Orientations in Weather: A Northern Textual Ecology

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation develops a "Northern Textual Ecology," a methodological approach that posits a correlation between the geo/meteorological forces of the north and the literary texts, Indigenous and other, of the north. I suggest that both the actual land and literary texts are environments: both are comprised of participants in a continuously transforming space of activity, and both are territories of expression. As a territory of expression, a text can be composed by a range of living participants, including human, animal, or plant, as well as atmosphere. However, this dissertation uses the term *text* primarily in the context of human artistic compositions.

This dissertation navigates two kinds of weather: the actual weather and textual, or composed, weather. Textual weather engages affective, rather than atmospheric, becomings. However, in the context of the literary north, these two forms of weather become indistinguishable, the atmospheric feeding into the affective, because so much of life in the north depends on actual weather. Theorizations of the north's actual weather come from Indigenous cosmologies, specifically the Inuit concepts of *Sila, isuma*, *Sedna*. These cosmological concepts present weather as an active agent in the land's relativity, connectivity, and contingency.

This cosmological approach is particularly relevant when applied to northern texts that refer to these concepts by name, while also demonstrating the shaping forces that these concepts theorize. This approach is also relevant when applied to texts that demonstrate an engagement with the non-discursive powers

of weather via techniques that extract affective sensations from the shaping forces of weather. As such, the weather in literary texts is not a projection of weather, but a transformation of physical weather into sensations that distil the affects of weather. In other words, textual weather is not a mimetic or figurative copy of the forces of weather as they are *represented* in literary texts; rather, it is weather that is composed as becomings and intensities within texts.

A text, then, becomes a term for the productive counterpoint between writer and earth. I theorize an immanent connection between the land and human artistic compositions with the help of Deleuze and Guattari's geophilosophical terms and concepts, such as intensities, becomings, deterritorializations, assemblages, affects, percepts, and multiplicities. These concepts contribute to a critical vocabulary that undoes the separation between the earth and its inhabitants and makes the claim that, beyond the categories of subjects and objects, there are only active territories that think in relation to the earth.

A literary text is expressive, just as the land is expressive. Following this idea, a reader's experience with the becomings and intensities of a text is analogous to the wayfarer's improvised movements through the unpredictable weather of the north. In the actual environment, wayfaring involves an attention to weather as it interacts with the land. Wayfaring practices emphasize an empirical perception of the land that contributes to an improvisational mode of travel. In a textual environment, wayfaring involves finding orientations in the affective events or becomings of literature and film.

In Chapter One, I discuss Taqralik Partridge's spoken word poem "I Picked Berries" and Glenn Gould's tonal poem *The Idea of North* as compositions of the forces of *Sila.* These poems blur the lines between human, land, and animal and disorganize the categories of subject and object. In Chapter Two, I discuss Isuma Igloolik Productions' *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* as a demonstration of the wisdom of *isuma*. In this film, the land is neither human nor nonhuman, but a range of active bodies in various organic and non-organic forms. Finally, in Chapter Three, I discuss Alootook Ipellie's *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* as narrative enactment of the creative and destructive powers of *Sedna*.

The constellation of literary texts that appear in this dissertation compose their weather via techniques of elision, layers of sound, lines of variation, blurred subjectivities, and the transversal connection of bodies. These texts (from the late 1970s and thereafter) connect both explicitly and implicitly to northern Indigenous cosmologies of land and weather, specifically to the Inuit concepts of *Sila*, *isuma,* and *Sedna.* These texts body forth from their environments in a way that demonstrates a range of perception and understanding that surpasses discursive forms.

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INTRODUCTION

UNCERTAIN EXCHANGES: NORTHERN LITERATURE AS AN ENVIRONMENT OF IMMANENT TURBULENCE

> The equation of materiality with the solid substance of the earth creates the impression that life goes on upon the outer surface of a world that has already congealed into its final form, rather than in the midst of a world of perpetual flux. Between mind and nature, persons and things, and agency and materiality, there is no conceptual space for those very real phenomena and transformations of the medium that generally goes by the name of weather. (Tim Ingold, "Rethinking the Animate, Re-animating Thought" 16)

> Travelling [for the Inuit] was not a transitional activity between one place and another, but a way of being [...] the act of travelling from or to a particular location plays a part in defining who the traveller is. (Claudio Aporta, "Routes, Trails and Tracks: Trail Breaking among the Inuit of Igloolik" 13)

> A Poem is stored energy, a formal turbulence, a living thing, a swirl in the flow. Poems are part of the energy pathways which sustain life. (William Rueckert, "An Experiment in Ecocriticism" 108)

> Pay attention, and you will find your way. (John Maksagak, *Uqalurait* 435)

I grew up in northern Alberta, where bears lurked by the apiary at the edge of our clover field, knocked over our garbage barrel when we were asleep, and loped in the ditch by our driveway. They appeared often in the form of dark bales, or the black oblongs of aspens. My mother was afraid of bears. Her mother was afraid of bears. My great-grandmother, who emigrated from Denmark, was also afraid of bears. A bear once treed my uncle and ripped the soles off his boots. I was terrified of coming face to face with one. When it finally happened, I was asleep in my bedroom, dreaming of a hot summer day. In this dream, I was walking up a

steep hill, climbing up from the flats of the Peace River, and, rounding a tight corner—I had no time to avoid it—I came upon a huge female bear. I pivoted to run, but, just as my body twisted, the bear spoke to me. I could sense her massive head almost touching my back. She said, "running is the worst thing you can do." I listened and tried to breathe. "Why don't you fly instead?" she asked. Then, she told me to run a few steps uphill, straighten my back, and jump into the wind. I was flying after that, swept up in the turbulent sky, above the willows and narrow trails and Saskatoon bushes, and she was ascending the hill in folding and unfolding waves of black, almost skimming the ground in a fluid climb, or was that my own shadow beneath me?

Last year, when I was a participant in the University of Manitoba's Pangnirtung Summer School, I had the opportunity to experience another dream-animal. I enrolled in this program because—although my research was already concerned with the sensory affects of northern weather—I wanted to be immersed in that weather so that it might find its way into my own thinking and writing. The Pangnirtung Summer School is a course offered by the universities Native Studies department and the Faculty of Environment in collaboration with the hamlet of Pangnirtung. This "Bush School," as its director Peter Kulchyski calls it, helped me to learn, first-hand, how the weather of Cumberland Sound can affect all aspects of the lives of its inhabitants. I was in Pangnirtung for five weeks, and during this time the emphasis of the program was on learning *from* and *with* the community, rather than *about* it. This distinction means that the program promoted embodied learning and collaboration *within* various situations, rather

than an analysis that could be conducted from a distance. In other words, through practice and performance, I learned how to work sealskin, sew mittens, host games, check nets, cook char, and scout for seals. Through these activities, I also learned to be more flexible in my expectations because every activity in Pangnirtung is subject to change and amendment, according to the weather.

While most of the course takes place in the hamlet, it also includes one week of camping on the land, in traditional wall-tents. We were camping on Saunik Island in late July and, one night, reports of a beluga migration reached us via overheard conversations on a CB radio. With this news, hunters ran to their boats, calling out to each other in serious and excited tones. Some students scrambled to find a spot with them. Then boats went out, and the soft vibrations of the motors spread through the rocky island, as the departing groups slid into the pinkness of the late-night sky.

It was early the following morning, and I was zipped into my sleeping bag when the boats came back. I heard laughing and talking, as families set up *mattaaq* on flattened cardboard boxes for everyone to share. Kevin and John, two students who were a part of my wall-tent group, returned from the hunt, talking fast, describing hairpin turns and the efficiency of Jaco and Andrew who skinned and butchered a beluga right where they'd killed it. I sat up in my sleeping bag and asked Kevin what it was like to see the belugas up close. He said that something happened that made him feel connected with them, but not exactly in an empathic or sympathetic sense. He said, "There was something stronger than that. The water turned white, and they were there, and Jaco [Ishulutaq] was

throwing the harpoon, so he had to be right out there on the prow, without losing his balance if the boat jerked."

I fell asleep again and dreamed of the whales called *qilalugaq*. In my dream, it was raining. I was drifting in a hunting boat on the open Arctic Ocean, watching the water, looking for the fat white bodies just under the surface. That was when I could hear their high whistles, throat growls, their popping and clicking percussions. The sound was coming from the sky. I looked up, and there was a whole pod of them, flying low, just over our heads. They had sharp wings and radiant, pewter skin. They were little jets, with metal wings. I thought, in my dream, that I should have known they could fly. They were coming right for us.

I dreamed of a bear who was not only a dangerous animal, but also someone who could teach me to fly. I dreamed of belugas, flying and singing toward a hunting boat. These dream-animals were not representations of bears and belugas, produced in the place of actual animals; they did not project a copy of bears and belugas, but they offered one of many possible emanations of these animals. These were dreams of interconnectivity and of porous identities. They were also dreams of weather, where bodies are not secured in place, but animated in the turbulence of the atmosphere. Tim Ingold writes about the animating potential of the sky in his book *Being Alive*, saying that we need to be swept up, into the open, in order to really experience life:

> Light, sound and feeling tear at our moorings, just like the wind tears at the limbs of tresses rooted to the earth…Thus, as it is

> immersed in the fluxes of the medium, the body is *enlightened, ensounded and enraptured*. Conversely, a body confined to a place in the landscape, and that did not equally inhabit the sky, would be blind, deaf and unfeeling. (134-35; emphasis mine)

The wind was blowing; it was raining. In my dreams, I felt the weather tear at me and transform me. The images in my dreams were emanations, gatherings, "occurrences" (Ingold 117),[1] and assemblages and part of the animating atmosphere of Saunik Island in Cumberland Sound.

Bears and belugas—wind and rain—exist in the physical environment and also in the environments of dreams, stories, drawings, and films, where we can experience them as non-discursive powers.[2] The weather of Cumberland Sound fed into my dream of belugas; likewise, the atmospheric feeds into northern literary texts when artists compose a kind of weather via style and technique. Thus, literary texts can offer us an affective experience that is akin to an experience in weather. The forcefulness of atmospheric weather in the north binds the epistemological, cosmological, geological, and meteorological together.[3] This binding of atmosphere to northern life also makes the weather in northern literary texts (*text* meaning an assemblage of *signs* that belong as much to a weather system as a literary sign system). Following the idea that weather permeates all aspects of life in the north, this dissertation develops a methodological approach

[1] Ingold uses the term "occurrence" to write about life as an ongoing process that is outside of the confines of subject and object. As occurrences, we are not nouns but verbs, always moving and changing within our web of relations. See *Being Alive* 117, 143, 155, 160, 161, and 230.
[2] Non-discursive powers, here, refers to the imponderable forces that we encounter. These forces are both beyond direct representation and acutely felt.
[3] Throughout this project, I navigate between two kinds of weather: actual, atmospheric weather and affective, textual weather.

that theorizes and demonstrates a correlation between the cosmo/geo/meteoro-logical north and the literary texts—Indigenous and other—of the north. I call this methodological approach a "Northern Textual Ecology." Within this ecology, I suggest that—like a dream of belugas—northern literary texts are not a copy or projection of the north, but an extension of its weather, an extension of the atmospheric forces that "bind" with us and allow us to perceive (Ingold, *Being Alive* 123). My goal is to elaborate an ecocritical conceptualization of northern literary texts as environments and to demonstrate how these environments can be read according to the forces that they draw from, gather, and express.

A NORTHERN TEXTUAL ECOLOGY

What defines or locates *the north* has been the topic of many colloquia and critical studies. The north is, variously, above the tree line, north of the 60th parallel, where the permafrost never melts, in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, where people still hunt and fish. This project's definition of the north encompasses many of the above characteristics, but its focus is on weather and how weather affects ways of being. In this project, the north is defined by the following characteristics: volatility, vastness, extremes of lightness and darkness, extremes of delicate and bold (flowers/ice floes), and lack of differentiation between land, sky, and sea. The north is also defined by practices, or ways of being, that often relate to weather. Therefore, what I call *northern* refers to an immanent mode of living in and moving through the world more than it refers to a categorical identity or exact cartographic location. Similarly, when I write about

northerners, I am referring to both indigenous and non-indigenous inhabitants of northern climes, who follow an immanent mode of living that is greatly affected by extreme weather.

The word *textual*, here, refers to more than systems of signification. The word *text* may be limiting in a northern context because it connotes a divide between the non-discursive forces of the world and the written world of discourse, whereas actual life in the north stresses interrelation and relativity. However, in choosing to use the word text, I am continuing in the development of a specifically Indigenous and northern sense of textuality, where textuality includes an irreducible range of creations/compositions. While the word text is weighed down by its ties to semiotics in some schools of thought,[4] it nevertheless has a particular use and resonance in connection with Indigenous literature and art. During my time in the Pangnirtung Bush School, I noticed the importance and prominence of the word text. The program leader Peter Kulchyski encouraged us to experience our surroundings (land, ocean, sky, plants, etc.) as "text." I talk about Kulchyski's insistence on the word text in Chapter Two, in which I describe how perceiving a sealskin as a text helped me to understand how all texts are porously connected to their surroundings. The word text can also serve to bridge the false divide between oral songs and stories and the written word. Keavy Martin uses the word text throughout her book *Stories in a New Skin: Approaches to Inuit Literature*, in which she employs it as a means of opening up all kinds of

[4] This project does carry forward certain aspects of poststructuralism, particularity its relativization of reader, writer, and text. However, as I will discuss shortly, I remain cognizant of the limits of poststructuralism, particularly its tendency to disregard the flows and forces that permeate the text.

expressive territories to reading. In a similar fashion, Christopher Teuton's book *Deep Waters: The Textual Continuum in American Indian Literature* seeks to avoid freezing culture via romanticizing oral forms of communication. Teuton writes from within the framework of Cherokee stories/cosmologies to develop "a theory of Native American signification," in which the "*oral impulse*, the *graphic impulse*, and the *critical impulse*" are interrelated parts of textuality (xiv).

Conversely, in David Abram's *The Spell of the Sensuous*, the oral is revered, while the written word is blamed for blocking humans from their environments. While many aspects of Abram's book resonate with this project, especially his notion of art as a terrain that is not limited to the human, I take issue with his treatment of the written word. For example, Abram claims that oral peoples once engaged with language as a kind of "porous membrane," which had the capacity to bind them to their environments, but this "membrane" became "plugged" with "letters" that cut people off from their environments (255-7). The line of thought in this project posits that the written word is one of many possible conduits that might bind us to the forces of the environment.

This project uses the term "literary text" to denote the binding of forces in a territory of expression. As a territory of expression, a text is not limited to that which is produced by human beings. In the north, a range of inhabitants—including animal, plant, and human—compose territories of expression that are manifestations of *being alive*. Elizabeth Grosz writes at length about territories of expression in her book *chaos, territory, art*, in which she says, "territory frames chaos provisionally, and in the process produces extractable qualities, which

become the materials and formal structures of art" (16). Chaos, in the context of this dissertation, refers to the cosmo/geo/meteorological forces that are beyond representation, but nevertheless acutely felt. Grosz identifies the forces of chaos as "cosmological imponderables" and "imponderable universal forces" (23).[5] This project focuses on territories of expression that are composed by humans and offer us access to the imageless forces of the north.

The "ecology" in this project is comprised of its cosmological, geographic, meteorological, and ontological interconnections. With its focus on interconnections, this project follows the practices of ecocriticsm as a "study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (Glotfelty xviii), as Cheryll Glotfelty defines the field. An ecocritical approach to literature, then, moves beyond a conceptualization of textuality as a network of words and symbols. Glotfelty cites Barry Commoner's "first law of ecology"; that is, that "everything is connected to everything else" (xix), in order to underline the porous connection between discursive and non-discursive forces. Within this law of interconnection, we can view literature as ontologically similar to the actual world that surrounds because it "does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether, but, rather, plays a part in an immensely complex global system, in which energy, matter*, and ideas* interact" (Glotfelty xix). In a Northern Textual Ecology, we are active participants in these exchanges.

A Northern Textual Ecology, then, is an immanent way to engage with Northern literature and film, in which readings are not reducible to meanings or

[5] Here the word "imponderable" gestures back to the idea of non-discursive forces, or that which is imageless yet sensed.

symbols, and are not dependent on the higher power of the author or critic. Immanence, here, is what William E. Connelly calls the "uncertain exchanges between stabilized formations and mobile forces that subsist within and below them" (*A World of Becoming* 43). An immanent style of reading is not dependent on a higher power, because, as Connelly puts it, "radical immanence" (39) perceives only open systems and interconnections between those systems. These connections occur "without the hand, intervention, guidance, or inspiration of a divinity" (Connelly 38). A view of textuality as an open system that interacts with other open systems can free us from a view that textuality is confined to discourse.

Within a Northern Textual Ecology, we can view textuality as a "meshwork" of human and non-human forces. I borrow the term *meshwork* from Ingold, who describes it as "a tangled mesh of interwoven and complexly knotted strands" (151). A meshwork constitutes an environment in which "Every strand is a way of life, and every knot a place"; all of these strands are the traces of our ongoing movements, "the paths *along* which life is lived" (151). As an environment, a literary text is what Ingold calls "a domain of entanglement" (71). This domain is not a closed system of signs that represent an external reality; rather, it is part of an immanent experience of living, and it is affected by the discursive and non-discursive forces that we encounter every day. Following a view of literary texts as a meshwork or domain of entanglement, I write about reading northern texts as an immersion in the cosmo/geo/meteorological forces of the north.

Like the word *text*, the word *literature* (or *literary*) "fits imperfectly" in a northern context, but it also has productive uses (Martin 43). In respect to its limitations, the institutionalized study of literature has been a southern enterprise. That is, the study of literature has often been dominated by intellectual traditions that clash with those of northern elders, philosophers, and writers. As Martin points out, stories, legends, and myths "exist within their own intellectual framework whose protocols may differ drastically from those conferred by the English word 'literature'" (43). Nevertheless, utilizing the word *literature* in a northern context can also be productive. As Martin suggests throughout her book, "Inuit literary texts and traditions readily adopt 'new skins'—new labels, systems, or frameworks—when strategically useful" (99). One such use, says Martin, is that literature "provides a means (and indeed, an impetus) for scholars to think seriously about the aesthetic and critical value of Indigenous intellectual traditions" (99). In this way, using the word literature has the potential to become an emphatic redirection: away from ethnographic readings that focus on who people *are*, and toward readings that focus on compositional qualities.

In a conceptual framework similar to that of Martin, I use the concepts of the literary and the literary text in order to focus on style and aesthetics, combining aesthetic (or style-conscious) readings of northern literature with Indigenous intellectual traditions. This dissertation, likewise, seeks to incorporate its techniques into northern practices and technologies that reflect Inuit *Qaujimajatuqangit* (IQ). IQ is "what Inuit have known for a very long time," and it is also "the Inuit way of doing things: past, present and future knowledge,

experience and values of Inuit Society" (Martin 98). I use IQ, as it is expressed in relation to weather and Inuit cosmologies, as a model for reading weather in northern literary texts. My goal is to create a coherent framework for thinking about weather in relation to northern literary texts.

Martin pursues the creation of what she calls a "land bridge" between Inuit intellectual and cultural perspectives (IQ) and literary studies, and she develops the model of this "land bridge" via the wisdom of elders: "After all," says Martin, "while elders' narratives are often explored for principles that will guide policy, administration, and everyday life, they also have a great deal to say about stories and storytelling...crucial information about Inuit literary concepts that challenges the prevailing theories of the southern academy" (101). By beginning with what elders have had to say about stories, Martin incorporates her reading strategies into larger Inuit systems of perception that "predate" southern studies of Inuit art (99). I use this scholarly model throughout my project. While Martin's approach focuses on what elders have had to say in specific regard to stories, my focus is on what both elders and contemporary Inuit theorists have to say about traditional cosmologies and practices that pertain to northern weather.

The literary texts that are of particular interest to this dissertation are contemporary works (1990 and later) that either demonstrate the shaping forces of Inuit cosmologies or actually refer to these concepts by name. Because of this cosmological focus, the majority of the texts in this study are produced by Inuit. However, these cosmologies also provide a provocative framework within which we can engage with a range of northern texts—composed by Inuit, First Nations,

Métis, and others—that demonstrate the forces of weather. The literary texts that appear in this project include Taqralik Partridge's spoken-word poem "I Picked Berries," Glenn Gould's tone poem *The Idea of North,* Igloolik Isuma Productions' film *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, and Alootook Ipellie's collection of short stories and drawings *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*. I selected these texts because they constitute a diverse range of northern media, including music, spoken-word, film, drawings, and prose. These texts engage with weather on both thematic and performative levels, employing techniques and affects that perform an atmospheric power to invade our sensory registers and immerse us in northern weather. Each text offers an immersion in northern inhabitation. These are not texts *about* the north; rather, they are texts *of* the north, of its seasonal variations, extremes, immense expanses, and its land/water/air connections.

In the sections that follow, I engage with both Inuit and Eurowestern concepts, as I describe the cosmological, geographic, meteorological, and ontological interconnections in this project. As I have explained above, I follow Martin's methodological approach that seeks to incorporate the "Academy" into larger Inuit systems of perception (IQ) (110). In this project, all concepts and philosophies are incorporated into the framework of the Inuit cosmologies of *Sila*, *isuma*, and *Sedna*. I will discuss these concepts shortly, but for now, briefly, *Sila* is the weather, *isuma* is a style of thinking that is predicated on the weather, and *Sedna* is the creator and protector of all sea animals.

Alongside of these concepts, I unite Inuit philosophers/theorists, namely Rachel Attituq Qitsualik and Jaypeetee Arnakak, with Eurowestern

philosophers/thinkers, namely Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Timothy Leduc, and Tim Ingold. Rachel Attituq Qitsualik, Jean Briggs, Keavy Martin, Timothy Leduc and Jaypeetee Arnakak's theorizations of *Sila, Isuma*, and *Sedna* and of Inuit *Qaujimajatuqangit* help me to understand the north as a force, rather than a discursive formation or a resource. Furthermore, conceptualizing the north as a force has allowed me to underscore the importance of non-representational readings. In other words, Qitsualik, Briggs, Martin, Leduc, and Arnakak inform both the cosmological and ontological aspects of this project.

Tim Ingold's work inspires this dissertation in many ways. Ingold's writing about "weather" as "the fluxes of the medium" that surround us and allows us to see, hear, touch, and taste is particularly relevant in helping me to think about northern writing as an extension of its weather (*Being Alive* 119). Ingold's conceptualization of the ontological connections between art and life also help me to envision northern literary texts as processes that are immanently connected to the larger processes of the north. As a connected part of the flux of life; that is, the processes that *are* life, literature draws the forces of its physical environment—storms, sudden winds, rain, melting—into its compositions. All literature is a kind of weather-writing. It is not a mimetic reproduction of the weather, but a place of becomings where the material of language produces forces analogous to the weather.[6]

The idea of weather-writing also follows Deleuze and Guattari's concept of Geophilosophy: a rethinking of Greek philosophy as an immanent part of its

[6] Analogy is distinct from mimesis, here, in that language generates sensations and affects that are similar to those sensations and affects generated by weather; however, this similarity does not stand in as a *copy* of weather, i.e., onomatopoeia that mimics thunder.

geography, or milieu. Deleuze and Guattari say, "Thinking is neither a line drawn between subject and object nor a revolving of one around the other. Rather, thinking takes place in the relationship of territory and the earth" (*What is Philosophy* 85). Deleuze and Guattari envision *becomings* as the transitional experiential states of who we are, and they envision writing as a process of becoming-other in relation to the earth. Geophilosophy contributes to a different model of reading northern literary texts, a model that posits a porous relationship between text and earth.

In uniting these northern and southern voices, my goal is to avoid hierarchical distinctions between them; instead, I place them in proximity to each other, allowing each voice to augment the other's capacity to act. One voice does not translate, interpret, or assimilate the other; but rather, these voices illuminate each other; they create sets of relations that result in useable moments within this project. My hope is that this composition of voices acts as a form of weather that can bind with the reader, analogous to the way in which atmospheric weather binds with the land and creates useable moments for hunters.

This project poses and demonstrates a model of reading as an exercise in *responding to northern weather*. Within the framework of a Northern Textual Ecology, the text and the environment are equally infused by weather. Weather is constantly shifting and changing in northern texts and demands that we read as wayfarers move: ceaselessly becoming, adapting, and responding. These ideas are specifically derived from concepts that originate in Inuit literature and Inuit interactions with the environment, but this project also incorporates relevant

critical concepts from other geographical locations. This project neither performs nor addresses Aboriginal literary criticism. Rather, it uses Inuit and other northern literature to generate a new, we might say "meteoric," model of reading northern literary texts.

INUIT COSMOLOGIES OF WEATHER

As I have already mentioned, the guiding concepts/cosmologies for this project are *Sila, isuma,* and *Sedna.* In the following section, I will clarify these concepts by emphasizing how they have been put into action. In its most basic translation, *Sila* is "the weather." Traditionally, Qitsualik says, Inuit children were taught to go outside in the morning and check on *Sila* ("Word and Will"). Going outside to check on *Sila* was important because so much of life—hunting, travel, and all matters of survival—depended on it. In a practical sense, paying attention to *Sila's* winds, clouds, and precipitations could (and still does) mean the difference between life and death. In a more metaphysical sense, *Sila* is life and death; it is the breath that humans, plants, and animals breathe. As Jaypeetee Arnakak puts it, "Beings—whether they be animals, human or spirit—become and pass away within [*Silarjuaq*]" or the animated atmosphere of *Sila* (qtd. in Leduc 30). *Angakkuit* (shamans) once had a ceremony of initiation in which they would expose themselves to *Sila*, sitting in the open, without any shelter, in order to be reconciled with the environment. In conversation with Timothy Leduc, Arnakak explains that the *angakoq* (shaman) could access truths that surpassed individual opinion or belief with the help of *Sila*. In this initiation with *Sila* the *angakoq*

could experience his/her own insignificance and be contextualized into the environment (ibid), or the living forces of *Sila. Sila,* then, is a force that is acutely felt and reminds human beings that they are part of (and not above) their field of relations.

When Knud Rasmussen asks the *angakoq* (shaman) Najagneq if he believes in the ancient powers, he says the power he believes in is *Sila*, which is:

> not to be explained in simple words. A great spirit, supporting the world and the weather and all life on earth, a spirit so mighty that his utterance to mankind is not through common words, but by storm and snow and rain and the fury of the sea; all the forces of nature that men fear. But he has also another way of utterance, by sunlight, and calm of the sea, and little children innocently at play, themselves understanding nothing. (*Across Arctic America* 385)

Although he uses the pronoun "he," Najagneq also suggests that *Sila* cannot be personified because it is everywhere; supporting "the world, the weather, and all of life." Speaking as it does through weather, *Sila* is not disconnected from breathing beings but inhabits them through breath and through words.

Sila, or weather, is the living atmosphere that inundates us and continuously shifts our experience at the empirical level—a drop in air pressure that makes our skin tighten, rhythms of tides and the moon, a gale force wind followed by a calm morning. Ingold says weather allows us to perceive (119). As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari say in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the horizon does not separate the land and sky; rather, the sky mixes with everything on the earth,

forming “sets of relations” (382). Weather is the mixing of materials and mobile forces, in sets of relations. Weather changes “points” and objects into animated materials (217). Seeing weather as a transformative force that also surrounds us and enables us to perceive and feel is congruent with Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptualization of smooth space, in which:

> locality is not delimited; the absolute, then, does not appear in a particular place but becomes a nonlimited locality; the coupling of the place and the absolute is achieved not in a centred, oriented globalization or universalization, but in an infinite succession of local operations. (383)

Interrelations, changeability, and reorientations are the constant state of the weather, and the world is constantly changed by that weather.

The forces of *Sila* surround literature from the arctic, and as we read this literature, we can also find ourselves surrounded by forces like those of *Sila.* These forces are, broadly, the moving medium that surrounds us and enables us to experience life through breath, touch, hearing, and sight. This medium is indifferent to our opinions, but through its forces, we can come to learn that we need to constantly adapt. There is a great potential for creative responses when it comes to *Sila* because it circumvents doxa with constant movement and change.

Isuma is an immanent way of being in the world. It is a flexible and adaptable knowledge that comprehends people, animals, and the land as changeable, because these beings are always being reorganized by *Sila*. *Isuma* is a mode of apprehending the world that is marked by flexibility, independence, and

attention. Jean L. Briggs, who has lived and worked in the Utkuhikhalik region, describes *isuma* as a responsive way of thinking. A person who has *isuma* is "skilled at observing, identifying relevant variables, seeing correlations among them, and evaluating probabilities, all very autonomously" (Briggs, "Expecting the Unexpected" 271). Because of this emphasis on autonomous thinking, lecturing and thinking for others can only be harmful because it does not allow individuals to exercise or even develop their own *isuma*. In this way, perceptions and actions are based on specific moments that bring together specific relations. In keeping with the autonomy of *isuma*, this project prefers to leave gaps and textual weather in those spaces where molar politics or instruction could provide a prescriptive direction.[7] *Isuma* is developed through an instructive but open and non-punitive parenting approach that includes questioning and playing. This approach leads to adults, who are "skilled at observing, identifying relevant variables, seeing correlations among them, and evaluating probabilities, all very autonomously" (Briggs 271).

Young children and *qallunaat* (inhabitants of the south) are thought to lack *isuma* because they lack flexibility. A southern inhabitant may lack *isuma* if he/she has never lived in the north and been exposed to the *isuma*-generating inclemency, unpredictability, turbulence and volatility of the atmospheric

[7] By *molar politics*, I mean the kind of politics that are based on fixed identity and rigid values. In his introduction to *Anti-Oedipus*, Michel Foucault writes: "Do not demand of politics that it restore the 'rights' of the individual, as philosophy has defined them. The individual is the product of power. What is needed is to 'de-individualize' by means of multiplication and displacement, diverse combinations. The group must not be the organic bond uniting hierarchized individuals, but a constant generator of de-individualization" (xiv). I will discuss the *molar* and the *molecular* in greater detail later in this study.

weather.[8] Likewise, a small child is often protected from the weather-filled environment. A child will cry and insist on his own way of doing things. An older person, or someone with *isuma*, will understand that, just as *Sila* is constantly reordering the land, no outcome can be predicted, everything is in flux; and therefore, the unexpected is nothing that should induce anger. A small child will cling to her parents, but through non-punitive and "permissive" parenting, that same child will learn the consequences of her own impudence, and will be initiated in the powers of *Sila*, so that she will have the *isuma* to make her own decisions and act independently (271). A young child is unable to survive in *Sila* because he does not understand how to pay attention and find his way. A person with *isuma* demonstrates wisdom that is predicated on weather.

The wisdom of *isuma* is closely related to the concept of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, or IQ. As I have explained above, IQ is what Inuit people know via their relationship with their environment. Regarding the relationship between knowledge and land, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) president Terry Audla says that Inuit knowledge is "acquired, practical and adaptable, it can be taught and passed on for a number of purposes, and it can mean the difference between life and death" (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami*). As Martin points out, "The IQ Task Force calls people's relationship to land 'the primordial relationship (the first relationship and the one from which the others flow)'" (122). Tying an intimate connection with land and animals to hunter-gatherer knowledge and

[8] Here, it is worth pointing out that southern inhabitants—many of whom are 'protected' from atmospheric weather within urban infrastructures—are vulnerable to other kinds of 'weather,' including oil economies, terrorism, gang warfare, political corruption, and car culture. These kinds of 'weather' also force people to adapt and become-other, in their own ways.

survival, Hugh Brody says, "Being able to move with accuracy on the ground appears to require a parallel freedom of movement in thought—an absence of constraint...A fluidity of boundaries, a porousness of divisions, can be seen as useful and normal" (*The Other Eden* 254). This fluidity connects with the relational thinking of *isuma*. It is difficult to separate *isuma* from IQ because *isuma* is a part of IQ. Both are passed down through and across generations, and both are acquired via immersion and practice. The difference is that IQ is a broad term for what Inuit people know, whereas *isuma* is the situated wisdom of an individual Inuk. It is a quality of immanent and relational thinking that may or may not be possessed by an individual at a given time.

Sedna is the mother of all sea mammals in Inuit cosmology. According to many stories, she began as a girl named *Nuliajuk*, an ancestor who refused to marry, but then mated with a dog and a bird. One day, *Nuliajuk* tried to escape from this bird with the help of her father. The two were escaping in a kayak, when they were nearly capsized by a terrible storm. Fearing that his daughter was the cause of the storm, *Nuliajuk*'s father pushed her out of the kayak. She clung to its edge, but he cut off her fingers to save himself. Her fingers became arctic sea animals as they fell through the water. Should any person harm the soul of one of her animals, *Sedna* will engage *Sila* to bring about blizzards, gale-force winds, and other meteorological conditions that will prevent good hunting.

In order to avoid provoking the anger of *Sedna*, Inuit traditionally observed many complex taboos, or rules for living that were created and maintained via communication with *Sedna. Angakkuit* (shaman) were responsible

for visiting *Sedna* in her ocean dwelling. During these visits, an *angakoq* would enter a kind of trance, and, in this trance, he/she would find *Sedna* with lice and tangles in her hair; the condition of her hair was believed to be a manifestation of the offences of the Inuit. The *angakoq* would gently comb out these lice and, once freed, they would transform into animals and swim toward hunters. According to the cosmology of *Sedna*, animals are not taken by hunters; rather, they offer themselves to hunters, as long as hunters are respectful toward them. This is a reciprocal system: the "Inuit hunter is not extracting from the environment but creating a bond between his people and their environment" (David Pelly, *Sacred Hunt* 106). As I suggest in Chapter Three, the *Sedna* cosmology helps us to view the north as a force, rather than a resource.

Sedna creates a reciprocal economy because she requires what Leduc calls a "conscionable etiquette" of mutual respect and wellbeing for all life (189): if anyone should fail to follow this particular etiquette in favour of self-interest or short-term satisfaction, the results will be a stripped-down environment that cannot provide for the people. The reciprocity of *Sedna* helps guide this project and its creation of a Northern Textual Ecology because, just as *Sedna*'s requirement for good living requires a substantive approach to interacting with the environment, a substantive reading style will not strip literature for its meanings and symbols. A substantive reading style situates the reader within the matrix of the text and requires responsible action. This reading style is generative. It is based on interconnectivity between the reader, text, and the field of relations that

surrounds the text. It is also based on sharing (reciprocity) because the reader cannot take from the text in a one-way arrangement.

For example, *Sedna* animates Alootook Ipellie's story "The Five Shy Wives of the Shaman," via catching the reader in her reciprocal circuits of affect. In this story, the narrator meets a "fellow shaman" who goes by the name of Shakespeare and confides in the narrator that he has five gorgon wives (59). The mixing, here, of the literary figure Shakespeare with the Greek figure of the gorgon blends stories, myths, dreams (the narrator is dreaming), and temporalities. Furthermore, these gorgons are also linked to *Sedna* via the book's explicit and implicit references to her. The pen and ink drawing that precedes the story depicts five gorgons with painted masks and hair that snakes out, in rope-like braids. At the crown of each head, black hair glistens via a *thickening* technique called *cross-hatching*, which is a technique that layers parallel lines in order to create a sense of three-dimensionality; Ipellie uses it throughout his book when drawing hair. Notably, his self-portrait, his depiction of *Sedna*, and this drawing of the gorgons link to each other via flowing hair that stands out with a *value added* or three-dimensional quality.

As I have said, *Sedna*'s hair became dirty and tangled if she was displeased. Furthermore, an *angakoq* could comb out her hair, and encourage the lice in it to become animals and to offer themselves to hunters. The significance of *Sedna*'s hair is only explicitly mentioned once in Ipellie's collection, but the prominence of flowing hair—made three-dimensional via cross-hatching—puts her forces into play throughout the collection. The power of *Sedna*'s hair is

prominent: it is a material that enfolds human, animal, and spiritual, and aquatic elements of the north. The prominence of *Sedna*'s hair in this collection brings the forces of northern weather into play because thickened ink lines slow down our engagement with the drawing and demand that we pause and perceive the chaos of dreams and of gorgons. If we read for these dynamic connections, we cannot simply speculate what a *gorgon* represents. Rather, we are affected by these gorgons as they are animated by their web of relations.

While *Sila* and *isuma* can offer models of human integration and contextualization within living environments, *Sedna* offers a conceptual model for a reciprocal relationship with our environments. Within a conceptualization of the text as an environment, the myth of *Sedna* might teach us to inhabit a text responsibly, without merely stripping it of its resources in search of a closed reading, or in hopes of backing a particular agenda. These Inuit intellectual traditions help me to find my way through northern literature and also formulate an immanent politics that works with my reading practices.

However, even as I attempt to clarify and categorize these terms, I also recognize that discretely separating them is contrary to the flexibility of the organizing and reorganizing powers that these terms convey. Rasmussen observed the enigmatic definitions of such terms as *Sila* and *Sedna*, saying, "Even such an outstanding clever shaman as Igjugârjuk had difficulty in defining the spirit Hila [*Sila*]" (*Igulik and Caribou Eskimo Texts* 51). While Rasmussen posits this indeterminacy as a "difficulty," it is questionable as to whether we want to read the porous relationship between these bodies as a "difficulty" that might be

related to the limits of language. I suggest that it is more productive to think of the porousness between these bodies as a resistance to the limits of interpretation, an insistence against intrinsic categories. For example, there is a figure named *Pinga*, who may or may not be the same as *Sedna*. Both of these forces control animals: *Sedna* controls animals of the ocean and *Pinga* controls animals of the land. However, these distinctions are not always true because *Sedna* is sometimes acknowledged as the keeper of both land and sea animals. As for their *homes*, *Sedna* is of the water, and *Pinga* is of the sky and is thus sometimes elided with the force of *Sila*.

These sliding categories are, according to Laugrand and Oosten, illustrative of "the inherent flexibility of Inuit categories organizing and reorganizing features of nonhuman beings"; as such, "we just have to acknowledge that these entities may merge and that particular features are not necessarily restricted to one entity" (26). The terms and concepts in this project slide into each other, much in the manner of stories that slide into other stories. All of these terms/concepts can carry human beings away from stereotypes, truths of all kinds, and visions of humans as separable and transcendent. When we are swept away from such ideal forms by the weather in a text, we can also pay attention to that weather in order to find our way.

COMPOSING WEATHER

According to the above concepts/cosmologies, the land is not a closed system, but a site of temporary connections and disruptions that are continuously transformed

by its weather. In this project, weather is the living atmosphere that inundates us and continually shifts our experience at the empirical level. Ingold says that the weather is "fundamental to perception. We do not perceive it; we perceive *in* it" (138). As matrixes of affect and sensation, we are producers and perceivers within the world; we compose and are composed by the weather, immersed in an affective world of life, rather than in a world of objects. In the words of Ingold, "Producers, both human and non-human, do not so much transform the world, impressing their preconceived designs upon the material substrate of nature, as play their part from within the world's transformation of itself" (6). The reader as producer/perceiver similarly reads with and becomes with literary texts, so that preconceived designs become imperceptible and transformations become possible. Because weather is predicated on flux and change, all that we know of our environments is contextual and relative. A Northern Textual Ecology extends this view of relationality to northern literary texts, thus putting the reader in an active and contingent relationship with the text. As Serres points out, referring to the work of Lucretius, even the most solid matter is just moving very slowly. Flux and swerve, becomings: what are they but movements into what has never been? In the introduction to Michele Serres' *The Birth of Physics*, David Webb comments, "in spite of the many examples of complex flows in the world around us, the idea of movement without finality can still strike us as strange" (xi). But the idea of movement without finality is fundamental to the north that this project seeks.

In a Northern Textual Ecology, both reader and text are part of a dynamic field of relations; this is a particularly northern way of apprehending the world. A hunter-gatherer mode of travel, or wayfaring, as Ingold calls it, the complexities and range of which I will discuss below, is contingent as it is dependent on weather and can only be defined by movement and uncertainty: a point of view that apprehends an individual's contingent place in the world. Leduc writes at length about this mode of apprehending the world in his book *Climate Culture Change: Inuit and Western Dialogues with a Warming North.* Leduc says that we might come to understand our relational place in the world through shifting our focus from self interest toward "a conscionable etiquette" that is based on a sense of reciprocity (189). For example, Leduc cites a hunting story from Hugh Brody's *Maps and Dreams*, in which Brody becomes "bewildered by the constantly shifting consensus concerning where game might be found" (192). Through his bewilderment, Brody learns that "subtle variables" require hunters to consider their entire, shifting field of relations, where "there is no space left for a 'plan,' only for a bundle of open-ended and nonrational possibilities" (qtd. in Leduc 192). This improvisational style of inhabiting the world is the foundation of a Northern Textual Ecology. Modeling my approach on the geographical expertise of northern hunters and gatherers, I find my way through the paths of northern literary texts, which extract from the physical environment weather as a flow of affects, intensities, and sensations.

Within the flux and change of *Sila*'s weather, to claim to *know* anything for certain is to be mistaken. This understanding is an important part of *isuma*.

Briggs explains the connection between wise uncertainty and weather as follows: "Inuit regard the world as a place where little can be taken for granted, where answers are not fixed and nothing is ever permanently knowable. At the same time, they consider it potentially knowable and usable from moment to moment" (Briggs 262). What Briggs describes here relates to what Deleuze and Guattari call "an internal arctic zone." This zone is "where the needle of every compass goes mad," and "A reorientation of the whole of thought becomes necessary" (*What is Philosophy?* 53). In this internal arctic zone, thought does not necessarily equal truth, but truth is "solely the *creation* of thought" (54, emphasis mine). In other words, truth cannot be congealed in thought, but it is part of the processes of thinking, processes that are pre-individual because they are wrapped up in the matrices of their surroundings. Northern weather is wrapped up in the processes of thought that compose *becomings of truth* that are free from the concepts of right and wrong, truth and lying.

We can access these becomings of truth in northern literary texts. In these texts, we find becomings of truth via affect, which has been extracted and framed from the chaos of actual weather. If the affects generated by art can be seen as non-human becomings, or becoming non-dominant; that is, something other than what we are, then art moves us out of *being* and into *becoming*, into an experience of life as an occurrence. How can art/literary texts do this? Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari suggest that art wrests affects from our recognizable affections, and it wrests percepts, or pure events, from our recognizable perceptions (*What is Philosophy?* 167). Therefore, art is able to offer us the chaos of weather as it

exceeds what we are able to articulate with nameable feelings (happy/sad) or recognizable images. For example, the storm that sweeps Ipellie's narrator into "Arctic Dreams and Nightmares" does not represent northern weather; it is northern weather in a virtual sense, and Ipellie creates percepts and affects that are valid beings in themselves and exceed/augment any lived experience. That is to say, these percepts and affects are blocks of sensation that generate more sensation. Deleuze and Guattari say, "We paint, sculpt, compose and write with sensations," but they also say we "paint, sculpt, compose, and write sensations" (*What is Philosophy*? 166). In other words, artists and writers experience actual life, actual weather, and bring this experience into composition with ideas, words, and memories.

Literature's becomings are not imitations of the actual world, not projections of forms, but the non-linear, a-signifying, unstable and mutable writing that throws us into what this project conceptualizes as weather. Weather is part of being alive in the world. William Rueckert calls poetry a "formal turbulence" in which literature's formal features, its motifs, structures, and devices, create an internal power. However, for this project, it is more accurate to say literature generates an *immanent* turbulence, the turbulence of affective events that occurs *between* actual forms and the forces that surround them. This connection between forms and forces is what Ingold calls the "binding and unbinding" of surfaces and their surrounding medium (surfaces and the weather) (121). This binding and unbinding is akin to what Deleuze and Guattari call "haecceities," or sets of relations, about which Ingold writes: "These haecceities

are not *what* we perceive, since in the world of fluid space there are no objects of perception. They are rather what we perceive *with*" (88). To perceive the environment, then, is to perceive weather.

Affective events disturb the actual state of affairs; they change what *has been* into potential for new actualizations. Affective events free us from the vision of our imagined ideal forms, and take us into the forces of the virtual, where forms are not fixed. These forces—in actual life, dreams, films, and texts—are *weather*. Without this weather—without this literary turbulence—we would be "blind, deaf, and unfeeling" in our readings, limited to either agreeing or disagreeing with what someone has posited as the final signified of a text (Ingold 135). However, immersed in weather, we experience the capacity to become other than what we are, outside of established conventions, zeitgeist, and recognizable values.

The wind was blowing, it was raining. In my dreams, I was immersed in forces that made it possible for me to become something other than what my organized, organic self was capable of in the actual. I combined with the wind and flew; I combined with water and hunters and joined with belugas as participants in a reciprocal system. I formed new relations via the weather of my dreams. My dream-weather was the combination of forms and forces. Belugas swept up into the sky, which is connected to the ocean. As it is with dream-weather, both terrestrial weather and textual weather are produced by interrelations, by sets of relations, by combinations.

The wind blows when warm air rises and cool air slides into the space that the warm air leaves behind. When warm air gathers droplets of water, clouds form. When there are too many droplets, the clouds become heavy, and it rains. In literature, when a sound, word, or sentence rises up our spines and over our skin, leaving room for a connected, but new, sound or word or sentence to slide into its space, a kind of wind blows. When the space between sounds, words, or sentences gathers intensity, a kind of rain develops. There are electrical storms between words when they combine the positive and negative charges that drift in through the permeable boundaries between any text and what surrounds it. There are blizzards blowing through syntax.

The northern literary texts that have inspired this project compose weather within the realms of the unpredictable, which are outside of the conventions of realism and the individual subject. For example, Ipellie's *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* assembles unruly bodies in *unnatural* unions, such as a copulating goose and woman, a hunter with a group of gorgon wives, and visionary exotic dancers who meet men on the tundra. These assemblages push us past the expected and thus offer us an experience in the forces of the Arctic, where the Arctic is *nalunaktuq*, or "difficult to comprehend" or "unpredictable" (Qitsualik, "Words and Wisdom"). As Rachel Qitsualik says, the Southern perception of the Arctic is that it is defined "by cold alone," but the Arctic is *nalunaktuq*, or unpredictable; it is a force with unforeseen power and potential (ibid).

In order to clarify what I mean by the forces of a text, I draw on Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of writing as a "bloc of sensation." As I have

been suggesting, the world we inhabit is composed of assemblages and forces. The open that we inhabit, every day, is made up of "flows and counter-flows of material" (Ingold 87). Literature draws on these flows and counter-flows, and composes them through its own flows and counter-flows. Within these flows, says Deleuze, "there are no straight lines, neither in things nor in language. Syntax is the set of necessary detours that are created in each case to reveal the life in things" (*Essays Critical and Clinical* 227). In the most straightforward sense of the word, syntax is what we call the multiple sets of phrases that create sentences, and sentences within sentences. Significant within this definition is the assemblage, for the most basic unit here is not the word, but the phrase.[9]

For Deleuze and Guattari, it is not a lone signifier that produces a bloc of sensation, but assemblages that combine with other assemblages. Assembled phrases act as more than simply words grouped together in a certain order, so that syntax becomes the invention of form, drawn from entities and patterns, both discursive and non-discursive. As such, syntax can "wrest" what we see and feel, our perceptions and affections, and compose them on the page as affects and percepts, or pure sensations (*What is Philosophy* 167). In his book *Deleuze on Literature*, Ronald Bogue explains, "the actual writer, existing as a concrete entity unfolding in the world," can use language; that is, syntax, to create lines that disorganize power relations and established codes (111). The land is an unfolding environment that becomes an affective force through assembled patterns that body

[9] Deleuze discusses the assemblage in *Dialogues II*, in which he says that the assemblage "is the exertion or the penetration of bodies, hatreds or love, for hatred is also a compound, it is a body, its no good except when it is compounded with what it hates" (52). Likewise, a single word must be compounded with other words to create a unit.

forth out of land and sky, bearing the pure sensations of the north. Qitsualik says the land is a force, that it is *nalunaktuq*. As environments that are *nalunaktuq*, northern literary texts do not *mean*. They *act*. Often, readings of northern literature focus on representation, where representation invests texts with molar forms of identity and meaning. Put another way, representation is limited to human goals, identifications, and desires because it seeks to give us what is already recognizable. Syntax, then, is a force in the text, a weather that contextualizes the reader, takes that reader beyond conventional codes and perhaps produces a kind of *isuma*, where the "difficult to comprehend" and "the unpredictable" might lead us into new actualizations, toward a 'content' that we do not already know. In relation to the wisdom of *isuma*, meaning is found in relations; sets of relations produce a turbulence that each individual can use for orientation. Turbulent literary weather forms when perceptions normally stored within the economy of habit are jarred out of place (for example, Atanarjuat running naked across ice or Ipellie's self portrait), and the world is reorganized.

READING AS WAYFARING

In order to write this project, I have had to learn to see weather where I had not noticed it before. Conceptualizing and writing this project has taught me that direct perceptual engagement within our field of relations is *vision* in its most profound sense. Vision is not a romantic, imaginative construct of the world. In a northern context, vision is learning to see what is moving all around us and

affecting us. Vision is direct engagement with what surrounds us. Ingold says that this kind of engagement is empirical, rather than representational:

> Learning to see, then, is not a matter not of acquiring schemata for mentally *constructing* the environment but of acquiring the skills for direct perceptual *engagement* with its constituents, human and non-human, animate and inanimate...it is a process not of enculturation but of enskilment. (*The Perception of the Environment* 55)

This description of "acquiring skills for direct perceptual *engagement"* is also a description of the ecological reading style of a Northern Textual Ecology, within which a reader learns to relate to all texts through the forces of weather that permeate them.

In a Northern Textual Ecology, the reader is a wayfarer.[10] The concept of the wayfarer has been developed and theorized by Ingold in relation to hunter-gatherer land use. Briefly put, the wayfarer is one who inhabits the land responsively and sees the land as relative and connected, as an occurrence. As a mode of apprehending and of moving through the world, wayfaring is closely linked to wayfinding, or the ability to navigate within the environment, to orient oneself without a cartographic map. Wayfaring focuses on one's ability to move and transform, while wayfinding focuses more on navigation. However, both of these concepts are *practices* within an environment. Wayfinding, as John MacDonald describes it in *The Arctic Sky*, is "based on close and constant

[10] The writer, as I will describe him/her in Chapter Three, is a seer who experiences a *becoming other*, or affective transformation in the act of writing.

observation of the natural environment" (162). It does not comprise a *system* or *method*; rather, it is a process and practice in which "Snowdrifts, wind direction, and stars are all mentioned but how these and other external markers translate into that comprehensive ability that enables Inuit to excel as wayfinders, seems to elude description" (162). MacDonald attributes part of Inuit wayfinding ability to an ordering system in which "the physical, biological, or ecological significance of the land" (162) create points of orientation. The very similar activities of wayfinding and wayfaring rely on an immanent experience in one's environment.

What the wayfarer *knows* about the world of the text is situated within a field of relations. It is a flexible and adaptable knowledge, as the wayfarer engages with material signs and is oriented and disoriented by them, thus taking part in the ongoing processes of life. Within these processes, we swerve unpredictably toward each other and toward new organizations. Here, we can locate an important intersection between weather, reading as wayfaring, and Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the "Body without Organs" (BwO). Deleuze and Guattari offer the BwO not as a vision of an actual body without any organs, but a vision of bodies—including ideas and books—as the forces or sets of relations, that compose them. Deleuze and Guattari write: "as an assemblage, a book has only itself, in connection with other assemblages and in relation to other bodies without organs" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 4). The BwO, therefore, provides an alternative to a view of literature as an object that *represents* something because it perceives relationally, rather than according to intrinsic qualities. Likewise, the BwO provides an alternative to the psychologically enclosed subject,

who is bound by the stratifications of biological family, gender, age, and so on. The BwO is not a body fixed at equilibrium; it simultaneously desires both life and death. Weather behaves as a BwO because its processes are becomings that range between zero intensity (stillness, death) and intensifying life (Colebrook, *Deleuze* 3).

The simultaneity of life and death in the BwO also connects with the breath, life, and death that are part of *Sila.* Rachel Attituq Qitsualik explains that, within a cosmology that ties all beings within *Sila's* atmosphere, Inuit "have developed intimate cultural ties to life and death, a deep understanding of the relationship between living and dead" ("Word and Will"). Within this relationship, "the dead are the foundation upon which life exists" ("Word and Will"). This connection between life and death, or between zero intensity and intense becomings, extends an alternative to readers of northern literature. That is, we can read this literature according to its relations and forces, without resorting to an evaluation of its affirmations of morality, identity, or even life. We can read northern literature according to its ceaselessly transformative weather. The wayfarer does not have authority over weather's movement and transformations, but is a reciprocal part of these processes. Ingold writes that when moving as a wayfarer one becomes a "line" because "to hunt for an animal, or to find another human being who may be lost, you lay one line of tracks through the expanse, looking for signs of another line that may lead you to your quarry (*Lines* 75). For the wayfarer, the land can be seen as a living system, lines in ongoing

transformation.[11] As Briggs says of the point of view of hunters from the *Utkuhikhalik* region, "nothing is certain" and there are only "useable moments" (262). This style of apprehending an environment makes it impossible to impose meaning on it, or to look for absolutes within it. Wayfaring involves a mode of living where there is no final destination, no search for meaning, but a generative meshwork of lines, which are the flows and counter-flows of materials that contribute to an ongoing creation of life.

A wayfarer and the land are part of a complex, interactive, and ongoing process. In this sense, the land and the wayfarer's experience on the land constitute a reciprocal practice that exceeds both objectivity and subjectivity. In the north, a wayfarer's movements are particularly dependent on weather, leading to a creative reciprocity between wayfarer and the weather. To travel in the north is to find one's way through a complex matrix of relations. In a Northern Textual Ecology, the reader is both a "perceiver" and a "producer" within her field of relations (Ingold 12), the matrix of relations that surrounds her as she moves through a text. Any thing can only be known momentarily, and within the context of what surrounds it. In other words, there are no inherent qualities, only relations, and we can only find our way if we pay attention to these relations.

For the wayfarer, these relations are always shifting; the wayfarer is always moving. Ingold writes, "the wayfarer has to sustain himself, both perceptually and materially, through an active engagement with the country [a story or a poem] that opens up along his path...each pause is a moment of tension

[11] The wayfarer becomes a line that moves through the environment, which is also a system of lines.

that...becomes ever more intense and less sustainable the longer it lasts" (150). The wayfarer is an occurrence, all movement. The wayfarer moves through the world with no final destination. The wayfarer as reader moves through his/her environment, taking part in its becomings. In keeping with the concept of the wayfarer, the readings of northern literature in this project align their movements with counterpoints of weather, taking part in the becomings of the text. A wayfaring reading generates a trace through zones of literature that are not coherent surfaces, but occurrences and ongoing formations. I call my readings orientations because they locate sets of relations in order to navigate through texts. These orientations are not cartographic, but wayfaring: they add a line to the text that might be followed for a time and then covered with other lines. They never arrive at a final destination, but follow with the text's materials and the forces of its weather, contributing to its ongoing creation.

In the actual north, the line of the wayfarer emerges in reciprocity with the environment because a multiplicity of forces composes the environment, and those forces create the conditions of perception. Likewise, for the wayfarer-as-reader, the intensities and becomings of northern literary texts, as they are transposed from northern weather, create a medium of perception. The eye does not, as Ingold has pointed out, perceive light; it perceives *in* light. Or, as Claire Colebrook has put it, "The eye becomes in relation to light, while light becomes colour through its relation to seeing," and "The present that is experienced by any self is possible only because there are forces, waves, particles, colours and intensities (haecceities) from which this actual world is composed" ("Woolf and

'Theory'" 73, 70). There is nothing preordained about the reciprocity experienced between the wayfarer and its environment. We can understand our environments as a matrix of forces that flows into useable moments and stable points, and, as Qitsualik reminds us, "general trends serve as poor indicators of what the Arctic will actually do" ("Nalunaktuq: The Arctic as Force, Instead of Resource"). As wayfarers, we *are* the bodies—of light, of wind, of taste, of sound—that we perceive, and because the futures of these bodies are undetermined, we too, have the potential to become other than what we are, to be actualized differently, according to our field of relations.

AGAINST REPRESENTATIONAL READINGS

The theorists who inform this dissertation emphasize the importance of context. They emphasize reciprocal living and active participation in our immediate field of relations, where an engaged response to one's material surroundings provides the context for any course of action. Because they emphasize context and relational connections, these theorists might be called proponents of empiricism and immersion. They work in contrast to representational readings which have occupied the following positions in northern literary criticism and ecocriticsm: nature as an Eden to which me might return; nature as a mother whom we have—in a Lacanian sense—lost; nature as a female body; more specifically, the north as a female body, the north as a terra nullius, and many others.

Although there are many examples of representational readings of the north, I have chosen to contrast with Sherrill Grace as a paradigmatic northern

theorist who uses a representational model of reading. I have also chosen to work with the tradition of the Arctic Sublime because its insistence on human transcendence persists in views of the north today; for example, the north as a wasteland. Grace's book *Canada and the Idea of North* offers an extensive range of media, which she aptly connects within a detailed history of northern Canada; however, her reading style limits the range of what literature (or any media) can do. Her reading style limits the text because it views art and literature as an artificial way of accessing the *real* world, a way to connect our imaginations with the north through metaphors.

Within a dichotomy between the *real world* and the page, metaphors are understood as what Ingold calls "figurative parallel[s] across two fundamentally separate domains" (*The Perception of the Environment* 50). Of course, the world and the text are two different domains, or realities, in the sense that the metaphors and symbols in a text cannot be matched to the world in a one-to-one relationship because neither the world nor literature can be reduced to meaning. Reducing literature to meaning leads to the kind of reading that Craig Womack parodies as both authoritative and disconnected, as, for example: "Well…I think the frybread probably symbolizes…" ("A Single Decade" 7). Womack says that this is "the kind of literary work that has been so very popular in our field in which people avoid historical research and base their criticism exclusively on tropes and symbols" ("A Single Decade" 7). Part of the problem with readings based exclusively on tropes and symbols is that these readings assume the power to

inscribe the world. The north, for example, has been inscribed with many metaphors, including a terra nullius, a woman, and a science lab.

Returning to Grace's book, its dichotomy between metaphor and world is problematic because it is a book about the north that follows the Eurowestern paradigm of human transcendence; this paradigm is at odds with the theories of interconnectivity and reciprocity that are practiced by the majority of the people who actually live in the north. Grace's book posits that art represents objects and ideas, and through it people are able to imaginatively access the real world, a world that is ontologically different than art. Grace claims that "the idea of the North" is a discursive formation that (in accordance with Foucault's notion of a discursive formation), "changes and is changed by the statements that constitute it" (260). Grace explains that her methodology is a combination of the ideas of Foucault, Bakhtin, and Bourdieu, whose theorizing is "turned towards the world in which we must live," as it explores "the ways in which language, texts, semiotic systems, and discourse are strategies or forms of representation that work in, are put to use in, the world" (24). This chapter also explores the ways in which texts might be put to use in the world, but the Northern Textual Ecology that I develop here, which works with theories of interconnectivity and reciprocity, is interested in how things relate, not as closed and objective forms, as representations and substitutes, but as differences within a "fundamental similarity," which is "the real unity that underwrites" the differences between things (Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment* 50).

George Blondin's story of Yamoria and his brother Yamagah provides an example of a Dene perspective regarding a non-representational reading, a relational reading that looks for fundamental similarities (*Trail of the Spirit* 23-43). Blondin's story also demonstrates the fluxes of weather and how these fluxes destabilize human plans and beliefs. In the story, these powerful brothers put an end to abuses of medicine power by introducing a new set of laws to help people develop a reciprocal relationship with their surroundings. However, Blondin explains that the transition into a new, harmonious way of living was not easy (28). Feuds and grudges, bringing destruction and heartache, preceded the unification of the Dene. Blondin tells the story from the beginning, but this summary begins *in medias res*, as Yamagah and his arch-rival Cho are in the heart of their power struggle (28-9).

One day, during Yamagah's teachings, Eyonee Cho attacked him, though precisely how is uncertain (29). Blondin specifies that the two men "tried to kill each other using medicine power" (29). Cho may have attacked him from behind, sneaking up and slipping a leather thong around his neck. They may have attacked each other face to face, smashing foreheads or fists. But certainly they were unable to harm each other because these warriors were equally matched (29). In the days that followed the fight, both Yamagah and Cho thought about nothing but killing each other. Then one day when Yamagah and his men were out hunting—the women, children, and Elders waiting for their return—Cho found a tactical opening and raided the vulnerable camp (30). Yamagah was excited to get back to camp because he'd had such a good hunt. He was loaded down with meat

and had some good stories to tell his family. But when Yamagah was only about five kilometres from his camp, a sick and enraged bear leapt from the birch and spruce and ripped the flesh from his dominant arm. The other warriors had to bind his arm in a sling, and it sopped up his blood and sweat as he hiked home with his men in the fall heat. In the warm air, everyone's clothes were sweaty. Sweaty clothes would not have been a problem, but, disastrously, winter arrived all at once as they neared the camp. Their sweaty clothes flash froze to their bodies (30).

This abrupt switch in weather has multiple implications. The forces and unpredictability of a northern environment also affect the story. At the level of the story, the weather's unpredictability diminishes Yamagah's ability to act. The weather further becomes a variable in the plot, so that the story's trajectory is affected by the force of the weather. The quick change in weather conditions also connects to contemporary, global conceptions of climate. As Leduc summarizes, climate change has been predicted using computer models, and these models tend to elide variables. Climate, then, becomes an algorithm that changes in predictable increments.[12] Leduc cites climate theorists and geographers David Demeritt and Spencer Weart, who say that these computer projections are efficient but lack nuance, thus ignoring the many variables that humans bring into the climate equation. That is, these computer models do not acknowledge "paleoclimate research," which indicates that "atmospheric regimes can change within a few years and that large-scale hemispheric changes can evolve as fast as a few

[12] This project focuses on *weather*, which it defines (via Ingold) as fluxes in our immediate medium. Weather can change suddenly and unpredictably. Climate, on the other hand, is the global averages of weather, a charting and mapping of weather over time. However, as Demeritt argues, the "atmospheric regimes" of climate are unpredictable and irreducible (qtd. in Leduc 58).

decades" (Demeritt, qtd. in Leduc 58). Although it is the local weather that shifts quickly in the story of Yamoria and Yamagah, the flash freezing nevertheless demonstrates that atmospheric changes are neither predictable nor incremental.

The weather changed in a flash for Yamagah and his men, but even with their frozen clothes, they kept going, and when they had almost reached camp, Yamagah called ahead to the camp for his favourite nephew. There was no answer. He called again. As he wondered why his nephew was not answering, Cho's men flew out of the trees and attacked. They had the element of surprise, but maybe Yamagah could have fought them if his arm had not been frozen to his body in a sling. He might have fought for some time with his one good hand, but in the end he was forced to retreat. In his retreat, he swore revenge.

Planning that revenge got Yamagah through the whole winter. Yamagah moved through the north, finding warriors who would join him in his revenge plot. He might have promised them protection or wealth, or he may have drawn people to him with the power of his mind. Whatever the reason, he managed to assemble a group. As his clan of fighters grew, spring got closer. In the summer, when Cho's group went hunting, Yamagah raided his camp. With his new clan of fighters, he attacked Cho's defenceless village. He grabbed sleeping children by the hair and clubbed them to death, yelling "when you are young you're not supposed to sleep too long" (Blondin 31). When women and children ran to the mountain to escape, he yelled at them, "May all the people on the slope of the

mountain turn back to rock!" (31). He looked to the mountainside, and the retreating clan had all turned to stone.

After turning all of those women and children to stone, Yamagah burned Cho's possessions and killed Cho's brother, throwing his body over a tree for birds to scavenge. Then the two warriors fought each other in a final clash. But after fighting each other for hours, Yamagah and Cho realized there would never be a winner and agreed to travel together and use their power for good. The men combined their medicine strength, joined clans, and began to assemble a united story. Their legend is told and retold by the Dene people of the north—the North Slavey, South Slavey, Tłįchǫ , Chipewyan, Satu, and Yellowknives.

Should anyone doubt the events of this story, they can go to an actual mountain in the Mackenzie range in the Northwest Territories. Across that mountain, we can see the women and children whom Yamagah turned to stone. As Blondin writes of the mountainside, "some rocks look like a woman with a baby on her back. Others look like a woman holding the hand of a child. Of course, this is what they are" (35). What does Blondin mean when he says, "of course, this is what they are"? I would like to offer three possible readings: (1) literal, (2) metaphorical, and (3) ecological. Literally, the rocks are the same women and children from history, except their physical bodies have been transformed into stone. Metaphorically, the rocks have nothing to do with the people from the story; they only resemble the shapes of people and might act as another symbolic element of the story. Ecologically, the rocks and the people from the story are the same in the sense that they belong to a shared field of

relations. A Northern Textual Ecology engages with the ecological reading because, of the above possibilities, it is the one that works outside of the paradigm of human transcendence. A literal reading is transcendent because it assumes a fundamental difference between humans and rocks, so that the only choices are either/or. The metaphorical reading is transcendent in a similar way because it assumes that humans could never be rocks, so it calls on "figurative parallel[s] across two fundamentally separate domains" (Ingold 50). An ecological reading is more immanent than transcendent because it accepts that people can be both human and rock, and it also accepts that a story can be animated by the land and sky; all are part of a contextual order. The rocks are *animate* in the sense that they are enlivened by their field of relations.

To ask *why* Blondin says that the rocks *are* women and children is, in part, a question of classifications. In Blondin's classification, the rocks and the fleeing women and children are understood in the context of Dene culture and history. To call this rocky and storied slope *a mountain* is also a kind of ordering because within the story of geography and science, that is the name given to such a rock formation: an ordered and discreet unit of material that is always a mountain, no matter what surrounds it. I suggest that Blondin's style of ordering comes from a view based the fundamental similarity between things rather than the fundamental difference and isolation. Allice Legat explains in *Walking the Land, Feeding the Fire: Knowledge and Stewardship Among the Tłı̨chǫ Dene* that the Tłı̨chǫ Dene way of seeing the land is inseparable from the stories of humans. The Tłı̨chǫ Dene translate "dè" as "'land, ground, dirt, earth" that is "in constant flux as a result of

the lives and interactions of all beings" (Legat 2). In this view, the landscape is a story that constantly unfolds. Humans are co-created within this story because, when we perceive the landscape, we are immersed in the narrative of everything being related as it unfolds in the air.

THE POLITICS OF A NORTHERN TEXTUAL ECOLOGY

In *Ecological Perception and the Environment*, James Gibson suggests that it is combinations of things—sets of relations—that account for what a thing can do. Things do not have intrinsic traits, but their capacities change, moment to moment, in given configurations. For example, water affords a surface of support for a spider to walk across, but it does not afford this support to a mouse or a human. In his book *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, Manuel de Landa says that the idea of "affordance" is closely tied to the matrixes of processes that happen in a field of relations, and the capacities to act that one body can "afford" another:

> A piece of ground does have its own intrinsic properties determining, for example, how horizontal or slanted, how flat, concave or convex, and how rigid it is. But to be capable of affording support to a walking animal is not just another intrinsic property; it is a capacity which may not be exercised if there are no animals around. (66)

The idea of affordance applies to northern literature in two significant ways. First, it suggests that what any thing can do—a thing's capacity to act—cannot be separated from that thing's environment. It is through immersion in our

environments that we experience the world disclosing itself, "things becoming things, and the world becoming a world" (Ingold, *Being Alive* 69). We cannot experience these becomings if we situate ourselves above or apart from our environments, but when any body is in proximity to another body, there is a potential for these bodies to enhance one another's *affective mutability*, and one another's capacity to act.

The weather we experience in northern writing situates us within the irreducibility of *Sila*. Being situated within *Sila* requires that we submit, as Leduc and Arnakak have suggested, to *Sila's* contextualizing power, meaning that we accept our situated place within the biosphere and acknowledge the fact that this biosphere does not exist as a means to solely human ends. Within this view of the biosphere, humans and other species are part of a larger ecosystem that is indeterminate and whose outcomes are subject to combinations of relations and actions. Perceptions of *Sila* are commensurate with James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis' *Gaia* hypothesis, which Arran E. Gare describes as a way of perceiving the "geological, atmospheric and biological processes and cycles" of the earth as a reciprocal and self-regulating system (*Postmodernism and the Environmental Crisis* 131). Lovelock's conceptualization of Gaia borrows the name of the Greek goddess, Gaia, who was believed to be a kind of earth-mother. Or, in a less anthropocentric view, she was believed to be the single living being that emerged from chaos and formed the symbiotic system of earth and atmosphere. In Lovelock's words, Gaia is "the hypothesis that the total ensemble of living organisms which constitute the biosphere can act as a single entity to regulate...

[and] maintain the Earth in homeostasis" ("Atmospheric Homeostasis By and For the Biosphere"). Gaia is indifferent to our economic goals and our visions of truth but is deeply affected by our actions. In this way, Gaia's indifference is akin to *Sila's* indifference, as both are affected by human actions, but neither is concerned with human categories or truths. Both *Sila* and Gaia have the potential to contextualize us within our environment.

To be contextualized by *Sila* is, according to Arnakak, to realize that "Nature is indifferent; it cares nothing for our limited conception of 'good' and 'bad,' 'evil' and 'beneficence'" (qtd. in Leduc 36). To be contextualized by *Sila* is to find oneself in an economy of reciprocity, in which 'sin' is a failure to be responsible to one's community, and sorcery is a selfish abuse of power (Leduc 118-19). However, there is a crucial difference between conventional, representational politics and politics of reciprocity. Within the powers of *Sila*, an economy of reciprocity operates according to connections, according to what Leduc calls "a conscionable etiquette" (189); it does not elevate the economic, political, or intellectual gain of the individual over the well-being of that individual's field of relations. When we are contextualized within a conscionable etiquette, we can venture away from the familiar frames of representational, molar politics—the politics of opinion and identity—and transition into a molecular politics, into a becoming molecular or imperceptible.

Deleuze and Guattari write about *becoming-molecular* as a disorganization of our opinions and identities as we are affected by the bodies that surround us.

They take the idea of the molecular from science, where something close to "unmediated perception" is possible (Colebrook 6). Within molecular life,

> one molecule does not decide or imagine its relation to another. But insofar as each molecule responds to its outside and encounters, it is perceptive. A hydrogen atom behaves in a certain way—or *is*— when it connects with oxygen, and these connections in turn behave or perceive according to their connections. We could refer to this as 'molecular perception' insofar as the relation produced is determined by the way each term's potential is realized in specific relation to another power or potential. (Colebrook 6)

A defining difference between molar and molecular politics is that molar politics are classificatory, defining people and their affiliate groups via the concept of intrinsic traits that are divisible from those with opposing traits. In this way, a molar politics guides representational reading styles: both depend on containing classifications. In representational reading styles, the self-contained individual is categorically separate from her discrete environment, although metaphors can join (what are perceived as) the fundamentally different parts of this environment. All of these parts are also joined by a containing force, such as an author or an ideology, which is also separate and intrinsically different from what it contains.

Within a molar political frame, we might read in search of symbols, metaphors, or messages. This kind of reading involves individual opinion, a faith in a final signified, and a certain amount of ignorance of complex interconnections. A molecular reading involves a sensitivity to those "mobile

forces that subsist within and below" the signifier (Connelly). This is a cross-sensory sensitivity, attuned to subtle or even terrifying connections. In proximity to the immanent turbulence of a text, we can begin to align our wayfaring with that turbulence, and as we do this, we might find new capacities to act within our field of relations, both inside and outside of the text.

These molecular and affective connections have the potential to confront the human greed and carelessness that have been characteristic of southern participation in the north. In short, the interconnectivity posited by these connections makes it quite impossible to ignore human contributions to *Sila*/Gaia because a world of becomings is a world of process and reciprocity, not a teleological narrative, in which all actions can be justified if they contribute to human achievement and satisfaction. Molecular and affective connections align us, as Deleuze and Guattari frame it, longitudinally, with the speeds, slowness, and extensive traits that compose the actual north, and through proximity to these configurations, we are latitudinally, or intensively affected. This affective relationship with the north (via its literature) makes possible, I suggest, an experience with the contextualizing power of *Sila.* To be contextualized within the powers of *Sila* is to gain an awareness of powers that exceed human goals and beliefs. Citing Gitay et al., Leduc writes that sensitivity to *Sila* "is not a romantic return to oral life-ways and knowledge but a wise attempt to unite 'our capacity for cool reason with those more sensorial and mimetic ways of knowing, letting the vision of a common world root itself in our direct, participatory engagement with the local and the particular'" (32). As I have been describing it, the

contextualizing power of *Sila* is the power of the biosphere to show us that we are only one of many processes, occurring within a larger, relational system.

The intensities and becomings that occur within the *Sila* of the northern literary texts here expose us to the ethology of Inuit orthopraxy. *Ethology*, as Dianne Chisholm has described it, is "an 'immanent' ethics that takes account of how bodies behave in relation to other bodies in ways more or less beneficial to the 'Life' of their mutual entanglement" ("The Becoming-Animal of Being Caribou" 6). Similarly, Inuit orthopraxy is action or behaviour that contributes to the mutual well-being of human and nonhuman beings. As the northern literary texts in this study offer immersion in ethology and orthopraxy, they can help us acknowledge the ways in which our becomings are wrapped up in the becomings of other beings.

PRACTICES OF WAYFARING, POINTS OF ORIENTATION

This project is organized into three chapters. Each chapter focuses on one of the Inuit cosmologies/concepts, *Sila*, *isuma*, or *Sedna*, and uses this concept as a guide by which we might find points of orientation in literary texts. Chapter One, "The Other Arctic: Abandoning the Sublime for the Relational," traces connections between the Arctic Sublime and representational readings of northern literary texts, contrasting the perceptual mode of the Arctic Sublime with a perceptual mode that thinks in relation to *Sila.* According to the mode of the Arctic Sublime, the power of the north's atmospheric weather makes it exciting, but this is an excitement that needs to be experienced at a distance. In short,

humans experience the forces of the north via congealed representational depictions of these forces which allow humans to maintain their own congealed subjectivities. This chapter suggests that the cosmology of *Sila* can offer an alternative to the Arctic sublime because this cosmology teaches humans that they are a part of *Sila*, connected to all other beings through the atmosphere. The goal of this chapter is to show how *Sila* permeates northern literary texts, making readers a part of the weather of these texts.

The orientations in Chapter One include Glenn Gould's tonal poem *The Idea of North* and Taqralik Partridge's spoken-word poem "I Picked Berries." *The Idea of North* is a tone poem[13] made from analogue recordings of five different people who are not from the north but have lived there for short periods of time. All of these people speak of their subjective experiences and promote their individual opinions, but these opinions are subsumed within the "weather" that this piece generates. To elaborate, the volume of these voices varies in such a way that one voice will fade and another will rise, and sometimes one or more of these voices will subsist at a low volume while ambient sounds or a 'lead' voice dominates. One of the effects of this composition of voices is that the content that is 'said' is secondary to the intensities that are created by what these voices *do* in a system. In short, *The Idea of North* composes a kind of weather that exceeds the arena of human concerns. Taqralik Partridge's "I Picked Berries" is a first-person account of summertime on the land in the Arctic. This poem generates a weather that exceeds human concerns through its blurring of the lines between human,

[13] A tone poem is a term used for a story told only with music.

land, water, sky, and animal. This blurring is especially evident in the poem's use of connecting words and elision, as well as its metanarrative framing device in which a terrestrial landscape and a landscape of stories are two distinct yet interrelated things

Chapter Two, "Isuma and the Outside: Connective Thinking in Igloolik Isuma Productions' *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*", enacts the concept of *isuma* (wisdom that is predicated on weather and other changing sets of relations) as a guide to thinking connectively. *Isuma* can be said to be an egalitarian thinking style because through it, all things are understood relationally. *Isuma* undermines hierarchies in its acceptance of change, uncertainty, and interconnectivity. This is true of human/animal and human/land relationships and of relationships between humans. In terms of human-animal and human-land relations, *isuma* promotes a perception of an environment in which nothing can be taken for granted, not on the land, not with animals, and not with people.

This chapter discusses Igloolik Isuma Productions' *Atanarjuat: the Fast Runner* as a text that demonstrates *isuma*. This film offers more than a representation of northern weather; it offers—via techniques of layers of sound, framing, and tracking shots—a land that is immanently connected to the human. In this film, a range of active bodies, in various forms (water, sky, human, animal, spirit) interact and connect. This film is an environment within which we might encounter what William Connelly calls "uncertain exchanges between stabilized formation and mobile forces that subsist within and below them" (43). Thus this

film can help us think with *isuma*, to think in relation to the exchanges are an immanent part of the north, inseparable from its forces.

Chapter Three, "Reading in *Sedna's* Plenitude: Ipellie's Arctic Dreams and Nightmares as Force, Instead of Resource" focuses on the *Sedna* cosmology as a model for reading that does not rely on scarcity thinking. Rather, *Sedna* is a model of plenitude because, within her cosmology, *angakkuit*, animals, hunters, and spirits are part of the matrix of relations that promotes mutual well-being. This ecological vision of the world refutes a model of careless resource extraction. The crux of this chapter comes from Qitsualik's statement that the Arctic is an imponderable force, not a resource. I extend Qitsualik's view of the Arctic to northern literary texts, arguing that encounters with the forces of these texts can take us past what we 'know' to be true and into contact with the destruction and creation of *Sedna*. Within models of scarcity, literary texts can only give us access to what is recognizably human; they cannot give us direct access to the movement and uncertainty that subsists beyond and around the signifying systems of language and culture. Submersed in literary weather, we might find a lack of grounding in the familiar, in our impeccable regimes of truth, but a lack of grounding in 'the truth' can free us from preconceptions and reconnect us with the powers of transformation.

Alootook Ipellie's *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* provides this chapter with a literary environment that enacts the forces of the north. This collection of twenty drawings and accompanying stories gives us access to beautiful and terrifying visions, through the dream-states of the narrator shaman. Through the

voice of this narrator, these stories engage with the tradition of didactic teaching; that is, what Martin calls "the didactic function of *inipkaaqtuat*," or traditional stories (42). This lesson-teaching function was traditionally employed to help people survive in the climatic and social Arctic. Alex Spalding, who recorded and translated Thomas Kusugaq's *Eight Inuit Myths* in 1950, says that the didactic element in traditional Inuit storytelling can provide "lessons in humanity to all of us, instructing us to be more courageous, more compassionate and wiser, less prone to jealousy, anger, and greed, more social and helpful" (qtd. in Martin 144). There is also a level of instruction in these stories that seems to mirror the approach that Inuit parents have used to help their parents develop *isuma*: Ipellie's stories include questioning and playing, and in offering readers assemblages of images and scenarios that defy so many regimes of truth (aesthetic, moral, and humanist), these stories can help us engage with the plenitude of the north.

CHAPTER ONE

THE OTHER ARCTIC: ABANDONING THE SUBLIME FOR THE RELATIONALITY OF *SILA*

> Even today, traditional Inuit wisdom maintains that the body has its own sila. Sila is the air, and we who have our own air also have a part of sila — a part of its life-force. (Rachel Qitsualik, "Word and Will")
>
> Ecological awareness will arise only when we combine our rational knowledge with an intuition for the nonlinear nature of our environment. (Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point* 41)
>
> There is no line separating earth and sky; there is no intermediate distance, no perspective or contour; visibility is limited; and yet there is an extraordinarily fine topology that relies not on points or objects but rather on haecceities, on sets of relations (winds, undulations of snow or sand, the song of the sand or the creaking of the ice, the tactile qualities of both). (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 382)

This chapter continues to develop the concept of a Northern Textual Ecology, uniting the cosmo/geo/meteorological forces of the north with northern literary texts. My goal here is to engage with the concept/cosmology of *Sila* and to extend the relationality of *Sila* into a perception of northern literary texts. According to the various theorists whose work comprises the methodology of this chapter, the world is at its most intense when we experience it as a matrix of processes that are the forces of our becomings, the transitional experiential states of who we are. As described in the introduction to this project, *Sila* is most commonly equated with the weather, but its broader implications extend to an animate biosphere within which humans participate. Rachel Attituq Qitsualik, Timothy Leduc, and Jaypeetee Arnakak all define the Inuktitut word *Sila* as the substance of life, the atmospheric occurrence that connects all beings that breathe. To be cognizant of

Sila is to recognize that our own lives and deaths are bound to the lives and deaths of other beings. When speaking of the relationality of the environment, Arnakak asks Leduc to "view ecology, environment and wildlife as sentient beings that are deserving of your respect" (qtd. in Leduc 183). This is not an economy of what Leduc calls "an economically self-interested individual," but an economy of reciprocity (183), what Leduc calls a "conscionable etiquette" (189). Chapter Three focuses on this reciprocal etiquette, but it is also relevant to the subject of relationality that guides this chapter. Here, *Sila* is the focus of reciprocal perception, an awareness of the fact that all of our perceptions are made in counterpoint with the atmosphere that surrounds us.

Sila is the medium that surrounds us and offers us the atmosphere that is fundamental to perception. In other words, *Sila* is the invisible air that allows us to see the land. *Sila* is, as David Abram says of air, "ineffable, unknowable, yet undeniably real and efficacious" (*The Spell of the Sensuous* 227). In this sense, *Sila* is a mediator between "the *seen* and the *unseen*" (254). In the north, the smells of sealskin, ocean water, and metallic rock, and the sounds of stories, creaking houses, and barking dogs are inseparable from those who perceive them. We see in *Sila*, breathe in *Sila*, and we find through *Sila* that we are not set above these perceptions; rather, these perceptions are a counterpoint of human sensory organs and atmosphere.

Sila is not a deity. Rather, it "moves and is without form of its own" (Arnakak, qtd. in Leduc 27). As I have already said, *Sila* is often translated as "the weather" in contemporary usage, but, more accurately, *Sila* is the empty space in

which clouds, winds, snows, and rains occur (Leduc 27). *Sila* becomes manifest as a powerful force when it is joined with the suffix *rjuaq* to make *Silarjuaq* (30). Leduc explains "the root term *rjuaq* refers to something big, great, or large, and when combined with *Sila's* reference to the substance of life," it contextualizes humans within a force that is fundamental to perception (30). Adding to this definition, Arnakak says, "Beings—whether they be animals, human or spirit—become and pass away within [*Silarjuaq*]"; it is the power of change and flux (qtd. in Leduc 30). Although ethnographers have anthropomorphized *Silarjuaq* as a male god,[14] Arnakak says "some Inuit would say that it is we living beings that are *Silarjuapormorphized*. *Silarjuaq* has natural rhythms and cycles as seen in the changing seasons [...] everything is mutable—only sentience, order and change are constant" (30). This inversion of anthropomorphism is significant in terms of a Northern Textual Ecology because it places humans in a field of relations with the environment, rather than above it; it refutes human transcendence.

When Arnakak aligns *Sila* with cycles and constant change, he seems to refer to the kind of order found in context, rather than the kind of order found in the inherent traits of things. Ingold makes a similar distinction between orders of proximity and orders of intrinsic value. Citing physicist David Bohm's theories of "implicate" and "explicate" order, Ingold says that, for Bohm, "explicate order" understands that "every thing is what is it is due to its own given nature and is connected to other things only though an external contact that leaves this nature unaffected" (160). Conversely, "implicate order" is empirical and situated; it knows the world through "movement and becoming, in which any thing—caught

[14] For example, Knud Rasmussen refers to *Sila* with the pronoun "he."

at a particular place and moment—enfolds within its constitution the history of relations that have brought it there" (160). The land's implicate order, and what Arnakak calls the mutability of *Silarjuaq*, is a relational field of processes, of weather. In a land of processes, nothing exists in isolation.

If we understand the land according to an explicate order (apart from its processes) we assume a false authority over it. Computer models that predict climate change, which I have discussed in the introduction, order the weather in isolation, as an equation that does not consider any factors beyond calculation and also beyond *what can be calculated*.[15] As Michel Serres asks in *The Birth of Physics,* "what good does it do me to know the exact second of the next eclipse when a thick mounting wind keeps me from seeing it? What good are all the tools in the world when snow and mud prevent their use?" (68). George Blondin's version of the story of the Dene brothers Yamoria and Yamagah suggests that the interventions of weather in the lives of these brothers show that there are occasions when final outcomes cannot be calculated.[16]

The northern environment is constantly shifting, as Béatrice Collignon writes concerning Inuinnait land-based wisdom: "change is the normal state of weather" (162). Part of the problem with trying to measure and categorize the environment is that these activities presuppose that we live in a world of objects, when we more accurately live in a world of weather. As Ingold says, objects "offer a degree of certainty and fixity, points that can be joined up" ("Rethinking

[15] Leduc discusses the limitations of computer models in his chapter "Researching Gaia's Uncertain Climate," saying that, within these models, "variables tend to be hypothesized based upon the assumptions of the modeller" (57).
[16] Blondin tells this story in his book *Trail of the Spirit: The Mysteries of Medicine Power Revealed.* For more detail, see the introduction to this project.

the Animate" 4). However, if we only perceive reality according to fixed objects, we stultify the animate and lively world that surrounds us. In short, "In this world, things leak: they discharge and absorb, and are only sustained thanks to the interchange of materials across their surfaces" (Ingold, "Rethinking the Animate" 4). In a leaky world of interchange, the processes of life destabilize the idea of the human body as a sealed and discreet container. We are part of "a potentized field of intelligence in which our actions participate" (Abram 260). As active participants in a field of intelligence, humans cannot transcend their environments. Yamagah, for example, cannot transcend his environment when the temperature drops suddenly and freezes his clothing. Everything in Yamagah's field of relations is animate and in flux: his clothing, the woods, and his body. This is a story in which the weather—turbulences and volatility—of a landscape shows us our contingent place within the environment. In this story, Yamagah conducts himself within the implicate order of weather, improvising as he travels. He does not move through a world of objects as a detached and discreet body, but moves with the processes of the weather.

The above story reflects Arnakak's view that we inhabit a world of cycles and constant change. Likewise, it reflects what Ingold says about our inhabitation of the world; that is, we are part of an animate world that we move *through*, rather than *across* (Ingold 71).[17] To move through a landscape differs from moving across it because, as Ingold says, moving through something requires dynamic interaction. It requires that we inhabit a world that is not preformed, not inert, but is constituted by "the aerial flux of weather rather than by the grounded fixities of

[17] In Ingold's view, all things are animated by their proximate field of relations.

landscape" ("Rethinking the Animate" 17). Deleuze and Guattari take the idea of moving through the world even deeper, writing, "We are not in the world, we become with the world; we become by contemplating it" (*What is Philosophy* 169). We become with the world, moving like a "'knife through everything' and become imperceptible" (169). Extending this becoming to reading literature, we become with it, we move with it, becoming imperceptible in its field of relations. Becoming imperceptible does not mean that we disappear completely; rather, it means that we are part of the world (land and literature) and are "defined solely by a circulation of states" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 2). From this perspective of circulating states, say Deleuze and Guattari, a wolf is not a wolf, but a wolfing (265). Becoming with literature dissolves our congealed and constructed views of ourselves, and we experience who we might be: a matrix of affect and sensation.

When we inhabit the world according to the fluxes of its weather, our movement through it is much more about process and carrying on than it is about staying on course. With respect to Inuinnait modes of travel, Collignon explains that experience on the land creates "an intimate, very personal relationship with" it (74). This relationship generates "Strong emotions, an appreciation of the beauty of the land (*kajjarnaqtuq*), outstanding memories of a life spent criss-crossing the territory" (75). The Inuktitut word *kajjarnaqtuq* is an expression of the beauty of an environment or any other-than-human being, particularly one that is both well-known and somehow overwhelming or surprising. As John Houston defines this word, *kajjarnaqtuq* is a feeling of wistfulness or longing within the

cycles of seasons and time; it is a longing that is saturated with an acceptance of contingency and change.

During an Inuktitut class at the Arctic College in Pangnirtung, I asked our instructor, Kelly Karpik, about the term *kajjarnaqtuq*; she explained that a person might see a familiar and remarkable mountain and then feel a sense of *kajjarnaqtuq*. Houston says this word is tied to both the seasons and people's movement on the land. He writes, "Pangnirtung is *kajjarnaqtuq*—a place one recalls with fond longing." Interestingly, the cyclical aspect of this concept ties it to *Sila*. In Huston's words, "following movements of animals, the spring fishing [the Uqqurmiut] missed also *being* the fish they yearned for, when that season would come around" (*2000 Pangnirtung Community Print Collection*; emphasis mine). I am not sure what Houston means when he says that the people missed "*being* the fish they yearned for." However, in an ecological sense, we can understand this statement as one of relationality and interconnectivity. If people are sharing *Sila* with the fish (smells, sounds, light), then they are part of those fish. The act of eating these fish also ties the fish to the humans through the cycles of life and death that are a part of *Sila*. The concept of *kajjarnatuq* offers a useful line for illuminating this chapter's focus on relationality because it points to the ways in which human becomings are intimately connected to the cycles of their environments.[18]

[18] Keavy Martin first introduced me to the word *kajjarnaqtuq* after she read an early draft of my first chapter. Martin writes: "This is total speculation, but what if the idea of the sublime in Inuktitut created not awe or terror because of alienation but because of a profound sense of belonging, or the familiar?" (Email correspondence, 16 August 2012)

In Igloolik Isuma Productions' film *Qapirangajuq: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change*, Rita Nashook uses the word "*kajjarnaqtuq*" to describe the breath-fog from a polar bear's mouth. "*Kajjarnaqtuq*" in this context becomes an expression of the beauty of being in the open. It implies the beauty of movement of breath (with its connection to *Sila*), which encompasses both the actual predatory threat of the polar bear, a reciprocal relationship with that polar bear through breath, and the ongoing movement of breath in all its forms and the transformations that this small movement of weather will take for all time.

The simultaneity of familiarity and transformation present in the concept of *kajjarnaqtuq* connects with an empirical immersion in *Sila*. This point of view is "radically empiricist" in its belief in its acceptance of the idea "that the absolute sum-total of things may never be actually experienced or realized in that shape at all" (Connelly 32-33). Likewise, George Tinker's description of Native Americans' view of an "all-form" coincides with *Sila's* immanence. Tinker says that "what Christians would refer to as God is understood as a spiritual force that permeates the whole of the world and is manifest in countless ways in the world around us at any given moment and especially in any given place" (qtd. in Leduc 29). This view refutes the holist view that parts of a system are maintained by a larger whole because here, the parts of the system *are* the whole. Furthermore, the parts of the system have no intrinsic, closed value, but "emerge as condensations or crystallizations of activity within a relational field" (Ingold 46). Qitsualik says that words are such crystallizations, drawn from *Sila* and expressed in breath ("Word and Will").

Like the polar bear's breath, our words are formed out of the materials of our surroundings. Speaking of the power of *Sila i*n connection with words, Arnakak says of his father, "He only knew that God (*Sila*) is a living, breathing immanence—a reality, not myth—and his worship was in the active partaking of that being" (qtd. in Leduc 29). Within these views of *Sila*, it seems that every text, every expression, is an extension of *Sila*. According to the above understandings, I can identify both speaking and writing as active partakings of *Sila.* In *The Other Side of Eden*, Hugh Brody suggests that the power of connections, so vital in many Indigenous cultures, is instructive to those of us who look toward a "resistance to absolutism of all kinds" (269). Recognizing importance of resisting absolutism is a step toward *isuma* (wise action).[19] It is the beginning of a minor politics and an immanent way of living in the world.

This chapter will now proceed via three movements. First, I will develop the concept of relationality, as it relates to Inuinnait land ecology, or Geosophy. Second, I will develop the concept of a non-representational reading, beginning with examples of representational readings, working in contrast to Sherrill Grace and the Arctic Sublime. After establishing how non-representational readings differ from representational ones, I will discuss how non-representational readings can expose us to literature's weather. Third, I will demonstrate a Northern Textual Ecology by means of my own readings, which will express an organizing principle based on flux and potential. These readings, which I call "orientations," will illustrate how a reader can conjoin with the processes of a text. The literary

[19] For a more detailed discussion of *isuma*, see the Introduction and Chapter Three.

texts that I move through in this chapter produce events through contrapuntal voices and styles, paratactic mapping (where unlikely places are brought together), shape shifting, and impossible movement (across continents and ice floes). While any literature can be traveled in the mode of wayfaring—in a reciprocal relationship with the weather of the text—the northern literature that I assemble in this chapter generates its own weather (through the techniques listed above) and this weather both destabilizes the environment of the text and orients the reader within that turbulent environment.

The first orientation demonstrates how Taqralik Partridge's poem "I Picked Berries" creates a matrix of relations that generate on-going becomings and intensities. The second orientation in Glen Gould's *The Idea of North* shows how the weather-forces of the north complicate the idea of a fixed container and fixed linguistic messages. Through these orientations, I will engage in a reading style that departs from the representational model and, in doing so, will see the radiating connections between environment and text. My objective in this chapter is to produce a reading of the north that is outside of identity politics and colonial aesthetics. In this way, I will situate my readings in the relationality of *Sila*.

GEOSOPHY, OR INUINNAIT CONCEPTS OF WEATHER AND CONTINGENCY

In *Knowing Places: The Inuinnait, Landscapes, and the Environment*, Béatrice Collignon theorizes her concept of "Geosophy," which is a "wisdom of the land" that considers everything in the environment to be active and relational (Collignon 71, 158). Collignon builds her theory of Geosophy on the fundamental concepts

of Inuinnait geographical knowledge, which promote an understanding of the land as immanently relative, connected, and humanly experienced as subjective. Collignon says that fixed and flat surfaces are of little importance in the view of Inuinnait Geosophy. What matters are lines of travel and variations in *Sila*'s weather that connect people and places in unpredictable ways. Inuit stories of Kiviuq include many examples of the unpredictable connections that weather can make. For example, it is a sudden turn in the weather that creates the massive waves that foil the kayakers who maliciously pursue the young Kiviuq. A twist in *Sila*'s weather provides an escape for Kiviuq, and thus his adventures begin. As Kiviuq travels, his adventure takes place "along paths," meaning the story continuously moves from one point to the next (Ingold 72). Like Kiviuq, who travels through a connected environment, the Inuinnait organize their reading of the land in a contextualized and connected way, so lines are more important than places (Collignon 160).

Collignon explains that within the Inuinnait perspective of connected places, no location has any intrinsic significance. What makes a location significant is the ways in which it connects to other locations, people, and animals. Collignon writes, "According to this system, anything that is outside the network of relationships does not truly exist and therefore does not get named"; however, "each identified place is an active partner in weaving the fabric of a spatial system" (160). The Inuinnait view that places do not exist on their own enacts an implicate order, whereby no thing has an intrinsic identity that can remain unaffected by proximate materials. Accordingly, the land cannot be reduced to

discrete representations of points; rather, points or places are produced within the processes of life, including hunting, berry picking, and storytelling. Traveling the lines between connected places puts a person in the matrix of the processes of life, which is a relative space, a series of relationships. Like relationships, land continues to change. Collignon explains: "if space is a network of relationships, if space is perceived in relative terms, then it follows that any knowledge about space can only be subjective" (166). However, the word *subjective* here calls for some clarification because it should not be confused with a human narcissistic projection onto nature. Subjectivity, as it can be understood within the context of Geosophy, is neither a matter of recognizing congealed identities, nor of insisting on a 'self' who is above the land. Rather, the subjectivity of one's experience on the land points to the ways in which human perception will change according to atmospheric and geographic conditions. Because of the protean state of the land, human beings can not assume that their experience on it can apply to anyone else's experience. In this way, human subjectivity in relation to the land implies an immanent relation.

Many southern inhabitants, or *qallunaat*, who have spent time in the north have commented on the importance of first-person experience, which is often revealed in reluctance on the part of Inuit to speak authoritatively about anything they have not experienced directly. This attention to the subjectivity of knowledge accepts the world's becomings and fluxes; it displaces humans and human agency and understands that we are only what we are within: a shifting field of relations. Perspective and weather make objectivity and constancy impossible; "that is why

skilled travellers keep looking backward when they are travelling in an unfamiliar area. They know that on the return trip, each landmark will look different in the reverse direction. The relationship will have changed, and so the character and sense of the place will have changed as well" (Collignon 167). Perhaps this simultaneous recognition and lack of certainty reflect a sense of *kajjarnaqtuq,* where intimacy with the land is dynamic and part of *Sila*'s changing cycles, where context and circumstance create understanding.

THE FORCES OF WEATHER DRAWN INTO NORTHERN LITERARY TEXTS

Geosophy's conception of the land's relativity, connectivity, and human subjectivity also applies to stories. Collignon characterizes Inuinnait stories (and I extend this to northern literary texts) as reflective of the above landscape qualities. She writes: "many narratives emphasize the very changeable qualities of places," and she gives, as example, the story of Kiviuna (Kiviuq), whose "good hunting spot can become a dangerous piece of drifting ice" (164), meaning that the very region of ice where Kiviuna/Kiviuq stood poised to spear a seal became a drifting and dangerous slab that no longer connected to a breathing hole. This example from the story of Kiviuq/Kiviuna illuminates the point that the land does not have intrinsic attributes. Again, here, we might consider the *kajjarnaqtuq* qualities of a close relationship to the land because even something that is loved and familiar will also be connected to *Sila*'s changing weather. Further, when the relativity of the land is a part of a story's narrative, it can create a concomitant relativity in the story itself because the narrative becomes unstable.

In *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory*, Julie Cruikshank says that her experience with Athapaskan and Tlingit storytellers has taught her that oral stories are better understood as activities than as objects, and as such they are "part of the equipment of living rather than a set of meanings within texts waiting to be discovered" (41). Furthermore, "What appears to be the 'same' story has multiple meanings, depending on location, circumstance, audience, stage of life of the narrator and the listener" (44). This shifting understanding of oral stories is very similar to the relativity expressed in Geosophy.[20] For example, place names are relative: "the little one" and the "middle sized one" might technically measure the same, but they are named according to their contexts (Collignon 164), according to the perspective of the one who is naming: "we can say that space is a function of the awareness of human beings who describe what they see in their own terms" (166). Environments (actual and literary), then, are simultaneously perceived and produced by the beings that populate them. Here, human "subjectivity" relates to immanent action, rather than to an abstract imposition on the land. Through immanent action, humans continuously come together with the land and sky, forming cosmo/onto/geo/meteorological assemblages that are continuously, as Ingold puts it, binding and unbinding. Assemblages continuously bind long enough to create a territory, or framing of forces, and are then unbound by the weather.

[20] In Geosophy, places without activity do not have names (Collignon gives the example of the English-named Victoria Island); therefore, places are known for their active rather than passive qualities.

It seems, then, that environments refute categorization. The environments of northern literary texts draw on the relativity of the land and pull it into the activity of storytelling of composing phrases, images, and sounds. Stories, and more broadly northern literary texts, draw on the forces and materials of the environment, and, in doing so, "stories always, and inevitably, draw together what classifications split apart" (Ingold160; emphasis in original). Northern literary texts draw on the forces of the land; they situate us within the processes of the matrix of life, and they, as Ingold and Deleuze and Guattari contend, are forms enmeshed with and wrested from the sensational/affective processes of life.

SILA'S WEATHER, *SILA*'S AFFECTIVE TRUTH

Within a common world with mutually sustaining connections, we are relationally situated within the processes of life and experience. Ingold writes about the situated perspective of the hunter, suggesting that this perspective is one of reciprocity rather than hierarchy, in which all organisms are part of a "cosmic economy of sharing" (*The Perception of the Environment* 48). He says that within this scheme, "hunting itself comes to be regarded not as a technical manipulation of the natural world but as a kind of interpersonal dialogue" (48).[21] Within this dialogue, "both human and animal persons are constituted with their particular identities and purposes" (48). However, these "identities," these "persons," differ from anthropomorphic projections because narcissistic human ends are not the goal within this reciprocating network. In fact, taking part in such a reciprocity acknowledges, in the words of Leduc, "The power of natural processes to resist

[21] Here, Ingold refers specifically to the Waswanipi Cree.

limiting cultural assumptions"; this is a "new, yet ancient, way of recognizing our worldly context" (Leduc 38). If human persons are not set over and against materials, and if natural processes can help us to perceive ourselves contingently within the world, we might say the network that surrounds us offers us an experience in affective truth, which is outside of our fixed regimes of *the truth*. This experience in affective truth also extends to literature, where we are surrounded by a network of signs that draws forces from the environment.

In conversation with Leduc, Arnakak states that *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (*IQ*) looks upon the sharing of experiential knowledge as the "'most reliable and relevant' approach for determining how people can act" (Leduc 39). This sharing of knowledge *is* reliable because it is based on immanent and empirical experience, rather than what one 'knows' ahead of time to be 'the truth,' rather than any prescribed or fixed narrative. A lack of sea ice makes seals unattainable, while the same warm weather that melts ice and prevents a successful seal hunt also brings in a migration of beluga whales. The migration results in a flurry of community activity while people race out to pursue a whale. Such is an affective event because it (is and) is not about the narrative of a whale hunt. On a narrative level, this whale hunt engages with the concerns of pursuit, accuracy, and stealth. Beyond the level of narrative, however, the hunt engages with nonlinear forces that subsist outside of recognizably human ends. In the later sense, a hunt is not only a story, but an affective event. The event is the interchange of weather, animals, people and the sensations that are produced by these things as they come together. As Elena del Rio describes it, "affect is a force of becoming that enables

bodies to pass from one experiential state to another" (27). Affective events enable our bodies to experience that which we cannot control and cannot predict, always temporary and shifting like blowing snow, like clouds, into new formations.

When I was on the land, camping on Saunik Island, I felt the charge and excitement as we sat electric and quiet, looking out to the ocean, waiting and watching for the hunters to return with meat and *mattaaq*.[22] I walked around the camp alone for a while but was compelled to sit down on flat rocks, to gain proximity to the group, the ones connected to the boats and hunters through CB radios and winds and tides. I wanted proximity to the exhilarating cheer that went up when news of the hunt came in, the cheer itself becoming weather. Analogous to this gust of conditions that sent hunters after a migration of belugas and held the rest of us waiting in the thrilling air, there is, in literature, a reciprocal relationship between reader and text that also depends on affective events. These affective events make reading a process of movement and immersion; these affective events, then, are much like weather in the terrestrial world.

In *Do Glaciers Listen?*, Cruikshank says that Athapaskan and Tlingit elders have described glaciers as animate. Greg Lynn says that animation "implies the evolution of a form and its shaping forces" (qtd. in del Rio 28). As readers of the animate, then, we are what Ingold calls perceiver/producers; we perceive along the paths of a text as we directly engage with the materials around us, as these

[22] *Mattaaq* is Beluga skin and blubber.

materials orient and disorient us, as they mix, dissolve, and solidify, like weather. Furthermore, in a northern context, an approach that sees our relationship with land as reciprocal emphasizes some of the key points in Traditional Ecological Knowledge, or what Cruikshank calls Colloquial Knowledge. These points include personal experience and immersion in a landscape, where the wayfarer gains "knowing-as-process" rather than knowing as a fixed body of symbols and information (Berkes, *Sacred Ecology* 4-5).

I would like to suggest that a Northern Textual Ecology might have the capacity to undo some of the humanist transcendence that persists in representational reading styles. What makes this possible is Northern Textual Ecology's immersed and contingent perspective. Mitchell Thomashow writes about such a perspective in *Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist.* According to Thomashow, "Ecological identity refers to all the different ways people construe themselves in relationship to the earth as manifested in personality, values, actions, and sense of self" (3). Within this relationship, "Nature becomes an object of identification" through "a person's connection to the earth, perception of the ecosystem, and direct experience of nature" (3). We can develop our own individual "ecological identities" by developing our sense of contingency within the matrixes of life. Thomashow writes:

> Perhaps most relevant for ecological identity is [Herbert. L Leff's] discussion of ecological systems thinking, which involves two qualities: a high level of ecological understanding and awareness

> and the sense of self as part of a larger system. He suggests that the ability to see oneself as an integral part of the biosphere is difficult to internalize, nevertheless 'it seems to offer the key to an active awareness and appreciation of our essential unity with each other and the rest of nature.' (19)

An understanding of ourselves as active parts of an ecosystem enables us to identify with our environment in a way that surpasses both objectivity and subjectivity. As "an integral part of the biosphere," I am enmeshed in the outcomes of that biosphere. My actions are wrapped up in the biosphere's actions. In other words, the biosphere reciprocates with movements that are an extension of my own movements. In literature, a reciprocal economy is one in which reader and texts have mutually affective encounters, in which the wayfaring reader is both a perceiver and a producer of the text. Furthermore, the text is produced by and contributes to the production of the world.

RETHINKING THE IMAGE AS A CONDUIT OF AFFECT AND SENSATION

In *Being Alive*, Ingold asks if we might be able to "find a way of describing the imaginative activity that goes on as one walks, reads or writes, without having to suppose that it involves the perusal of images" (197). However, he clarifies that images are not the problem; rather, the problem lies in the way in which we use images as likenesses or reflections of the world. This use of images is a problem because it creates a block between humans and the world. Put differently, we create a disconnect between ourselves and the sensuous environment of *Sila* when

we use images to *represent* the imponderables of the world, to congeal forces into a static form. To avoid this disconnect, suggests Ingold, "it is the very notion of the image that has to be rethought, away from the idea that images represent, on another plane, the forms of things in the world" (197). If we conceive of the image away from representation, it can become a conduit to affects and sensations, and, in this way, it will not "stand for things but rather help [us] find them" (197). In order to illuminate the difference between using images to represent the world and engaging with images as conduits to the affects of the world, I will provide some examples of each strategy.

In my introduction, I established Sherrill Grace's *Canada and the Idea of North* as a book that engages in a representational reading style, preferring to read the north through an interface of images, which we might peruse in order to develop an *idea* of north. Grace's book attempts to consolidate the past 150 years of writing about the north into four chapters that "explore a selection of representations of North from a wide range of fields" (22). Grace says, "the real north (or norths) is not, for the moment at least, the issue. It is not, in all its particularity, complexity, and diversity, what I am writing about" (22). Here, Grace seems to acknowledge the complexity and diversity of the *real* (actual) north. However, in her view, non-discursive forces are severed from the north that she imagines. In other words, Grace engages with representational images of the north and then consolidates these images in such a way that they cohere as an "idea." Grace's work relies on images to connect the ontologically different worlds of environment and text. For example, in *Canada and the Idea of North*,

Grace analyzes R. Murray Schafer's 1973 orchestral piece *North/White* as series of metaphors that represent the forms of the north. She writes, "shimmering notes" followed by "repeated glubbing that conceivably mimics the sound of oil moving through a pipeline," and "the hammering percussive barrage of noise" reproduce a snowmobile (139). Here, *North/White* "represents all the heavy machinery, from planes to trucks and mining equipment that we use to open up, develop, and exploit the North" (139). In other words, Shafer's composition merely reflects recognizable tropes and images.

After reading Grace's analysis of *North/White*, I sat down and listened to the piece several times. I did not hear oil moving through a pipeline. I did not hear heavy machinery. Listening to the piece, I noticed the following: a high, clear line of strings opens the piece, but these notes are supplanted by a howling electronic sound and a Tristan-like discord of clipped percussion and symbols. I noticed that the clarity of strings returns briefly and blends again with the "glubbing" sounds, and a spiralling-down of strings fades into a far off whistle and gains a full, low brass and tapping. Then the whole orchestra goes liquid, with a "glubbing" that turns into a trickling. A blast of horns and symbols comprise a discord. And then a drumbeat comes in, relentless in its meter (like a poem of dispondees), though it has no rhythm. The crystal strings return, only briefly, frantically. There is a drum crash, then more "glubbing." Fade. This is what I noticed. This is what I can say from the perspective of a listener with no musical background. I did not experience *the real north*, if that north is defined as images of trucks and pipelines. However, I did experience unexpected shifts in the music.

There is no message or meaning in these shifts; rather, as art, *North/White* extracts from the north's non-discursive weather—*Sila*'s weather—and composes this weather in musical phrases that are a conduit to affects and intensities. For me, the "bloc of sensations" in this piece presented a nonhuman landscape, barraged my senses and involved me in a span of turbulent and disorienting weather (Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 167). The percepts of this piece exposed me to sensory becoming, which is "otherness caught in a matter of expression" (177). My point is that I just listened to this piece and experienced its processes. In this sense I perceived the piece, and I also conjoined with it in becomings, becomings that shifted my capacity to act and feel. Reading music or literature as a producer/perceiver, in a reciprocal relationship with it, allows us to perceive with it (as one does the weather), rather than looking to it as a congealed object with intrinsic meaning.

Grace reads *North/White* as a depository of objects and metaphors, but Schafer's program notes offer a slightly different (although still problematic) approach to the piece. Schafer's reading of his piece suggests that the north is a mythical place, that we might process as one would a bobble or heirloom. In his notes, Schafer laments:

> just as the moon excursions destroyed the mythogenic power of the moon (it ceased to be poetry and became property), Canadians are about to be deprived of the 'idea of North,' which is at the core of the Canadian identity. The North is a place of austerity, of spaciousness and loneliness; the North is pure; the North is

> temptationless. These qualities are forged into the mind of the Northerner; his temperament is synonymous with them. (Schafer, "Program Notes" 63)

In the above quotation, Schafer actually compares the north to the moon, thus drawing on the trope of the north as a terra nullius that we might inscribe and imagine. True, both moon and north are places that were visited in their time as the apex of national exploration missions. But, to Schafer, an actual, physical encounter with the moon will destroy its mythogenic power. The actual moon, one that an astronaut might touch, has nothing to do with the moon of human dreams. Schafer suggests that we got too close to the splendour of the moon, and now it cannot hold the same imaginative power. Transposing this vision onto the north, it evokes Burke's Sublime, in which a person's imagination can be thrilled by a dangerous or powerful landscape, but the power of that landscape will diminish if one gets too close to it. Schafer says that, like the moon, the north is in danger of changing from "poetry" to "property," implying that poetry is all imaginative potential and property is all banal realism. But if poetry is traversed in search for meaning, isn't it then traveled as prosaically as one would travel across a fenced property?

Representational readings employ metaphor, symbol, and mimetic imitations of forms in order to convey a tracing or image of the world. These readings lack *kajjarnaqtuq* because they lack a sense of relational and immanent affection, an affection that perceives all bodies as occurrences within the cycles of *Sila*. Additionally, because they deal in what is recognizable, which is to say

predetermined and established prior to the power to act, representational readings play into mental habits and familiar tropes. In this view, reading is not an affective event because regimes of truth and judgment close down knowing-as-process, knowing through experience and immersion. There is no power to act if recognition is established prior to our immersed and responsive evaluation.

A Northern Textual Ecology joins with the power to act because it takes part in "the very processes of the world's ongoing generation and regeneration" (Ingold, *Being Alive* 26). A Northern Textual Ecology values immanent experience with the ongoing occurrences of the world. Outside of the recognition of fixed objects, we can create values as we experience and evaluate the context of the image and our immersed proximity to it (Flaxman, *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy* xix). Reading a text in the mode of empiricism and immersion actually breaks the conventions of discourse because it focuses on experience as a "catalyst to the establishment of an intimate, very personal relationship" that generates affective events (Collignon 74). Following Ingold's view of images, I argue that *moving through literature is moving through life*. In this sense, the cosmo/geo/meteorological north is reducible to its symbolic value. Rather, northern literary texts generate a site of reciprocity and force us to navigate without a predetermined route.

REPRESENTATION AND THE ARCTIC SUBLIME

Through the examples of Grace's representational reading of *North/White* and through Schafer's reading of his own work, we have seen two ways in which the

north might be inscribed by human perception. Grace suggests that only the imagination can—through art—present a coherent north. Outside of imagination, the north is too big, too particular, complex, and diverse, to comprehend. Thus, in Grace's view, art gives southern Canadians the symbolic signifiers through which we can *know* the north. In a similar vein, Schafer suggests that the actual north in all its complexity should not destroy the mythical north, the north that is treasured in southern Canada's imagination. Both of these approaches are representational and reminiscent of the Arctic Sublime.

According to I.S. MacLaren, in "The Aesthetic Map of the North, 1845-1859," European explorers created representational art to cope with the harsh conditions of the Arctic, allowing the sublime to dictate how landscape was perceived. MacLaren explains that the "vertical heights of a glacier dooming small figures, or a ship packed in icescapes suggest the terror of the sublime, something beyond "human navigational control" (36). The north, in this context, can only be translated into fixed images that congeal vast forces into objects. According to MacLaren, the tendency to reduce the power of the northern environment into recognizable, yet still exciting, forms has had "for subsequent generations a bewildering legacy of landscape perception which could only see the Arctic, almost without exception, as a vast uninhabitable and alienating realm" (47). The Arctic Sublime relies on a landscape perception that is based on an explicate order. That is, the sublime understands humans and the environment as discrete entities. Art, then, acts as a projection that links the actual world and the mind. Through images—conceived as fundamentally different from what they

represent—the Arctic Sublime brings its audience into a close encounter with powers of the north's environment and the forces of its weather. However, it supplies the mind with something like a cardboard cut-out of the real world, suggesting that this reproduction is as close as they will get. Thus, the Arctic Sublime cuts off any relational context with the processes of the world's weather. Any closer, any more real, and the Arctic becomes less mythogenic, as the sublime works to preserve the Arctic's mythogenic power.

When the Arctic Sublime shares a conceptual space with *Sila*, the element of control in sublime aesthetics is evident. Cut off from the relational context of the moving air, from our breath, the Arctic Sublime ultimately creates a space for human beings to approach death without being completely seized by it. In sublime depictions of the north, the weather is congealed into shapes that only *threaten* to obliterate us, but cannot fully do so. However, to let go of the narrative of the contained individual, and to exist along the paths of the world's weather, is to recognize our ultimate vulnerability to death. As Rachel Qitsualik explains, the Inuit concept of *Sila* insists on the indivisibility of life and death, combining these states through the air that passes from the dead to the living. Qitsualik writes:

> When any creature—human or beast—perished, its *Sila* (breath/life) was essentially believed to leave that particular body, after which it could linger for a time, dissipate into the larger whole, or find its way into a new form (although the life force tended to stick to its own species). ("Words and the Substance of Life")

Qitsualik says that when Inuit were living on the land, they were "living between land and *Sila*" ("Words and the Substance of Life"). Land and *Sila* were not disconnected, but infinitely connected by breath, life, and death. Here, there is no split between the human body and its surrounding weather. By contrast, the narrative of the Arctic Sublime that keeps the weather contained as an object provides the comfort of distance and enclosure; it approaches death, but also protects us from it. In developing a Northern Textual Ecology, I offer a reading style that immanently connects us to the processes of *Sila's* breath, life, and death. This connection comes from a departure from a reliance on metaphor as a bridge between the real world and the written word. In a Northern Textual Ecology, weather-writing comes from sets of relations within the text. Just as what we call (atmospheric/terrestrial) weather also comes from sets of relations between land and sky, literature's weather comes from the relations between signifiers and the relation of the reader to those signifying relations. These relational connections draw the reader into processes much like the terrestrial weather might draw one into processes of ice, sleet, or winds. These processes might make us a little more aware of our place in the matrix that surrounds us.

While reading Leduc's *Climate, Culture, Change,* I came across the story of Val Plumwood, a vegetarian ecologist who experienced first-hand the subject position of being prey to a larger predator. Interestingly, Plumwood later wrote that the experience brought her to greater creative expression because she came out of it with a more palpable grasp of what it means to be part of the matrix of living beings. When Plumwood was attacked by a crocodile, she found herself

grabbing for the narrative of the self that is impervious to nature. Recalling the event, she writes, “In its final, frantic attempts to protect itself from the knowledge that threatens the narrative framework, the mind can instantaneously fabricate terminal doubt of extravagant proportions: This is not really happening. This is a nightmare from which I will soon awake,” but when caught in the mouth of her predator and thrown into its “death roll,” Plumwood “glimpsed the world for the first time "from the outside," as a world no longer [her] own” and indifferent to [her] life or death” (“Human Vulnerability”). Plumwood’s experience also relates to how we read. Being in the death roll of a crocodile, Plumwood was released from the limited perspective that keeps us separate from the forces of our surroundings. Applying her insight to reading, we might be similarly released into the experience of literature’s forces, minus the already recognizable narratives we bring to it.

FINDING NON-REPRESENTATIONAL SPACE WITHIN THE SUBLIME

While MacLaren suggests the only way out of the spectre of the sublime is to find new symbolic ways to represent the north, I suggest that the concept of the sublime is still relevant to the north, but this sublime is not a representational sublime; it is what Gregory Flaxman calls “possible worlds” (321). In *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy: The Powers of the False,* Flaxman links the idea of a non-representational space of possibility to the sublime. He finds this reading of the sublime in Deleuze, who understands the sublime as an event in which we experience what is not and what never will be represented:

"something too powerful, or too unjust, but sometimes also too beautiful" (*Cinema 2*, 19). With the Deleuzian sublime, there is a sense of openness: the world outside of the frame. This frame, for example, could be the frame of the state, the individual, or the frame of an authoritative reading—narrative or cinematic, for example. Possibility happens when the world outside of this frame reflects back into the frame and shifts thought. In the case of film, what is out of frame—lighting, sound, or the gaze or the framed face—is reflected on-screen, but this "outside" is unseen by the viewer. There is nothing transcendent or representational in this off-screen "possible world." This possible world is one through which we move, experiencing its weather, and this "weather is no mere phantasm, the stuff of dreams. It is, to the contrary, fundamental to perception" (Ingold 138). When we acknowledge that weather is fundamental to perception, we can move away from the spectre of the sublime because—immersed in weather—we can experience the north palpably and directly.

A Northern Textual Ecology opens up this kind of perception through positioning readers with their senses (open) to affective events. This open-style reading is different from a representational reading; it frees us from the tradition of understanding the world through the structure of fundamental differences, where we can only know the world through symbols that stand in for it. Instead, a non-representational reading gives us access to the relationality of the north. In an ecological reading style that finds its basis in the mode of the wayfarer, the reader/wayfarer and her weather world, of the land or literature, can become in relation to one another. Such a reading style is based on the ability of affective

events to transform what a body can do. The weather affects us, just as we affect the weather. When we are affected by the weather of a text, we find ourselves outside of the regimes of Truth and inside an exchange with other bodies, which is a dynamic opening of our capacity to act. The concept of *kajjarnaqtuq* might help us understand how it is possible to be struck by power of something that seems too large and beautiful, but, at the same time, feel a reciprocal connection with that thing. When we experience ourselves as part of an active flux of materials, affection for the land becomes a relational and connected affection; furthermore, being part of an ongoing flux of moving and changing materials implies renewal and change. In this sense, *kajjarnaqtuq* is not a kind of nostalgia because it does not expect a return to the same.

Approaching literature as something with which we can move through—according to its weather—is particularly relevant when reading northern literature because the north comprises bodies of movement, thinking, and feeling that have the capacity to affect and be affected by other bodies, including human bodies, glacial bodies, animal bodies, and the bodies of stories. Here, the wayfarer-reader composes and is composed by the weather. In the north, the atmospheric or actual weather feeds into the affective weather of literature. Atmospheric light, wind, and precipitation offer a particular range of perception to northern inhabitants, a range of perception that also permeates northern literary texts as intensities and becomings.

ORIENTATION: *KAJJARNATUQ* AS COMPOSED IMAGE IN "I PICKED BERRIES" BY TAQRALIK PARTRIDGE

Taqralik Partridge's spoken-word poem "I Picked Berries" situates us within an Arctic summer, using images as a conduit to the affective qualities of *kajjarnaqtuq*. On a narrative level, this poem engages with the activities that take place on the land in the summertime. On an affective level, this poem extends the matrix of the many reciprocal relations in the land into a matrix of relations in images. Partridge's speaker tells a set of stories about being on the land, and she seems to address these stories to a rather naïve listener. In this way, the stories in "I Picked Berries" act as an elaborate detailing of relations that destabilize previous sublime, representational readings of the north. These relations are especially evident in the poem's use of connecting words, its use of elision, and its metanarrative framing device in which a terrestrial environment and an environment of stories are two distinct, yet interrelated, things.

"I Picked Berries" uses the conjunction "and" 33 times, which extends connections between signifiers until they become part of a baroque and complex unity. The poem begins with berries—the subject of the title—and the colour of the berries then stains the narrator's lips:

> What can I tell you? I picked berries, buckets and buckets,
> sucked up purple berry juice on my lips
> like lipstick and started
> one-match fires for tea
> for me and my sisters.

Dressed in Mother Hubbard parkas
and our only itching close calls were with
black flies and horse flies and mosquitoes
like hovering schools of fishes.
We could have scooped up enough of them for soup.

You'll want to know, the tundra is one big tiring mattress
to walk on with sloping stone breaks and muck to stick even
hip-length boots and pools, deep and cool
by boulders spotted with orange, yellow, black, white
and light green lichen.

Stained lips are connected by the conjunction "and" to "one match fires," where the colour of the berries (no longer explicitly purple) is now implied in both the match head and in the flames. These connections create affective events in the poem because they move beyond personal sentiment and involve bodies in proximity, which experience an altered "capacity to act" (Massumi, Translator's Foreword, *A Thousand Plateaus* xvi). Berries become lips, matches, and flames, and also remain berries, and these heterogeneous materials form rhizomatic connections with all that exists in their field of relations. Deleuze and Guattari write: "a rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle; between things, interbeing, intermezzo…alliance…the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, "and…and…and.' This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb 'to be'" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 24). In this poem, the berries

become the middle, the intermezzo, and the speaker—the *I*—becomes the one who plays with the images and shakes them loose of their signifiers. As the speaker aligns divergent things through her storytelling, she makes connections that challenge "the hegemony of the signifier" (15). On a narrative level, we encounter activities associated with being on the land in summertime. However, the rhizomatic connections I have just described also generate the affective qualities of being on the land in summertime. There is an endlessness in the rhizomatic connections between materials that affectively evokes the endlessness of days, where, in twenty-four-hour sunlight, one day blurs into the next and there is "no beginning or end" (24), only alliances that take place within the tactile, olfactory, and visionary space of *Sila*'s summer.

Earlier in this chapter, I quoted John Houston's explanation of the concept of *kajjarnaqtuq* as a yearning for a season that would come around that extends to missing "*being* the fish they yearned for." I suggested that perhaps this elision of people and fish is connected to a shared existence in the cycles of *Sila*. The connections that we discover in "I Picked Berries" can offer us an experience in *Sila's* weather cycles that surpasses the representational mode of the Arctic Sublime. Within these rhizomatic connections, we can encounter a *kajjarnaqtuq* experience within of *Sila's* cycles. The summertime images here are neither prescriptive nor symbolic, but affective, because they bring us into proximity with the percepts of the north and, thus aligned, we become part of the matrix from which the poem bodies forth.

The opulence of the poem bodies forth from a field of relations that include the speaker's senses. These senses are not precisely divided but smoothed into each other, where *taste is big and smelling is substance, an element, a colour*. On the land, the speaker says:

> Flowers are many and miniscule and plants
> [that] tend to taste bigger than they look
> like roots we dug by rocks and ate
> with grit of sand and smelling metallic.

Through the rhizomatic joining of the senses, "an intensive trait starts working for itself, a hallucinatory perception, synesthesia" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 15), where a perceptual experience opens a pathway to an involuntary sensory experience, so that, for example, seeing becomes olfactory and tasting becomes visually perceptible. The speaker here describes such an opening and crisscrossing of sensory pathways, where taste has a size and texture has a smell. Via a kind of proximate synesthesia, we experience the speaker's becoming with the land.

The speaker offers an affective experience of the complexity of being on the land, where the speaker says her "only itching close calls" were with

> Black flies and horse flies and mosquitoes
> like hovering schools of fishes.
> We could have scooped up enough of them for soup.

Here, "close calls" with mere insects might seem to distance the speaker and her sisters from danger, but the girls are connected with hunting and fishing in the next line, where the insects are "like hovering schools of fishes." Moving from a

list of insects—black flies and horse flies and mosquitoes—and then comparing these insects to "schools of fishes" is a kind of intermezzo—an alliance—that makes the next line possible: "we could have scooped up enough of them for soup." Since soup, in this context, is not likely made of insects, it is the comparison of insects to fishes that makes the soup possible. In a sense, the insects have become fishes and yet also remain insects. This is a mode of desire that has been conceptualized by Deleuze and Guattari, who propose a desiring that is not based on a subject who wants something (lack); instead, this kind of desire is a part of process and excess, and it produces ongoing transformations that need not be diminished in biologically reproductive conjugal formations.

Deleuze and Guattari describe this excessive desire through the example of an orchid and a wasp. These bodies—orchid and wasp—are heterogeneous entities that merge and *deterritorialize* and *reterritorialize* each other, in a becoming expressive, an orchid-wasp refrain. In her book *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, Elizabeth Grosz also looks to the animal world in order to develop her conceptualizations of desiring-production in art. Grosz writes that birds, whales, and humans all improvise in their music making, and this kind of improvisation is "not reducible to the pragmatic world of survival" (39). Rather, what the expressive territory of this music suggests is that "those living beings that 'really live,' that intensify life...bring something new to the world, create something that has no other purpose than to intensify, to experience itself" (39). The song of belugas couples with the viscosity of the ocean and creates a sonorous refrain. The song of belugas couples with my

sleeping mind and creates a refrain that far exceeds any psychological analysis. Similarly, the flies, mosquitoes, and soup in this poem make an Arctic Summer refrain. The "hovering schools of fishes" that connect insects and soup are deeply related to both what comes before and after them. This line demonstrates a field of relations and the dynamic and productive relationships within the poem. These relations *are* weather because they are in perpetual flux, and (acting as weather) they allow us to perceive the thickness and opulence of the poem-environment.

Elision also generates the fluxes of multiple connections that allow us to perceive the opulence in "I Picked Berries." For example, the active agent is missing or unclear in the following lines:

> …the boy at the prow was a spring and a watch dog
> looking for rocks to guard against and scraping
> oars on boat-side, calling up seals.
> Rifles raised and ears ringing as bullets wind by,
> but we were never afraid.
> Bobbing on waves and peeing in pots
> with stars and aurora overhead.

The "boy at the prow" is both "a spring and a watch dog," which corresponds to his dual actions of avoiding dangerous rocks and hunting. With these actions, the boy is both prey and predator, roles that are furthered when he scrapes oars against the boats to communicate with and call up seals, both an alliance with the seal and a ploy to hunt it. However, the list of gerunds, "looking," "scraping," and "calling," also becomes a kind of general action that could belong to anyone in the

boat. With no attached pronoun, these actions are shared by all. The individual action is also the group action. Similarly, the line "rifles raised and ears ringing as bullets wind by" does not limit its participants. Are the seals' ears ringing? The speaker's ears? The boy's ears? And who is "bobbing on waves and peeing into pots with aurora overhead"? Everyone in the story becomes mutually implicated in its action; all of these sights, textures, and sounds are a part of the shared and relational space of *Sila*.

The terrestrial world and literature are equally open to the perceptual space of *Sila*; textual environments and actual environments present alternate ways of experiencing the matrix of processes of *Sila*. Ingold makes the suggestion that a story is ontologically similar to lived experience. In his words, "the appearance of the living animal as a creature of nature is just one of [its] manifestations, ontologically equivalent to its figurative depictions and the stories that are told about it" (204). In other words, the seals in Partridge's poem are not representations of seals in the Arctic Ocean, but they are rhizomatically connected to other stories of seals and to the affective events that surround hunting seals, part of a shared field of relations.

The story of scraping oars, which I first encountered in this poem, showed up again when I was on an actual boat and with a group of people who were hunting for living seals. When the driver and lead hunter, Jaypeetee Kakkee, reached down to scrape his coffee cup against the boat to call up seals, I felt a wonderful moment of connection—Partridge's story had found its way into a new story. The new story, which I was living, added a cup to the list of things one

might use to call up seals. It also added music, as we played the radio, some Lady Gaga, because the hunters on the boat said that seals like music. "I Picked Berries" showed up and augmented my experience in the 'real' world, but the poem is not just a representation of the outer reality of the physical world. Moving through the physical world, I recognized a moment from the poem, but it was not purely representational. It was more like the materials (words) of the poem combining with the sounds of the cup scraping the boat, and amplifying the affective force of the sound of the scraping.

"I Picked Berries" engages with many familiar northern experiences of being on the land, but its speaker makes it clear that *she is telling stories*, and those stories create a world that is comprised of stories. "What can I tell you?" the poem begins. "You'll want to know," it says; "I can tell you," it continues. Through these multiple addresses to the reader, the poem becomes a web of possible stories that work together. The specific places in the poem are not named, perhaps because it is the *events* and things of the stories that make the world(s) of this poem. Fishing holes, ponds, rivers, bays do not have names, but they exist relationally, only to be known by what they do. In this sense, Partridge (originally from Kuujjuaq, Nunavik) creates a kind of "systemic geography," whereby we can navigate the poem. Collignon writes about "systemic geography" in relation to Inuinnait place names, pointing out that places are only known through their active qualities. That is, "a place does not exist by itself, in its own right. A place exists only because of the relationship it has with other places, or with people or animals. It is these connections that give meaning to places (160). In systemic

geography, the individual elements that make up a field of relations do not stand on their own; they exist in relation, so all elements are only known in a global sense. The systemic geography in "I Picked Berries" can guide us to the insight that we are a contingent part of the earth and sky because it guides us through a web of animate things and stories that are part of a dynamic system. The speaker offers "fish stories," saying that she can tell these stories

> from every point I ever cast a silvery lure
> to sing in char or trout or salmon
> the small ones not caught in Norman's net
> who went out at low tide with mending line
> to square up holes and came back with legendary catch
> of four-foot fish and no proof left but bones
> after supper. Even those, the dogs might have
> choked down hacking throats.

The multiple points and kinds of fish in the first line suggest that there are many stories, but the fish are small, which might mean the stories are small as well. But perhaps the fish (and the stories that they generate) are only small beside Norman's legendary story. We cannot really say how small the "small ones" are, except in relation to another fish in a connected fish story. The poem orients us in a landscape of *Sila*'s relationality, in which we cannot imbue any description as a fixed measurement. The stories that comprise "I Picked Berries" fold together in a way that is inseparable from the reader, as we perceive the affective events of the poem as dynamic and unfolding around us, via an elision of pronouns, so that

actions take place with shared or perhaps unclear agency. Actions such as "looking for rocks," "scraping oars," and "calling up seals" drift away from any particular subject and act as affective weather because they are the movements, sounds, textures, and light that we bind with in order to perceive.

ORIENTATION: THE REFRAIN OF NORTH, *THE IDEA OF NORTH* BY GLENN GOULD

The final orientation in this chapter navigates Glenn Gould's *The Idea of North*, finding sets of relations in its contrapuntal composition. *The Idea of North* is a composition of human and non-human voices in an arrangement that Gould calls a "tone poem" or "contrapuntal radio."[23] *The Idea of North* orchestrates the voices of five characters with ambient sounds in the enclosed space of a north-bound train called "The Muskeg Express." While *The Idea of North* does not make any explicit reference to the powers of *Sila*, the relational space of *Sila* provides a useful framework for perceiving the contrapuntal arrangement of voices in this tonal poem. The specific compositional techniques I discuss in relation to *Sila's* weather in this piece are counterpoint and the voices of ambient sound, which Gould calls "ostinatos." These compositional techniques help me to illuminate this piece within the framework of *Sila's* relationality. Although this piece is set in an enclosed space, its contrapuntal composition puts all voices (each breath) in a reciprocal relationship, in a flux of movement, in which *meaning,* as a congealed and recognizable object, is ungrounded and swept up into the weather

[23] Thanks to Anthony Cushing for reading this orientation and for clarifying the term "tone poem." Cushing writes: "[the term] a bit of a hold-over from the late 19th- and early 20th-centuries, of telling a story with only music" (Email correspondence, 28 July 2014).

of the north. However, before I begin my orientation in the relational aspects of this piece, I would like to make a brief return to Grace, who reads it solely according to its discursive qualities. In *Canada and the Idea of North*, Grace argues:

> Gould was influenced by the evolving construction of Canada-as-North and was aware of the myths of the North circulating in the culture. More precisely, he was fully self-conscious about the role of the Group of Seven in contributing to this image of the country and prepared to carry on where they left off, to push their imaging of country further…adding to and interpolating his voice and the voices of his five speakers into the discursive formation of North. (131)

In order to believe Grace's argument, we need to read landscape inscription as something that flows from human discourse onto the land. We also need to read assuming authorial intent, as Grace also builds her reading within the framework of Gould's biography, citing what Gould called the "staggering creative possibility" that many people find in the north, due to the "physical fact of the country" (qtd. in Grace 31). Could it be, then, that the composition of *The Idea of North* is immanent to the weather of the north; that is, part of its relational field? Part of *Sila*'s weather? Part of what Abram calls "a potentized field of intelligence" (260)? On a representational level, Gould contributes to the construction of the north, but on a relational level, the atmospheric north feeds into this tonal poem.

The Idea of North orchestrates the spoken words of five characters in the enclosed space of a north-bound train called "The Muskeg Express." Grace says that these characters "represent five different responses to the North and a broad knowledge of most areas of the sub-Arctic and Arctic, from Southampton Island in Hudson Bay to Tuktoyaktuk on the eastern side of the Mackenzie delta, where it joins the Beaufort Sea" (13). The five characters are created from character templates and broad strokes. The characters and their details are as follows: Marianne Schroeder, the Nurse; James Lotz, the Geographer; Robert A.L. Phillips, the Government Official; Frank Valee, the Sociologist; Glenn Gould, the Producer; and W.V. McLean (Wally), the Retired Surveyor/Narrator. There are no individuals in the tone poem, although each voice *represents* a northern 'type.' There are no individuals in Gould's *The Idea of North*, but there are organic and inorganic sounds that mix and blend. One voice begins to speak, and the next voice comes in, only a quarter beat behind the first. All voices are accompanied by ambient sounds, or ostinatos. Ostinatos, for Gould, are the silverware in the dining car, children's voices out in the taiga, or some banging of luggage. These ostinatos bring a productive excessiveness to the piece, and through this excessiveness, they offer an experience that surpasses the linguistic content of the piece.

In putting these organic and inorganic voices in contrapuntal relation with each other, *The Idea of North* subverts transcendent representation and takes us on a ride through which we can experience the idea of north through its affective events. The opinions and fixed psychological qualities of these characters

generate what Deleuze might call the molar forces, while the tone poem's assembling and mixing of their voices generates molecular forces. Musically speaking, "counterpoint" is an arrangement of more than one simultaneous melody line. For Gould, counterpoint is the polyphonic overlapping of recorded voices and nonhuman sounds. In *The Idea of North*, counterpoint creates a matrix of relations that augments what each single voice can express. In his dissertation *Three Solitudes and a DJ,* Anthony B. Cushing summarizes the augmenting power of counterpoint as:

> the basis for how we perceive the underlying systems of musical works composed by traditional counterpoint or by a assembling pre-existing recorded audio. The connection between the old and new is important, as one does not supplant but augment the other. As such, counterpoint is a fluid musical concept, rather than a fixed system of rules governing composition in a narrow musical palette. (ii)

From the perspective of the above conceptualization of counterpoint, *The Idea of North* is a production of the fluidity of the north, rather than a representation of its closed systems. Cushing also cites Felix Salzer and Carl Schacter, who trace the "chief objective of counterpoint" as its ability to make us "sensitive to the forces of opposition and agreement, tension and relaxation, direction, climax" (24). Counterpoint works via the unbinding and binding of voices, and it can make us sensitive to the forces of *Sila*'s atmosphere because it engages directly with breath and composes that breath in sets of relations.

MOTION AND DIRECTION IN THE PROLOGUE

The prologue begins with silence. Slowly, a woman's voice becomes audible, as Schroeder's soft spoken tone draws us into the sonic environment of the piece. We might strain forward a little, trying to make out her words. Then, when her voice becomes clear and audible, it seems to move toward us in the sonic environment, as she says, "flying over this country, you could see various shades of green in the water, and you could see the bottom of the lakes." Almost one minute into the piece, when Schroeder's voice has reached its greatest volume, Valee's voices crosses in, saying "I don't go for this Northmanship bit at all" (0:52). Valee's voice is deep and textured; it remains at a lower volume than Schroeder's voice for twenty seconds, but then it crescendos forward, to gain prominence in the sonic environment until Phillips' voice crosses in, with its thinner, nasal register (1:19). Phillips and Valee, then, alternately move forward to become the "lead" voice, until Schroeder's voice once again emerges and comes closer, in front of the others, as she says, "It was most difficult to describe. It was extreme isolation [...] I would walk out to one of those lakes and watch those ducks and geese just fly around peacefully or sitting on the water. And I felt that I was almost a part of that country, part of that peaceful surrounding, and I wished that it would never end" (1:39). Her voice recedes at this point, and Valee and Phillips emerge and join, crossing over each other and making each other's voices into rumblings and dronings.

As the above description demonstrates, these voices generate a sense of relational depth and viscosity within the sonic environment. They rise, come

forward, recede, drone, and rumble. These functions are what Cushing describes as the "action "and "direction" of voice. Cushing's analysis and charting of the contrapuntal voices in *The Idea of North* also help us to understand the movement and spatial orientations of these voices in counterpoint. As part of his study, Cushing reproduces Lorne Tulk's (Gould's technician) graph of the prologue, which demonstrates the volume and crossover points of these voices. Tulk's graph shows the first three minutes of the prologue as three oscillating lines that rise with increased volume and lower with decreased volume. In this graph, Schroeder's line is depicted in solid black, and this line has the greatest range of peaks and valleys with sharp points. Valee's line is depicted in a string of small **X**s*,* rising in nearly equal peaks and then dropping suddenly. The dotted line of Phillips' voice rises in slow, rounded peaks and also drops suddenly to mix with Valee's line. As useful as Tulk's graph is in helping us sort out the voices and their functions, it does not do justice to the action and direction in this piece. However, Cushing includes an inversion of Tulk's graph that shows what Cushing calls the "proximity" of the voices in relation to the listener. In this graph, near is loud (at the bottom of the graph) and far is quiet (at the top of the graph). Accordingly, we can see how these voices advance and recede. Schroeder's voice, for example, comes near the most often, and the angular peaks illustrating her action suggest that we might experience this proximity with a certain sharpness of force. Indeed, Schroeder's voice is at its loudest when it lilts up on the words "still," "ducks" and "geese." In these moments, her voice moves palpably near.

The proximity in this piece underlines its relationality. We cannot listen to it as a *soundscape* of the north because, as Ingold says, problematizing the term soundscape, "the environment that we experience, know and move around in is not sliced up along the lines of the sensory pathways by which we enter into it" (Ingold 136). As an "environment" that we can inhabit and experience, *The Idea of North* has a density that can affect us on various sensory levels, including our sense of hearing and our sense of haptic touch. Earlier in this chapter, I discussed images as conduits to affective events. This kind of engagement with the image eschews the representational purposing of images, where we might contemplate them as cardboard cut-outs of some actual world to which we have no access. To purpose sound as a representational *scape* via which we can reflect upon the world is equally problematic. If, as I have been arguing, northern literary texts are environments, then we can inhabit them with all of our senses. As an environment, *The Idea of North* extends to us the weather within which we can perceive affective events.

Recalling Cushing's definition of counterpoint as "a fluid musical concept, rather than a fixed system," I contend that the counterpoint in *The Idea of North* brings us into an affective experience of relationality. It provides, not a mimetic reproduction of *Sila*'s atmosphere, but a force of becoming that manifests itself in motion and direction. Gould's own view of music is that it is indivisible from its web of relations. He says, "I think our whole notion of what music is has forever merged with all the sounds that are around us, everything that the environment makes available" (qtd. in Cushing 15). *The Idea of North*, then, is an environment

of north, a sonic environment that bodies out of the forces of the north and gives us access to the forces of texture and smoothness, proximity and separation, sharpness and softness. What these voices are saying at a linguistic level guides the arrangement to an extent, as they tend to crossover each other in thematically resonating ways. However, the actual linguistic content of these voices, and the molar politics that these voices profess, is deterritorialized by the techniques of the piece. As I have just described it, the contrapuntal arrangement, including the modulating volume, of these voices generates affective an environment in which we might encounter the affective forces that are part of the environment of *Sila.*

EXCESSIVE, EXPRESSIVE OSTINATOS

The prologue to this piece provides an effective example of the fluid function of counterpoint in this piece, but it is limited to human voices. I turn now to a brief look at Gould's use of ostinatos in order to consider the texture of non-human and inorganic voices. One of the most intense manifestations of these ostinatos occurs in act five, or "the dining car scene." Here, the sound of the train, "The Muskeg Express," becomes a more forceful presence, persisting at low volume, while Lotz and Phillips and Schroeder and Valee pair off in conversation. Following the pattern set in the prologue, modulating volume control brings these voices forward, and then pushes them back. The theme of conversation in this scene has turned to the topic of *reality*, or the actual state of affairs in the north. All of the ideas and opinions of these conversations are underwritten by the constant movement of the train which permeates the piece and acts as a force that persists

no matter what the linguistic content insists upon. Here, the sound of the train provides what Cushing calls a "basso continuo," or a constant through-line that holds creates consistency in the sonic environment.

In addition to the permeating sound of the train, sounds of clinking silverware, high-pitched laughter of children, and a dropped tray further work to contextualize these voices within their environment, until it becomes difficult to pick out which voice is speaking. There is excessiveness in the sounds of these ostinatos—in the clank of trays and the constant rattle of silverware—that demonstrates what Deleuze and Guattari call desiring production, which is expression for its own sake. These ostinatos provide some of the many lines of excessiveness in this piece. The human voices also contribute lines of excess. For example, Schroeder's voice emphasizes and extends hard vowel sounds, giving it an almost ornamental vibrato. I have called this orientation "The Refrain of North" because of its melodic interconnections among organic and inorganic voices and processes. I take the concept of the refrain from Deleuze and Guattari, who use the word to express a concept of "art" that surpasses the human. The refrain is "any aggregate of matters of expression that draws a territory" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 323). Deleuze and Guattari describe the brown stagemaker bird's actions as a refrain that acts as "a veritable *machinic opera* tying together orders, species, and heterogeneous qualities" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 330). Elizabeth Grosz writes, "The tick and the mammal whose blood it extracts, the spider and the fly it captures, are contrapuntal or harmonic forces, dueting features that must be considered as part of one and the same refrain" (*Chaos,*

Territory, Art 53). Within this tone poem are porous boundaries that leave an opening back to the chaos of weather. *The Idea of North*, then, draws a territory of expression, while it operates relationally and connectively.

The Idea of North concludes with the voice of the narrator, Wally. Throughout the piece Wally, a surveyor by profession, has measured the north with his opinions and codified it according to his limited perspective. However, as I have been suggesting, these opinions have been constantly overwritten by counterpoint. The Epilogue of the piece brings orchestral instrumentation into the counterpoint and, in this way, extends the excessiveness of the ostinatos.[24] String instruments crescendo and decrescendo, injecting intensity into Wally's voice and simultaneously undermining the linguistic content of his speech. That is, while Wally insists on the importance of an adversarial relationship with nature, the strings permeate the sonic environment and underline the impossibility of such a dualism. For example, Wally says:

> I'm gonna say, (strings decrescendo) the common enemy of both of us, whether it's now or yesterday, or forever, you know, I suppose the common enemy is mother nature, mother nature. (s*trings crescendo*). Oh, he says, yes. As he's willing now to be a fellow traveler of my imagination, eh? So I go on to say that the north is the war, that you can afford to be against mother nature if only humans make it possible. (s*trings decrescendo*). Well, he asks, what's wrong with that? What's good about that, or bad about that?

[24] The music here is the last movement of Jean Sibelius' Symphony No. 5. A half-diminished seventh chord lends a discordant affect to the end of Wally's soliloquy. Thanks to Cushing for these insights (Email correspondence, 28 July 2014).

Here, the light harmony of the strings keeps the narrative unified and organic. In the meantime, Wally's near-manic repetition sets up a duality between the unified organic and the human. As Wally's frantic repetition crescendos, a "crack up" or failing of the human becomes inevitable, and out of this failing comes a space of non-signification, or an "outside." Out of this "crack up" comes an opportunity to go beyond recognition.

> Well, I says, ha, (*soft brass*) there was a time, believe me (*brass crescendo*) in living memory again when humans used to combine against mother nature not only because they had to, but because in a sense there was a cleanness, a sureness or a definiteness about coming up with mother nature *(slow, quiet brass*) that is lacking in our […] in our big city anonymity[...] (*strings enter with brass*) No longer do humans combine to defy, or to measure, or to read, or to understand, or to live with this thing we call mother nature. Our number one enemy instead of being mother nature is of course human nature *(crescendo, half-diminished seventh chord*).

In layering the warmth (even human quality) of strings with the iciness of brass and building to the crescendo of a half-diminished seventh chord, this scene rolls into the terror and presence of the sublime, but this is *not* a sublime that pits matter against vitality. The chord that interrupts Wally's words, "our number one enemy instead of being mother nature is of course human nature," seems to indicate the fabricated notion of either kind of "nature." This half-diminished seventh chord, then, affectively vocalizes a glitch in Wally's thinking, thus

providing a line of flight to the outside, where we are aligned with the chaos of the weather.

The orchestral brass similarly undermines Wally's opinions. For example, as we can see in the above quotation, Wally's final lament is periodically blasted over with brass, specifically trumpets. The trumpets interrupt Wally, undermining him not only in that they drown out his words, but in that they say something unrecognizable (at least on a representational level) over his clichés. Wally says, "This William James that wrote in Harvard, this many years ago, whatever he did, I (*trumpet blast*) I suppose he meant really, (*trumpet blast*) that not war (*trumpet blast*) the moral equivalent for us (*trumpet blast*) is going north (*trumpet blast*) [….] about." If the Arctic Sublime sought to retain the stability of Eurowestern subjectivity, these trumpet blasts act like the northern weather. As Collignon says an experienced hunter is always ready for changes in the weather, and as the Inuit hero Kiviuq (Kiviuna) reminds us, the weather brings the unexpected: a storm breaks the ice on which he is standing, and he "drifts in the wide ocean encountering all kinds of strange beings, who seem to emerge from the edges of humankind, before making his way home" (Collignon 162). As he drifted, Kiviuq may have experienced a sense of *kajjarnaqtuq,* both in his appreciation of the beauty of the land and in his longing for home, but these feelings were likely infused with the knowledge of the contingency of the land.

CONCLUSION

The north is a place of weather, which in a Northern Textual Ecology can be defined as shifting sets of relations. This is where trails are reterriorialized by snow, where the seal's breathing hole is deterritorialized by a hunter, and where the hunter's excellent hunting spot is reterriorialized by the sun and soft ice. The north is a place that has been congealed by southern readers in representational readings that do more to define the south than they do the north. However, if we read along the paths of northern literature, if we read outside of representation, we will find the constant variations that are part of the weather. If we travel with this weather, we will find the journey is constantly transforming, like the lines of travel that map the north; these are zones of virtual activity. These kinds of lines, says Ronald Bogue, are of "zones of ongoing constructive, generative activity, each zone serving at most as a pilot in an open-ended movement beyond any pre-constructed map" (25). The page and the land are fundamentally similar.

The concept of *kajjarnaqtuq* also expresses the similarity of everything that exists in a given field of relations—the surprising power of northern landscapes—but it does so without needing to create a scale of separation. A Northern Textual Ecology reminds us that the land is sentient and responsive and tied to stories. Connected, relative, and subjective, the landscape is a language that we must learn in order to think immanently.

CHAPTER TWO

ISUMA AND THE OUTSIDE: IMMANENT ETHICS IN IGLOOLIK ISUMA PRODUCTIONS' *ATANARJUAT: THE FAST RUNNER*

> The Netsilik Inuit, lacking wood, made sled runners by cutting their summer tent of caribou hide in half, wetting the pieces, wrapping each half around a line of fish laid head to tail, and freezing the whole. Then they fastened the runners together with crossbars of caribou antler, lashed with thongs of seal-skin. In the spring, when the sled thawed, they took it apart, ate the fish, sewed the tent back together, and moved in. (Jean L. Briggs, "Expecting the Unexpected" 263).

> A ghost becomes a boy becomes a raven becomes a feather becomes a man. A man becomes a salmon becomes a spirit becomes a woman. A girl becomes a dog becomes a seal becomes a spirit. A spirit becomes a penis that is fed to a woman who becomes a fox who becomes excrement that becomes flies that are spirits. A spirit becomes a man who has sex with a corpse who gives birth to a spirit who becomes a boy who becomes a bird. (Hugh Brody, *The Other Side of Eden* 245)

In the above passage by Jean Briggs, sled runners improvised from a column of frozen fish wrapped in a skin tent are, empirically speaking, materials put to use. As Briggs describes these sled runners—a tent folded around a line of frozen fish, reinforced with caribou antler, and lashed with cords of seal skin—they are an assemblage of material objects in an extended relationship with human beings. The qualities of these materials do not reside in them as a kind of intrinsic essence, and neither can we understand these materials as a symbol of Inuit ingenuity. Likewise, the becomings that Hugh Brody describes above are not symbolic. For example, when Brody alludes to the Inuit legend of *Kiviuq*, where "a spirit becomes a penis that is fed to a woman who becomes a fox who becomes excrement," the fluidity he describes is based on proximity and relationships. The

becomings in Inuit histories and legends do not *symbolize* the intimate relationship that Inuit people have with the land; rather, these becomings are, like the sled runners, recyclable products of a long-term relationship with the materials of the Arctic. These becomings reveal porousness between bodies existing in proximity within a field of relations. Of this porousness, Brody writes: "in the myths and histories of the hunter-gatherer world, there is a lack of defining line between good and bad, playful and serious. There is an instability of moral qualities, therefore, that matches the instability of identity...a world where there are no material certainties" (245). The sled runners, as Briggs describes them, and the becomings in legends and histories, as Brody describes them, demonstrate the process-based epistemology of *isuma*, which is a way of knowing based on direct, empirical engagement.

The word *isuma* appears in the *Inuktitut Living Dictionary* in 235 different forms, with a range of meanings that includes such thought-related concepts and thinking states as *isumaguti* or the power of reasoning, *isumallutuq* or poor judgement, *isumamittuq* or acting with initiative, *isumajaaqtuq* or agitated and wild thoughts, and *isumataaluk* or epiphany. However, even in citing the number of times *isuma* appears in the *Inuktitut Living Dictionary,* I am limiting the concept in a way that is incongruent with its use. This is because, as Béatrice Collignon points out, "there really is no such thing as a dictionary of Inuktitut like an English or French dictionary" (156-57), because an Inuktitut dictionary can only be "a list of elements that can combine to form an endless list of words" (157). Furthermore, "The best answer to the simple question 'How many words

are there in Inuktitut?' is 'How many do you want?' The words are created as they are needed. In the same way, we could say that knowledge is only created as a situation requires it" (157). Inuktitut words are created as they are needed just as the sled runners are created out of useable materials when they are needed. *Isuma*, then, cannot be reduced to a list of words; it is difficult to define or limit its meaning because, like *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (IQ), "it exists only in practice" (157). Rather than attempting to define *isuma*, it is more useful to identify some of the ways in which it is practiced.

Briggs, who has lived and worked in the Utkuhikhalik region, says that *isuma* is the state of being an autonomous adult, with the capacity to act appropriately in unpredictable situations. While children are thought to lack the self-discipline and autonomy of *isuma*, Inuit parents raise their children in such a way that they will grow up to develop it. That is, according to Briggs, Inuit parents encourage their children to develop *isuma* with an instructive but open and non-punitive approach that includes questioning and playing. This approach leads to self-sufficient adults who are "skilled at observing, identifying relevant variables, seeing correlations among them, and evaluating probabilities, all very autonomously" (Briggs 271). However, an individual with *isuma* is not individualistic. As Briggs says, "the radical practice of autonomous behavior creates good observers-and, paradoxically, good followers"; for example, if "one does not notice that the camp leader has detached his radio aerial from its support, one may be left behind within the hour, when the camp moves" (271). These

examples of observation-based action are markers of *isuma*. It seems one might attain *isuma* through an extended relationship with proximate materials.

However, *the kind of world* in which Inuit go about is also a key to understanding *isuma* because *isuma* develops in an environment where empirical experience is much more useful than categorization. The kind of world that a person with *isuma* perceives is one of contingency and relations; or perhaps we may say that a person who perceives that the world is composed of contingency and relations will develop *isuma.* Along these lines, Briggs says, "Inuit regard the world as a place where little can be taken for granted, where answers are not fixed and nothing is ever permanently knowable. At the same time, they consider it potentially knowable and usable from moment to moment" (262). Put another way, *isuma* is a mode of thinking and acting contingently. To have *isuma* is to think outside of absolutes because *isuma* acknowledges a world in which answers are not fixed. Briggs says that being situated in the weather of the Arctic teaches people that sudden changes can be expected. This approach to life as "usable from moment to moment" creates a demand for a highly developed sense of ethics because, within this contingent way of being, each person must behave ethically in given moments, and there is no one moral code that fits every situation. The wisdom of *isuma* perceives the natural world as a powerful and sentient force that operates outside of human morality, as an immanent wisdom that arises in encounters between humans and the land. Within the wisdom of *isuma,* nothing is knowable except within its situated context because, according to Jaypeetee Arnakak, "Nature [*Sila*] is indifferent; it cares nothing for our limited conception

of 'good' and 'bad,' 'evil' and 'beneficence'" (qtd. in Leduc 36). This way of being in the world calls for situated knowledge, where our potentials are only realized as all of the variables are felt and assessed. Furthermore, this improvisational way of being cannot be represented because it is outside of what has yet been experienced or imagined.

One of the biggest challenges of perceiving our environments beyond representation is that it requires an acknowledgement of immanence, of what William E. Connelly calls the "uncertain exchanges between stabilized formations and mobile forces that subsist within and below them" (*A World of Becoming* 43). The concept of immanence is particularly relevant in the north because, as Collignon notes, "subjectivity, or contingency, is at the core of a geographic system in which human beings are just one of the elements, among many others" (166). A Northern Textual Ecology engages with this faith in immanence—which is a key aspect of *isuma*—and applies it to northern literary texts in two important ways. First, it sees the material conditions that create a text as part of the mobile forces of that text, the *weather* of the text.[25] Second, it sees a text as porous and flexible, written and rewritten by its field of relations—analogous to the ways in which the land is written by weather.[26] Within this view, the world permeates literature and creates lines that surpass symbols, narrative, and character psychology. Not only does the world flow *into* literature via the affective

[25] For example, the cyclic forces of summertime feed into the expansive and open-ended connections—when heterogeneous materials form rhizomatic connections—in Partridge's "I Picked Berries." See Chapter One for an Orientation in this poem.
[26] For example, the excessiveness of weather is composed as ostinatos in *The Idea of North*. "Ostinatos" are the ambient noise in Gould's composition. See Chapter One for more detail.

perceptions of the writer, but literature also bodies forth *out of* its material conditions, where material conditions are the forces that a writer encounters, so that the weather of the world is part of the weather of a text. Applied to a Northern Textual Ecology, a contingent way of apprehending the world models an empiricism that can also create *an isuma in our reading practices*. If we apply a mode of perception that beholds the world as a network of unperceived potential to reading practices, we can experience literature and film outside of representational categories that might block our perception.

Within a Northern Textual Ecology, the north is *not* composed of discrete objects with intrinsic values. Rather, it is composed by the weather: a dynamic field of relations within which bodies of all kinds come together and affect what the other body can do. The north *is* (and is *in*) the weather-filled literary texts that are contextualized by the conditions of their making; texts that draw from transformative and shaping forces and compose those forces as affective events. Ingold contrasts the difference between reading for meaning and reading for affective events, saying that, contrary to many historical accounts, the land is not shaped, covered, or obliterated by schemes of "mental representations" (47). The land is not a "palimpsest for the inscription of cultural form" (47). Rather, as Ingold sees it, "the forms of the landscape...emerge as condensations or crystallizations of activity within a relational field" (47). The transient crystallizations of activity that emerge from a relational field are affective events that we both perceive and produce. Within an ecological reading style, we do not

read about the north's weather; we read in the north's weather as it temporarily crystallizes in textual exchanges.

During my time in the Pangnirtung Summer School, I learned something about the porous nature of a text—along with the permeable and absorbent world of *life*—when I apprenticed in working a sealskin. I had planned to buy a pre-treated (tanned) skin from the Arts Centre and to sew with this processed material. The thinking was that it would be difficult enough just to learn to *sew*, but the program director, Peter Kulchyski, urged me to buy a raw skin and learn to work it. My skin came to me with its own story, as the local hunter, Gordon, who sold it to me, said that his eighty-year-old grandmother had killed the seal. I sat in the Arctic College, looking at my sealskin. Peter came over to take a look at it and said that it was a text. I agreed with him in some abstract way, but somehow this text seemed inscrutable to me. The next day, we set out for the land with our sealskin scrolls. Of course my skin, though unreadable to me at the time, was already connected to the story of Gordon's grandmother's kill, to living seals, and to *Sedna*'s generosity.

The first morning on the land was warm and clear. Saunik Island sloped beneath us as we sat by the ocean with Elders Taina Nowdlak, Nevee Nowdlak, and Ooleepeeka Ishulutaq. Ooleepeeka is my name twin (*Ooleepeeka* is the Inuktitut spelling of *Rebecca*), and she sat easily on a smooth rock, with her legs out in front of her, over a sealskin. Her back was straight as she pulled the end of the skin toward her with one hand and scraped it with the other. I placed myself

stiffly beside her and imitated her method. The Elders made this look easy, but it was not. Ooleepeeka called to me, "Ooleepeeka, Ooleepeeka!" and she nudged me out of the way and took over, proficiently scraping the hard, black fat off the skin. I was thankful and tired. My name-twin was watching out for me. After a morning and afternoon of work, we put our skins away. Some went hunting, some strolling, some to get water, some to eat *palouga*, everyone adjusting to the unstructured time of the land. As we dispersed and went our own meandering ways, most of us neglected to label or mark our skins. The next day, there was some shuffling of skins between students, as we tried to locate the ones that we'd started with. The elders suggested that we might want to keep closer track of our skins and take them with us into our tents with us that night. As I worked closely with my skin in the day and slept with it at night, my whole body began to smell like a sealskin, and I experienced another part of the porous nature of this 'inscrutable' text.

After the scraping came the stomping, bending, washing, and drying. During these processes, the scent of seal mixing with my scent, I could also smell frying *palouga* and the oxygen-fresh smell that floated in from the cold water of the Arctic Ocean. Along with all of these smells, things like jokes from familiar voices, an arctic char pulled from our net, tiny pink eggs spilling off a knife, slanted light*, miniuq*/light rain, constant light, and baby eider ducks, were also binding with me and with the story of my sealskin. Margaret Nakashuk helped me wash the skin. We heated water on a Coleman stove, poured it into a Rubbermaid and added some soap. The skin had been so difficult to scrape, but it was supple in the water, animated by the movement of our hands and the small currents we

stirred up. Washing that soft skin, in that pleasantly warm and soapy water, I felt a connection with the seal, to the grandmother who killed it, with Margaret, and with Ooleepeeka and the other Elders around me. This was the first moment in my time in Cumberland Sound that I had felt I was adding my own line to the meshwork of stories that surrounded me.

When Peter had initially told me that the skin was a text, I could not read it. That is, when I first held it, I had no relationship with it. The more I worked with it, developing an immanent working experience with it, the more I understood that it could not be read only according to my previous experience in the world. I became a wayfarer of sorts with my sealskin, and by going around in the environment that I shared with it, I learned to read it within its context(s). Ingold says that all stories must be read in this way:

> For stories do not, as a rule, come with their meanings already attached, nor do they mean the same for different people...Indeed it may not be until long after a story has been told that its meaning is revealed, when you find yourself retracing the very same path that the story relates. Then, and only then, does the story offer guidance on how to proceed. (162)

I did indeed find myself retracing the path of my sealskin—through being on the land and listening to conversations, through watching and listening to the Elders, through watching my peers Christine Graff, Warren Bernauer, Paulette Metuq, and Petaluu Kakee, and Silasie Anilniliak as they hunted, patrolled for polar bears, cooked *palouga* and *mattaaq* stew, babysat and relaxed. Through all of this

watching and through the cross-sensory immersion of working my sealskin, I followed and read the story of the skin. This is a story that is inseparable from the processes that created it; as I said of my dream of belugas in the introduction, it is an occurrence, not a congealed image with intrinsic meaning. While working with my sealskin, I had to learn its story and my story "by going around in an environment" (Ingold160).

In the story of my sealskin, *isuma* is present at many levels, including the process of the skin's production, the material of the skin as it changed with processing, and in the narrative of my time with the skin. When I worked closely with the material skin, a whole matrix of textures, smells, and viscosities opened up to me. A network of stories also opened to me as I worked the skin. No doubt, the significance of this skin will continue to change over time, with further narrative processing. Julie Cruikshank says that all narratives are ongoing processes and can never provide "seamless closure" (*The Social Life of Stories* 2). In this way, process and product (the scraped and washed skin) became inseparable.

THE "VIRTUAL *QAGGIQ*" OF ISUMATV

My sealskin cannot be *read* as a hermetically sealed object that hides a codified meaning. Rather, it is ecologically part of the cosmo/geo/meteorological forces of Cumberland Sound. It is an occurrence—an event—that is porously connected to the land and to the community of Pangnirtung. Because it illuminates permeable boundaries, connectivity, and constant change, the story of this sealskin serves as

an introduction to the work of Igloolik Isuma Productions, whose films are connected to the ongoing generation and regeneration of the north. The goal of this chapter is to consider Isuma's film *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* within the context of the wisdom of *isuma*, which, as I have been describing it so far, is a wisdom that is drawn from and predicated on the protean nature of the Arctic environment. As its name indicates, Igloolik Isuma Productions takes on the concept of *isuma* as its guiding principle, offering viewers an opportunity to gain *isuma* (or the ability "to think") via connective relations with the forces of the Arctic.

This operating principle is profoundly related to the goals and themes of this project because *isuma* promotes a rethinking of the subject as a being among other beings, territories, and forces. The *ethology*, or immanent and relational ethics, of *isuma* teaches us to think and live creatively and relationally. This is what Rosi Braidotti calls a "nomadic ethics," a term taken from Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "nomadology," which is a way of being that resists stratification and hierarchy ("The Ethics of Becoming Imperceptible" 134). Braidotti's nomadic ethics "aims at achieving the freedom of understanding, through the awareness of our limits, of our bondage. This results in the freedom to affirm one's essence as joy, through encounters and minglings with other bodies, entities, beings and forces" (134). The aims of Isuma Productions fit within this model of nomadic ethics because the promotion of *isuma* is the promotion of the molecular or interconnected human.

Regarding the aims of Isuma, Keavy Martin points to the "generous distribution" of their films, which "can be accessed for free via their internet portal, IsumaTV" (96). Martin suggests that this portal acts as a "virtual *qaggiq*," or communal gathering place/feasting house (96). Indeed, the films and interviews available through IsumaTV offer access to the plenitude of the north. This generous offering connects with other systems of reciprocity that are prominent in the north (such as food sharing or hunting protocols). As Martin sees it, "Like the offer of food, this resource should not be refused or handled squeamishly; rather, visitors to the *qaggiq* must learn to accept the gift—and the responsibilities that come with it" (97). Part of this responsibility is to recognize that Isuma's films are *ecological*; that is, these films are composites of the cosmo/geo/meteorological forces of the north. I suggest that a recognition of the ecology of these films connects with Martin's suggestion, via Shari Huhndorf, that we see and understand Isuma's filmmaking in relation to Inuit political sovereignty because this sovereignty is not only about access to resources; it is about practicing epistemologies and cosmologies that engage with *isuma,* where the reciprocal ethology of *isuma* simultaneously brings us to an awareness of our human limits and releases us into the freedom of deep interconnectivity with our environments. Within *isuma*, there is no single, prescriptive way to be, only ways to be in given moments and relations. I suggest that such a way of being can bring real life to our active, political engagement with the world.

I have chosen to work with *Atanarjuat* as the primary text for this chapter because it enacts *isuma* in the processes of its production, in its narrative content,

and in its style. *Atanarjuat* was the first feature film to be written, directed, and acted in Inuktitut, and it was filmed on location on Igloolik Island, where Atanarjuat made his legendary run from Qikirtaarjuk to Siuraq Island.[27] Through this film, we can connect with the stories, animals, spirits, and atmospheric volatility of the north. We can see the film as porous and flexible, written and rewritten by its field of relations—analogous to the ways in which fish can become sled runners and thaw to become food.

ISUMA AND THE OUTSIDE

In Inuit philosophy, according to Briggs, weather is an impersonal force that contests human plans in unexpected ways, but adapting to weather helps one to develop *isuma*. In a similar manner, the weather/affective events in film can contest our habituated responses and trouble the absolute categories that we use to frame our thinking, thus fostering an *isuma* in our thinking. *Isuma* has "implications of deep thought or wisdom" (Evans 127), and it also includes a kind of thinking that is outside of thought; to have *isuma* is to be aware of the unpredictable forces that can enter and transform any frame of thought. As I have already pointed out, within *isuma* there is no formulaic or coded way to be; there are only our own responsive actions to our surroundings. Here, I turn to Deleuze's concept of "the outside" in order to sort out and clarify connections between: (1) actual weather and thought/*isuma* in northern geo/meteorological environments

[27] A map that retraces this run appears in the published screenplay.

and (2) affective weather and thought/*isuma* in the film *Atanarjuat*.[28] Deleuze's concept of the outside can help me clarify these different levels of immersion and *isuma* because the outside theorizes how the forces or events in film can force us to think beyond recognizable frameworks, and *isuma* has been theorized as a state of wisdom that is developed/practiced when atmospheric weather forces us to think improvisationally. In *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy,* Gregory Flaxman writes that "Deleuze envisions the Outside beyond the offer of any image of thought—the Outside (*le Dehors*) is outside (*en dehors*) any model of what it means to think" (36). These unpredictable forces are comparable to the affective weather of a text, which connects with Deleuze's concept of a "line of flight," as it "dissolves the imposition of an overarching image in order to introduce thought into an impersonal field of forces" (Flaxman 36). This impersonal field of forces is analogous to the impersonal forces of *Sila*. As I have explained in the introduction and in Chapter One, *Sila's* storms and volatility can teach us that our own human goals are quite insignificant, and coming to terms with this insignificance is part of *isuma.*

Sila is contextualizing because it teaches us not to expect a prescribed narrative outcome in our lives. During my time in the Pangnirtung Bush School, I noticed that the elders leading our group were continually aware of *Sila*'s indifference to our personal narratives. For example, when our group returned from our stay on the land and got resettled back in Pangnirtung, Joanasie Qappik made a short speech, saying that he was thankful that nobody was injured and that

[28] The concept of the outside is relevant in much of Deleuze's work. My focus on the Deleuzian outside comes primarily from *A Thousand Plateaus* and from his cinema books and Gregory Flaxman's reading of those books.

nothing bad happened when we were camping. This thankfulness did not equate to a pessimistic attitude but rather to an attitude of *isuma* that acknowledges humans' contextualized place within the forces of the land, where *Sila* continually exceeds expectation. Writing about Deleuze's concept of the outside, Elena del Rio likewise says that it exceeds our individual human hopes and anticipations and forces us to think outside of them. Describing the outside in Claire Denis' *Friday Night*, del Rio says the outside is "neither a series of inner, subjective impressions...nor a representation of external, objective reality, but rather the film's own spiritual/creative decision to engage in virtual movement" (170). The virtual, here, is a becoming-molecular, where the camera angles, cuts, music, and images affect us via their configurations. Braidotti describes this becoming-molecular/becoming-imperceptible as a process in which "The subject is a spatio-temporal compound which frames the boundaries of processes of becoming" (134). Put differently, the becoming-imperceptible of the virtual is the outside that extends from and beyond images and puts us in touch with the conditions of change, the possibility of which is obstructed in the absolutism of representational readings. To be put in touch with the conditions of change is also part of the process involved in acquiring *isuma*.

This chapter will now proceed via two movements. First, I will further develop the concept of *isuma* as it relates to the filmmaking of Igloolik Isuma Productions. In this movement, I will consider *isuma* both at the level of production methods/style and theme. The orientation for this movement will consider the

traditional Inuit name system in *Atanarjuat* in order to show how the film uses the actual system of soul names, or *atiit*, to create a narrative complexity that underscores community connections rather than individual identities. Second, I will develop the concept of *isuma* as it relates to Deleuze's concepts of affect and the outside. The accompanying orientation in this movement will focus on how the scene of murder and escape in *Atanarjuat* demonstrates an ethology of interconnectivity, or becoming-imperceptible.

THE PROCESSES OF "*ISUMA*" IN IGLOOLIK ISUMA PRODUCTIONS

Igloolik Isuma Productions takes the concept of a place that is "potentially knowable and usable from moment to moment" (Briggs 262) and applies it to their process-centered way of making films. In the spirit of working moment to moment, rather than by a schedule, *Atanarjuat*'s director Zacharias Kunuk and cinematographer Norm Cohn adjust their filming and production according to events such as good/bad weather, community activities, and hunting/fishing; that is, activities in which *isuma* plays a major role. Describing this flexible schedule, in *The Fast Runner: Filming the Legend of Atanarjuat*, Michael Robert Evans writes:

> At Isuma, Kunuk and the others follow a much more traditionally Inuit way of working. They show up when they are ready and they work when they can. Making sure you're on the job from one specified time to another is a Qallunaat way of working, not an

> Inuit way, and Isuma runs on Inuit rhythms as much as possible. (53)

This passage divides work-ethics into the binaries of *Qallunaat* and Inuit, but perhaps a more useful distinction might be between which practices demonstrate *isuma* and which practices lack *isuma*. A work ethic of self-monitoring and acting contingently with the community and with the environment demonstrates *isuma*. Likewise, the contingency of Isuma Productions' schedule emphasizes the openness of the wisdom of *isuma*, what Briggs calls "A general readiness to perceive and to realize multiple potentials in a changing world" (266). Finding or gaining *isuma* does not involve finding oneself, in the sense that a person might discover her/his political and personal affiliations for all time, thus developing firm opinions and a fixed way of seeing the world. Rather, finding or gaining *isuma* connects with a faith in immanence and the usable and changeable crystallizations that form in moments, outside of opinion and categories.

The world leaks into our opinions, so that, learning from the concept of *isuma*, we might say, "*ayuqnaq*," which translates into something like "oh well," when we encounter the unexpected. However, "oh well" might be too flippant for the nuances of this word. Perhaps *ayuqnaq* translates to something closer to what Braidotti calls "endurance," or joyful affirmation even in adversity (134). To say *ayuqnaq* seems to suggest an acceptance of a participatory and eventful life. In *Never in Anger*, Briggs writes that "the person who says calmly, 'Ayuqnaq,' instead of flying into a dither is using his *ihuma* [*isuma*]; he is behaving like an adult" (365). As Briggs writes:

> One hears the word Ayuqnaq all the time, in all sorts of situations in which uncontrollable circumstances, including the will of others, interferes with one's wishes or activities, and always it is said in a perfectly calm or mildly amused tone: when one spills one's only cup of tea or loses one knife; when a sudden thaw brings the iglu dome down on one's head during a sound sleep; or when one's neighbour evades a request for assistance. (365)

Growing into this graceful ability to pause and to think requires that we accept that life is dynamic, just as the land is dynamic. Really accepting the protean nature of the land can lead to an understanding of our contextualized position within our surroundings. *Sila'*s weather constantly binds with the land and restructures it. Life in the north, then, relies on *isuma*, which is a mode of being in an improvisational relationship with constant change.

As above descriptions suggest, *isuma* is a way of being that is contingent on the material conditions of the north. Igloolik Isuma Productions' 2000 film *Atanarjuat*: *The Fast Runner* offers its viewers an experience with the materials conditions that promote the development of *isuma* and also require *isuma* for survival. For example, community seamstresses, hunters and country food, and actors comprise the film's mise-en-scène. These uniquely arctic features create a film that offers to viewers the shifting sets of relations (the weather) of Igloolik. The film draws on the forces of the north when we see Atanarjuat's wife Atuat working a sealskin that comes from a seal that was killed by a local hunter. In this very tangible way, *Atanarjuat* carries forward the wisdom of *isuma* because the

materials of the north are remade and actualized in the context of the film. As Briggs has explained, an ability to see multiple purposes and potential in material—and I suggest that this includes multi-level textual readings—is a sign of *isuma*. Briggs says that part of the world-orientation of *isuma* manifests in

> a tendency to look at both people and objects in terms of multiple and shifting qualities and uses, instead of freezing them with labels into Entities and focusing attention on one or a few fixed attributes or uses to the exclusion of others. We can distinguish two aspects of this attitude: (1) a tendency to observe, for the purpose of discovering what is in the material, human or otherwise, what its potentials are; and (2) a readiness to re-make both objects and people to actualize now one potential, now another. (272)

To "actualize the potential" in stone, for example, a carver might search for the form that is already inside of it; however, several forms may be freed from the same stone "so that the finished carving might be a human head when seen from one angle, a bird when seen from another" (Briggs 272). To look at material in this way and to then actualize its potential is to experiment with what that material affords; it is to inhabit that material. Writing about material and form in the paintings of Vincent Van Gogh, Ingold says that Van Gogh "reveals to us, the task of habitation is to bind substances and the medium into living forms" (121). In a similar way, drawing from the cosmo/geo/meteorological forces of the north, *Atanarjuat* binds language, material culture, story, and land, but it does not

contain these elements; rather, it uses the medium of film to make them into living forms.

One of the practical and instructive elements of *Atanarjuat's* Inuktitut script is that it brings the living form of old Inuktitut back to the young actors in the film. This use of old or traditional Inuktitut was one of the topics of conversation when Nancy Wachowich spoke with the film's screenwriter, Paul Apak Angilirq, in 1997, just a year before Apak's death. During this conversation, Wachowich and Apak talked about the linguistic transformations the script went through from beginning to end, and Apak explained that he interviewed eight elders and transcribed his recordings of these interviews into an English language story, which he submitted to the Canada Council in a grant application. The story was then converted to an Inuktitut script, and elders were consulted to make that script as historically accurate as possible in terms of the level and style of Inuktitut. Explaining the difference between the contemporary dialect and the traditional dialect, Apak states: "Myself and Zach, we are able to speak Inuktitut, but we speak 'baby talk' compared to the elders. But for Atanarjuat, we want people speaking real Inuktitut" ("Interview with Paul Apak").

Wachowich writes that Apak told her "how, while writing the script, he had tried to think, act and speak in the manner of Inuit ancestors, virtually becoming each of the characters in turn" ("Interview with Paul Apak"). Apak also commented on the affect the film had on its actors. As Wachowich summarizes, "these men and women had already begun 'living their characters' or 'living their traditions' by growing their hair, by learning rituals and rules of behaviour and by

practicing speaking Inuktitut using the dialect of the elders used when Inuit lived on the land" ("Interview with Paul Apak"). Part of these becomings might be due to the fact that *Atanarjuat's* script generates the extra-narrative relations that are built into the complexity of Inuktitut, where words are created in moments as needed. Here, we can recall Collignon's comment that in Inuktitut, "words are created as they are needed. In the same way, we could say that knowledge is only created as a situation requires it" (157). Concerning the complexity of Inuktitut, Brody explains that it is impossible to separate it from a way of being:

> Again and again a lesson that I had expected to be about language had also been, or become, a lesson about other things—how to hunt, how to behave when talking, how to use the telephone, how to walk, how to sit, how to make jokes, how not to make jokes, how to play checkers. (64)

Thus, *Atanarjuat*'s script offers its Inuktitut speaking viewers an immersion in *isuma*'s manifestation of remaking objects, in this case language, to actualize new potentials.

Within the wisdom of *isuma*, there is no one way to be, only moments in which sets of relations create useable potentials. If we read *Atanarjuat* with this kind of flexible and adaptable wisdom in mind, we can participate viscerally and empirically in the forces of the north. This kind of viewing—viewing as wayfaring—is unscripted. Ingold explains:

> It is usual to say of the people of a culture that they follow a 'way of life'. More often than not, this is taken to mean a prescribed

> code of conduct, sanctioned by tradition, that individuals are bound to observe in their day-to-day behavior. The task of the wayfarer, however, is not to act out a script received from predecessors but literally to negotiate a path through the world. (162)

To be an adult, to have *isuma*, is to "negotiate a [contingent] path through the world." Igloolik Isuma Productions might strive to do things "the Inuit way," but it is important to remember that, as their name indicates, Isuma's project is to make people think in terms of alliances, sets of relations, and moments, where nothing can be taken for granted.

ORIENTATION: *ATIIT* AND *ISUMA* IN *ATANUARJUAT*

Close-up of a child's face. Cut to a close-up of a young woman, who looks down at something that is just off-screen. The next shot reveals a seal oil lamp and an old woman's hand pouring the last of the oil into it. They are out of food and the young woman—the boy's mother—is crying. The old woman looks at the child and calls him "Little Husband." She looks at the young woman and calls her "Little Mother." This is a scene of proximity and union, but the alliances that these three characters share surpass biology and time. They are aligned through their *atiit*, or soul names. An *atiq* creates a complex connection between living and dead people who share a name. The young mother Atuat has been named after Panipak's deceased mother and, therefore, shares part of her soul. Because of her name, Atuat is Panipak's mother, although these women are not biologically related. Atuat's son, Kumaglak, is named after Panipak's husband, the Chief and

shaman of Igloolik, who is killed by Tuurngarjuaq in a spiritual battle. Although he is only a child, Kumaglak is Panipak's husband. *Atiit* (soul-names) figure prominently in *Atanarjuat*, and they reinforce an intricacy of relationships that is consistent with the molecular perspective of *isuma*; *atiit* are not based on genetic kinship; rather, they create an alliance between the living and dead and between various age groups and biological families. There is no specific ceremony or procedure designed to determine a baby's *atiq*. Some people find their child's *atiq* in a dream, while others wait, getting to know the child a bit, and then deciding what it will be named.

Because they create porous boundaries across gender, time, and biology, *atiit* effectively disorder molar characteristics that often define individual identity. For example, a baby girl may be named after a male elder, carrying forward both his age and his gender. Named after a male elder, this girl will be raised as a boy and with all of the respect that an elder would deserve. Even as a child, she may be the husband of another young girl who shares an *atiq* with her *atiq's* wife. She may also be the wife of an older woman or man, as several people may share the same *atiq.* As Brody writes of a girl named after her grandmother, "she will notice the way in which individual choices are respected. More and more she discovers that she is embedded in a web of relationships that link her, through her *atiq*, to so many others" (13). Briggs connects the practice of soul-names with the qualities of *isuma* that help Inuit to "look at people as well as objects in terms of changeable, adaptable potentials, rather than conceptually 'freezing' them into Entities with fixed characteristics" (264). Relating to individuals according to

their *atiq* also enables people to "take a flexible view of characteristics that others might consider fixed and nonnegotiable" (264). In this naming system, people are known for qualities that surpass their genealogical identity. Briggs writes:

> In addition to the genealogical identity that people acquire by virtue of being born to particular parents, people have one or more 'name identities': they 'are' one or more of the persons for whom they are named. The behavioral implications of this fact vary from group to group, but, in general, it can be said that the holders of a name acquire all the kin relationships that belonged to the person for whom they were named. In individual cases, people may also acquire kin relationships that belonged to other previous possessors of the name, even though they were not named for those predecessors [...]Thus, the Inuit kinship system, which is in principle rather simple, is, in operation, not a system at all, but a tangle of idiosyncratic networks that is extremely complex and difficult to learn. (264-65)

The importance of name identities in *Atanarjuat* works with *isuma* at the level of narrative, as it demonstrates the actual practice of soul names in the context of this legend. On a narrative level, *atiit* help to establish the community in the film as a complex network, with alliances that are far from straightforward. This complexity is part of the film's *isuma,* its ability to look at people in terms of the complex networks that comprise them.

The complex relationship between Panipak, her biological grandson Oki, and her "Little Mother" Atuat provides an example of the actual alliances that come from name identities. While Oki is the blood relative of Panipak, she has a unique association with Atuat that makes her look out for Atuat's well-being. For example, after Oki and his group kill Aamarjuaq and chase Atanarjuat away from the camp, Atuat and her son Kumaglak form a family unit with Panipak. According to their *atiit,* Panipak is living with her mother (Atuat) and husband (Kumaglak). She gives up the security of Oki, the young and able hunter in her biological family, to help care for her little mother and her infant husband. These three characters living together and treating each other according to the characteristics of their *atiit* shows the practical and emotional implications of *atiit*.

The dramatic tension that guides the narrative of the relationship between Panipak, Atuat, and Kumaglak revolves around a scarcity of food, which is made worse because none of this group can hunt. Atuat fears that they will starve. She cries, saying she must go to Oki for help. To this, Panipak replies: "I'll be right here. Do what's best for my little husband." As Panipak speaks, the shot cuts from a close-up of her face to a medium shot of the family of three, sitting close together. Panipak and her little husband are near the seal-oil lamp and also backlit by the sun coming through the snow blocks of the igloo, but a background shadow cuts the frame and Atuat sits in darkness, still crying. While this shot suggests that Atuat is vulnerable and isolated, the intervening shots and dialogue add complexity to her situation. Surrounded by ambient light, Panipak says to Atuat,

"I know you'll always take care of me." Even though Atuat sits alone in the darkness, she is also the little mother who has always taken care of Panipak.

Panipak looks into the lamp, and the shot cuts to a close-up of Atuat in tears and framed by darkness. Panipak then leans over the lamp; a quick zoom shows a close up of her quiet face, as a sound-over of her voice says: "Brother! We need your help right away! You have to come soon, Brother!" The shot then fades to her brother and his wife (in a different camp) leaning over their bright lamp as Panipak's voiceover continues. "Brother!" On an actual or narrative level, Panipak's *atiq* relationship with Atuat draws Atuat into Panipak's biological family. The cross-fade between the two homes superimposes the families together, and this layering acts as a virtual link between the distant camps. Although the seal-oil lamp in Panipak's home is nearly out of flame, the lamp in her brother's home burns brightly. Although one home is in a weak position, there is strength for them in their web of relations. Likewise, although Atuat is framed by darkness, Panipak sees in her the strength of her deceased mother and says to her, "I know you will always take care of me." The sound-over of Panipak's voice and her brother's response to something that he hears in his head come from the web of relations that connect people through and beyond their *atiit*. These are the implied forces of the film that extend beyond biological family units.

AFFECT AND THE OUTSIDE

There is complexity at the narrative level of *Atanarjuat* because the Legend of Atanarjuat, as it was assembled and told by Apak, brings with it versions of the

legend as told by eight Elders, plus the many versions of the story that these Elders had heard, and the virtual possibility of future versions of the legend. The film's mise-en-scène encompasses the sewing and hunting skills of ancestors, living Elders, and future generations. Drawing from the materials of Igloolik as it does, *Atanarjuat* exemplifies what the Arctic affords. Here, *affords* is a word that bears a range of connotations including economic, artistic, ecological, and visceral. When *Atanarjuat* gives us access to the materials of the Arctic, it affords us the opportunity to access these materials and, through the experience of the film, gain a relationship with these materials. In this way, the film affords us new capacities to act with the wisdom of *isuma.*

In *Atanarjuat*, the affective events that take place within its narrative and structure are excessive in that they gather all kinds of material forces, past, present, and future, the bindings of which constitute unscripted becomings. Both *isuma* and Deleuze's outside (intensities that reorganize us and force us to think) look beyond what is known, acknowledging that we cannot locate reality within the frames that we create, such as symbols, institutions, or identities: "Rather, the reality of the possible derives from the clashes and contestation of forces themselves" (Flaxman 35). The "clashes and contestation of forces" are, then, what enable us to see, to think, to attain *isuma*. They are contextualizing beyond image. Ingold theorizes such forces as weather, as "what is going on" in the medium that surrounds us, where "Participation is not opposed to observation but is a condition for it, just as light is a condition for seeing things, sound for hearing them, and feeling for touching them" (119, 129). The viewer does not perceive

these interzones; rather, she/he perceives *in* them, in a dissolving of subjectivity and representation. In *Atanarjuat*, we perceive in the interzone of land and sky, moving along with Atanarjuat as he breathes and becomes ice and air.

Viewer and film are animate because both are part of a lively and generative matrix of materials and the forces of weather. The north and the film *Atanarjuat* are porously connected via ancestors, weather, stories, and language; therefore, the forces that the film generates are Arctic forces that affect the viewer's potential to act. The power of a film to affect a viewer is that film's affective power, its power of *affect*. As I have been suggesting throughout this project, affect in art is analogous to weather in the actual world. The term affect refers to a change in a body's capacity to act. As Deleuze explains, the term also implies an animate field of relations:

> What is called 'perception' is no longer a state of affairs but a state of the body as induced by another body, and 'affection' is the passage of this state to another state as increase or decrease of potential-power through the action of other bodies. Nothing is passive, but everything is interaction, even gravity. This was the definition Spinoza gave of 'affection' and 'affectus' for bodies grasped within a state of affairs. (*What is Philosophy* 154)

Because *Atanarjuat* creates for its viewers an extension of the material, narrative, cosmo/geo/meteorological north, it is able to affect us via these forces. The affective power of *Atanarjuat* is a crucial point in this chapter. First, the concept of affect relates to an overarching correlation between weather and composed

sensations.[29] Second, it relates to the haptic, nonverbal, auditory, and intuitive aspects of *isuma.* That is, *isuma* is not so much taught directly, as "you must behave in this way or that way"; rather, *isuma* is learned or gained through experience and "enskilment" (Ingold 61), through going through the world and being *affected* by it. As Briggs points out, the parenting style that helps children develop their own *isuma* is open and non-punitive because each of us must develop our own *isuma* through our own experiences in the world. The affective qualities of *Atanarjuat*, then, offer us a chance to be immersed in the volatile weather of the north. In offering us this experience, Igloolik Isuma Productions plays the pedagogical role akin to the open, non-punitive parent.

Claire Colebrook explains the experiential importance of affect in connection to Deleuze's cinema books, explaining its aspects of proximity and a-subjectivity, aspects that connect to the outside because they are not powers of an objective, external reality but powers of potential. Colebrook says:

> Affects are not actions (or powers exerted) but *powers to*. Is not cinema the power to *feel* fear, desire, tragedy or melancholy without oneself being afraid, desirous, afflicted or depressed?...This is the eternal power to be afraid, to desire—not reducible to any of its instances. (63)

[29] Currently, the field of cultural geography is attempting to unify the meteorological and the affective dimensions of experience. See, for example, Derek McCormack's article "Engineering affective atmospheres on the moving geographies of the 1897 Andrée expedition," which follows a Spinozan understanding of affect as a question of *what a body can do* within an environment. McCormack's article focuses on the Swedish engineer Salomon August Andrée's 1897 attempt to fly to the North Pole in a helium balloon. This failed expedition provides an illuminating study of the affective register of northern meteorological forces.

In connecting with the affects of *Atanarjuat*—connecting with the powers to—we can become molecular in our responses because we are not responding to a represented, intrinsic entity, but to something that forces us to think outside of representation. In the forthcoming orientation, we will see an example of the *powers to* in *Atanarjuat*, when Atuat silently screams Atanarjuat's name, until her scream becomes a pure, a-signifying potential.

What is outside of representation is the contestation of forces and what is implied in that action. For example, In *Atanarjuat*, Puja (Atuat's rival, Oki's sister, and soon-to-be Atanarjuat's other wife) joins Atanarjuat in his caribou hunt, and their bodies encounter the affecting bodies of the land and the caribou. While skinning a caribou, they work together, "both hot and sweaty," and after they have fallen back in the tent and made love, "Puja opens her clenched fists and lets a shower of caribou fur fall on Atanarjuat's face" (Screenplay). On a narrative level we can recognize that Puja has insinuated herself into the hunt in order to win the affections of Atanarjuat and take him away from her rival, Atuat. However, the connection of the bodies of these characters to their milieu creates the affects of strength and appetite, which are affects that belong both to the land and to the characters. Puja and Atanarjuat's ability to act is augmented in that they experience an increased chance of survival on the land. As viewers, we are aligned with the affects of the land through the screen.

Affects move us in unpredictable ways; we experience affects in moments when we are deeply compelled, moved, and conjoined with something radical and unnameable, something other than ourselves. Because the powers to (the affects)

in *Atanarjuat* are relational and not intrinsic, they connect with *isuma.* To attain *isuma* in the north, one needs to apprehend the world as flexible, as knowable only moment by moment. In this way, a wisdom that is based on the intrinsic qualities of things is faulty. Only a wisdom that is based on connections and relationships will allow one to proceed safely as an autonomous adult. It is the entire field of relations of the north, then, that enables one to attain *isuma.* It is the weather of the film that allows the viewer to experience beyond the narrative expectations of the agent.

As viewers, we can experience the becomings of the north when we become aware of the virtual, or outside that extends beyond plot, character, and metaphor. Deleuze has written about this "outside" as the moment when we feel "that the movement, that the line that is framed comes from elsewhere, that it does not begin with the limits of the frame" (Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts* 255). Connelly writes about what is beyond the frame as an outside that "exceeds our capacities for encompassment" (65). This excessive production goes past the straightforward narrative of the text, but it does not overwrite or replace that narrative. Rather, it infuses intensity into narrative concerns.

ORIENTATION: *ISUMA*, UNSCRIPTED BECOMINGS AND THE OUTSIDE

The focus of this orientation is *Atanarjuat's* escape scene, which begins when Oki and his two accomplices sneak up on Atanarjuat and his brother Aamarjuaq, who are sleeping, mid-day, in their tent. This action is accompanied only by the sounds of footsteps against the rocky ground, the sound of distant birds, of the wind, and

of soft snoring coming from inside the tent. The absence of non-diegetic sound works to reinforce the realism of the scene, and this realism affords a stark immediacy that forwards the scene's narrative concerns, namely Oki's revenge and the viewers' concern for Atanarjuat's safety. However, an off-screen drumbeat begins when one of Oki's accomplices knocks the tent down. The loud, crumpling sound of the collapsing skin tent becomes the sound of a fast drum, thus tying the drum to both the affective forces of the moving bodies and falling tent and the dramatic action of the murder. This drumbeat continues in conjunction with a series of quick cuts, animating and intensifying the murder scene, as Oki and his accomplices repeatedly strike their spears into the sleeping platform under a collapsed tent. One high-angle shot lingers on the spear as it grinds and twists and emerges covered in blood. This blood creates a narrative suggestion that one of the brothers is either injured or dead; it also provides the first traces of blood in the scene because soon blood will seep from Atanarjuat's bare feet into the ice. Throughout the attack, a hand-held camera cuts from low-angle to high-angle shots, conveying both the sense of power that drives the group forward and the violence and visceral intensity of the attack. This switching between shots, then, blends with the affective intensity of stabbing in high-angle close-ups of spears penetrating the tent.

When the stabbing concludes, Oki and his accomplices stand, half-dazed, over the crumpled tent. An extended shot of Oki's face takes the concerns of the film even further away from representational narrative. This extended shot of Oki's face disconnects him and his character from the previous and future action

of the film and makes his face knowable only in the present moment. In this shot, time is experienced directly, rather than through movement; this shot injects affective intensity into the narrative. Oki's face resonates with something extra, something that exceeds the limits of his character. It escapes the narrative subjectivity of the face. In this sense, this double face "loses face," as Gregory Flaxman and Elena Oxman say in "Losing Face"; losing face is the process "whereby the face is collapsed into an identity, such that instead, it vibrates with pure quality" (49). In the affection-image we see the becoming of the face that, in a paraphrasing of Deleuze and Guattari, escapes the face and becomes imperceptible. In this shot, Oki's face becomes the site of becoming-imperceptible, which is a becoming non-dominant and becoming molecular (a move away from authority and control and toward experimentation). In this becoming, there is a "prepersonal intensity" and a shifting of experiential states (Massumi, *A Thousand Plateaus* xvi). This prepersonal intensity helps connect us with the contingent wisdom of *isuma* because, in this moment, Oki is not defined by any intrinsic traits; rather, he is part of his field of relations, and he is open to the mobile forces of the north. In other words, his congealed molar self is overwritten by extended daylight, winds, and spirits.

One such mobile force is the spirit of Kumaglak. We hear Kumaglak's laugh, as a hand-held, continuous shot of Oki's face moves from a choke-shot, to a close-up, to a side-view in which all that is visible of Oki is his hair, and finally back to a close-up. The non-diegetic drum sounds that have accompanied the murder scene continue through the close-ups of Oki's face, and with this

drumming, from off-screen, we hear Kumaglak's voice ring out: "Shithead!" The shot of Oki's face then cuts to Kumaglak standing alone, framed by the land and sky. The drumming stops and a stark sound-over of Kumaglak's voice warns: "Atanarjuat's brother is running after you!" At this moment the film shows an environment where nothing can be taken for granted, which is part of the perceptual state of *isuma*. To our surprise, even after all of that stabbing, Atanarjuat is alive, and he lunges out of his fallen tent.

As Atanarjuat runs, the camera follows him and his pursuers in a long-shot, which engages with the plot, or narrative action of the scene. This kind of shot makes us respond with suspense and the expectation of certain narrative outcomes. Non-diegetic drums heighten the plot of the escape, as we see the backs of four men running away from the camera, across the rough snow, with the naked body well ahead of the other bodies. Oki's group throw their spears pathetically short of hitting Atanarjuat. A low chant layers in with the non-diegetic drumming, a sound that on one level heightens the dramatic intensity of the action, and on another acts as a delirium.

A break in the escape scene returns us to the camp with a cross-fade to Atuat, Puja, and Ulluriaq as they approach the camp. There is only the ambient, on-screen sound of birds and the quiet laughter of the women. A non-diegetic flute cuts in, as the women find the broken tent and the exposed and bloody body of Atanarjuat's brother. Atuat screams "Atanarjuat" repeatedly until only her mouth is moving but the name she mouths is inaudible; the movement of her mouth and the sharpness of the flute vibrate with the pure quality of sorrow and

loss, as if what she is saying is too painful to be audibly expressed. Being outside of vocal expression but still expressed through Atuat's anguished face, Atanarjuat's name becomes a "pure singular quality," a potentiality (Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 102). Here, Atuat's face is "the pure building material of affect" (103). In this scene, Atuat is contextualized in the unpredictable forces of her surroundings, where her individual desires and wishes are overpowered. The silencing of her individual voice aligns with what Arnakak has written about *Sila*'s indifference to our individual categories and beliefs. As she screams Atanarjuat's name until it becomes, not an actual or molar name, but an opening to the affect of anguish, she adds to the non-subjective quality that his run will soon take. Briefly, though, we are returned to the level of the narrative; as Atuat continues to yell Atanarjuat's name, the volume returns to her voice. "Atanarjuat," she screams, "where are you?" and, with this voiced question, viewers are brought back to the concern of Atanarjuat's escape.

However, this return to narrative concerns is brief. A cut to black follows Atuat's question and the next scene is a tracking shot of Atanarjuat's feet on the ice. His legs and feet blur from the speed of his motion, and they bleed into the ice that cuts them. Both this blurring and this bleeding smooth Atanarjuat into his milieu, his field of relations. Furthermore, there is no dividing line between the cloudy sky above and the white ice with blue pools of water below him. The tracking shot cuts to his head and shoulders as he continues to run. He appears to run through a terrain that is all sky, snow, and water. His blood runs into this terrain and his breath flows into it too. His breath blends with the non-diegetic

flute and drums, immersing him in the unseen forces of the film. Atanarjuat's immersion in, and his porous connection with, his surroundings visually and audibly join him with the powers of *Sila*. He glances back, and the shot cuts to Oki, who (framed slightly from behind and framed less tightly) is not so much aligned with the molecular forces of the film, but with his own will to catch Atanarjuat. The position of the camera and framing in relation to Oki align him with the molar, narrative concerns of the film. I suggest that Oki acts as a wilful agent who pursues his own wishes in opposition to the land; thus, he is outside of the graceful wisdom of *isuma*. On the other hand, Atanarjuat—in his becoming imperceptible and running *into* the land—acts as part of his environment, thus aligning himself with the wisdom of *isuma.*

Atanarjuat's naked body further exposes him to the forces of the environment. The penultimate segment of his escape places viewers in front of Atanarjuat, where they see his fully exposed body. Here, viewers are brought into Atanarjuat's exposure. We have seen his naked chest exposed to the snow, water, and sky. We have seen his bare feet exposed to snow and icy water, but in this medium shot we see his naked body from the front. This shot of Atanarjuat's nakedness creates an affective opening whereby he is fully exposed to his surroundings and the matrix of relations that is the outside. Having fled his own camp, the safety and security of his family and his community, he runs into the open in all ways, as he stumbles and gasps and collapses in a pool of icy water. The drumming continues. His pursuers fall behind. The sky behind them grows dark and a line appears at the horizon, further showing these characters separation

from the forces of their web of relations. Unlike Atanarjuat, they are bundled in clothing.

The group has been running over snowy land, with patches of water, but as the scene draws to its conclusion, more water appears over the snow. They are approaching the ocean. As they run, they approach a massive crack of open water between the land and the sea ice. A shot at ground level shows the group running after him through water. A low shot shows Atanarjuat running through a pool of shallow water, running toward the ocean. The scene slowly, very slowly, dissolves to a double-exposed shot of the land and the crack and its open water. In this double-exposed image, Kumaglak's ghost stands over the crack, calling "Over here." He extends his arm and waves in a long, repeated gesture. Kumaglak's waving figure blends with the image of open water that came before it, so that, like Atanarjuat, he blends and blurs with snow and water and sky and clouds. Like Atanarjuat, Kumaglak appears as an event, an occurrence. As occurrences, Atanarjuat and Kumaglak exceed the narrative of the chase scene and become part of the forces that actually add chaos to this narrative. Atanarjuat runs toward the voice that calls him. We see him front-on as he reaches the edge of land and launches into his jump. Atanarjuat's jump ensues in silence, beginning with a low angle shot in which we (at water level) see him from below. The next shot shows him landing in silhouette, where he acts as another organic form in a vast and recontextualizing environment. Around him, parallel striations in clouds and in pools of water create a diffuse vanishing point, whereby the distance that Atanarjuat must travel is both infinite and directionally unclear. He has escaped

his pursuers, and in doing so, he has become almost imperceptible in a land without a finite end.

The entire scene of Atanarjuat's escape unfolds as a becoming imperceptible, a mobile entity, a being of land, sky, ice, and potential. As a character, Atanarjuat is soothed into the land. The forces of his environment—ice, cold, air, water, stories, spirits—determine his capacity to act, and in flowing with these forces, in becoming with them, Atanarjuat is no longer an actual, confined organic body, but a force among many others. This state of imperceptibility is significant in terms of the aims and politics of Isuma Productions. On a molar level, viewers are taught a specific lesson in *right* and *wrong* as the murderers are chided by the environment, while the hero escapes. On a molecular level, the murderers visually remain framed and contained within their organic forms, whereas the hero becomes with his environment. When Atanarjuat becomes porously connected with his environment, his run becomes the air; it becomes the water. Viewers are aligned with the movements of this air and water, with the forces of the north. In this way, *Atanarjuat* offers an empirical experience that might, on a visceral level, take viewers into the contextualizing powers of *Sila*, where *isuma* is learned and developed.[30] I suggest that this kind of visceral experience with the north has the potential to change viewers' capacity to act, just as the forces of the Arctic afford Atanarjuat the possibility of making his seemingly impossible run.

[30] Another example of Atanarjuat's ability to improvise within his environment takes place when he uses the technology of spikes on his boots to win a fight on an ice-floor.

CONCLUSION: WHAT THE ARCTIC AFFORDS

Both the outside and *isuma* point to styles of thinking that exceed the actual limitations of fixed and framed bodies. If we are to think about *Atanarjuat* with *isuma,* we can think about it not in terms of what it represents but in terms of its mobile forces, which are beyond and outside of representation. The forces of the Arctic that we encounter in *Atanarjuat* align us with the contingency of *isuma.* These forces mobilize affectivity and open us up to the potential of change. In terms to Isuma's goal of Inuit political sovereignty that I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, being open to the possibility of change is part of Inuit epistemology, part of *isuma*. I suggest that for both Inuit and non-Inuit viewers, the significance of being aligned with *isuma* is that its point of view is empirical and situational, and always outside of representational politics. It is outside of representational politics that real change—inventive and contingent—can happen. Through *Atanarjuat,* we can experience the Arctic as a meshwork of movement and materials that can change the way we live. Through *Atanarjuat*, we find training in the ways of *isuma*. Or, as Briggs has put it: "training for an experimental lifestyle."

CHAPTER THREE

READING IN *SEDNA*'S PLENITUDE: IPELLIE'S *ARCTIC DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES* AS FORCE, INSTEAD OF RESOURCE

> I don't feel sorry for *Sedna*. (Jaco Ishulutaq, Sanigut July 2013)
>
> [The] Inuit hunter is not extracting from the environment but creating a bond between his people and their environment. (David Pelly, *Sacred Hunt* 106)
>
> The best lesson has been that of nalunaktuq: the fact that general trends serve as poor indicators of what the Arctic will actually do. Many people believe that Inuit survivability and Land-knowledge are one, but few suspect that both hinge upon an acceptance of the Land's protean nature. (Rachel Attituq Qitsualik, "Nalunaktuq: The Arctic as Force, Instead of Resource")

In Chapter One, I introduced Timothy Leduc's idea of "a conscionable etiquette," which is Leduc's way of describing a system of human actions that benefit the life and wellbeing of "an abundant sharing cosmos" (*Climate Culture Change* 189, 191). This sharing cosmos is comprised of land, sky, animals, and humans, as well as other forces that exceed human representation but, nevertheless, can be palpably and directly experienced by humans. Within Inuit cosmology, one such imageless, tangible force is *Sila* (weather), and the state of *Sila* is intimately connected to human actions. Traditionally, hunters would practice a conscionable etiquette to ensure good *Sila* and plenitude. For example, an Inuit hunter who had just killed a seal would take a mouthful of fresh water and, leaning down to the seal, pour that water into the seal's mouth. He would do this because he did not want to offend the soul of that animal and thus provoke the severe consequence of angering *Sedna*, the ocean-dwelling being who requires that humans respect their

web of relations, specifically animals. If any animal's soul is offended, *Sedna* can bring about blizzards, gale-force winds, and other meteorological conditions that will prevent good hunting. The equitable web of relations in the *Sedna* cosmology involves an aggregate of animals, weather, people, visions, practices, and *angakkuit* (shamans), all functioning together in a counterpoint that is improvisational and creative. Within the *Sedna* cosmology, as David Pelly describes it in *The Sacred Hunt*, the "Inuit hunter is not extracting from the environment but creating a bond between his people and their environment" (106). The environment in this view is a force, rather than a resource.

Traditionally, Inuit worked together to establish and maintain collective rules, or taboos that would help people sustain good relations with *Sedna*. Taboos were the intricate sets of laws that governed human actions in regard to eating, hunting, and land use. The Inuit understanding of taboos was, and *is* according to Jaypeetee Arnakak, a set of "living rules" that are a "measure of collective wisdom" (qtd. in Leduc 198). Rasmussen describes *Sedna* and the observance of taboos in *Across Arctic America*, saying, if animals were scarce, it was thought to be because one of their souls had been injured and, with this injury *Sedna's* anger had been evoked (30). It was up to the *angakoq* to visit *Sedna* and to mend relations with her. This visit took place during an out-of-body experience, or vision, during which the *angakoq* had two main objectives: to calm and appease *Sedna*, and to relay her messages to the rest of the camp (30-31). As the *angakoq* demonstrated to the gathered camp what he/she learned from *Sedna,* it was up to the members of the camp to find an understanding of *Sedna*'s message, that is, to

figure out what had offended her. Once the offence(s) were discovered, it was up to the offender(s) to come forward and confess what they had done. Once all of these steps were accomplished, the force of *Sedna* would be appeased, and the animals would once again offer themselves willingly to hunters.[31] This cosmology is a model of a conscionable etiquette because it not based on resource extraction; rather, it is based on respecting and valuing one's meshwork of relations.

The Arctic is a meshwork of relations; it is, as Rachel Attituq Qitsualik has described it, *nalunaktuq*. The Inuktitut word *nalunaktuq* describes that that which is beyond representation, and also beyond human understanding. In her article "Nalunaktuq: The Arctic as Force, Instead of Resource," Qitsualik defines *nalunaktuq* as "difficult to comprehend" or "unpredictable." Importantly, Qitsualik's definition need not be read hermeneutically, where "difficult to comprehend" might imply that the Arctic holds an intrinsic meaning that cannot be deciphered. Within a hermeneutic reading, being difficult to comprehend might create unpredictability, but only because the reader lacks the skill with which to predict via a decoding of signs. Conversely, and this is how I understand Qitsualik's definitions of *nalunaktuq*, being difficult to comprehend suggests *a lack of* intrinsic or preordained qualities. A key part of Leduc's vision of a conscionable etiquette is that humans cannot fully comprehend their environments, but they can and do experience them. This entangled view of our environments works against classification, reduction, and preconceptions of all kinds. As Qitsualik says, Southern perception of the Arctic is that it is defined "by cold

[31] This description of *Sedna* is largely drawn from Rasmussen's *Across Arctic America* and from Thomas Stone's "Making Law for the Spirits."

alone," when it is composed of a complex multiplicity that is difficult to comprehend ("Nalunaktuq: The Arctic as Force"). The north is *nalunaktuq*, or unpredictable, because it is a force with unforeseen power and potential that completely exceeds human goals and desires. Perceived as *nalunaktuq*, *Sedna* and the other forces that surround her can push us past "the limitations of our rational depictions" (Leduc 194).

The concept of *nalunaktuq* adds another line to this project's Northern Textual Ecology, as it directs our attention away from essences and embodied human interests and toward a nonhuman assemblage of forces. Qitsualik says the land is a force, that it is *nalunaktuq*. Likewise, as environments that are *nalunaktuq*, northern literary texts offer us affective engagement with "forms of naked, immediate existence" (Roy Rappaport, qtd. in Leduc 194). Encounters with *nalunaktuq* environments can take us past what we 'know' to be true and into contact with the volatile forces of destruction and creation, which connects back to traditional views of *Sedna* as a force. Jaypeetee Arnakak calls *Sedna* "the source of all creation and destruction"; Mircea Eliade calls her the "source and matrix of all life" (qtd. in Leduc 183). Often, though, readings of *Sedna* (and of northern literary texts) focus on representation, where representation invests forces with molar forms of identity and meaning. Representation is limited to human goals, identifications, and desires because it seeks to give us what is already recognizable.

When Christian missionaries arrived in the north, they could not understand *Sedna*, nor the complex and prolific taboos that were maintained in

order to appease her.[32] Missionaries misunderstood all that *Sedna* requires because they were quite unfamiliar with reciprocal economies. In Leduc's words, "Western thought assumed the primacy of its own belief in an economically self-interested individual" (183). They called *Sedna* "Sattaanassee," or Satan, because of the séances that took the *angakoq* into a visionary encounter with her. Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten explain the Christian reaction to *Sedna* in *The Sea Woman: Inuit Shamanism an Art in the Eastern Arctic*, saying, "The missionaries singled out the sea woman and the feast connected with her as their primary targets for elimination, wishing to eradicate completely the immoral practices associated with her" (25). In the missionary view, *Sedna* was a false god that needed to be destroyed.

However, this focus on *Sedna* as a deity akin to Satan constructed a fundamentally false view, because she is beyond representation and more aptly conceived of as a relational force, as the "source of all creation and destruction"; as such, *Sedna* can remind us to "view ecology, environment and wildlife as sentient beings that are deserving of [our] respect" (qtd. in Leduc 183). The missionary campaign to vilify *Sedna* extracted her from her field of relations. In doing this, the missionaries "may have given much more importance to the tradition of the sea woman than it actually had for the Inuit themselves" (25). In other words, before Christian contact, *Sedna* was integrated into an aggregate of people, animals, practices and ways of being. After contact, she became more congealed as an idol, with intrinsic qualities. Before she was congealed as an idol,

[32] Laugrand and Oosten discuss missionary attitudes toward *Sedna* in *Sea Woman: Sedna in Inuit Shamanism and Art in Eastern Canada*. John Houston also discusses the ways in which missionaries destroyed *Sedna* ceremonies in *Nuliajuk: Mother of the Sea Beasts*.

Sedna was *nalunaktuq*. So it is that outsiders to the north often focused on "maximizing economic self-interest" in a "scarce wasteland" (185). Missionaries told the Inuit that it was not necessary for them to observe their taboos because God made the animals, and people, made in the likeness of him, could eat without restriction. However, in removing human responsibility, the Christian view construed the Arctic as a resource, not as *nalunaktuq*.

The above attitude connects with scarcity thinking, a perceptual mode that assumes competition is the key to survival in a place of limited resources. Scarcity thinking separates humans from their wider field of relations (the earth) by way of reducing the unstable forces of the earth and its atmosphere to an image of a world that is broken, depleted, and exhausted. From this world, we must extract as *much as we can* while we *still* can. Applied to literary texts, scarcity thinking is part of any reading that treats the text as an exhaustible resource. Hermeneutic readings insist that the text can be reduced to its meaning, which implies that there are only a limited amount of correct readings to be found in a text. Accordingly, literary studies have encouraged us to *mine* literature for its meanings, a metaphor that points back to an underlying notion of scarcity and resource extraction. Beyond hermeneutics, there is an approach based on fundamental lack that understands literature based on the limits of language, insisting that, as impoverished as they might be, signifiers are our only means of expressing our embodied interests. Even readings that favour irreducibility of signifiers within a text can create a vision of scarcity if they separate human artistic compositions from the geo/meteorological forces that surround them, thus locking human desire

into formations of signifying systems that are of a fundamentally different order than that of the forces of the natural world.

Within models of scarcity, literary texts can only give us access to what is recognizably human; they cannot give us direct access to the movement and uncertainty that subsists beyond and around the signifying systems of language and culture. However, as I have been suggesting, there is a way of reading that embraces the forces and process of the world through art. This kind of reading understands art/textuality as a counterpoint between reader/writer and earth, as a mode of expression that thinks with the earth. Ecologically, the ocean, the *angakkuit*, and the animals share a fundamental similarity; they are part of the contrapuntal refrain of *Sedna*. This ecological vision of the world refutes regimes of truth that rely on such ideas as essences and intrinsic qualities. Submersed in literary weather, we might find a lack of grounding in the familiar, in our impeccable regimes of truth, but a lack of grounding in 'the truth,' can free us from preconceptions and reconnect us with the powers of transformation. Deleuze calls this kind of truth "the powers of the false," which is not insincerity, not deceit, but a proliferation of contradictions and ill-fitting associations that compose *becomings of truth* that are free from the concepts of right and wrong, truth and lying (Flaxman 29-30).

In this chapter, I connect the *nalunaktuq* forces of *Sedna* with my reading of Alootook Ipellie's *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares,* which was published by Theytus Books in 1993, and is widely-known as the first Canadian short story

collection written by an Inuk. This northern literary text is a collection of twenty drawings and twenty accompanying stories that Ipellie subsequently produced in order to "connect each drawing with a story" (xviii). Throughout this collection, a drawing comes before each story (and repeats on the verso of every page). These drawings and stories are overlapping lines in the same meshwork: lines of the drawings covering and thickening each other, extending into lines of the stories that trace over and branch out from each other, all of these lines overlapping traditional stories, all of these lines drawn from weather and cosmologies, until the *life* of this collection is its involvement with its total field of relations.[33] These drawings and stories compose as a series of becomings, the becomings-other that can connect our lived and desiring bodies to the cosmo/geo/meteorological forces of the north. In these stories, Ipellie invents the Arctic as *nalunaktuq*, as a force rather than a resource. He does this by assembling impromptu alliances between images, ideas, and words.

The figure of *Sedna* is the thematic focus of only one drawing/story in Ipellie's collection.[34] However, the desiring and inventive origins of *Sedna* flow throughout these twenty line-drawings and stories in the form of visions of more-than-human aggregates in ongoing variations. These dreams and visions extract from the north its open-ended forces of creation and destruction. *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* works within northern weather and with the forces of *Sedna*, which are outside of the conventions of realism and the individual subject. These

[33] See the introduction to this project, where I write on page 9: "I borrow the term *meshwork* from Ingold, who describes it as "a tangled mesh of interwoven and complexly knotted strands" (*Being Alive* 151).
[34] This piece is "Summit with Sedna, The Mother of Sea Beasts," which I will discuss in a forthcoming orientation.

stories work, we might say, in the open because they offer the north as a collection of generative bodies. Like the environment in which it is set, *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* is a force; it is *nalunaktuq*. My goal here is to show how we can read this collection through its visions and intensifications, which connect with the traditional practices of the *angakoq* and with the interconnections and counterpoints in the cosmology of *Sedna*.

PERCEIVING THROUGH ASSEMBLAGES, NOT THROUGH REPRESENTATIONS

As I have already discussed in Chapter One, Sherrill Grace's *Canada and the Idea of North* is based on a representational model of reading that claims we can only access the north through its discursive formations. Grace's representational reading style offers little room for us to directly *experience* the north through its non-discursive forces. For example, Grace's reading of Alootook Ipellie's comic strip *Ice Box* focuses on its use of parody, effectively blocking us from the strip's surprising and complex assemblages.

Ipellie's *Ice Box* series first appeared in *Inuit Monthly* in 1974. This comic strip is set in a pre-Nunavut north, and it follows the lives of the Nook family, situating them in various community contexts, and narrating their situations with both English and Inuktitut syllabic speech bubbles. The particular cartoon that Grace interprets appeared in *Inuit Today* in 1979 (Grace 251). This cartoon shows Papa Nook, with a harpoon in his hand and a crucifix around his neck, standing on a hill in deep snow, saying "Just when I was running out of soapstone...God answers my prayers once again" (qtd. in Grace 251). In the same frame, we can

see that Papa Nook has found two angular forms protruding out of the snow. Next, we read that he is thrilled with the "colour," "hardness," and "Chipability" of these hard forms, and next he finds inscribed on them what he believes is a secret message (qtd. in Grace 251). The final frame pans out to show that the forms protruding from the snow compose the word YELLOWKNIFE in both English and Inuktitut syllabics. A thin figure ("Good Lord Bones") leans over to translate the "secret" message: "This monument was erected in memory of one of Ottawa's greatest governments" (qtd. in Grace 251). According to Grace's interpretation:

> Ipellie has moved beyond the irony of hyperbole to the voice of prophecy: before long, Yellowknife will be ancient history, buried in Arctic snow, its monuments ready for recycling and, in this case, for Papa Nook's sculptured writing back. (252)

While Grace's interpretation is not inaccurate, per se, its insistence on using Ipellie's art in order to read the world *as it is* does not leave room for the assemblages in the comic strip that do more than parody *what already exists*.

Grace's attention to Ipellie's use of parody reinforces binaries because it essentializes the difference between north and south and ignores the proliferation of connections—harpoons/crucifixes/art/politics/snow/signification/writing/monument—that the strip generates. Put another way, to read a literary text as parodic is to read according to its binaries, rather than its assemblages. Parody works through what Christine Harold calls "*reinscribing* oppositions—for example, health/sickness or authenticity/conformity—back into a larger textual field," and for this reason "parody, as negative critique, is not up to the task of undermining

the parodist's own purchase on the Truth as it maintains both a hierarchy of language and the protestor's role as revealer" (191). Grace's hermeneutic parsing suggests that Ipellie's comic serves primarily as a corrective, or a way of "writing back" against uninformed or harmful representations (Grace 252).

Brian Massumi explains that parody must rely on and reproduce "the true" in order to lampoon it (*Parables of the Virtual* 69). In other words, parody does not invent anything; rather, it preserves coded forms—must preserve them—in order to exist alongside of them. In Massumi's words:

> Concepts of mixture, margin, and parody retain a necessary reference to the pure, the central, and the strait-laced and straight-faced, without which they vaporize into logistical indeterminacy. Erase the progenitors and the hybrid vanishes: no terms have been provided with which to understand it on its own right. (69).

A crucifix-wearing Inuk who *writes back* on recycled government stone presents for critics an obvious reading of the margin, or a hybrid culture; however, as Massumi suggests above, reading with imperialist or majoritarian forces as a foil actually works to reinforce the *centre*. What if we, in the style of wayfaring; that is, with improvisational movements, understand Ipellie's comic strips as forces, as *nalunaktuq*? What do the snow, the buried letters, the crucifix, the harpoon, the impermanence of stone do? How do these things assemble to generate lines that exceed perceptual thresholds? Rather than seeing the crucifix and the harpoon as symbols of hybridity, or the buried letters as a coded prophecy, can we see these as part of the syntax or phrasing of the multiplicities of the north, through and by

which new inventions are made? How can we read the images of monumental letters, organized across the side of a snow hill, of an Inuk hunter with a crucifix, without resorting to the idea of *writing back*? We can read more productively, if we see these images in relation, even in productive relation (and, and, and) rather than in opposition.

Another problem with readings based on binaries is that they can create a false sense of *sameness*, meaning that they can elide productive difference in order to reinforce prescribed ways of being. For example, Grace's commentary on the lifestyle of Ipellie's Nook family reads: "For the non-Inuit southern reader the comic is full of surprises, not the least of which is that the North has families who are a lot like ours" (249-50). Grace's suggestion that southern readers will find it surprising "that the North has families who are a lot like ours" mistakes similarity in surface detail, or what might be construed as representational accuracy, for similarity in function. We can trace this logic back to the explorers/ethnographers who found Inuit families to be more *civilized* than other Indigenous groups because Inuit families shared some surface qualities with European families such as small households, in which men provided the food and women took care of domestic duties. Christopher Trott writes that, because Inuit families lived in camps comprised of small family units, they were not seen as "primitive others" but as "'primitive' versions of ourselves" (4). The ethnographic insistence on a natural or essential form of family is guided by a telos that insists on an *ideal* family bound by biology.

Casting Inuit families within this vision completely overlooks the fact that these families have traditionally operated within unique boundaries that are quite unlike those of the nuclear, European family. These practices are discussed in Chapter Two, in relation to *atiit*, or soul names, which create complex bounds that exceed the limits of biology, age, and gender. Concerning Inuit kinship, Trott writes that affection, choice, naming, social relations, adoption practices, memory, and the generative processes that attend these elements all contribute to flexible (although perhaps indeterminate from an outside point of view) boundaries around who is and who is not part of one's family (6). Once again, we can see how reducing something—in this case a family—to a molar and fixed identity comes at the cost of ignoring the multiplicity of forces that compose life. In terms of the limitations of representation, the ethnographer's teleological vision is akin to the literary critic's closed reading.

The complex modes of organization that compose an Inuit family must be reduced and interpreted in order for a reader to see "families who are a lot like ours" (Grace 250). In reducing Ipellie's cartoon to what is readily recognizable, Grace's reading limits both what the north is and what it can be. This kind of reading thinks with scarcity because it insists that there are limited possibilities, and it insists that we already *know* what a *family* looks like. Conversely, a Northern Textual Ecology does not assume the power to inscribe the north or its literature with closed meaning; rather, it navigates through northern literary texts according to its forces, which are extracted from the forces of the land and weather. The forces of the north have the power to dissolve congealed and

constructed identities. Likewise, northern literary texts draw on the active forces of the land and composes these forces so that readers might encounter them as pure sensation. We can encounter these multiplicities, these sensations, not as the ethnographer, who pries them into the subjective present and interprets them according to what he can recognize. Rather, we can encounter them as the wayfarer who draws on the sensations of literature as occurrences,[35] as goings on, as forces, as *nalunaktuq*. This way of reading is not interested in what northern literature means, but in what it can invent.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into four orientations in Alootook Ipellie's *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares.* These orientations use the creative cosmology of *Sedna*, the visionary role of the *angakoq*, and Deleuze's concept of the powers of the false as guides to perceiving the desiring and transformative powers in Ipellie's collection. First, I consider the unexpected alliances in "Summit with Sedna, Mother of the Sea Beasts." Second, I discuss the narrator/ shaman-figure in "Self-Portrait: Inverse Ten Commandments," suggesting here that the role that this narrator plays parallels the role of traditional shaman. Furthermore, I discuss this narrator as an example of the writer as seer and healer, or one who invents assemblages that connect our lived bodies with desire. Third, I read "After Brigitte Bardot" in the context of dreams and nightmares, with a focus on the way fictional dreams and nightmares provide a lack of grounding in *safety*,

[35] I discuss occurrences in the Introduction to this project. As occurrences, we are not nouns but verbs, always moving and changing within our web of relations. See *Being Alive* 117, 143, 155, 160, 161, and 230.

that is, in regimes of truth and in the romantic, but, at the same time, these dreams create affective, or desiring, truths. Finally, I consider the forces of Fabulation in "Arctic Dreams and Nightmares."

ORIENTATION: "SUMMIT WITH SEDNA, THE MOTHER OF SEA BEASTS"

In the introduction to this dissertation, I told the story of meeting a bear who taught me to fly and a pod of belugas that flew above me like white aeroplanes. These animals were part of my dreams. They had no actual bodies, but I have made the suggestion that they are ontologically similar to actual bears and belugas; that is, these dream animals do not *represent* actual animals. Rather, they are occurrences and goings-on that can only belong to the meshwork we know as bears and belugas, to which individual bears and belugas, the idea of bears and belugas, stories, dreams, and memories of bears and belugas, prints and carvings of bears and belugas, and whole groups of actual bears and belugas belong. The word *beluga* is incomprehensible without the implicate order of its matrix of relations. When I say the word *beluga*, or when I call this white whale *Delphinapterus leucas*, I am only slowing down the delirium that is the occurrence of *beluga* within its inseparable meshwork. When I dream of a beluga, I make a beluga refrain, a territory of beluga that always opens back to the manifold forces of *beluga*.

Sedna is a myth, but she is also a happening; she belongs to a meshwork of windstorms, humans, animals, and so on. *Sedna* is an ancestor; she is also inclement weather, and she is a harpooned seal; these forces are what Ingold calls

"alternative manifestations of the same occurrence" (143). In *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*, Ipellie gives us multiple, unexpected combinations that might be conceived of as manifestations of the forces of *Sedna*. Eleven of these twenty stories involve sexual relationships between gorgons and humans, birds and humans, monsters and humans, spiritual forces and dreamers, to name a few of the combinations. These combinations are, I suggest, manifestations of the *unnatural* alliances in the *Sedna* cosmology, but such alliances are part of a world in which there is no *nature*; there is no contained whole, only forces (non-human beings) in connection with other forces.

The sex in *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*, in many ways, dislodges the notion of *sexual identity*. The "Frankenstein" that seduces *Sedna* (40-42) and the gorgon wives that the narrator encounters out on the land are manifestations of sex beyond identity. The nonhuman beings in Ipellie's collection can contextualize us in the forces of chaos, thereby offering us affective truths. *In Gossips, Gorgons and Crones: the Fates of the Earth*, Jane Caputi says, "when we face the Gorgon we begin to face the chaos in ourselves" (287). Can we, then, approach the alliances in *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* as a becoming familiar with our own chaos and the chaos of forces that surrounds us? Within the methodology of a Northern Textual Ecology, these alliances are compositions of the cosmo/geo/meteorological forces of the north, and they do put us into contact with that which exceeds the human. Ingold's description of "songs, stories, and designs" from the north seems fitting here. According to Ingold, these literary

texts are not representations, nor are they metaphors that can "[dress] up a plain reality"; what these texts do is

> conduct the attention of performers *into* the world, deeper and deeper, as one proceeds from outward appearances to an ever more intense poetic involvement. At its most intense, the boundaries between person and place, or between the self and the landscape, dissolve altogether. It is at this point that, as the people say, they become their ancestors, and discover the real meaning of things (*The Perception of the Environment* 56).

Stories, carvings, and drawings of *Sedna* are, likewise, conduits to a living past and the becomings that offer affective truths.

Sedna stories tell of a girl named *Nuliajuk*, or the ever-copulating one/the one who refused to marry. This girl was seduced by a beautiful dog-man, then by a storm bird, who (when she tried to leave him) swooped again and again at the kayak she shared with her father, creating violent weather.[36] Fearing the storm, her father pushed her overboard. She frantically wrapped her fingers around the opening of the kayak and clung on, but the storm bird kept swooping and the weather kept storming until, in desperation, her father chopped off her fingers. She then fell to the bottom of the ocean, her fingers falling with her and becoming the bountiful sea animals of the Arctic. Ipellie's drawing/story, "Summit with Sedna, the Mother of Sea Beasts," takes us to see her, in this kind of underwater

[36] My sources for this story include Laugrand and Oosten's *Sea Woman*, Houston's *Nuliajuk: Mother of the Sea Beasts*, Rasmussen's *Across Arctic America*, and Leduc's *Climate, Culture, Change*.

home. This visit is a "summit," as the title says, but the eyes that look out from the drawing suggest it is a violent kind of summit. It seems we must be accessories to this violence because the eyes (on the palms of her hands) stare blankly at us. She blocks the way with her hands. The chin of her triangular face cuts sharply between her breasts. Her chin and her teeth are the only sharp angles in a collection of aquatic and fluid lines and curves, drawing together the forces of creation/flow and destruction/interrupted flow. Her mouth opens in a scream that joins forces with *Nuliajuk*, clinging to her father's kayak, terrified in *Sila*'s storming.

In Ipellie's drawing, all the lines are thin and lightly drawn, except for *Sedna*'s braids, which are detailed with thick layers of ink lines. The lines follow the curves of her braids—a technique known as contour-hatching—which adds *value* or three-dimensionality to the image. These braids are the only value-added, or three-dimensional part of this drawing; they are the thickest part visually; they lift off of the page in a glimmering texture, and the importance of *Sedna*'s hair further thickens them. The power of *Sedna*'s hair is prominent: it is a changeable material that responds to human actions; it is human, animal, and aquatic; it assembles with an *angakoq*'s touch and becomes a seal that becomes food. In Ipellie's drawing of *Sedna*, her braids are tidy and shiny. According to *Sedna* stories, such tidy hair should signify that she is content. So why must we have this "Summit with Sedna"? This is a question that the drawing cannot answer; all it can do is immerse us in forces that are *nalunaktuq*, forces that are difficult to

comprehend: curves of hair and body, angles of teeth and face, repeating patterns of textured circles in aureole, mouth, and two sets of eyes, on her face and hands.

The accompanying story "Summit with Sedna, the Mother of Sea Beasts" adds lines that can help us understand, on a narrative level, why *Sedna* backs away in fear the drawing. The narrator tells us the story of a great famine in the Arctic that has been brought about by "**sexual misconduct**" (36). These words are bolded in Ipellie's text, as are a handful of other words. Like ***Sedna*'s** thick, glossy braids in the drawing, the bolded words stand out from the thin lines of other words with "added value," or three-dimensionality. The thickening of the words "**sexual misconduct**," here, connects with the epic sex story that is to follow. As to the nature of this misconduct, the narrator explains that *Sedna* has been soliciting visiting *angakkuit* for sexual favours. The narrator journeys to visit her, and during his visit, he learns that she has "never been able to have an orgasm" (36). After learning this, the narrator and his "fellow shamans" decide something has to be done, so they "prepare a summit with Sedna" (37). They call on the forces of all of their spirit helpers, and joining with these spirits, they compose a creature that "would possess spiritual powers equivalent to a hundred spirit souls" (37). Together they create their version of "**Frankenstein**," who approaches *Sedna* and takes her into an "ecstatic dream—a sensual trip she had never taken in her lifetime" (41). The story concludes:

> In a state of sexual ecstasy, Sedna released a perpetual explosion of orgasmic juices. In the same instance, during her virgin joy, she

> released all the sea beasts, which immediately proceeded to travel without impunity to the hungry Arctic world. (41)

Is this monster "**Frankenstein**" connected to the monster who ran out into the icy Arctic in the early nineteenth century? Like *Sedna's* braided hair, like the words "**sexual misconduct**," his name appears in bold. Beyond any hermeneutic attempt to guess at what this bolding means, there is thickness; there is the noise and the slowing down that such a thickness generates. Furthermore, the seemingly randomly bolded words in this texts assemble connections and opaque alliances. These alliances are *nalunaktuq* because they are difficult to comprehend; they do not provide clues to any intrinsic quality in the collection; rather, they intensify the forces of the collection.

The shamans and their helping spirits become a frightening monster, a **Frankenstein**. Seeing this monster, *Sedna* shrieks and begs him to stand back "extending her webbed hands toward the monster's eyes which [are] streaked with crimson and glowing like gold" (41). *Sedna*'s union with the monster creates a becoming-other, an incongruent amalgamation that can connect our lived and desiring bodies with the forces of *Sedna*, with *Sedna* as *nalunaktuq*, with *Sedna*'s desire. By desire, I mean what *we do* when we perceive in, and draw from, the multiplicity of life's forces. This is the mode of desiring that has been conceptualized by Deleuze and Guattari, who propose a desiring that is not based on a subject who wants something (lack); instead, this kind of desire is a part of movement and excess, and it produces ongoing transformations that need not be diminished in recognizable conjugal formations. In his essay "A Thousand

Ecologies," Ronald Bogue says that desiring production connects "human organs, diverse organisms and inorganic entities and processes in makeshift, variable relations, and the flows may consist of matter, energy, information, sensations, thoughts, fantasies, and so on" (45). According to Bogue, desiring production is inefficient in "the way that makes room for glitches, pauses, divagations, and impromptu variations" (ibid). This kind of desiring—extra-human, carnal, excessive, transformative, impromptu, experimental and relational—is also the desiring we can find in the cosmology of *Sedna*: Inuit ancestor, sea dweller, and mother of all sea animals.

ORIENTATION: "SELF-PORTRAIT: INVERSE TEN COMMANMENTS"

Ipellie's opening story/drawing, "Self-Portrait: Inverse Ten Commandments," sets up the movement and excess that will follow in the rest of the stories. That is, this story introduces the modality of dreams and visions that allow the *angakoq*/narrator to become unhinged from his congealed physical form and from chronological time, thus establishing the on-going transformative journeys that will follow. In this story, the narrator travels to a visionary realm, where he encounters a dark and frightening image of himself. This image is of his *dark side*, but not in the sense of an *ID* or any kind of repressed self; rather, this terrifying version of the narrator's face is an opening into the narrator's capacity to change. The narrator says that, during this trip to see his dark side, his "soul had gone out to scout [his] safe passage into the cosmos" (8), where he is caught in bad *Sila* (a

violent windstorm) and taken on a transformative journey that opens into many more journeys.

In this lead story, the narrator describes an experience of waking up in a windstorm. Meteorological forces of a windstorm propel the narrator into a visionary state. At the level of narrative action, the storm creates enough disequilibrium to push the narrator "in and out of consciousness" (3), and into what seems to be a nightmare. However, beyond the level of narrative, this opening story sets up the impersonal forces that will follow in two senses. First, it creates a world in which the subject need not be *either/or.* Rather, the subject is established as many, thrown into a dream-like world of multiplicities, in which he sees his own face and his outstretched hands with ten, small agonized faces that scream incomprehensibly. Second, it introduces the narrator as a seer, who perceives inversions of established truths. These "inverse" relations are made possible by the contextualizing forces of *Sila*, through which human categories of good and bad become irrelevant (3).

Like a traditional *angakoq*, Ipellie's narrator travels into a realm of visions, or into the spirit world, and relays his visions as they occur. What he sees is a series of images and events that—dreamlike—are not bound by time and location. He narrates his encounter with a terrifying image of himself, with upside-down, yellow and bloodshot eyes and ten more terrifying faces on the ends of his fingers. Here, the narrator's vision renders perceptible forces that exceed the subject. Through his multiple and unrecognizable voices, the narrator, who is a shaman, performs a function that parallels that of a traditional *angakoq*, or a spiritual

intercessor, who does not tell his audience what to think—in a top-down and authoritative manner—but instead generates opaque visions and becomings. In his article "Making Law for the Spirits: Angakkuit, Revelation and Rulemaking in the Canadian Arctic," Thomas Stone says that shamanic performances "were likely to call for a significant amount of interaction between the assembled members of the community and the possessed or spiritually transformed *angakkuq*"; furthermore, "this interaction often entailed communications from the spirit world that would be highly opaque in character, and which often involved the *angakkuq's* use of a distinctive language or terminology" (133). Adding to Stone's description, we can envision the land, waters, sky, weather, animals and the spirits of these as speakers or informants in this interaction, with all of these forces being part of a conscionable etiquette.

Ipellie's narrator wakes to find himself in a dream in which a terrifying version of his own face appears as an image in front of him. This face reaches out its hands, and at the end of each finger is another tiny face. Via telepathy, this face tells the narrator that he has arrived in "Hell's Garden **of Nede**," or in a place that might exist in an inverse relation to Heaven's Garden of Eden (7). Again we encounter bolded words; again lines have been thickened. There is a build-up here. The bolded words clog the sentence just a bit. Thus, we stick here, for a moment; we cannot glide smoothly past the forces that these bolded words generate. However, in the subsequent moment, when the terrifying double face says, "Welcome, welcome, welcome...to the Garden of Nede" (7), the words are not bolded, and there is no slowing effect. Rather, we can slide past this welcome and

into the "squalid fingertips" of the narrator's terrifying double, as he reaches toward the narrator, wraps his hands around the narrator's head, and lets the ten small heads lick him and cut his skin with their sharp tongues. The narrator says, "the cruelty inflicted on me was unbearable! Blood was splattering all over my face and body. I screamed in dire pain" (7). The disfigured bodies in this disjointed vision push us into unprotected existence; this encounter between the narrator and his double, the narrator's face covered in blood as he is licked by small tongues, pushes us past contained narrative, meaning, and human form. The strange alliance between the narrator and his double pushes us into a visionary experience because it is unrecognizable and therefore cannot be filtered by any narratives that we already know.

The contingency and opacity in these stories has the power to force us outside of our particular *scriptures*, or codified moral maps. However, in conversation with Leduc, Jaypeetee Arnakak explains that *angakoq* could not find such an ethical stance without the help of *Sila*. In an "initiation experience" with *Sila* the *angakoq* could experience his/her own insignificance and be, as Leduc has described it, "contextualized within Silatuniq," or the living forces of *Sila*. To gain this contextualization, the *angakoq* would suffer alone outdoors:

> The suffering journey for Igjugarjuk, as told to Rasmussen, began with an initiation that entailed being left alone on the tundra in a small hut just big enough to sit cross-legged. Perched on a small hide upon the snow, he was forbidden to touch anything, had

> limited food and water, and was far from his community. Igjugarjuk described those thirty days of cold and fasting as being so sever that he 'sometimes died a little' (Leduc 34).

Within this experience, *Silatuniq* does not work to "remedy but to help rebalance, to massage the individual to its natural equilibrium within the environment" (Arnakak, qtd. in Leduc 34). The *angakoq's* initiation in suffering, via the indifference of *Sila,* could, in other words, could extend him/her beyond the molar or recognizable self and into the insight that "Nature is indifferent; it cares nothing for our limited conceptions of 'good' and 'bad,' 'evil' and 'beneficence'" (Arnakak, qtd. in Leduc 36).

Ipellie's narrator is initiated in such a way in "Self-Portrait: Inverse Ten Commandments" and in the stories that follow. The narrator's fixed, phenomenal self yields to intensities and forces of becoming. Arnakak says, "the suffering of shamanic initiation is a process for letting go of the cultural beliefs that limit participation in social realities that transcend and, eventually, consume our bodies"; however, the *angakoq's Silatuniq*, his contextualized perspective, might be difficult for others to accept because "it may contradict dominant cultural assumptions for everyday living" (qtd. in Leduc 37). In this way, it is up to the *angakoq* to first see and then render perceptible all that is too powerful for everyday perception. "Shamans are the sensitive people," Arnakak says, "in so far as they're able to sense and perceive what normal people cannot or will not face" (qtd. in Leduc 37). In this visionary aspect, the role of the *angakoq* aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of the artist as someone who has "seen

something in life that is too much for anyone" (*What is Philosophy?* 172). Ipellie's narrator fulfills this role as a visionary whose perceptions take him beyond opinion, good, bad, and beneficence. He is "a seer, a becomer," and he has "seen something in life that is too great, too unbearable also, and the mutual embrace of life with what threatens it" (Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy*? 171). Along with seeing what is either too beautiful or too unbearable for ordinary people to see, the writer is "the physician of himself and of the world" (Deleuze, "Literature and Life" 228). The reason the writer is able to bring health is that he or she has been contextualized within the forces of the world, through the processes of becoming, always becoming. In becoming molecular the writer ceases to project an ego and, instead, invents assemblages that are always in process.

On the surface of these stories, however, the narrator might appear to be generating fixed opinion. It could be argued that these stories over-code a Christian/Colonial message with more *truthful* Inuit messages. For example, the narrator does not hesitate to *analyze* what he sees and constantly offers his own interpretations of events. For example, he says, "the ten squalid heads [represent] the Inverse Ten Commandments in Hell's Garden of Nede" (6). The opinions in these stories can potentially lead us to generate closed or hermeneutic readings. On the surface, *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* might seem to be reactionary, negative, or oppositional, which may be why Alootook Ipellie has been read through the lens of parody, and has been referred to as a satirist.

Ipellie's image of the narrator crucified on the tundra has been read as satire by Dale Blake, in her dissertation "Inuit Autobiography: Challenging the Stereotypes." In another example, in *Northern Voices: Inuit Writing in English*, Penny Petrone prefaces Ipellie's work, commenting on "The satiric element, clearly evident in Alootook Ipellie's short story, follows the Inuit tradition of using satire as a powerful social sanction" (248). Renée Hulan makes a similar comment about Ipellie in *Northern Experience and the Myths of Canadian Culture,* saying, "His work employs satire, which is a convention of Inuit oral literature, to comment on the aspects of modernity that continue to affect Inuit life" (90). It is questionable, though, whether *satire* is the right term. From the point of view of coded understanding, it might apply. However, the strategies in *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* of assembling, distorting form, and inverting conventions might be read as a kind of humorous dismantling, or even a visionary dismantling of what is recognizable. In spite of the seemingly overt symbolism and in spite of the narrator's opinionated statements, these stories undermine 'the truth' in their refusal of constancy and form.

ORIENTATION: "AFTER BRIGITTE BARDOT"

This orientation extends the above discussion of the writer as physician (and writing as a series of becomings) into a broader discussion of what Deleuze has called "the powers of the false."[37] These powers are the becomings and metamorphoses of art that invent "the lies that raise falsehood to its highest

[37] See Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy*.

affirmative power" (Deleuze, qtd. in Flaxman xx). This affirmative false, however, is not to be confused with duplicity, deceit, or lies; rather, powers of the false are powers of excess, or many co-existent truths, or what Gregory Flaxman describes as "a plurality of possible worlds that bear the world beyond the precincts of truth and lying" (Flaxman 117). In *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*, the 'logic' or geography of the dream goes beyond the precincts of truth and lying. Within these dreams or visions, there is a lack of grounding in regimes of truth. Instead, we find ourselves swept into the unsafe, unromantic, unapologetic contextualizing powers of the false. These dreams and nightmares act as affronts to molar identities and identifications; they push us, as readers, into zones of indiscernibility and desire. We are initiates in these zones, in the contextualizing powers of these stories. The prolific becomings and multiple truths in these stories help us to let go of dominant cultural assumptions and limited oedipal desires: those desires grounded in matrimony, biology, and psychology. These stories generate many truths, even incommensurate truths, and show us that the process of assembling the incommensurable reveals to us the way truth, as opposed to 'the truth,' is created.

In these stories, dreams offer a way in which multiple truths can coexist because they loosen fixed forms, unhinge time, and create unexpected composites/alliances. Dreams, in this context, are important because they inject intensity into narratives and connect us with forces that are beyond congealed representation. This use of dreams contrasts starkly with the ways in which the inventive power of dreams has been co-opted by colonial readers, who have used

dreams to interpret people. To clarify, colonial readings of Indigenous dreams have not worked to loosen congealed forms; conversely, these readings have worked to solidify a fixed image of the *Indigenous dreamer*. According to Renée Hulan, the dream has been used to create a pan-Indigenous identity based on the concept of a people who "inhabit a mystical or dream-like space," a "dream people" (154-55). Along these lines, Hulan has criticized Barry Lopez's first-person Arctic adventure narrative, *Arctic Dreams*, for its colonial construction of a "dream people." According to Lopez, northern Indigenous people are capable of going through life in a dream state, and in this way they are fundamentally different from rational people. Hulan discusses Lopez's idealization of dreams, particularly his unfounded claim that these "dream people" have different brains (Hulan 154). As Lopez writes, "The mind we know in dreaming, a nonrational, nonlinear comprehension of events in which slips in time and space are normal, is, I believe, the conscious working mind of an aboriginal hunter" (qtd. in Hulan 154). The diminishment of Indigenous dreaming in Lopez's work is deterritorialized via *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*. The title of Ipellie's collection may or may not be alluding to Lopez's book, but *Arctic Dreams* predates Ipellie's collection by five years; so, whether or not the allusion was intentional, it would be difficult if not impossible to read *Arctic Dreams* naively after reading *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*.

In *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, Gregory Bateson says that dreams deal in opposites, in the way that animals deal in opposites. Bateson's example: a dog encounters another dog and both bare their teeth in order to say "I do not wish to

fight" (54). The dogs enact the opposite of what they mean in order to get at an affective truth. Why? We could say it is because dogs lack 'words.' But, according to Bateson, this snarling gesture is more expressive than words could be; because "the messages we exchange in gestures are really not the same as any translation of those gestures into words...no amount of telling somebody in mere words that one is or is not angry is the same as what one might tell them by gesture or tone of voice" (12). Dreams exceed language. They work instead via affect and intensities.

The Freudian view of dreams is that they are dark storehouses, filled with the symbols and metaphors that represent painful memories. In waking life, we repress these memories, but in dreaming life, they come to us as *dream work*, or distorted visions that must be translated into waking and rational terms. Through these translations, we might understand ourselves and our motivations. However, through the act of interpreting our dreams we, indeed, force language on dream material. To force language on dream material is to diminish the desiring relations of dreams and gestures, to make recognizable and conjugal all that is "continually active, necessary, and all-embracing" (Bateson 137). Dreams, then, as purveyors of the powers of the false, do not provide us with representations of who we are, but with affective extensions of who we might be. Dreams deal in opposites or in the powers of the false, powers that show us affective truths—truths outside of the precincts of truth and lying.

The affective truthfulness of dreams reflects a key to my methodology. Like a dream, a literary text cannot be summarized, reduced into other words.

Dreams, then, provide me with an additional model for perceiving the affective events in literary texts. In this orientation, my goal is to read "After Brigitte Bardot" and to demonstrate how it uses the realm of the dream to surpass representation. This story could be, and has been, read for its political messages. However, to read this story for a message is to ignore the zones of indiscernibility that it creates. Reading this story for its affective and intensive compositions can push us past its apparent *resources* of symbolic meanings. We can engage with the *nalunaktuq* of its incommensurable truths.

The story "After Brigitte Bardot" also assembles rhizomatic becomings that take this story beyond the static realms of truth or lying. While this story seems to have a very particular political agenda, its most powerful political forces are its molecular forces of intensities and becomings that draw from the transformative geo/meteorological north and take part in the north's ongoing transformation. Of course, the political *issue* at stake in this story is the European ban on seal products. Bans on seal products have been the root cause behind much poverty in the north. In 1983, Europe established a ban on Canadian whitecoat pelts. Before this ban, close to 75 percent of seal pelts were exported to Europe. After the ban, the market for sealskins collapsed, and, with this collapse, northern hunters lost a major source of income. In 2009, the European Union banned the importation of *any* Canadian *seal products*. This total ban continues presently.[38] "After Brigitte Bardot" refers explicitly to the poverty that followed the 1983 ban, and also to the celebrity protests that led up to the ban. One such protest took

[38] See George Wenzel's *Animal Rights, Human Rights: Ecology, Economy and Ideology in the Canadian Arctic* (1-6).

place in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1977, when the French actress Brigitte Bardot made a personal appearance, alongside Greenpeace activist Paul Watson, to renounce the sealskin industry.[39] Clearly, Ipellie's story connects with this event. Dale Blake confirms this connection, writing:

> Ipellie reaffirms his connection to his people by presenting political issues pertaining to their livelihood. He juxtaposes comedy and politics in "After Brigitte Bardot" (104-13) to speak against outside interference in traditional Inuit hunting practices. As he says, he wished to convey a certain message of protest, and to 'have a little fun with Brigitte Bardot' at the same time. (Interview)

This story, indeed, conveys "a certain message of protest," but so much of this story is *nalunaktuq*, or difficult to comprehend. I suggest that what is difficult to comprehend in this story is also the power in this story: the powers of the false that get at something beyond molar politics to how truth is made.

In the drawing, we find a dapper Inuk male with slicked back hair, a polka-dot sports jacket, a white necktie adorned with a crucifix pattern, and striped dress pants that are tucked into a pair of *kamiks* (traditional skin boots). This dashing man has his arm around a lady whose hair seems to be an unflattering extension of her black fur coat. However, upon closer inspection, we can see that this is not a fur coat at all. The woman's body is the round body of a seal's. The woman's stark, human face pokes out where the seal's face should be.

[39] During Bardot's 1977 visit to Labrador, Watson handcuffs himself to the winch line of a ship and gets into a physical fight with sealers. Bardot makes two more protest trips to Canada, in 1997 and 2006 ("History of Sea Shepard Campaigns for Seals").

Around her fur neck, she wears a delicate crucifix, and on her small flipper, she wears a silver bangle. Lurking behind these two humans is the outline of a devilish seal. I say devilish because this seal has small horns and a devil's tail, and he is about to pummel the Inuk with a large club.

It is in the conjunctions of all of these details that we can escape the precincts of truth and lying. There is no clear message of protest in this picture. Instead we find a complex assemblage of desire, spectacle, and death, via assemblages of religion, bodies in proximity, fashion, and metamorphosis. Notably, the 'skins' of all these characters are all mixed up with each other: woman in seal fur, man in sealskin boots, seal without fur but seemingly walking with the man's boots. The woman's face comes through where a seal's face should be, which shows us her "inner being," something we would not normally be able to see. Ingold explains that "with the head covering removed or retracted, [animals] are known as 'hoodless' (*nasaittuq*)" (*The Perception of the Environment* 122). It is not normally possible to see an animal's motivations and emotions because animals conceal their feelings behind their fur; seeing an animal as hoodless is rare and dangerous because "to witness it 'face-to-face', with its hood removed, one must already have crossed over from the human to the animal domain" (Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment* 123). In *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut*, John Makigaq describes encountering a strange caribou:

> I thought to myself, 'I must have caught a good, different caribou.' I thought that if I skinned it, the other people would see the legs, but as I kept looking at it, its eyes started to move and its lips

> stared to shake. I was starting to get scared. I though to myself that I was just getting spooked, but then the skin of the caribou stared to shake again, from its antlers to all other parts of its body. I must have been staring at it for a long time when I noticed that there were tears forming in its eyes and falling to the ground, and the inside of its mouth started to show. (154)

Makigaq goes on to say that he ran away from this strange creature because seeing it has revealed something special, rare, and terrifying: "an *ijiraq*, a shaman's spirit" (154). Seeing these shape-shifting spirits is extremely dangerous for an ordinary person, but, as I have already noted, via Arnakak, *angakkuit* are "the sensitive ones," who are capable of seeing what ordinary people cannot. In "After Brigitte Bardot," our ability to see this hoodless face parallels the *angakoq's* vision because direct access to such a sight is too terrifying for the average person. The narrator, as a seer and intercessor, is able to access terrifying visions, and his performance (via drawings and stories) of this realm generates multiple and productive truths that go beyond a molar or representational message.

Ipellie gives us a woman who is part seal, but *hoodless* and showing a human face. This vision of it takes us beyond PETA's "I'd rather go naked than wear fur" campaign. For, Ipellie dresses a woman as a seal and a seal as a woman and makes a compound, an assemblage. In *Stories in a New Skin*, Keavy Martin mobilizes the northern trope of "animals wearing their skins" (7) in order to investigate "the ways in which Inuit intellectual traditions might similarly dress in new 'skins' for the purposes of infiltrating the academy—and likewise, in the

ways in which the wrongs of the southern institution might similarly be 're-dressed'" (8). I suggest that Ipellie's depiction of a *hoodless* woman and a *naked* seal can infiltrate southern attitudes regarding sealskins via the assembled affects and intensities connected to wearing another's skin. Such affects might be drawn (desirously) from such fur-related forces as death, warmth, weather, interconnection, smells, fear, poverty, and wealth. The affects drawn from these forces have the capacity to infiltrate the molar politics of the anti-fur protest lobby without resorting to the precincts of truth and lying, right and wrong, moral and immoral.

Through the conceit of the *angakoq's* vision, Ipellie offers readers a glimpse of the terrifying, and this glimpse surpasses our moral presuppositions. He creates a compound, rather than a binary such as human/animal. The woman wears seal, and *is* a seal insofar as she is taking on the traits of the seal, and these traits augment or diminish her capacity to act. And, just as this woman is becoming-seal, the seal is becoming something else: a murderer or a devil. The man wears sealskin boots that appear also to function as the devilish seal's feet (alongside his bottom flippers), creating the illusion that the seal has legs via the man. All of these figures are interconnected through life and death.

Who is the villain here? There isn't one. There are only assemblages. The Inuk wraps his arm around the woman who wears the naked seal's fur and the seal is about to club the Inuk. This circle of sharing and killing is, as Martin says of the trope of *skins*, complex with "connotations of kinship and transformation, and

also of violence and coercion, it represents both the possibility and the discomfort of adaptation" (8). Ipellie's depiction of shared skins demonstrates what Deleuze might call sympathy, for "the assemblage is cofunctioning, it is 'sympathy', symbiosis" (*Dialogues* II 52). As an assemblage, "sympathy is not a vague feeling of respect or of spiritual participation: on the contrary, it is the exertion or the penetration of bodies, hatreds or love, for hatred is also a compound, it is a body, its no good except when it is compounded with what it hates" (*Dialogues* II 52). Ipellie's drawing also compounds Christian symbolism with the seal's horns and tail, but, as it is in the story "When God Sings the Blues," the distinction between God and Satan does not hold in these stories. Like God and Sattaanassee, the figures in this drawing are interconnected beyond sensible separation. In drawing this picture with compounds, with sympathetic assemblages, Ipellie speaks with the Arctic in a collision of desiring relations.

ORIENTATION: "ARCTIC DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES"

"Arctic Dreams and Nightmares" is the title story of Ipellie's collection, and it is a fitting place to conclude this chapter because it is composed of compound images and scenes that demonstrate the impossibility of finality. This story performs a collision of bodies, from which the narrator emerges in new material manifestations that allow him to act in unexpected ways. Furthermore, this story draws on images and themes that have appeared elsewhere in Ipellie's collection, offering us (as dreams do) the past, or other aspects of the collection, without the limits of morality, without the limits of subject and object, and without the limits

of life and death. This story offers us a place in the weather-filled dreams and nightmares of the north, where we can find a lack of grounding in the familiar and an immersion in the powers of the false.

The story is preceded by the image of a compound body that is both man and eagle. The human part of this compound is upside-down, and the face (of the story's narrator) is a variation on the one that accompanies "Self Portrait: Inverse Ten Commandments" (which also appears on the cover of the book). Like the face in "Self Portrait," the image resembles, and is most likely based upon Ipellie's author photo that appears on the back cover. In the author photo, Ipellie's hair fans across clean sheets as he looks up at the camera with a calm expression. Conversely, the hair we see in "Arctic Dreams and Nightmares" appears charged with an electric current, like a zigzag mat or pelt, accented with jagged white lines. This electric hair generates a nightmarish sense of violence, at once uncanny and also palpably real. Jagged white lines open up the torso of the human body as it splits and becomes the body of an eagle. One arm is human (fist clenched), the other is a huge talon. One leg is human, the other an eagle's talon. The depicted creature is a becoming eagle via a complex assemblage of pain, strength, survival, and flight. The narrator's electric hair, his clenched fist, and the shards that fly from his body suggest a form that is dynamic and in transition. Electricity extends from his face and white shards fly from his body, offering us access to his suffering and survival, themes that are explicit in the story.

Throughout "Arctic Dreams and Nightmares" the narrator's physical form emerges in several different manifestations of being and becoming, including

starving, feasting, shrinking, and becoming an eagle. These movements between different physical manifestations blend together in the way that dreams blend, both paratactically and irrationally. This story begins and ends with death: first the death of animals via hunting and then the death of the narrator via a brutal transformation from alcoholic to eagle. This blending—of dream and nightmare, of man and eagle, and of life and death—offers us a way to see beyond binaries, to a state of being that is not *a* dream or nightmare or *a* life or death, but multiple variations of these states that form compounds of man-eagle, dream-nightmare, and life-death.

This story is set in the tundra, where—in an igloo in the dead of winter—the narrator closes his eyes "with the fierce wind wreaking havoc on [his] psyche" (127), and sees terrifying and beautiful visions. The world in this story is *nalunaktuq*. It is difficult to comprehend. It is a force that is sometimes chaotic and sometimes composed. Within this world, life and death blend together and augment the narrator's potential to become other than what he is. The narrator's dreams make his becomings possible, as they slide into each other without logical transitions. This lack of hypotactic logic creates a conduit to the powers of the false, powers that engage with the impossible, with untruths, while also offering vital clarity. The narrator remarks on this dream-clarity, saying "a world that encompasses no dreamers is a world of chaos" (128). In the composed delirium of dreams, the narrator is able to diagnose himself and then restore himself to health. This diagnostic function is evident when the narrator dreams of becoming imperceptible (129). In this dream, he drinks from a strange lake, and becomes

"the incredible shrinking man." As in the Hollywood film of the same title, the narrator continues to get smaller until he is imperceptible to the human eye. Too small to hunt, he lives on the berries and plants of the tundra and muses that he will no longer, ever again, have trouble "relating to k.d. lang" (130). He says, "I was a world unto myself and lived happily ever after" (130). However, this trite, fairy tale ending is questionable because the narrator is cut-off from his field of relations, and the life that is imprisoned in this imperceptible man parallels his isolation from the world. His vegetarianism is a kind of separation from the forces that surround him: the "low shrubs and tiny, intricate flowers in all colours," that he perceives as out-of-reach, as the largest bushes in the world (129).

Just as the narrator's surroundings seem to be out-of-reach, his past likewise seems distant and unreachable. As he roams through tiny flowers the size of bushes, he thinks of his "distant cousins" (130). Thinking of his distant cousins as he becomes imperceptible, the narrator diagnoses his "extraordinary solitude" (130). He says that "even if they were able to find me, I could never relate to them again" (130). With this comment, the narrator diagnoses his sense of separation from both the past and present. However, even as he also evokes a separation from his lineage, he liberates the forces of the past that are imprisoned within him. The narrator is too small to become entangled with his field of relations, so he is cut off and isolated. His diagnosis of his disconnection and his concurrent recognition of his inextricable entanglement with his field of relations is an enactment of the *ethology* of Inuit orthopraxy. Ethology, in the words of Dianne Chisholm, is "an 'immanent' ethics that takes account of how bodies behave in

relation to other bodies in ways more or less beneficial to the 'Life' of their mutual entanglement" ("The Becoming-Animal of Being Caribou" 6). Inuit orthopraxy is correct action or behaviour in relation to the mutual well-being of human and nonhuman beings.

The idea of mutual well-being extends into the final movement of this story, in which the cells of the narrator's body act in a way that produces vitality and new life (131). Here, in this nightmare, a huge eagle breaks violently from the narrator's chest. Reflecting from within the dream, the narrator says:

> What the eagle represented was a caged bird that had been trapped inside my unconscious mind for a millennium. Apparently, in the beginning, it wasn't an eagle at all. It was a mere blood cell that had become extremely disenchanted living through the vessels of my body...the disenchanted cell became unhappy because my body had become unsafe to live in. Hardly any nutrients ever passed through the vessels except ravaging alcohol. The cell was absolutely tired of being drunk and was now extremely afraid of becoming an alcoholic. (132)

In this reading of his own dream, the narrator suggests that there has been a kind of gestational gap between what he became (an alcoholic) and what he might become (an eagle). This gap relates to the powers of the false, or, as William Connelly says, "that which was incipient at an earlier moment, was not enacted when action took a different turn, left a deposit as a gestational force without portfolio, and now jumps from below the threshold of articulation, thought, and

consciousness into the adventure of thought, desire, and action" (64). What is important in this gap is how it combines that which is outside of our control (what has already happened) with the resonances of that moment and allows us to merge the past with a new situation and open up new possibility.

This new possibility is what Deleuze calls Fabulation, and he says that it has the power to create *a people to come*. Deleuze says, "fabulation—the fabulating function—does not consist of imagining or projecting an ego. Rather, it attains these visions, it raises itself to these becomings and powers" (*Essays Critical and Clinical* 227). The aspect of Fabulation that resonates in "Arctic Dreams and Nightmares" is the intra-action of the unarticulated past with present-tense action. Connelly explains this intra-action as a creative collision that happens when the unrealized past collides with present circumstances. In Connelly's words:

> it draws partly upon powers outside our provenance and partly upon what we do with them, is not under the full control of those involved in it. Its agency and our agency become blended together, or better imperfectly fused, helping to show us that we are never consummate agents even when we participate in creative adventures...[situations] are the moments that spur thinking as an encounter between a forgone past and a new situation, opening a possibility that may eventually belong entirely to neither. (64)

The eagle made of disenchanted cells comes from those resonances of the past that collide productively with the actions of the present. The cells that take over

the narrator's body draw on past actions and events and show the narrator that he is not a consummate agent in his ability to transform. The narrator says, "some of the most important cells that I needed to continue living had left me to perish!" (133). However, this is not the end, but the beginning of something entirely new. Within this vision of becoming, the positive and productive powers of the world exceed the limits of reason and certainty. The eagle extracts "from alcohol the life which it contains without drinking...Becoming is loving without alcohol, drugs and madness, becoming sober for a life which is richer and richer" (*Dialogues* II 53). Ipellie's narrator concludes the collection of stories saying, "This was an incarnation of a different eaglekind. Arctic dreams and nightmares—what a world unto itself!" (133)

CONCLUSION

"Arctic Dreams and Nightmares" works as an exemplary purveyor of the false by engaging with paratactic dream material, which offers us "an incarnation of a different eaglekind," a north that is *yet to come*. Ipellie's entire collection can offer us creative collisions that open up to new possibilities, and we can access these possibilities, if we engage with these stories outside of authoritative reading strategies. This chapter has suggested that the *Sedna* cosmology and the practices of traditional *angakkuit* provide a productive model for reading the dream-material of this collection because reading within these models enables us to put aside scripted morality and certainty and to become aware of productive interconnections and entanglements. If we read *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*

according to its interconnections and entanglements, we can move toward an ethology of living and reading, in which the affective events in northern literary texts can help us transform out of the molar forms that hold us.

CONCLUSION

QUVIANAQ: JOY, ICE, AND OUR PROVISIONAL LIVES

> Then I would be lonely and melancholy but suddenly feel happy for no reason. I would start singing 'Joy!" 'Joy!' ['*Quvianaq*!' '*Quvianaq*!'] Just like that. (Ava in *the Journals of Knud Rasmussen)*
>
> The inner—what is it, if not intensified by sky? (David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous* 262)

This project has been an experiment in weather-writing and weather-reading, practices that understand literary texts as active and relational parts of the north. As I have been suggesting throughout this project, there is no dividing line between encoded language and the language of land and sky, only bodies in relation. Life feeds into literature and literature feeds back into life. We could say that life inscribes literature with sensation: this mode of perceiving literature is particularly relevant in the north, where weather inscribes cosmology, epistemology, and practice. In the north, lives are immersed in the medium of extreme weather, which has the capacity to build *isuma*, to deterritorialize scripted morality and certainty through productive interconnection and alignment. This deterritorialization is a movement, a disorganization of hierarchized structures that is not exactly a *return* to the past, but an extension or enactment of the entanglements of the north, past, present, and future. The becomings-other in northern literary texts can offer us a place in the conscionable etiquette of the north because they connect us with the cosmo/geo/meteorological forces that

permeate so much of actual life in the north. Spirituality, art, and ecology are one, and all of these are permeated by weather.

Gretel Ehrlich's *Arctic Heat* is a poem cycle that is permeated with northern weather. These connected poems do not reflect on the idea of weather, via a distant observer. Rather, Ehrlich composes lines that allow us to affectively perceive weather. An excerpt from one passage reads:

> Brendon cuts a large hole in ice so
> seals can visit us in the night.
> From my bed I peer down
> into empires of turquoise,
> past walls of white to where ice ends and
> blue becomes liquid darkness...
> This is the eye into the universe
> that has gone past its own seeing. (26)

Seeing through the medium of ice and cold water, here the eye "has gone past its own seeing" and become imperceptible, which is to say it has moved outside of the semantics of individual subjectivity to a place where *meaning* is collective and more about connections, flows, and processes than it is about a consolidated, molar unity. Release from this molar unity is what Michel Serres calls "deviation from equilibrium," which is a departure from the monotony of being. As Serres says, "If we had only the principle of identity, we would be mute, motionless, passive, and the world would have no existence" (*Genesis* 22). In the north, fixed identity does not cohere, because the north is vast, volatile, and full of life. It

pushes humans into constant movement and new adaptations that help stave off molar configurations of the self and molar ways of understanding life. As Ehrlich says in *This Cold Heaven*, "Everything in the Arctic is provisional. The ice and our lives" (28). The joy that I have felt in writing this project and being in the world with this project has come through most intensely when I have palpably felt my life as provisional and wrapped up in the forces that surround me. I have felt this joy while reading the texts in this project; that is, I have been inscribed by the provisional forces of northern weather, which writes itself, line after line, not in codification, but in sensation.

In each of the previous three chapters, we have endeavoured to consider northern weather in its porous relation to northern life and to extend the productive consequences of extreme weather into literature's affects, becomings, and intensities. The powers of northern weather are in its forcefulness, its capacity to inundate us with our own sense of smallness, to reorganize our fixed plans, and to reward systems of cooperation and reciprocity. The forcefulness of *Sila*, the wisdom of *isuma,* and the reciprocity of *Sedna* demonstrate an understanding of the north that is relational and contingent. With the help of these cosmologies, we can come to understand the north as something that emerges in as a part of our actions. Such an understanding can help us become more aware of our responsibility as readers, since our reading practices engage in becomings that affect the ways in which the north is materialized. A Northern Textual Ecology works with the above cosmologies in order demonstrate practices of writing and

reading that do not gaze from afar toward a mythogenic copy of the north; rather, these practices emerge through improvisational responses to weather.

I have written this project from my own relative position as a student, a writer of stories and poems, a person who grew up in the sub-arctic, and a person who was raised to believe in absolutes; but my earliest lessons in inhabiting my own corporeality and becoming molecular also happened in northern weather. I would like to conclude this project with my own story of weather and how that weather affected me, on a windy day in March, in a community called Bear Canyon.

This story takes place on a particular morning, when I was still a child in elementary school, and our Member of the Legislative Assembly Grant Notley came to make an announcement.

I didn't understand what the announcement was at the time, and I'm still not sure what it was. But I do remember Grant Notley coming to our school. Grant Notley was the only New Democrat Party MLA in the province at that time. He was very respected by the people in my community, even though most of them didn't vote for him. He died tragically when the small plane he was travelling in crashed in a storm in 1984, but he is still one of the most famous and most loved Albertans ever. There's even a park in Edmonton named after him. I like to walk through it and think about the day he came to our school.

That day, my teacher said: "It will be a great honour for us to host our Member of the Legislative Assembly for Spirit River-Fairview." I sat in my desk and looked out the long side-windows.

He hadn't arrived yet. No cars or trucks or were out there, spinning up clouds of gravel. But, for a few seconds, a surprise whirlwind of snow and spring dust diffused the sun, and it looked like headlights coming toward the school. Or maybe I really did see headlights, because, when I shut my eyes, counted to ten, and opened them again, I could see the figure of Grant Notley.

We filed outside to meet him on the wet grass, next to the orange snow fence and the main road. Patches of dented and dusty snow lay around us, and the run-off water was rushing through a culvert. We were standing there, in front of the school, with the flag pole on its giant cement block.

Grant Notley stood with his back to the east. His hair caught the wind and animated his head. Being one of the smaller children, I was at the front of the group, and from the sharp angle of my perspective, I could just see the sky and a corner of the blowing flag behind his head. He looked down on me and smiled, and there was a little gap between his front teeth. With an exceptional voice, he said "This is an important time in history...always remember."

Over in the ditch, a cattail burst and the taupe fluff went flying, landing on the melting-snow water, shifting out to the road, lifting up and catching on our jackets.

Two long, black cats came out of the teacherage, next to the school. I would have liked to have called out to them. The smells of all that wet grass and those old leaves and all of the mice who must have died under the snow in the winter fermented in us, like fizzing pop. Days were getting longer. Water was running in the ditches.

Grant Notley's soft, brown hair caught the wind and animated his head. I looked up at him: his face was optimistic, though I'm not sure why. Something important was happening right then, at that precise moment in history.

Is there anyone left who can remember exactly what he said? We all stood there, outside of our little L-shaped school that seemed official and permanent. "Always remember," he said, as the velvet cattail fluff was blowing off of the bare reeds and floating through the sky. We were all listening to Grant Notley, thinking about all of the things that we could do with our future. Some people came out of the teacherage, but I couldn't see what they were doing. They were probably calling for the cats or something, or they were watching the cattails shaking.

"Always remember," Grant Notley told us. And I know what he said was important because my teacher was watching him and her eyes were fixed and wide and curious.

It was the first time we'd met a great and powerful man, and his clothes were beige and smooth. He didn't have jeans with a snuff can in them, or snap buttons, or pens and toothpicks in his shirt pocket. I was watching his clean hair lifting in the wind. "Always remember," he said.

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