as revealed in constructions of people and place in northern narratives, this is not an assertion of pure or authentic native experience. Instead, it is a critical look at the position of women caught within (and disobedient to) gendering discourses. The narrative seeks to balance an intimate look at how women are positioned within indigenous Athabascan society with the ways in which men and women challenge and transform a culture that Murie could only perceive as existing on the edges of space and the margins of time. Wallis spends particular time relating the pasts of Bird Girl and Daagoo, "rebellious youths" who end up either cast out of the tribe or leaving voluntarily. These rebellious pasts are what save the two youths from death as they grow up: Bird Girl grows up a hunter, treading on male territory, and is cast out and must fend for herself because she will not marry and assume the role of a wife in her tribe. Daagoo is a dreamer who breathes life into half-told tales in an attempt to live between myth and reality as he migrates south in his own testing of the landscape. The pivotal moment for each character that sets them on their paths of learning and growth comes in the form of a caribou hunt. The caribou act as catalysts to set the characters' lives in motion so that Bird Girl and Daagoo can eventually return to their tribes with knowledge, acceptance, and compassion.

In a pivotal scene that occurs before Daagoo's departure from his Gwich'in homeland, Daagoo's father brings him on the fall caribou hunt in an attempt to instill in the young dreamer more of a sense of responsibility. In the moment before Daagoo

almost upsets the hunt by breaking a stick while stalking the creatures, Wallis describes the scene:

> Coming over a rise and down into the valley, Daagoo felt his breath taken away by the sight of hundreds of caribou spread out, pulling lichen from the ground. The men crept on all fours toward the unsuspecting animals, approaching into the wind so their scent would not be carried to the herd. All the hunters watched their leader, who signaled with his hands whether he wanted them to stop or to strike. Daagoo watched the chief and his father ahead of him, but he also watched the caribou delicately picking at the white moss. (54-55)

Daagoo is distracted while he hunts—he is both watching the men and the caribou, unable to focus on either one. This bifocal gaze is important in that it signals a different sort of relationality. His failure to hunt, brought about by being too attentive to the presence of caribou, marks Daagoo as "other" in the novel while the men in his group, who only see caribou as objects to be hunted, lose their lives later on. Daagoo is forbidden to participate in the hunt after his inattention leads him to make a sound that could scare off the caribou, and he watches the hunters proceed to bring down the animals. Daagoo realizes an important point that disallows any position from which to avoid being implicated in the matter of living: "It saddened [Daagoo] that these animals must die so that his people would live" (55). Through feelings of regret combined with knowledge of necessity, Daagoo rethinks his position within a cosmology where the roles for people are rigid and binding. He decides to give up

these relationships to family and place for a time and follows his dream south, to where the sun is said to go when it leaves the north.

Daagoo's realization that he is somewhat like the caribou leads him to opt out of these relations and travel to discover new ways of inhabiting the world (a move reminiscent of many narratives focused on male travelers). In contrast, Bird Girl's options are much more limited and much more violent. Because Bird Girl grows up a hunter, treading into male territory; she refuses to marry and is cast out. Using an analogous description for Bird Girl's sighting of a herd of caribou, Wallis sets up a similarity between Bird Girl and Daagoo in their relations with the nonhuman world:

> [Bird Girl] walked along a plateau, hoping that the caribou would be grazing somewhere nearby. She had heard stories that the caribou were so plentiful that even an unskilled hunter could bring down at least two before the herd took off in a stampede. Her heart raced. She felt sure that, when the time came, she would bring down more than that.
>
> Suddenly, following a ridge down into a valley, she saw hundreds of caribou below. In awe she watched the animals graze amidst a quiet hum of activity. Bird Girl had not been prepared for this sight. Gone was all her determination to hunt these animals. She sat on the ground, absorbed in the magnificent view. (74)

Daagoo and Bird Girl have their resolve to hunt mitigated by the sight of the caribou. Although Daagoo, like Bird Girl, does not participate in the hunting of the animals, he helps in their butchering, turning the animals into useful stores of meat for the

tribe. Because he is a dreamer and wanders off in the night, he avoids conflict with the Ch'eekwaii (the Gwich'in word for Inupiat, or Alaskan Eskimo) and remains alive to save the women and children of his band from their murderous inclinations. Bird Girl, however, is not so lucky. Just as the caribou are prey for the Gwich'in hunters, so she becomes prey for the Ch'eekwaii. Instead of running away, Bird Girl stares as if in a trance at an approaching figure. Trying to pinpoint his difference, she realizes that he did not move as "a friend coming in greeting but as a predator moving in on its prey" (75). Bird Girl is captured, taken north to Ch'eekwaii territory and enslaved. She is humiliated, abused, and raped by her captor, which she takes as punishment for her rebellion: "[S]he lay awake, anguishing over her awful mistake. She had run away from her own people to avoid marriage. Now she was in the hands of the enemy and suffering a fate that was far worse" (109). It is important to note that for each character their precipitation to movement is linked to a *failure to hunt* and this leads to the capture and enslavement of Bird Girl and the murder of the men of Daagoo's band in a raid. Both Daagoo and Bird Girl intimately realize that the tie between caribou and Gwich'in is a tie of life and death for the humans and yet it is not simply a matter of advantage for the one species. To restate Cruikshank from the beginning of the chapter, the caribou interact as real and figural animals with the Gwich'in people; the Gwich'in, in turn, situate their understanding of themselves as a people in this figural and real relationship with the caribou.

Bird Girl and the Man who Followed the Sun, in the end, is a story like the "Ice Bear" from the first chapter, a narrative about putting order into a disordered

world. Colonial narratives such as London's or Service's are unable to write the story of native presence, because to do so would belie the foundations of progressive civilizing time that posits the originary moment of contact as occurring in an empty place. In her study of the "presents" created by an ongoing history of colonialism in Australia, Rose discusses the importance of "[c]oncepts of heterogeneous time [that] demand the understanding that different kinds of time are coeval, that is, coexisting" (25). Taking the past as "contested territory" (Rose 12), Wallis suffuses her narrative with temporalities that are fractured and multiple, even "knotted." "Time-knots," in the words of Dipesh Chakrabarty, describe "the writing of history [that] must implicitly assume a plurality of times existing together, a discontinuity of the present with itself" ("Minority Histories" 28-29). On another level, this is a local story that speaks to the patriarchal organization of Athabascan culture, a patriarchal organization that often fits too well in western schemas of subjectivity. Wallis systematically challenges a hierarchical order in which the male chief has full authority and women have to conform to strict gender roles or face violent consequences. Bird Girl is able to escape her captivity through the help of an old woman marginalized because she is no longer young and productive. Through these feminine connections, Wallis agues that a more productive and balanced path lies with integrating women into men's space—and the elderly with the young—in order to reveal different capacities and knowledges that are necessary to let life flourish.[40] Daagoo's mother Shreenyaa clarifies this position when he consults with her on

[40] Wallis' first novella, *Two Old Women* (2004), refigures the place of the doubly marginalized—the elderly and female—for an integrated society able to overcome the hardships of famine.

whether or not to trust Bird Girl's brothers' (who come from a different band) offer of "a new future:" "[It] takes more than bravery to survive in this land. It takes a great number of people working together. This is how the Gwich'in have endured" (115). The Gwich'in are a collective, a composite of people, caribou, land, stories, and the potentiality that comes from continually testing the landscape and making new tracks across it.

The discontinuity of time in the novel disrupts colonialism's panoptical time in favor of entangled and lingering time that responds to the violence of literal and figural depopulation. Murie's inability to acknowledge the tracks on the land made by Daagoo and Bird Girl speak of histories of erasure, while Wallis' novel attests to the ability for movement and transformation across space and time as evidenced by Daagoo's journey. In texts such as the anthology that contains Service's poem and London's short story, we find the "great Alaskan epic" filling a land considered to be without history; in Murie's memoir, the lone masculine hero is replaced by feminine domesticity, even as indigenous presence continues to be replaced *tout court*; in *Being Caribou* new limits to the boundaries between species are replacing older conceptions of what it means to be- and become-with even as the mediation for these new positionalities cannot account for what has already been de-placed and replaced, the human. Wallis' novel and the Kaktovik papers "In This Place," in contrast, are modes of writing presence that attest to the fact that none of these replacement projects have been complete, nor will they ever be. "In This Place" and Wallis's stories also disrupt the notion that what was once a marginal object (Alaska) can now

be private property, bought and sold.[41] Murie and Wallis demonstrate that the imperial fantasy of feminine lack waiting passively to become active masculine presence, while having some unfortunate purchase in popular culture and political regimes, is not the truth of the Arctic. The caribou, a migrating animal, moves between worlds, and through these worlds connects people, environments, and stories. In the end, caribou movement is difficult to map, for the caribou travel across human notions of boundedness, revealing their capacity to rupture concretized notions of gender, genre, and geography.

Once again the medium fails to let caribou be the subject of their own story. I have suggested that it may be because of genre, because collectivities cannot be figured in the masculine adventure tale that traverses the Arctic literary landscape. I have also written that the failure to write caribou is due to gender and gendering. The caribou are feminized in their communality; they represent sociality, humility, and passivity and therefore cannot act as a subject in narrative. The caribou are not legible in the modes of writing that have traditionally been used to write "north," and the mediating stories produced to bridge the gap between human and caribou never seem to extend across the gulf of the encounter. Humans are left alone in the landscape—observers divided from the observed through the boundaries of what is termed "wild," "nature," or "pure." The caribou travel through all of these diverse sets of geographies and desires: Inupiat, Athabaskan, Inuit, white, Canadian, American, riverine, montaine, desert, developed, rural, and rich and waste territories. I conclude

[41] Alaska was once known as "Seward's Folly" after U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward who was considered a fool for brokering the purchase of the frozen tundra from Russia in 1867.

with two last attempts to bring caribou into discursive presence, both again, perhaps, not really about caribou. The first is a series of pictures when clicked through on the website produce a herd of caribou, the second is a picture in words of a herd of reindeer.[42]

Located on several websites devoted to Alaskan stock images, there are more than enough pictures of caribou to make up a whole herd.[43] At least one third of Patrick Endres's stock images of wildlife photographs include shots of caribou framed next to the Trans-Alaska pipeline. A note alongside one set of the pictures states: "Although there was some displacement of caribou calving in the Prudhoe Bay oilfield, in general, caribou have not been adversely affected by human activities in Alaska. Pipelines and most other developments are built to allow for caribou movements, and caribou have shown us that they can adapt to the presence of people and machines."[44] Caught and stilled as an icon, an image that comes to stand in as shorthand for the varieties of history and inhabitation in Alaska, caribou are never pictured with humans in these series of shots, but only with the lingering presence of human interest: the pipeline and the Dalton Highway haul-road up to Prudhoe Bay.[45] The stillness of the photographs suggests immortality, the beautiful antlered buck silhouetted for eternity against the mountain skyline, impervious to change or death.

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[42] See Figures 3 and 4.

[43] The idea of "stock images" for a place or an activity indicates, once again, that there are short-hand representations that make a place or a thing known. Similar to the making of an icon, these stock images reconfirm knowledge that is already in circulation but does not initiate a process of reflection that asks how or why we know as well as the discomfort when engagement necessitates the transformation of these expectations and desires.

[44] Valkenburg "Caribou Information and Pictures"

[45] There are several photographs that do include humans in the background, but the foreground focuses on only the trace of caribou in the form of caribou antlers (either shed naturally or left by hunters).

However, the framing devices of screens, geopolitical borders, pipelines, lakes, moonlight, and shadows ask the viewer to consider the adaptability of these creatures. While the photographs attempt to depict several cross-cultural and cross-species engagements, caribou remain exemplary figures of adaptability to the ramifications of the narrative practice exemplified by the pipeline: resourcing the world.

In contrast to these caught and stilled, not-so-innocently framed, caribou, there is a migrating herd that transforms the very words on the page they inhabit. While not specifically about caribou, Nils-Aslak Valkeapää's poems 272-273 depict reindeer on the move. These poems are an attempt in language to presence a collective in a landscape that can account for history, multiplicity, and transformation. In the collection of his work titled *The Sun, My Father* (the English translation from the Sámi), the reindeer-herding poem goes untranslated. The editors and translators try to explain: "Honoring the poet's decision—and Ezra Pound's belief that some things can be said only in the original language—we are including poems 272-273, involving reindeer-herding terminology, in the original Sami" (7). The first poem spans eight pages and begins with two terms that connote some aspect of herding and that indicate descriptive "names" of the actions performed by each member of the herd (Gaksi 319). The poem ends with nothing but dotted lines on the last two pages of the poem, representations of the traces of the herd after they have passed through the landscape of the book. Harald Gaski, one of the translators of the poem, writes, in an article on Valkeapää:

> What is interesting is that the words furthest to the right on the page are of this type [drive-shout to get the herd on the move], while the words furthest left (and thus in the direction the herd is moving), describe the sounds that the herd and the bells [attached to the reindeer] make. This implies that the herders have got the herd moving so that it is now in motion from right to left. By contrast, we continue our reading of the poem…in the left to right direction that we normally read the text, so that the herd is again behind us. We walk in the opposite direction to it, and end up only seeing the tracks after the herd has passed. (321)

Caribou, of course, are not reindeer; they are not a species maintained in herds by humans, and their figural resonance in the landscape and in narrative does not derive from the same form of affective relationship to human others. Reindeer herding, too, has an illustrious history in Alaska as an attempt to make the land and the indigenous people inhabiting it productive members of American capitalism.[46] Poem 272-273 repopulates an emptied land with reindeer, active movement, sound, and the Sámi (who cannot live without reindeer just as the reindeer cannot live without the land).[47] "[Valkeapää's] poem about a reindeer herd migrating," Gaski concludes, "has about it…extra culturally-cued implications that [tie] it to myths, ideas and practical everyday life in a combination that opens the eyes of the observer to see the well-

[46] Cf. Taliaferro on the history of reindeer herding in Alaska. The book is the true story of the rescue of trapped whalers at the end of the nineteenth century by Alaskan reindeer herders. Reindeer herding has a mixed history in Alaska. Initially proposed as the "new beef," reindeer meat never caught on in the lower 48 states and few indigenous groups were willing to do the yearlong work of herding when caribou migrated to them seasonally.

[47] It is important to note that this poem functions as a means to write the history of Sámi relationships to land that counter Scandinavian appropriations of it through heroic narrative modes.

known through a new lens" (322). Instead of watching a herd pass from a mountaintop like Murie and her companions, or seeing the traces of their passing etched on the hillside like Heuer and Allison, in Valkeapää's poem we are traveling on the same ground and in the same landscape, only we are going in the opposite direction, along a previously broken trail made new in the encounter with caribou.

FIGURE 3:

Stock images of caribou in the Brooks Range and Denali National Park taken by Patrick J. Endres.

Patrick J. Endres / AlaskaPhotoGraphics.com

Caribou and Alaska pipeline

Barren ground caribou, rangifer tarandus, migrate across the tundra north of the Brooks range, Arctic, Alaska.

Photo ID#: 17b-29823.jpg

Patrick J. Endres / AlaskaPhotoGraphics.com

Bull caribou silhouetted on mountain ridge

Bull caribou silhouetted on a mountain ridge in Denali National Park.

Photo ID#: 2115481.jpg

Patrick J. Endres / AlaskaPhotoGraphics.com

Bull caribou on autumn tundra, Denali Park

Bull caribou in colorful autumn tundra, Denali National Park, interior, Alaska.

Photo ID#: 21031475.jpg

Patrick J. Endres / AlaskaPhotoGraphics.com

Hiker and caribou antlers

Hiker looks over a mountain stream drainage, Bull caribou antlers on the tundra, Denali National Park, interior, Alaska.

Photo ID#: 21012490.jpg

FIGURE 4:

Nils-Aslak Valkeapää's untranslated poems 272-273, from the collection *The Sun, My Father.*

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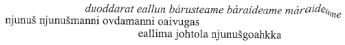

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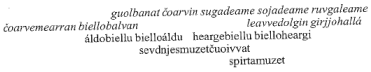

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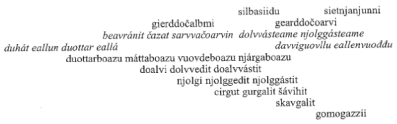

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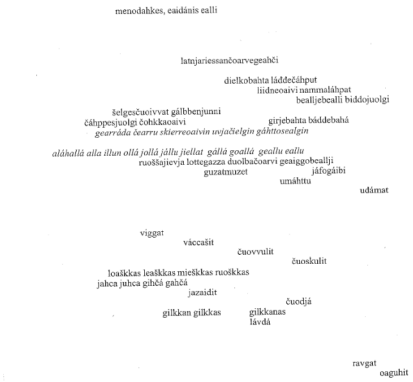
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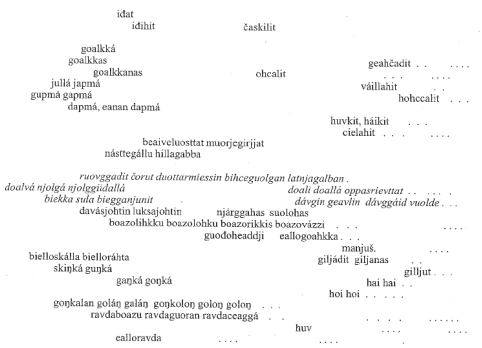
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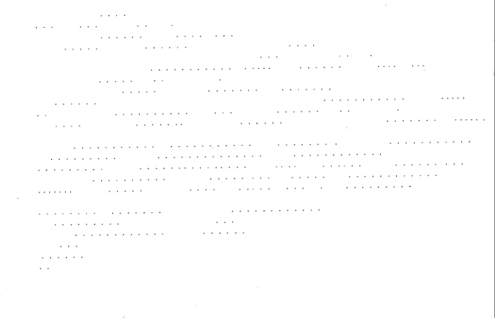

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CHAPTER FOUR

QUEER FISH:
NORTH PACIFIC SALMON AND GENDERED DESIRE

To learn to live means to learn to die, to take into account, to accept complete mortality (without salvation, resurrection, or redemption—neither for oneself nor for any other person).
–Jacques Derrida[1]

We come upstream in a red canoe.
–Koyukon Athabascan riddle

Totem Salmon: Life Lessons from Another Species (Freeman House), *What Salmon Know* (Elwood Reid), *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen* (Paul Torday), *First Fish First People* (Jane Corddry Langill), *The River Why* (David James Duncan), *Gould's Book of Fish* (Richard Flanagan), *How to Travel with a Salmon and Other Essays* (Umberto Eco), *Where There's Smoke, There's Salmon: The Book of Jewish Proverbs* (Michael Graubart Levin), *Salmon: The Cookbook* (W.A. Jones), *Salmon Without Rivers: A History Of The Pacific Salmon Crisis* (Jim Lichatowich), *The Behavior and Ecology of Pacific Salmon and Trout* (Thomas P. Quinn), *The Lost Coast: Salmon, Memory and the Death of Wild Culture* (Tim Bowling).

In its generic multiplicity, this admittedly schematic list of books about salmon reveals a complex connection between who salmon are and what they do for human systems of thought. These narratives about salmon reveal a deep interest in salmons' material well-being, political engagements involving fishing for salmon, environmental activism around salmon habitat, and the economic history produced

[1] "I am at War With Myself"

from salmon. The above list of books comes from a wide range of genres: fiction, memoir, cookbook, ecological science, sociology, folktale, travel narrative, elegy, and political history. Salmon appear in this list as material beings who live in a specific habitat (often one that is threatened); salmon have certain behavioral patterns that can be studied and linked to other creatures in the same habitat; salmon are also good to eat. Salmon figure in nonfictional stories about childhood, attachments to place, and global politics. Salmon also figure in fictional stories about the same. As will be shown in the following analysis of the material and figural lives of salmon, salmon are a beloved topic of all sorts of writers: poets, naturalists, bio-regionalists, biologists, journalists, short story writers, postcolonial writers, writers of historical trauma, and environmental and native activists. Salmon are border crossers that traverse these genres like the stories these writers tell, genres and fish transgressing literary, cultural, and environmental boundaries.

From this brief list of the thousands of titles that include salmon or a near relative, one determines that salmon stories are useful, even if for whom and why remains a question. For the Kiks.adi Tlingit of Alaska's Southeast, a story about salmon teaches how one must act properly toward others. For several of the other authors—Jeannette Armstrong, Nora Marks Dauenhauer, Sherman Alexie, Eden Robinson—with indigenous ties to salmon and place, salmon help tell a story of loss and dispossession of land, culture, identity, and agency. Salmon also can tell a story of resilience, adaptation, and strength. Non-indigenous writers also like to tell a story of loss through salmon, although the loss appears more as a mourning of entitlement

and privilege. An important aspect of these last salmon narratives is their reliance on normative sexual relations for the telling of the story of salmon, a hyper-vigilance against ambiguity and uncertainty, against queerness. In these, salmon are a mask for human sexual relations and male anxieties about the strength of their masculinity when confronted with the loss of empire (*Salmon Fishing in the Yemen*); frontier ("What Salmon Know"); and male economic, political, and cultural power (*The River Why*). Salmon occupy an ambiguous place in the environment and in narrative. The second chapter discussed the ambiguous position of seals who breathe air but live in water. Salmon also confuse boundaries; they are anadromous, that is, they change from fresh water lake/river dwellers into creatures of the sea and then back again.

In this chapter, I follow salmon on a journey through the Columbia watershed of the Pacific Northwest, the Mattole watershed of Northern California, the Bristol Bay fishery of Alaska, the "nowhere" space of the hatchery, and finally, the global reach of the great Pacific Ocean. Unlike the creatures in the preceding chapters (polar bears, seals, and caribou), salmon have touched the lives of a wide cross-section of the world's human population because they are able to live in a variety of habitats. Their very intimacy with many different species and human groups lends itself to the imagination of scientists, fishermen, and nature lovers as they envision the lives of salmon when the creatures travel far from home and return again with such a dramatic material presence. As Freeman House narrates his first encounter with salmon in a lake in Southeastern Alaska, "I looked down into the water, and I could not understand what I was seeing…The water was clear and shallow, and the entire

bottom below me was a brilliant red…and it moved, writhing and undulating in a way that was terrifying" (27). House likens this experience to a dream, one of those "temporary rifts in reality" that has the power to change a person's direction in life. Unlike polar bears, who have come to represent the imminence of climate change (that is still, nevertheless, far from *here*), salmon represent something much more local and inspire much more dramatic action on their behalf.

But a story about salmon is never just about salmon. While this truism has been repeated across the previous chapters with each arctic creature, the reports, studies, novels, poems, and films in which salmon appear seem to have a distinct inability to capture the protean fish within narrative and thus more narratives continue to be generated. The inexhaustible supply of salmon stories is matched only by the number of stories about the exhausted supply of salmon. In fact, the multigeneric and dynamic production of stories about salmon thematizes the inability to fully capture salmon in discourse, given that the discourse around who and what salmon are, and for whom, constantly shifts according to which salmon-human relationship is under review. Salmon signify in the various literatures in which they appear, but their signification is hardly stable. Leanne Simpson writes a moving account of the role of fish in Chief Spence's hunger strike during the "Idle No More" indigenous activist protests in Canada:

> Fish broth. It carries cultural meaning for Anishinaabeg. It symbolizes hardship and sacrifice. It symbolizes the strength of our Ancestors. It means survival. Fish broth sustained us through the hardest of circumstances, with

> the parallel understanding that it can't sustain one forever. We exist today because of fish broth. It connects us to the water and to the fish who gave up its life so we could sustain ourselves. Chief Spence is eating fish broth because metaphorically, colonialism has kept Indigenous Peoples on a fish broth diet for generations upon generations.[2]

Simpson's analysis of the material semiotics of fish broth—the physical body of the fish rendered into a nourishing broth and the symbolic field from which the action gains meaning—encapsulates how fish appear in human cultural systems. They are a figure of protest and action, symbolic regeneration and return, material wealth and poverty. For indigenous groups along the Northeastern Pacific, the story of salmon—that is the collapse of the fisheries, harvesting regulations, dams and other hydroelectric projects across spawning streams—is a story of colonialism. The story of salmon is the story of indigenous people and the murderous intent of the colonial machine that turns lives into restless capital that is always on the move. The story of salmon is the story of desolation that comes from the ability of one group to move on while the group that wishes to stay, to be rooted, is the one that must live with the loss of life, connection, and narrative coherence. This is the story of Robinson's "Queen

[2] The Idle No More movement began in November of 2012 in protest of the Canadian Government's steadfast unwillingness to honor treaties with Canadian First Nations. It has grown into an international protest of the treatment of indigenous people in nation-state formations. It has a diffuse and local organizational structure; some of their goals are stated thusly: "INM has and will continue to help build sovereignty & resurgence of nationhood; INM will continue to pressure government and industry to protect the environment; INM will continue to build allies in order to reframe the nation to nation relationship, this will be done by including grassroots perspectives, issues and concerns" ("Idle No More Vision"). Simpson's reading of the protest can be found at "Fish Broth & Fasting."

of the North," the narrative of what comes after colonialism, habitat destruction, residential schools, and intergenerational sexual violence.

In a romantic description of the relationship between coastal indigenous people and salmon, John Muir, in 1879, writes about the Stikeen (Hoona Tlingit) Indians he met during his brief travels through Alaska's coastal waters around Sitka: "Yonder you see a canoe gliding out from the shore, containing perhaps a man, a woman, and a child or two, all paddling together in natural, easy rhythm. They are going to catch a fish, no difficult matter, and when this is done their day's work is done" (24). After reflecting on the natural abundance of the area in terms of berries, timber, flora and fauna, he remarks,

> I have found southeastern Alaska a good, healthy country to live in. The climate of the islands and shores of the mainland is remarkably bland and temperate and free from extremes of either heat or cold throughout the year. It is rainy, however,—so much so that hay-making will hardly ever be extensively engaged in here, whatever the future may show in the way of the development of mines, forests, and fisheries. (30)

Muir obliquely refers to the push for homesteading, ranching, and cattle-rearing on the islands of Southeast Alaska by the federal government in a move reminiscent of the western expansion of settlers in the nineteenth century. While "hay-making" and cattle ranching never got more than a foothold in the landscape and economy, by the time Muir visited, there were already two fish-processing canneries in Southeast Alaska and by the time of his second visit in 1890, there were thirty-seven canneries

in operation (Catton 16). According to the histories written about cannery operations in the Northeastern Pacific, the market economy they brought to the area was less intrusive and antagonistic to Tlingit culture than government representatives and conservation politics. Acknowledging that the native people had aboriginal rights and family ties to particular streams, cannery operators paid each family for use of that stream. However, the manner in which the canneries procured fish was so destructive to the spawning cycle (damning the stream and harvesting all the fish) that in 1889 Congress passed the first law intending to protect a species or habitat in Alaska, making it illegal to interrupt the spawning cycle (Ibid. 16). Not only were the cannery methods curtailed, however, but so were the customary methods of the Tlingit, given that no provision was made for Aboriginal use of the salmon streams to procure subsistence foods.

Dauenhauer—poet, linguist, translator, and educator from Southeast Alaska—contributes some modern additions to the story of Tlingit and salmon in the collection *First Fish, First People*. She offers "Five Slices of Salmon:" an introduction to Tlingit history as it relates to the importance of salmon, two stories from her childhood that revolve around salmon fishing, a short play, a poem and a bonus poem. Dauenhauer describes the lives of Tlingit as intricately intertwined with those of salmon: "Not only have we always used salmon as our main diet, and not only has it been the mainstay of our subsistence and commercial economies, but the different varieties of salmon are a part of our social structure and ethnic identity" (101). She writes movingly about the rupture that occurred between Tlingit and salmon, a

supplement to the canneries' story of a peaceful transfer of cultural and economic systems:[3]

> With the arrival of Euro-Americans many Tlingit and other Alaska native people were separated from their land and resource base. For example, many canneries were built at the mouth of salmon streams traditionally claimed by Tlingit clans and used for subsistence fishing. Tlingit people historically practiced subsistence hunting, fishing and logging without dominating or destroying the natural resources. Traditional Tlingit fish traps were woven and could be hand carried. In contrast, the canneries built barge-size fish traps that were anchored along the migration routes, intercepting thousands of salmon on their way to spawn. Entire salmon runs were depleted by fish traps and by logging practices that ruined habitat. (103)

Despite the incursion of a market economy that processes (harvesting, killing, cleaning, and packaging) millions of pounds of salmon and at the same time commercially logs the forest, Dauenhauer does not call for a return to an idealized "pre-modern" time. She weaves together her inherited Tlingit and post-contact histories to create stories that entertain and educate people regardless of ethnic identity or their role in the destruction of the watershed that formerly nourished the Tlingit people (and to some extent still does). She writes, in her stories of childhood about the power boat her father used to fish commercially, trips to the city for

[3] As a supplement, these stories are not outside of or merely in addition to the stories put forth by the dominant discourse. Instead, using Derrida's understanding of the supplement that is writing to spoken language, we can see that the story of the canneries is dependent on, is even produced by, the stories of the indigenous people who are left out, made other, erased.

"business deals," and the modern appliances and conveniences that are now fully integrated into the lives of Tlingit, gadgets that are often transformed from their original uses to fit traditional modes of living with people and salmon. Dauenhauer focuses on her indigenous history as it appears within frontier discourses and rearranges the emphasis to reveal a contact zone that is rich in contestation, unequal power relations, and ongoing interaction. She thus finds a way for humans and nonhumans who inherit a violent past to figure out how to get on with each other in the present.

It is a familiar pattern in the north: a commercial enterprise supported through the sale of fish, whale, oil, or animal skins works closely with—disrupting as little as possible—the native inhabitants of the region exploited for its natural resources in order to procure the most profits with the least difficulty. The native inhabitants are introduced to a cash economy with its market goods offered at trading stations and are acculturated at the same rate that subsistence resources are depleted. Theodore Catton, however, remarks, in *Inhabited Wilderness*, on the often incompatible views of living in and using wilderness that make up the history of the development and conservation of Alaska. He notes that processes of acculturation do not follow a linear trajectory, and one of the most overlooked aspects of how subsistence practices continue to influence native life in Alaska is that the activities of hunting, fishing, and berry-picking do not decrease in any correlation with the increase of wage-earning power (42). While canneries were initially able to offer wage-based jobs to the local Tlingits (and later the political organization of the Alaska Native Brotherhood lobbied

to keep Filipino and Chinese workers from the United States' west coast from being brought to work in the processing plants), at no time was there ever a complete transfer of native approaches of subsistence inhabitation to a capitalist model of wealth accumulation.

Catton, as a historian, presents the complex and often shifting perspectives on the wilderness and the role of national parks in the American consciousness. He follows these shifting perceptions through Congressional acts, newspaper reporting, National Park records, and biological and statistical reports gathered on the flora, fauna, and human populations living within and around the parks of Alaska and the northern west coast of North America. Attentive to the fact that he has the recorded history of everyone with a vested interest in the salmon economy except that of the Tlingit and other native inhabitants of the region, Catton gives a thoughtful glimpse into the administrative world of balancing the region's diverse population. He also remains attentive to how human needs and desires are projected on the rich habitat of the Northern Pacific and how these come into conflict with other nonhuman claims for the same resources.

Focusing on the inherited histories of systemic violence from the colonization of rich salmon-producing habitat (what, in effect, is screened out of the records reviewed by Catton), Armstrong (Okanagan) lists the numerous policies that have shut native peoples out of their customary fishing relations along the Northeastern Pacific Coast. In "Unclean Tides: An Essay on Salmon and Relations," she focuses on the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia located just north of Washington State,

but her observations hold true for the northern tribes of British Columbia as well.[4] Armstrong begins her appeal:

> For thousands of years the original peoples of the West Coast of North America practiced sustainable conservation harvesting through complex patterns of strictly observed trade laws and internal practice. In salmon harvesting, everyone observed ceremonially protected customs which imbedded respect for their source of life. Such customs, exampled by first salmon rites, are common throughout the Pacific Northwest Coast peoples. Salmon harvesting was strictly regulated in various ways by knowledge-keeper chiefs in their various jurisdiction, no matter where on the river system, to allow for upstream takes with the goal of preserving future full spawning cycles. (181)

Armstrong argues that the colonial system, which privileges capitalist accumulation over the health of eco-systems, has turned the original inhabitants of the Pacific Northwest into "scapegoats," blaming them for the decline in fish populations. Regulations for the management of the fishery often fall most heavily on those who should have prior claim to the fisheries based on customary care, rather than on off-shore commercial fishing fleets that tend to have monumental levels of waste from "by-catch" (non-target species of fish caught during harvesting and tossed away,

[4] cf. Julie Cruikshank's detailed discussion about what the making of the State of Alaska meant for those living on the other side of the border in her study, *Do Glaciers Listen?* See also Catton, *Inhabited Wilderness*.

dead). In the clash between nations, the native inhabitants divided by these borders almost always lose out: sockeye salmon that return to Canadian rivers to spawn,

> mature on the high seas in the Gulf of Alaska and return to the Nass and Skeena [rivers], passing through Southeast Alaskan fisheries where large numbers are now being intercepted…Over sixty percent of sockeye taken in Southeast Alaska are Canadian-origin sockeye. Alaskan interception of Canadian stocks from these two rivers have more than doubled since the signing of the Pacific Salmon Treaty in 1985…making it impossible [in some years] for Canada to meet its minimum escapement goals for conservation of those stocks for spawning returns. (Armstrong 187-188)

The signing of the Pacific Salmon Treaty between Canada and the United States was intended to bring responsible harvesting techniques to the salmon fisheries that overlap between the two countries in Pacific waters in order to assure the healthy flourishing of both salmon and people. Instead, American commercial interests have trumped the wellbeing of the resources they extract. After Canada seized two American fishing vessels in their waters, American commercial fishers "retaliated by hauling in an unprecedented five times their regular Canadian salmon interceptions. This inordinately ignorant and dangerous move has struck fear in the B.C. Native food and trade fishers monitoring the ominously low river returns" (Armstrong 191). The excess and waste of the fishing industry is paid for not by the commercial fleets nor by the consumer, but by the native peoples who, already under "severely restrictive conservation programs," voluntarily cut their harvesting to almost nothing

to insure that some salmon are able to return to their headwaters to spawn and renew the stocks depleted by the ocean fishing industries (Ibid.).

However, the story of salmon in the latter part of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first is not simply a story of loss, it is also a story of care that comes from loss. The North Pacific salmon fishery was on the verge of collapse after World War II due to extensive and intensive set-net harvesting that wiped out whole runs in order to provide cheap canned food for soldiers and other Americans. The history of salmon lives in Alaska and Canada are inextricable from the military-industrial complex, a complicated and layered history of desire, nostalgia, embattled masculinity, and the ambiguity that comes from change, all of which show up in Elwood Reid's story, "What Salmon Know." While House (in *Totem Salmon*) identifies state-governing agencies as the impediment for "becoming indigenous" to a place—to living well—Reid points the finger at the military-industrial complex. Like the oil industry, however, military spending in Alaska creates the economic base from which to hire construction workers, such as the protagonists of the story, Marley and Craig. The un-feelingness of the military complex arrives in the form of two servicemen from the southern parts of the United States who only know how to fish for bass and catfish, neither of which are endemic to Alaska, metonymically suggesting that neither is the military.

World War II was a defining moment for Alaska in the national consciousness, with its strategic access to Japan (or to North America if one were to come from the other direction). Before the war, there was little infrastructure in the

territory and even less regulation of commercial fish harvesting. Until the fish were perceived to be in decline, cannery operators did not seek assistance in management and were generally left to their own devices, perhaps due to the not-quite-legal status of their coastal operating sites built before official permits from the federal government could be granted. Fisheries management in this instance becomes a type of care; and although it is a type of care that may seem entirely selfishly directed towards human consumption and capital accumulation, it is also entirely invested in the continued life of the salmon. The story of salmon, then, is also a story of management, of twentieth-century applications of science in service to the rational development of resources. Or, in other words, of national and state interest in creating Alaska as an extractive frontier "done right" without the excuse of not knowing the effects of squandering natural resources.[5] Thus, the stories of fishery management, commercial fishing interests, and the importance of salmon to indigenous people are not necessarily separate, competing, or inherently antagonistic narratives. Rather, in certain respects, these stories complement each other, support each other, and change each other dynamically, just like the salmon who connect these various interests upstream, downstream, and across the Pacific ocean.

Salmon and their defiance of being rooted—of belonging to a singular place—inevitably bring them up against capital and nation formations. Christopher Connery, in "Ideologies of Land and Sea," provides a helpful new lexicon for this type of story, urging us to think not in terms of networks, with their somewhat static nodal or

[5] Cf. Haycox for in-depth historical study of Alaska as a colony and Cooley for the salmon fishing industry's integral role in Alaskan politics.

"knotted" points, but of the flows that move salmon, humans, and capital across the world. An oceanic consciousness produced through remaining attentive to how water can connect, facilitate, or separate histories, cultures, and economic exploitation opens up the types of stories that can be told and who they might be for. The most popular story involving humans and salmon is a story about humans (represented by white men) and their fall from nature into (techno-) culture. Reid's story, for example, is set in opposition to the technical world of the military-industrial complex, while David James Duncan rails against the "technoid" world of the hatchery, put in place to counteract the damage of dams to watershed systems. The economy of Oregon and Washington that allowed settlement by the forebears of Duncan and his compatriots is based on fishing (that leads to depleted fish-stocks), logging interests (and the resulting pollution and obstruction of waterways), and the creation of dams (that wreck havoc on temperature, flow, and regulation of silt).

The history of these "lost waterways" is an inherited history of violence and loss that prefaces another story of care involving the salmon of the North Pacific: the story of environmental action, of the coming to an environmental consciousness by people moving into areas devastated by frontier extractive economics. After mining, logging, and ranching, the scarred mountains, polluted waters, and arid landscape met people like House in the late 1960s as they moved out of crowded urban environments, disillusioned with life on the commodified and technified urban edge. Alaska (or Northern California for House) was the promise of a "new frontier" that could be developed and conserved for the environmental purity it represented. The

whales, otters, and seals were coming back after near extinction due to protective measures, and so it was thought that the salmon industry could also benefit from enlightened ecosystem management. Therefore, settlers who wished to "become of the place" (House 199)—to be once more part of a narrative of flourishing rather than desolation—could find ways of entangling themselves in the damaged ecosystem. As Richard Cooley's in-depth analysis of the promise of land management that Alaska represented at statehood demonstrates, Alaska was an experiment in how to do "frontier" better and in alignment with the new understanding of how previous opportunities in the "frontier" west had decimated and polluted vast tracks of wilderness that could have been sustainably managed for centuries (*Alaska* 3). Of course, one must think critically about these discourses of management, scientific control, and frontier economics, but the point is that Alaska was the first state in which national parks, recreation areas, and game sanctuaries came before state and private commercial ventures involving land and animals. This is the story of the environmental movement of the 1960s combined with the post World War II disillusionment with man and his murderous culture.

In the first histories written after Alaska was made a state in 1959, the story of salmon is one of transforming the territory into an autonomous political machine, independent from the federal government and able to look after its own interests. Ernest Gruening, former governor of the territory and then senator for the new state, expresses this position clearly:

> Despite the unceasing protests of Alaskans, the biennial memorials of the Territorial Legislature, the repeated efforts of Alaska's voteless delegates in the Congress, the concerted and valid criticisms of Alaska's fishermen, the Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service was utterly oblivious to these pleas and presided over the steady decrease of the salmon resource until, in 1959, the last year of federal control, it reached the lowest point in sixty years. (qutd in Cooley, *Politics and Conservation* xiv)

In Gruening's story, Alaska's statehood and salmon are connected. Telling the story of the birth of the state of Alaska through the decline of salmon populations (measured in the number of cases of canned salmon produced during the season) aligns Alaska symbolically with nature, and thereby naturalizes the political and social organizing of the state. The increase in salmon populations after statehood, when the state legislature gained control of the industry, at once legitimizes the political organizing of the territory leaders and naturalizes the institutional structure of the state: what's good for the salmon is good for the state and vice versa. For Gruening, salmon are an integral facet of the new state; indeed, salmon are the link to Alaska's prehistory. Moving forward in time, salmon confirm the futurity of the state through the legislature's ability to curb the excesses of federal neglect and mismanagement. The senator links "Alaska's aboriginal[s]" who were "amply nourished" by salmon to "the people of Alaska," who, to combat the unscrupulous and oppressive tactics of the lobbyists in throttling Alaska's economy, awaken "to the need for statehood—and in their getting it" (xiii-xv). The aboriginal past of Alaska—

firmly placed in the past tense—confers the "natural heritage" of the Pacific salmon industry on the people of the state of Alaska (xiv). The "people" that make up the citizens of the new state, however, rarely include the native inhabitants whose interests in salmon was somewhat protected through federal treaties—a "privilege" that white inhabitants of Alaska vigorously protested (Catton 55).

In this story of difficult beginnings, the care for salmon is almost overlooked in deference to the more epic narrative of how a political system triumphed over corruption and mismanagement. And yet, the lives that were saved were those of the salmon who continue to nourish the people of Alaska through their material bodies and the cash income traded for their bodies on the open market. While the narrative of the birth of Alaska includes, in fact relies on, care for salmon, it is not a story that includes Alaska's indigenous people who also care for salmon. These management systems of the state are not neutral for all the people who live in the area that became the state of Alaska. Gruening argues that federal employees acted in the interests of the federal government and lobbyists of the canning industry in their mismanagement of the North Pacific fisheries. However, state policies were also formulated in service to the goals of the state, many of which were in conflict with the needs and desires of those who live within its borders. In order to function as a late capitalist member of the United States, the state of Alaska needed to collect revenue for state projects, uphold the privatization of certain property—including taxable fish habitat—and maintain free enterprise and global markets influencing the price of fish and other revenue-generating products.

The United States' policy for managing fisheries in the North Pacific was not created in a vacuum. Concurrent with the push for Alaskan statehood was a move by the United States to "Americanize" the fisheries off Alaska's coast, which up until the 1960's were primarily given over to foreign factory ships ("And Then There were None" 4). By providing government incentives and subsidies for boats and fishing gear and closing the three-mile off-shore limit to non-American vessels, the United States was able to take control of the North Pacific fishery at a time when fish stocks were already crashing due to overexploitation (Ibid. 4). Left with the devastation of these shortsighted policies that failed to take into consideration ecology on an oceanic scale, and not simply the ecology of one species—the target species—the new state struggled to implement conservation measures.[6]

From the late 1800's through statehood, regulatory commissions and agencies were set up to address the decline in fish populations—especially all five salmon species that spawn in Alaska rivers—and yet, this practice of care—with commercial interests first and foremost—has been an almost insurmountable barrier to addressing the question of what do salmon want, for salmon populations continue to lag.[7] What is the desire of salmon that can lead to practices of care to keep the species—and their

[6] The pollock industry, for example, has been notoriously difficult to regulate as pollock are an open ocean species and the netting technique used to maximize pollock catch also has a considerable by-catch. And the by-catch species caught in the most devastating numbers is usually open ocean salmon who will never return to their home waters to spawn.

[7] Management technologies that have been put in place (permits, seasons, net size) are not working and salmon numbers are not increasing. While recent studies have cited trends in populations of salmon that include extreme "boom and bust" years, what these studies do not address is the fact that the motivation for managing a fishery is to make it a sustainable harvest; that is, a continued "boom" with no "bust." And this simply has not been the case with North Pacific salmon.

ecosystems—flourishing?[8] Salmon do not live in a species vacuum. Perhaps more than any of the other creatures I discuss in this dissertation, salmon have such a varied connection with both the natural and human world that their loss would precipitate major ecosystem and economic collapse—from ocean to river, seal to grizzly bear, benthic communities to streamside soils.

A management system based in commercial interests seems incapable of incorporating indigenous communities who also rely on salmon for cultural narratives of place (and the health of salmon is also the health of these communities). Complicating the story further, is the salmon's ocean-going proclivities; different communities have different access to salmon, depending on whether the community lives on the coast, mid-river, or at the headwaters of a particular river. The Yukon River is exemplary in this regard. In 2004, the Yukon River Intertribal Watershed Council (YRIWC) formed to address the health of the Yukon River in a eco-systemic fashion. YRIWC brings different groups with varying stakes in salmon together in order to discuss how people and salmon might live together—in other words, how people dependent on salmon might come together in a practice of care for the salmon.

Like the proliferating stories about them, salmon, one finds, are difficult to manage. Is it because of their biology, the ecologies of their various watery environments, their place as food, symbol, historical connection, political rallying

[8] In the language of science and bureaucracy, the desires of salmon are completely illegible. While the concerns of ecofeminism may seem to occlude the practices of care that these other forms inhabit, focusing on what a species might desire outside of what humans desire for that species brings us into patterns of listening and behaving that takes seriously that there are more than human stakes involved in living and eating well. This last point is stated most persuasively in Jacques Derrida's philosophy: "*learning* and *giving* to eat, learning-to-give-the-other-to-eat. One never eats entirely on one's own" ("Violences contre les animaux" 282).

point, or economic mainstay for different, and often contending, groups of people? Salmon are almost excessively generative in relation to human systems of capital, identity formation, and food security. From one standpoint, salmon can tell the story of the United States' global political ascendancy, the state of Alaska's political autonomy, and global capital. From another perspective, salmon are made legible through the trade in their material bodies connecting people around the world even as the loss of these bodies produce narratives of traumatic dispossession. But salmon and their stories are at a crisis point; the world's demand for the flesh of this world-traveling commodity has exceeded the world's ability to produce it. Global desire, it seems, has surpassed even the capacious capacity of salmon to (re)generate. I now turn to some of these salmon stories that offer a window on the life-worlds of the multi-species environments with whom salmon share in the choreographies of care for (to name a few of the participants) humans, oceans, rivers, bears, soils.[9]

In a Kiks.adi Tlingit story told by Andrew Johnson, a boy, Aakwtaatseen, disparages a piece of salmon given to him by his mother and throws it away. As a consequence for his impetuous action, Aakwtaatseen is taken to live with the salmon people in order to learn their rules, rituals, and customs surrounding food, games, and visiting (their neighbors the Herring people and the Kiks.adi people). Aakwtaatseen

[9] "Choreographies of care" originates in the work of Charis Cussins (1998) around an ethics of care as a practice in her ethnographic studies of women and fertility. Marianne Lien adopts the intricate, contingent, and situation-specific mode of attending to others in a paper she presented at a UCSC Anthropology Colloquium entitled, "Becoming Sentient; Choreographies of Care in Salmon Farming." Lien discussed new European Union legislation that recognized the sentience—or ability to feel pain—of salmon in aquaculture sites. She argued that the "choreographies of care in assemblages of living creatures [suggests] that attention to orderings of death can illuminate the fragile achievements of life, and guide us in the politics and practices of living." This is one recent example of new ethnographic research into multi-species assemblages involving humans and salmon. See also the work of Heather Swanson, UCSC Anthropology.

learns that salmon are not objects that can be thrown away like trash; instead, their bodies are given as a gift of exchange between beings who respectfully engage in obligations to one another. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the flourishing of this multispecies connection—and what it means to change perspective; that is, to be converted to an alternative position from which to reflect on and, perhaps, change one's actions. I will also discuss what it might mean to call salmon "the happiest of creatures" (Johnson 9) who are deeply concerned with the happiness of Aakwtaatseen—they get up to all sorts of tricks to make him laugh in amusement with them. The temporality of human-salmon engagements is also highlighted in this brief Tlingit story and becomes a factor in how humans and salmon relate to each other in the world: Aakwtaatseen lives with the salmon people for "three or four years" (8), about the length of a salmon's life from egg to juvenile smolt to open ocean maturity to the return to the home river to spawn and start the cycle anew. While this story and the poem by Dauenhauer are of Tlingit origin, not all the stories I examine think salmon in the same way (relationally). The salmon are bearers of many types of stories, yet only certain stories—those more oriented to the human in terms of sexuality, nationhood, historical trauma, or melancholic loss—gain an audience and become the vehicle for how the world understands salmon. To even begin to approach what the "happiness of these creatures" might entail, it is important to bring all narratives of care to the discussion.

Sara Ahmed writes, in *The Promise of Happiness*: "Happiness shapes what coheres as a world" (2). The "world-making" of happiness is an important place to

start in thinking about who (individuals, groups of people, salmon) and what (corporations, states, nations) have stakes in the "feelings of salmon." Ahmed explains: "Ideas of happiness involve social as well as moral distinctions insofar as they rest on ideas of who is worthy as well as capable of being happy 'in the right way'" (13). Ahmed asks not what happiness is, but what happiness does in order to think through the nexus of how feelings—conventional feelings—allow some forms of participation and legibility in social forums and not others. I wish to take these critical arguments about affect and social lives to cross-species, cross-cultural, and transnational bodies—of water, fish, and humans. The uneasy and contested moral and social dimensions of happiness operate in salmon stories under a variety of guises: the colonial apparatus of a state that administers the lives of humans and nonhumans; normative gender roles threatened by queer contamination from those who do not conform; and diverse modes of engagement for salmon that promise trans-historical, transnational, and trans-species practices of care.

While Ahmed focuses on an "archive of unhappiness" around feminist killjoys, unhappy queers, and melancholy migrants (the names of her chapters), I want to pull the figure of wealth and fortune (an original meaning of "happy") to rethink the figure of the "miserable" indigene through this model of happiness (Ahmed 22). Misery has often been used as a synonym for poverty, for lacking in wealth. The first definition in the Oxford English Dictionary for misery is: "A condition of external unhappiness, discomfort, or distress; wretchedness of outward

circumstances; distress caused by privation or poverty."[10] William Cronon discusses Indian waste and its connection to Indian poverty in *Changes in the Land*: "Indian poverty was the result of Indian waste: underused land, underused natural abundance, underused human labor" (56). Indigenous people, through the eyes of the early European colonists to "New England" (an orientation that persists across the settlement of the United States), were seen as materially wretched (they lacked a surplus of goods) and spiritually wretched (they lacked Christianity). This double lack led, not surprisingly, to the conclusion that native peoples were an inherently "unhappy" lot, incapable of "giving value" to the "proper objects" of happiness, to be oriented to "the good life in the right way" (Ahmed 24, 38). Ahmed clarifies: "we learn that happiness is how some things are made into goods" (38). While Ahmed, in this declaration, means "goods" in the sense of a positive orientation, she is also playing on "goods'" double meaning: the material commodity that can be bought or traded, that leads to wealth, to fortune. Wealth is the result of having goods and it is also a state that is good, to which one should aspire. Native Americans were doubly othered from "the good:" they lacked in wealth and they lacked aspiration to the good life as practiced by the colonists. Native Americans were miserable in their "outward" and their "inward" circumstances.

Alexie, however, rejects the parameters of a commodified happiness which has its meaning controlled by settler culture in his prose poem, "The Powwow at the End of the World." In the poem, the narrator takes the position not of the miserable

[10] "Misery"

indigene, but of the angry Indian, stating: "I am told by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall after that salmon swims upstream, through the mouth of the Columbia and then past the flooded cities, broken dams and abandoned reactors of Hanford" (17). Alexie's poem is the first piece in the collection *First Fish, First People: Salmon Tales of the North Pacific Rim*, opening the regional study by identifying the institutional power of dams, nuclear energy, and the political and social stratifications that organize life in the Pacific Northwest. These structural inequalities that prevent the "happiness" for fish and Native Americans pit native inhabitants against the "many of you" that control the resources—the wealth—of biological commodities that are transformed into global capital. For Alexie and the other authors in the collection, salmon mean more than capital (although many enter a market economy through commercial fishing) and more than cultural revival. Jane Corddry Langill, editor of the collection, writes: "Why salmon? We had often used the fish as an emblem of the region [the Pacific Northwest] in joyous celebrations" (10). *First Fish, First People* presents a complex history of fish and people as the multi-author volume introduces histories, legends, personal accounts and short stories of people and salmon from across the Pacific. The mixed genre of the collection troubles the borders of nations and cultures to present multiple truths about the multi-naturedness—the queerness—of salmon as they cross lives, temporalities, streams, and oceans.

Dauenhauer transforms the binary structure of Alexie to clarify that the contemporary moment of engagement with salmon cannot be traced to an originary

moment of purity or authenticity: her Tlingit cultural zone mixes with U.S. salmon industries, canneries, and migrant labor that puts down new roots in Southeast Alaska and adds new items to the cultural repertoire of what can be considered Tlingit in the 1980s. In her poem in the form of an instructional recipe, "How to Make Good Baked Salmon from the River," Dauenhauer uses the codes of cultural anthropologists who are interested in eating habits to instruct and invite her readers to partake in the feast.[11] The cannery is a potent site of cultural mixing: built on the banks of the land, it is already almost part of the ocean as it processes fish for global consumption. Dauenhauer acknowledges the shifts in traditional life-ways and she is not apologetic, "authentic," or nostalgic. She moves in the ordinary of the present to transform her reader's expectations as she grapples with the discourses of the frontier writer, ethnographer, historian, linguist, fishery service, Parks service, tourist, or cannery worker and finds a way to bring everyone to the table to eat "good baked salmon from the river." Along with the people in this narrative, raven, mosquito, and salmon are also part of the dialogue, each having a cultural memory and a place at the table.

Susan Kollin writes that Dauenhauer takes "into consideration the various conditions that might restrain her audience from following the recipe, [and] she takes care to update the instructions for her current readers, thus expressing her fundamental belief that cultures are not lost but change" (*Nature's State* 134). Furthermore, she "writes of the battles facing tribal peoples across the state as they struggle against cultural destruction and move towards cultural recovery…dedicated

[11] Originally published in a collection of poetry entitled *The Droning Shaman*, "How to Make Good Baked Salmon from the River" is also anthologized in *Fist Fish, First People*.

to reversing the history of cultural suppression across native Alaska" (132). Although the invitation to eat is Tlingit in expression, everyone is invited; the encounter is not exclusive. Eating, especially eating the figure of return and continuity, such as salmon, remains a reciprocal activity and to forget this is to cut oneself off from networked engagements, inviting potential ecologic disaster. Or, in the words of Dauenhauer: "When done, toss the bones to the ravens / And seagulls, and mosquitoes, / But don't throw them in the salmon stream / Because the salmon have spirits / And don't like to see the remains / Of their kin thrown in by us / Among them in the stream" (15).

Dauenhauer suggests that traditions can be enacted in a multitude of ways and that there are many influencing factors that change culture, such as the transformation of subsistence fishing into cannery fishing: "It's best made in dry-fish camp / On a beach by a fish stream / On sticks over an open fire, / Or during fishing / Or during cannery season" (11). In this manner, Dauenhauer invokes traditional Tlingit cultural markers (the eating of salmon, the telling of stories, concerns for earth others who are also relatives), while also recognizing change, transformation, and new ways of conceiving and demonstrating these traditions (using a fry pan and oven, paper plates, taking the garbage to the dump, telling jokes, and drinking beer). She takes the time of the present for her poem, the time of the aftermath of violent encounters and their subsequent fall-out: the reader may not be a Tlingit at fish-camp, but she or he could be a Japanese cannery worker. The poem clearly demonstrates that salmon tastes

"best" at fish-camp, while fishing, or at the cannery; with seal oil and berries, rice and soy sauce or fruit cocktail.

Dauenhauer playfully recognizes that no culture lives in isolation and that change occurs and can be positive, can lead to new "goods." Tlingit and non-Tlingit migrate, salmon baking moves from the streamside fire to the city, but people are no less rooted in their new or old locations: "In this case, we'll make it in the city, / Baked in an electric oven on a black fry pan" (11). She also highlights other forms of inherited trauma that become part of a cultural lexicon such as alcoholism and trade goods such as tea and coffee: "If you shouldn't drink beer, / Tea or coffee will do nicely" (15-16).

Beginning with the eating of salmon that connects histories of migration and displacement across the Pacific, Dauenhauer returns the reader and the salmon back to their roots, along a riverbank, telling stories among relatives. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, in *Postcolonial Eocriticism*, call these enactments of care "alternative modalities of belonging" that practice "ecological understandings of the relationship between human beings, the environment that surrounds them, and the other creatures with whom they share their world" (119). Settler entitlement (the need to assert connections to a place in the present) is implicitly criticized in this modality of care and inhabitation. Considering how entitlement is a powerful organizing schema that suffuses both indigenous and non-indigenous narratives of belonging (for different reasons) complicates notions of "dwelling" that might otherwise seem to reflect an engaged practice of care for where one lives. An emphasis on dwelling in a place,

Huggan and Tiffin suggest, reveals the displacing effect of settler entitlement even as it obscures violences in the past by privileging the manner in which the land is presently occupied. Control over property (and indeed, the "ideology of possession") is systematically deconstructed in Dauenhauer's poem for a concept of belonging that can encompass dislocation, migration, and home for a variety of people and animals (Huggan and Tiffin 82, 119).

"The happiness of people has a great deal in common with the happiness of salmon," House writes in his account of the history and desire behind one of the first community action groups to attempt the saving of wild native salmon stock in Northern California, *Totem Salmon: Life Lessons from Another Species* (142). House's text is both a love letter to an animal beloved and an effort to understand how humans create community, with each other and in a particular place. House's story about the intertwined lives of salmon and people in the Mattole watershed resonates with the conflicted tenor of post-colonial settler anxiety about dwelling. Huggan and Tiffin explore this problematic nexus of desire and repression, defining it as "the crisis of belonging that accompanies split cultural allegiance, the historical awareness of expropriated territory, and the suppressed knowledge that the legal fiction of entitlement does not necessarily bring with it the emotional attachment that turns 'house and land' into home" (82). While they are exploring the work of Allen Curnow of New Zealand in the mid-twentieth century, certain hauntings persist in the latter part of the century for American writers involved in "bioregional" back-to-the-land efforts to reclaim natural areas turned to actual waste by their frontier

forefathers. An operative term in both the New Zealand and American settler context is "entitlement." After all, Huggan and Tiffin continue, "to assert one's right to live in a place is not the same thing as to dwell in it or inhabit it; for assertion is possession, not belonging, and dwelling implies an at-homeness with place that the genealogical claim to entitlement may reveal, but just as easily obscure" (82). Entitlement "isn't just property" and it is more than "the recognition of affective ties to land" (ibid.). The term covers imaginative and emotional ties to land that are (re)confirmed through certain legislative mechanisms like property title, and it also encompasses the tensions redolent in the mix of affective, material, and historical association to place. The anxiety for settlers around entitlement to land that may have been occupied for some several hundred years by Euro-Americans is the "powerful entitlement" that *previous* occupation established through an even longer tenancy on the same land (53). Gruening's invocation of "Aboriginal" happiness with the wealth brought by the abundance of salmon in Alaska before federal mismanagement, mentioned previously, is an expression of settler entitlement.

On the surface, House's "personal and cosmic" memoir about living in and coming to care for the Mattole region does not seem to be haunted by the displacement of the previous inhabitants.[12] By the time of his engagement with the land and waters of the area in the latter part of the twentieth century, "almost all of the Mattole and Sinkyone people who inhabited the Mattole Valley had been killed in battle, murdered by vigilantes, or removed to either the Round Valley

[12] Gary Snyder, champion of the bioregionalist movement *par excellence*, provides an endorsement on the front cover House's book: "A grave and delightful book, both personal and cosmic."

Reservation…or the larger Hoopa Reservation" (176). When House moves into the Valley, settler occupation has already been established for over 150 years, allowing him to write somewhat romantically, that the "scanty notations [of the descendents of the original occupants interviewed by anthropologists] are the only clues remaining to us to bridge an otherwise total discontinuity in the long experience of human habitation of the place" (176). House, however, is concerned with entitlement as a "new-comer" to the Valley relative to the frontier ethos of the long established rancher/logging community. He asks: "How could we begin to act like people of a place rather than like consumers and producers in a market system over which we had little control?" (157). In other words, how might he and the others of the valley enact the process of "becoming indigenous, becoming of a place" (199)? The problem for the happiness of salmon and the happiness of people in the Mattole is not a haunting by the specters of previous inhabitants; rather, "the happiness of the state" with its different governing bodies that control access to resource extraction that has priority over human communities, salmon, and watersheds (139). House, and the Mattole Watershed Salmon Support Group—convened for salmon conservation and watershed restoration after the inherited histories of full-scale resource extraction—are only legible to these governing institutions because of the legibility of their entitlement to the area through the extermination of the valley's prior people. However much House might complain about how to translate the Support Group's "vernacular experience" into a "credibility equal to…state capital," he and the other members of the group already have a foot in the door. The former inhabitants of the

valley only ghost the margins of House's narrative, fundamentally the story is more about competing settler views of land-use and tenure than the Sinkyone's "scanty notations."

Of course, the riverside ecology of Dauenhauer and House is only part of a salmon's life. When thinking about salmon, one also must think oceans. Although rivers can be politically contentious spaces as they meander through more than one country, state, or community, oceans bear an even more complex geopolitical burden.[13] Connery (in "Ideologies of Land and Sea") continues his argument for rethinking the relationship between land and sea by observing that land has a "geo-imaginary" that points to the exercise of hegemonic power regimes and the sign of capital. This geo-imaginary is also networked with competing narratives of "loss" such as "the disappearance of the Commons, the fencing of the great plains, and the closing of the borders" (177). For the ocean, however, he asks, "Does the ocean have a history" (Ibid.)?

The ocean has (historically) resisted the grids of power that stretch across landmasses. However, it is often brought into regimes of symbolic power. Nowhere is this more evident than where the land meets the water. The coastline is a powerful zone of semiotic upheaval.[14] It is one sort of liminal zone that marks boundaries between land and sea, between what signifies in a geopolitical sense and what "bears no message" except in a figural, symbolic, or storytelling way. But there is also

[13] For the complex geo-political histories and symbolic values of rivers cf. Kabir.
[14] Connery quotes Roland Barthes: "In a single day, how many really non-signifying fields do we cross? Very few, sometimes none. Here I am, before the sea; it is true that it bears no message. But on the beach, what material for semiology" (177)!

another ambiguous zone between land and sea not identified here: the estuary, lagoon, or tidal flat where land and sea meet on the watery side—rivers and oceans come together and salt water and freshwater mingle and exchange elemental and mineral lives, or at least messages. This is a transformative space where salmon turn from freshwater to marine creatures on their way to adulthood before returning to the fresh water of the river system on their way home.[15] Not only do the fish cross the liminal threshold of juvenile to adult, but they also make an even more significant change—from fresh water to ocean—as they cross over the very elements of life.

Connery writes about "ideologies of land and sea," but salmon are creatures of neither and both. Rivers, and the streams that feed them, are a special case; rivers are the most visible manifestation of watersheds—the geographical mapping of the movement of water from land to sea. House eloquently describes watersheds as living organisms: "Draw a diagram of the patterns of water on the wet slopes and they resemble nothing so much as the capillaries in our own bodies that deliver blood to every inch of skin surface" (37). But in contrast to the human body, a mountain's system of water is not moving out to a periphery with every beat of the heart; instead, the flow is "down and in to the heart of the sea" (Ibid.). Salmon hatch in freshwater streams, then move to the ocean to take in nutrients while avoiding land-based predators, returning to the freshwater streams of their birth to reproduce and die.

[15] Freeman House evocatively describes the relationship between a salmon and her home stream: "It was not readily apparent that each glowing salmon egg contained within it a strategy for the survival of its species based on precise adaptations to the full range of environmental conditions its home stream might present during any one year—genetically encoded information that provided the skills for identifying the home stream along with a hardwired sense of the time when that particular stream would be at its optimal conditions for spawning" (86).

Salmon's final contribution to their ecosystem is to leave the rich nutrients of the oceans far inland on the banks of streams, the edges of lakes, and in the stomachs of carnivores and omnivores that prowl restlessly in their wake (55).

Connery argues that global studies arise problematically from a conception of space as geographical, as land: "The thinking of the global until fairly recent times, from Eratosthenes, who coined the term *geography*, 'the writing of the earth,' and preimperial Chinese geographer Zou Yan, has been material, topographical, spatial, and elemental: its concerns have been mountains, rivers, oceans, islands, and continents, and the way these forms shape social life and history" (175). While oceanic thinking forms the basis for projects that contest or reject the parceling of land as space into national or imperial geo-imaginaries (Mediterranean studies, Caribbean and Atlantic studies, Pacific studies), Connery argues that more needs to be asked about how "categories through which the earth is imagined and portioned—elements, regions, nations, space, continents—and the ideological character of that imagining—transcendence, ownership, expansion, colonization, free trade" are components to the critical thinking of the global (176).

By claiming that "land and sea" form a "dominant elementalism" (176), Connery identifies the obstacle for thinking how salmon inhabit multiple worlds and ideologies. While geography certainly has mapped rivers and the lands they flow to the ocean, fish still travel in a world remarkably alien to the human species. When Connery asks after the character of ocean's signification, the unlivable space that is "[u]nplowed, ungraded, unmarked, and unowned" (177)—a commons that appears to

offer an antidote to the over-capitalized and fenced in properties to which land has been subjected—he highlights the difficulty for salmon in a historical temporality and spatiality arising from geographic thinking. The use of land-based metaphors for thinking about salmon produces them as non-mobile raw material that can be enclosed and owned. This perspective disarticulates the salmon from a tapestry of other connections that have more to do with flows, cycles, and the slipperiness of salmon bodies. House explains the history of salmon farming, a practice firmly rooted in a land-based ideology; salmon hatcheries "were an attempt…to apply the methods of industry and agriculture to wild fish" (76). The newly formed United States Fish Commission at the end of the nineteenth-century write openly about their accumulation-based ethos: "We have tilled the ground four thousand years…we have just begun to till the water" (Seth Green, in House 77). By contrast, a thinly disguised ploy on the part of capitalism to maintain free and limitless trade is found in the argument that the ocean is and should remain "common to all." The fish within these oceans, as has been pointed out by Armstrong, are caught in this nexus of "goods" moved across land and sea-scapes for the "good" of all, or at least the few with economic and political control of the waterways.

In the context of salmon in Oregon, Duncan discusses, in an interview for the Oregon magazine *1859*, salmon on a rather queer journey that literally moves them from hatchery facilities to the ocean by barge. 1859 was the year when Oregon became the thirty-third state of the United States of America. Like Alaska, statehood for the Pacific Northwest territory gave more power to commercial interests that

wished to protect white settler interests in Pacific Northwest resources (salmon and logging), while simultaneously limiting to extinction Native customary rights protected by federal treaties.[16] In the "mostly true" story Duncan tells the magazine, he shares an anecdote from his time working with a "PBS 'Nature' crew doing a documentary on the horrors of being a wild salmon suffering state and federal 'recovery efforts' in the Columbia/Snake" watershed.[17] Like his more overtly fictional novels, this story weaves together the spiritual and material lives of salmon and humans. The salmon in this particular story is a female spring Chinook (or "queen" as he refers to her), who, with her "nervous, sexual vitality," transforms the Eucharist of Christian salvation into the peaceable kingdom here on earth: "All this primordial wild Gift needs to bring the abundance and beauty latent within it, is our acceptance of it, as given, and please God 'unimproved'" (Ibid.). His insistence on the "unimproved" nature of the salmon is a retort to the salmon hatcheries along the Columbia River system, built in order to help salmon breed, grow to adulthood, and navigate the dams along the riverway as they swim to the sea. Duncan argues that substituting technological apparatuses for natural spawning is not the answer to the decline in salmon runs that have been caused by technology (dams built to make cheap hydro-energy) already in place.

[16] Sandra Osawa (Makah) details the racist division of resources that state law (against federal policy) instituted. In the words of a judge of the Washington state court: "The premise of Indian sovereignty we reject. The treaty is not to be interpreted in that light…At no time did our ancestors, in getting title to this continent, ever regard the aborigines as other than mere occupants of the soil, and incompetent occupants of the soil. Any title that could be had from them was always disdained" (141). Issues of entitlement, occupation and land/water-use will be addressed further in this chapter.
[17] Max "Interview"

The PBS *Nature* program to which Duncan refers in his interview is "Salmon: Running the Gauntlet," a documentary that focuses on the once abundant salmon fishery of the Columbia River Basin. This is not just a story of loss (of habitat, salmon, subsistence, and sport fishing); it is also one about the flawed role of human technology-as-savior of the natural world. The film's cover clarifies: "The drastic decline in [the salmon's] numbers is due not only to overfishing, to habitat loss and dams, but is also a consequence of our own extraordinary efforts to save them." Deploying Duncan's salvation rhetoric and the binaries that entrap human and fish, the film synopsis continues: "These iconic creatures, at once resilient and fragile, manipulated and wild, are incubated in plastic bags, born in hatcheries, carried in trucks and barges, and then forced to run a gauntlet of dams and other obstacles along the rivers they travel." As discussed in previous chapters, icons are hardly neutral in their production and obfuscation of the animal or object to which they refer.[18] To call salmon "iconic" seems to move away from the very materiality of the being that Duncan (and other activists) are engaged in preserving. However, like the metaphor "polar bear," the iconicity of salmon—at once a "representation of some sacred personage" and "regarded as a representative symbol"—works to bring salmon more firmly into a practice of care. The salmon is an icon in the relationships that Duncan and House narrate; she is at once a material being and a symbol of life and renewal—her body is a host for multiple relationships, expectations, and desires.

[18] Icon most often refers to the nineteenth century definition: "[a] representation of some sacred personage, in painting, bas-relief, or mosaic, itself regarded as sacred, and honoured with a relative worship or adoration." However, the definition expanded to the secular in the twentieth century to read: "A person or thing regarded as a representative symbol, esp. of a culture or movement; a person, institution, etc., considered worthy of admiration or respect" ("Icon").

Salmon are not just metaphors, however; they have "historically played a vital role in sustaining millions of square miles of diverse ecosystems" ("Salmon: Running the Gauntlet"). Duncan lyrically describes the watershed ecologies that include salmon in his novel *The River Why*—a meditation on dislocation, migration, and home in relation to salmon, humans, and their mutual attachment to rivers.[19] Duncan's blend of melodrama and ironic humor at once highlights and obfuscates the place of salmon in the watershed and the role humans, especially white settler men, have played in their decline. Duncan addresses native absence along the river in his novel, even as his white male protagonist symbolically learns to dwell through the gift of a native story of place, becoming an entitled settler who inherits the Oregon of 1859. The previous narratives of Duncan and House have some anxiety over the rightfulness of inheritance; whether, indeed, the legitimacy of belonging can come from the caring for a place. The anxiety over legitimacy and entitlement are screens for other anxieties, however, given that Alexie and Dauenhauer have already identified that care for salmon is care for the native inhabitants. Salmon are a fish of return; their life-cycle includes hardship, uncertainty, and predators on all sides just like the historically oppressed Native Americans. For Alexie, it is salmon who "will lead all of the lost Indians home" (17).

For Duncan, House, and Reid, anxieties about entitlement are in essence an anxiety about maleness, both in terms of losing an authoritative role in history and by becoming obsolete in the queer reproductive salmon sex of the hatchery lab. House

[19] "Salmon: Running the Gauntlet"

attributes a human sexuality to the spawning salmon while turning the spawn into the climactic act of a salmon life. House writes: "While the female has been probing, the male has begun to hover steadily nearby, and he has begun to tremble. Now it seems as if an invisible soupy fog of piscine eroticism rises off the water and envelops the observer. The fog is a dense, cold, quiet mixture of sex, death, and inevitability" (25). Such an insistence on the erotics of the encounter between salmon suggests that other anxieties are motivating the work of House. Salmon—in their liquid environment and with their vastly different sense perceptions—are a difficult creature to bring into human sign systems. The work to make an erotics out of salmon procreation that is legible to human readers points to an underlying need to divert attention from other, perhaps less worthy, fears. The successful reproduction of salmon confirms the practices of care enacted by House and the Support Group while legitimizing the rightfulness of their inhabitation in the valley.

Duncan in turn does his best effort to keep the following sexual encounter among salmon from being queer, calling "the three-way jack-buck-queen dance" in the Idaho wilderness a "Pacific Northwest Holy Family."[20] In the story of this queer Holy Trinity, the human men stand like apostles, waiting to pass judgment on the sacredness of the act to follow. In answer to their question regarding the point of a female's life ("Is there a male?"), "she was joined by a jack—a male of 6 or 7 pounds." Duncan refers to the jack as a "mere boy in salmon terms, but carrying milt, and so better than nothing."

[20] Max "Interview"

> his presence stimulated her. Right there in bright sun, water clear as air, that queen of a salmon turned on her side and began ramming a redd [a scooped out hole in the gravel of a streambed that will hold the nest of fertilized eggs] into the spine of this continent, her body shining like a silver knife blade, water churning, stones visibly flying, not a mark on her, the jack going nuts, swimming circles around her, over her, under her.

In Pacific salmon species such as Chinook or Coho there are two types (or morphs) of male and one female. One male morph, "jack," returns to the home stream after only two years in the ocean while the male "hooknose" and all females spend three years in the open ocean. Jacks are smaller, with camouflaging coloring, while hooknoses are big and brightly colored with a pronounced snout. Jacks are just as viable in breeding terms as hooknoses, and the resulting male fry will grow up to be either in form—the two morphs are a strategy to optimize stream and ocean conditions, a scientific explanation that loses some symbolic value when carried into a storytelling tradition.

Joan Roughgarden, in *Evolution's Rainbow*, explains the biology of this Holy Family, making it a bit queerer indeed (while Duncan refers to Chinook salmon, coho and Chinook both have the two male genders, jack and hooknose):

> The females excavate a nest in the gravel in which they lay their eggs. When they do, the closest male fertilizes the most eggs. Hooknose males are better than jacks at fighting for position near a female and wind up with the most fertilizations. The jacks obtain some fertilizations by darting in under the

> female while she is laying eggs. The benefit for the jack of being able to breed one year earlier and avoiding the hazard of living another year at sea compensates for its relative disadvantage in fertilizations compared with the hooknose. Jack and hooknose coho salmon appear to have equally successful strategies of life. (77)

Despite the "equally successful strategies of life" performed by the jack and the hooknose, the jack does not display power or exude masculine sexuality like the hooknose—he fails to promote Darwin's "myth of the handsome warrior" (Roughgarden 166). So Duncan and his male colleagues cheer when "out of nowhere, a big eggplant-colored male [sweeps] into view. A big strong sperm-laden Swain, with shoulders and courage and several pounds of milt and a toothy kype to drive off opportunistic egg-eating trout." Duncan chooses to focus on the paternal capabilities of the hooknose to protect his family from outside predators thereby protecting the structure of the heteronormative nuclear family from the lurking queerness of the jack as well.

But why might salmon be queer? Why do certain writers emphasize gender divisions as a way of organizing sex in other animals? Salmon are queer fish in general, never mind their three genders. They live in a protean environment of water, an always active, always changing element. And beyond their watery world, they will not stay put even in one type of water as they change their liquid environment not once, but twice in their lifetimes. They are fleshy and red, their bodies killed in order

to be consumed, to be incorporated into our human bodies, to be made one with us. Is it possible that salmon might make humans queer?

In Noreen Giffney and Hird's introduction to *Queering the Non/Human*, they write that Queer (with a capital Q): "comes to signify the continual unhinging of certainties and the systemic disturbing of the familiar" (4). Queer (and the process of Queering) brings together life and death, as exemplified in the editors' celebration of "'both requiem and genesis" that engages with "the discursive categories…of nature, culture, science, art, temporality, and the Human" (2). The shuttling between requiem and genesis and not Duncan's "Holy Family," comes closer to the point of understanding what it means when Derrida says that to "learn to live means to learn to die…without salvation, resurrection, or redemption." Salmon seem to be forever frozen between life and death: the moment when most people experience the life of salmon is in their imminent death, when they return to their home streams to spawn (to create new life) and die—the two acts are forever inextricably linked in salmon life-worlds. Salmon are also a consumable species, one that is enjoyably eaten by many species, including *Homo Sapiens*, once again linking the life of the salmon with its death.

Implicit in the argument of Giffney and Hird's "Queer" is the interest in the space between life and death, and a "collection of methodologies to unpick binaries and reread gaps, silences and in-between spaces," an echo of the Kaktovik emphasis on the "third path" (5). Death and life for salmon (as well as other species) are linked to sex. Hird questions heteronormativity's insistence on animal sexuality as a mirror

of binary sex categories in its reinscription of heteronormativity's gendered and sexed norms onto nonhuman animals. Read one way, Duncan's queer Holy Family acts as a resistance to the normative story of the inevitable decline and loss of salmon due to their inability to evolve fast enough to live in an ever-changing world. Duncan and the film crew bodily enact a narrative of impossibility, trekking miles into the wilderness to find salmon, restoring habitat, and skillfully narativizing what the world is with and without salmon; a Holy Family of salmon, humans, and habitat. Duncan's Holy Family is queer, because like Giffney, Duncan has a "commitment to the here and now, the present," and he does not "put faith in the always postponed future, but mak[es] an immediate intervention" (Giffney 57).

Although Duncan queers the story of salmon decline, he still relies on normative sex and gender roles. The sexual vitality of the female salmon is in stark contrast to the all-(human) male film crew who are transformed into "fathers" as they worry about whether or not a male salmon has made it to the headwaters to fertilize her eggs. Once he has, they cheer, high five, and begin to worry about predators such as bears or trout reaching the young fry. The focus on the sexual energy of the salmon obscures the potential for an erotic reading of the homosocial grouping of human males. The bonds among same-sex humans are submerged in deference to the reproductive capabilities of the fish who brings the group together. Duncan proceeds to identify a binary between technological or man-made creation versus natural birth, an opposition that is at the root of his anxiety about a "queer" birth for the salmon. He explains that the film crew "were ragged from three weeks of filming industrial

hatcheries and dam-mitigation devices and endangered salmon slit open and killed and posthumously processed for their eggs and milt instead of being allowed the first page of Genesis birthright that is the Spawn" (Max "Interview"). Duncan acerbically adds:

> the techno-utopians who run the place had written WELCOME HOME SOCKEYES! on the labratory [sic] wall where they kill and slit open the guts of every returning fish and start throwing antibiotics and antifungals to fight the head-rot the salmon get from concrete tank abrasions, and maybe athlete's foot ointment and Preparation H too.[21]

Haraway is instructive about what, exactly, Duncan fears in the form of these "techno-utopians." It is not simply that they do salmon sex "the wrong way," but, rather, this ambivalence about "border-crossing" arises from the "potential to be enlisted in the service of fresh forms of exploitation and domination in a scientifically recolonised world" (Huggan and Tiffin 206). The hatchery technicians tap into narratives of salvation as they fertilize the eggs, rear the fry, and release the fingerlings into barges that travel down the dammed river systems. Duncan, in turn, re-co-opts the language of "secularized salvation history" belonging to Western scientific progress that the technicians represent, turning their "helping-hand" back to the "Genesis birthright that is the Spawn" (Haraway qutd in Huggan and Tiffin 206). Although written in the context of Margaret Atwood's post-apocalyptic techno-

[21] Duncan's practice of care for the salmon necessitates a division between the natural and the artificial or technological. Identifying the technologies that have contributed to the decline of salmon, the "techno-debacle" that is the Columbia/Snake river system's eight dam gauntlet, he is wary of management plans based in a "techno-utopian" system of hatchery workers who "techno-diddle" the salmon's eggs and milt in plastic bags.

thriller *Oryx and Crake*, the following analysis holds true for the anxiety about the dominance of technology over nature displayed by Duncan: Atwood's "brave new world is a triumph of scientific administration and surveillance in which scientists alone possess the secret of nature, entrusting to themselves the future of the earth" (Huggan and Tiffin 210). Duncan and most other writers advocating for the end to the multiple dams along important salmon watersheds identify the catch-22 that is what Huggan terms a "misplaced technocratic optimism" (204): the use of technology to fix problems brought about by the use of technology, revealing "the murderous arrogance with which human beings have taken ideas of the human to themselves, twisting them in their own individual interests or using them to justify their own immediate ends" (207).

Unlike the efforts of Duncan to differentiate natural from "techno-" procreation or the perseverance of salmon and men illustrated by House's "soupy" mix of sex and death in the salmon spawn, Reid's short story, "What Salmon Know," identifies the importance of the art of mythmaking in stories of men and fish.[22] While Duncan and House diffuse some of their anxiety about a perceived diminishment in male significance through concerns about inhabitation and procreation, Reid's construction of masculinity turns this formation around. He questions even the possibility of "dwelling" (of becoming indigenous to a place) when tensions between hierarchies of men are unresolved. The world of his story is divided into a valorized

[22] These nature stories written by white men are particularly concerned with animal sex scene that are told in such detail that it seems to function as a way to mask anxiety about the ambiguity that is human gender and the transgressive roles of women into men's business.

masculine wild(er)ness opposed to a foreign, controlling—and denigrated—feminized governing force. The violence of settler entitlement is cathected through the transformation of unruly human females in the beginning of the story into a passive feminine nature that is violently despoiled at the end. The male protagonists fail to protect nature (in the form of a female fish) against the rapacious and indifferent representatives of federal control *par excellence*, the military. The self-mythologizing of Reid's characters is fashioned not just out-of-doors, but more importantly, *outside* the space of the perceived domesticity of a world that is too ordered, easy, and soft (the "lower forty-eight" of the contiguous United States). Alaska, for Reid's characters, is the place where not only can men be men, but they can also be more authentic men when placed in a position of savior for an endangered feminized nature.[23]

The narrator, Craig, inhabits several ambiguous zones; he is a working traveler currently in Alaska who came up from the south and imagines an easier life in Hawaii, where he can make twenty-five dollars an hour, live on the beach, and

[23] Reid's story has complex and unresolved layers of gendered violence. These layers include violences between men, between men and women, between men and a valorized feminine nature, and between men and a feminized—but malignant—foreign controlling body. I read these stratified conflicts (that produce different outcomes for the bodies involved) as diverse, but interrelated and mutually supporting, examples of male anxiety about a loss of identity when "masculine" spaces (like wilderness) and occupations (generative work like construction) are perceived to be under threat of emasculation by women and other controlling forces. The display of violence in the story has real consequences for human bodies, but the use of the animal (the salmon) both highlights and obfuscates these outcomes, while also creating the animal as the outlet, or scapegoat, for inter-human violence. Violence between species (human and animal) can be a coded representation for violence among species (men and women), but it also has real consequences for the body of the animal. This reading holds true for the following story by Robinson.

have all the girls he can dream about.[24] His buddy Marley is a direct contrast. His "black eyes toggle back in their sockets" (90); his "dark hair hangs out of his hood in frozen clumps" (94); he's "greedy about fish and likes to keep his freezer full until spring" (92); he stands, "frozen hair flapping in the wind like some primitive dragging dinner back to his cave" (97). In contrast to Craig's penchant for moving, Marley is rooted, perhaps more ideally placed as the "native" in the story, caring for the fish he ardently kills in the face of a bigger threat (the "outside" to Alaska, or the federal government represented in the story by military servicemen): "Marley's theory is that Alaska's the only place big enough for him to die in. That he needs mountains, permafrost and legions of bears to hold his soul in after he's gone" (92). There is little room for women in this cosmos.

Women are doubly othered in the story; they are either working as waitresses that serve men or they are fleetingly mentioned as flirting "Eskimo girls" going after the perceived highest ranking white men in the room. In fact, women are simply to be passed around: "Marley…once lost a pretty little Eskimo girl with cheekbones and one of the all-over tans to some flyboy from Fort Eielson. Because in Alaska you don't lose your women—just your turn" (98).[25] In this world, the Eskimos are girls, exotic and easy, and the Indians are men, of the angry variety, who threaten "to kick the bartender's tender young hide if he don't grab them some winning pull tabs out of

[24] Another geographically coded colonial fantasy—already parodied in Herman Melville's *Typee* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *South Sea Tales* in the 1800s.
[25] Having grown up in Alaska, I must admit I have never heard this expression before. A more popular saying is told from a woman's perspective about the men in the north: "the odds are good, but the goods are odd." A best-selling comedic guide to "Alaskan men" plays off this truism and the importance of fishing: *Catch & Release the Insider's Guide to Alaska Men* (1997).

the bucket" (89). And it is the "Tanana Indians" who set the forest fire that brings a haze of indeterminacy to the setting, "hoping the state would hire them to put out the blaze" (92).

After the two men are rejected by the girls at the bar, they decide to head out on a fishing trip, because "Marley thinks fishing can change anything, bad luck, a sour marriage or a shitty job" (90). The men "lose thirty dollars' worth of lures to snags" and decide to clean the fish at the roadhouse's cleaning station instead of by the river (93). On the way, Craig notices that the dying fish are "shoot[ing] [their] milt out on Marley's back" and the "hens start dropping egg sacs that crunch under [his] waders" (97). The absurd waste of salmon futurity leads Craig to stop and ponder Marley's insistence on the need for space and his desire to be consumed by that space and the creatures that live within it. He stares "up into the white swirl of the sky as the fish writhe and flop around [him], releasing their sperm and roe onto the frosted ground. For a moment [he's] lost in the slither and slide of the dying spawn and [he] think [he] know[s] what Marley means" (97). This failure to reproduce, to extend life into the future is an instance of the "death drive," of the need not only to eradicate the self, but all selves, all life. The spawn is not successful, it mixes not in the water of the home stream but on the frozen ground, neither "helped by the hand of man" nor able to occur "in nature." The spawn (and by extension the salmon) is in limbo, existing out of place and running out of time.

The "double-death" of fish and men is caused by influences beyond the control of either.[26] Two military servicemen (Greer and Chester) stationed in Alaska come to the same river to fish; they represent an outside threat that reveals the instability of Marley and Craig's relationship to nature and each other. Although "the governor says that military bases drive the economy and that we should welcome each new GI with open arms," Craig is not all that keen on "that good-neighbor business" (98). Greer and Chester look to Marley and Craig for guidance on how to "reel in a big one," but when Chester does, he fails to treat the salmon with respect. Greer and Chester land the "big fish" that escaped both Marley and Craig. Instead of hauling her out, beating her head with a rock to kill her instantly, and filleting every piece of meat from her body, Chester sticks a knife in her side and cuts slabs of meat off her still living body and then releases the mutilated fish back into the water where she attempts to still swim upstream (106-107). The encounter between the two sets of men is between working class representatives of different, but interrelated and reliant, economic mechanisms. The story is suffused with a longing for an order of nature that can encompass a male hierarchy based on knowing, protecting, and caring for a nature under siege. Through a story about fish, Reid highlights layers of violence obscured when focusing on a practice of dwelling. The female fish with her sides cut out represents the "burning" of the wide-open spaces by a military-industrial complex that does not have room for Marley and Craig or the Tanana Indians and Eskimo girls

[26] Deborah Bird Rose's formulation of not just the death of a species but also the eradication of all relationships connected to that species, including humans and their stories. Cf. *Report from a Wild Country* and "Multispecies Knots of Ethical Time."

at the bar. The violence done to the female body of the fish is a threat that Marley and Craig can confront, even if, in the end, her body is only able to make visible the violences that men inflict on each other.

While Roughgarden has offered a way in which to attribute sexual agency to nonhuman species outside of the conservative sex roles of a reduced understanding of human sexuality, the male authors discussed here are not anti-salmon procreation, they suffer from what Huggan and Tiffin call "accommodating the nonhuman in humanistic thought," without interrogating what hierarchical structures or ways of knowing that entails (208). Salmon sexuality is a thinly veiled rewriting of a human male sexual fantasy that must contain the queerness of fish within containing structures, either that of religion or masculine stereotypes. When thinking through the queer reproductive strategies of salmon, Reid's fish "shooting their milt" down the men's backs and the hens' eggs "crunching underfoot" may not be about a profound pessimism for the futurity of salmon, but for the attachment frontier stories have to the homosocial world of masculine men, a world defined by the absence of all that is different.

In contrast to Reid's "big fish" story about threats to male identity that pit men against men is Robinson's haunting return of histories of racial and sexual violence. Robinson's "Queen of the North," from her collection, *Traplines*, is told from the perspective of Adelaine, a young Haisla woman who spends most of the story on the Haisla Reserve, just outside of Kitimak in northern British Columbia on the other side of the Alaskan border. While fish are rarely mentioned, histories of competing

commercial fishing interests, American and Canadian battles over fish stock, and First Nations' struggle for autonomy and relevancy vis-à-vis a colonial dependent relationship with the nation transect the story. The title of the story comes from the name of Adelaine's Uncle Josh's fishing boat, a boat that brings violence when she docks at the beginning of the story and, although the end is ambiguous, the reader assumes more violence will travel with her as she departs for the fishing season at the end of the story. We learn early in the story that Josh has been sexually molesting Adelaine since she was a small girl and, along with Adelaine, we discover later in the story that Josh was molested by a priest at a residential school as a small boy.[27]

The gender and power hierarchy elided in Reid's "brush-off from some Eskimo chick in satin hot pants" (89), comes back in full force in Robinson's description of what it means to be a young native woman in the twentieth century living on a reserve, an outsider in her own land and a commodity to any passing tourist schooled in the overly-eroticized image of the "Indian Princess": "I could feel him watching me, was suddenly aware of how far my shirt dipped and how short my cutoffs were. In the heat, they were necessary. I was sweating too much to wear anything more" (208).[28] Adelaine has just finished making fry bread as a fundraiser at

[27] An unfortunately all too common occurrence for young native children sent away to the schools during a bleak period in Canadian history, the full extent of the violence only now coming to light through several "truth and reconciliation" initiatives. Cf. *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*.

[28] "Native American women face the highest rates of sexual violence and physical assault of any group in the United States. According to U.S. Department of Justice statistics, one out of three Native women will be raped in her lifetime, and three out of four will be physically assaulted. In the majority of the cases, the assailants are non-Indian" ("Violence Against Native Women"). Adrienne K. elaborates: "Native women have been highly sexualized throughout history and in pop culture. There are any number of examples I can pull from, the 'Indian Princess' stereotype is everywhere–think the story of Pocahontas, or Tiger Lily in Peter Pan, or Cher in her 'half breed' video, or the land 'o' lakes

a powwow, when the tourist Arnold plops down five $20 dollar bills and asks her to make a batch just for him. Using his economic clout and trading on Adelaine's interest in the money for the sake of the "Helping Hands Society," Arnold is given what he wants, down to his last request for Adelaine to "shake [her] hair out of that baseball cap" (209). As her hair hangs limp to her waist, Adelaine walks away, apparently unperturbed by the list of demands she is asked to perform for the money from Arnold. The interaction between Arnold, a "middle-aged red-headed man in a business suit" (206) and Adelaine encapsulates the set of relations between Adelaine's Haisla people and the dominant culture that controls where her people can live, go to school, and fish. Not only does he control the material conditions of Andelaine's life, he also asserts his right to control her representation in the dominant culture through his insistence that she conform to the image of a "sexy squaw."

Why read this story as a fish story, a story about the interconnected lives of salmon and people on the Northern Pacific Coast, and not as a gothic tale of (human) horror, incest, intergenerational secrets, and psychic drama the text might otherwise suggest? Or, why not simply read it as the story of Uncle Josh and the histories of abuse perpetrated by the colonial system of Canada against First Nations people that is repeated through the generations, transforming Chinua Achebe's "one long night of savagery" (from which the first Europeans delivered the African people) to the unending violence on Native people against themselves (72)? This story, of course,

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girl…We're either sexy squaws (the most offensive term out there), wise grandmas, or overweight ogres. But the pervasive 'sexy squaw' is the most dangerous, especially when you know the basic facts about sexual violence against Native women."

can be read as both a colonial text and as an example of the fantastic. These reading practices leave something out; they have limits that stop short of accounting for the role of Adelaine as a young native woman circumscribed by histories of violence towards her people and the lack of agency she has to confront them. Adelaine is not completely lacking in agency, though; she takes action in her own defense, from living with her aunt and cousins in Vancouver after she has an abortion to confronting the origins of the violence in her family that started with Father Archibald's abuse of her uncle. Switching the codes of allegory, salmon are not figures that perform services for humans here; instead, Adelaine and her story of the violence of othered bodies are an allegory for the salmon who are also fighting for the recognition of their lively bodies caught and stilled in centuries of abuse and ecosystemic neglect. The cyclical opening and closing of the story with the return and subsequent leaving of Uncle Josh's boat, the *Queen of the North*, draws attention to the location of the Haisla people as living in northern British Columbia, but that northerness is also once again circumscribed by the American border, the panhandle of Alaska that blocks access to the coast and traditional fishing areas for many First Nations people of Canada.

In Robinson's story, Adelaine is like a salmon swimming upstream, caught between interests on all sides of her that do not necessarily have *her* best interests at heart. Her world is overly determined by the violent histories of extreme racism that placed her people on a reserve and denied them access to self-determination, economic stability through non-destructive frontier operations, and the freedom to

assert cultural difference and pride. Adelaine's position is also one of hyper-sexualized expectation when she is trapped and objectified by the powerful white male gaze of Arnold. Unlike Adelaine's lover Jimmy, who takes action by joining her Uncle Josh's ship for his next salmon run after he learns about Josh's abuse of Adelaine, Adelaine does not appear to have an escape route, her place or role, like Duncan's "queen," is already determined to be where she is, on the reserve, a native woman locked in a location, made to perform in a certain set of culturally and historically coded ways. This rendering of her position within the text is too simplistic, however: Adelaine does have agency, even if it is only one of stillness, of refusing the violence that others have dictated as the inheritance of a First Nations woman, living on the brink of the Canadian and American extinction-machine.

The riddle that opens the chapter (the answer is, of course, Red salmon) comes from the little book, "Koyukon Riddles," adapted and introduced by Richard Dauenhauer (the husband of Nora Marks Dauenhauer). Published in 1975 for The Alaska Bilingual Education Center, the riddles were originally collected by an Episcopal priest in 1913. According to Dauenhauer, winter was traditionally the time for riddles after the hard work of summer and fall, when "the food supply had been gathered and prepared." For the Koyukon, specifically, riddles are associated with "the return of light" during the second half of the winter.[29]

Dauenhauer explains how riddles relate to the everyday world, when they might appear to be only evocative flights of fancy. "Riddles are like poems," he

[29] The Koyukon are an Athabascan people that live on the Koyukuk and Yukon Rivers in Northern Alaska.

writes. “A riddle is an act of imagination—an act of seeing something in terms of something else…riddles turn things upside down and inside out [and] gives us a new or different way of seeing the everyday world.” Many of the riddles point to animals important to the Koyukon as sources of food, clothing, and tools (salmon, beaver, ermine, Dall sheep, fox), and others highlight the landscape of northern Alaska or modes of traveling within that specific territory (riddles about mountains, islands, sled runner tracks and the whirls paddles make when dipped into water). The Koyukon world, as revealed in acts of poetic identification when a mountain range turns into the moon, a salmon becomes a canoe, and the meeting of paddle and water is the sound of singing, is deeply embedded in the environmental conditions of northern Alaska. It is also a deeply narrative world, where language bridges the relationships between humans, animals, tools, and environmental conditions. Seeing the “everyday world” anew through these slight poetic acts reveals the deep connection and identification that the Koyukon have with salmon and other creatures, an identification and symbolic order open to uncertainty, unfamiliarity, and otherness.

The riddles also point to the boundaries of the Koyukon world, boundaries that mark marginal or ambiguous space: “The water tears away at me” is an island and “I reach beyond the mountains” denotes the sun or moon. Islands, mountains, lakes, beaches, and estuaries are all liminal spaces where distinctions between land and water blur, where the world—and the people and animals within it—might act somewhat queerly. The Koyukon recognize that these salmon who are traveling home, back to the world of the Koyukon, are multiple in nature even as they are all

carried in one vessel; the "we" connotes the repetition of the many salmon, their presence a multitude waiting to happen behind the mask of a single body. Imagining the happiness of salmon teaches one how to live and how to die "without salvation, resurrection, or redemption"—beyond the Holy Trinity. And yet, I think for the Koyukon at least, they are not alone at the end either.

CONCLUSION

> Against this vortex [of species death], what does one have to offer? Writing is an act of witness; it is an effort not only to testify to the lives of others but to do so in ways that bring into our ken the entanglements that hold the lives of all of us within the skein of life. If we wonder, as many of us often do, if there is any point in telling stories that awaken ethical sensibility in this time when so much is happening so rapidly and seemingly so unstoppably, there is a countervailing dread: if no stories are told, if all the violence goes unremarked, then we are thrust into the world of the doubly violated.
>
> –Deborah Bird Rose[1]

> The greatest peril of life lies in the fact that human food consists entirely of souls.
>
> –Ivaluardjuk[2]

The title of the dissertation focuses attention on the politics of bringing humans and animals into administrative practices and juridical orders in the north. In 1970, the Gwich'in and Kaktovikmuit were made into singular subjects through the shareholder structure of incorporation in the political referendum known as the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). ANCSA is the product of the contact zone among diverse communities of people, animals, oil, ice, tundra, wind, desire, and culpability. As Alexandra McClanahan and Hallie Bissett explain, in *Na'eda*, their "Guide to Alaska Native Corporations:" "Alaska Natives' urgent task in the face of the State of Alaska beginning its selection of land [in the late 1960s] was to protect as much as they could and make sure that it remained under Native control. Their aim was to give up as little as possible while maintaining as much traditional land as they could" (12). In order to accomplish this feat without resorting to creating reservations and becoming tied to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, legislation was

[1] "Multispecies" 139
[2] Qutd in Rasmussen *Intellectual Culture of the Igloolik Eskimos* 56

developed (under intense pressure for oil development) to set up business corporations to manage Native resources (13). ANCSA divided Alaska's native people into twelve regional corporations with a thirteenth to represent those who lived outside of Alaska. Although the division of ANCSA seems to be geographic and cultural, it is even more so temporal and ontological as it cuts generations of people off from each other and the ecological systems that were once more than "resources."[3] Politics created many of the stories of the north, but the poetics of these engagements generate spaces and times for witnessing other entanglements of people, animals, and place; an ethics, in other words, that brings response and responsibility together.

I end with one last proposition for how one might approach the lives and deaths of others through the art of storytelling. It is not the active story of the (male) hero who can move easily along the dynamic passageway between the binaries of life and death, nature and culture, human and animal. It is the active passive cultivated in listening to a long story cycle filled with an impossible number of actants: human, animal, vegetal, and mineral. Matei Candea explains inter-patience, an extended interspecies practice of learning to live together:

> Patience is the active cultivation of inaction. Whereas passivity is mere negativity, a lack of action, patience is the action of allowing things to happen to one; the patient is not, like the object, definitionally incapable of action but,

[3] Only those living in 1970 were given shares in their regional corporation, the "after-borns" can only be bequeathed shares from relatives and do not automatically count in the corporate definition of who counts as "native."

> rather one who gives him- or herself over to a relationship in which action flows one way. Like imitation—albeit for a different reason—patience is therefore a limiting case of action: Patience is action turned against itself, intention intent on self-suspension.[4] (249)

I do not propose that humans wait patiently—that is, passively—while the world continues to heat up and oceans, watersheds, rainforests, deserts, mountains, and tundra become unlivable. The patience is in learning to listen to the other, to what the other wants; it is an "ecological engagement with flow [that] calls for a gift concept inflected toward responsibility. From an ecological point of view, the idea of not returning energy is extremely problematic" (Rose "Multispecies" 136).

The stories I have been telling involving humans and animals in the north seem to reconfirm the human—human worlds are reconfirmed or restructured through these animal tales. I urge a different reading. Storytelling, whether it is in a Yupik classroom, an environmental impact statement, or an academic treatise, is a mode of witnessing, is "an effort not only to testify to the lives of others but to do so in ways that bring into our ken the entanglements that hold the lives of all of us within the skein of life" (Rose 139). There is an irreducible presence of the animal that exists outside the human, even if a connection to that liveliness can only ever exist for the human through the tool of language. Encompassing the other in language could

[4] Carla Freccero, in *Queer/Early/Modern*, joins passivity, patience, and passion together from their mutual Latin root ("patior") to argue for a queer historiography. A passive politics (which is not the same as quietism), she argues, is a "suspension, a waiting, an attending to the world's arrivals…not as guarantee or security for action in the present, but as the very force from the past that moves us into the future" (104). Love, desire, waiting, responding to and attending on the other from the life we have been bequeathed and for the generations who come after.

reduce the other to mere metaphor, a mask for human anxiety, desire, or power. But John Muir's metaphors that connect humans with glaciers or the possibilities of futures carried on a salmon's back bring humans into engagements that are more than the reduction of the animal to human symbolic and material needs. The animal could be a mask for human psychosocial interests or, just as plausibly in the stories of seal-human co-constitution, the human could be an animal mask for the inhuman, the more than human *inua* (soul) that exists in all the living. There are choices, crossroads, and questions. Losing stories about humans, animals, and environments impoverishes the range of adaptive strategies that could allow for new modes of living. Rose terms the end of interspecies connectivity a "double-death" that is more than the extinction of bodies; it also breaks apart generations of belonging to, and bequeathing, life.[5] She writes:

> Species as well as individuals have life expectancies, and extinction, too, is a functional part of the evolutionary process…And while animals and plants have a more tenuous life when compared with bacteria, theirs (ours) is also a more complex one. [Life] is an extension of itself into new generations and new species…And from an ecological point of view, death is a return. The body returns to bacteria, and bacteria return the body to the living earth. (127)

[5] Double-death is also linked to an end to "ethical time" or aenocide, the killing of future generations. Quoting James Hatley, Rose writes: "Generational time is the time of aeons, and ethical time is the flow of death narratives across generations [death narratives are addresses to those who come after that call for a response]. Aenocide is therefore 'the murdering of ethical time through the annihilation of all the following generations'" (137). Hatley is concerned with the millions who were put to death during the Third Reich. Rose extends his ethical philosophy to include nonhumans in the stories of generational responsibility.

The deaths of polar bears, seals, caribou, and salmon are part of a process that also includes the deaths of humans, but death does not necessarily mean extinction when the stories of becoming-with and belonging-to make connections across species and temporalities.

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