# Claiming Animals, Claiming Sovereignty:
# Animal Welfare, Indigeneity, and Sovereignty in the Canadian Eastern Arctic

by

Brandon Kerfoot

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Department of English and Film Studies
University of Alberta

**Abstract**

This dissertation examines a series of case studies in the politics and semiotics of animal welfare, Indigeneity, and sovereignty in the Canadian Eastern Arctic from 1950 to 2017. Arctic animals such as seals, sled dogs, wolves, and polar bears often become the focus of Canadian animal welfare activism, fundraising, and policy, a focus that quickly becomes conflict, for these animals are central to Inuit hunting and social relations, whereas many Southern Canadians have never encountered them. Drawing on Frank Tester and Peter Kulchyski's analysis of the twentieth-century welfare state and animal management in *Tammarniit (Mistakes)* and *Kiumajut (Talking Back)* respectively, I argue that in contemporary literature and politics, various politicized groups make covert sovereignty claims as they assert kinship with arctic animals. This research exposes the *animal welfare state*, which formed in the late twentieth century to circumvent Indigenous activism and continue colonial policies under the guise of concern for animals.

This project defines and analyzes the appropriated meanings that sustain the animal welfare state. Deploying Roland Barthes' analysis of myth, I develop a semiotic framework that addresses the movements and barriers between Inuit speculative fiction, environmental and animal welfare activism, and political documents, and I contribute to the fields of critical animal studies and Indigenous literary studies by identifying the common structure by which seemingly disparate groups make legitimacy claims. By exposing the mechanics and pressure points of the animal welfare state's mythological structure, I also show how its apparent resilience belies a deep instability and vulnerability.

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# Introduction

## The Animal Welfare State

This dissertation examines a series of case studies in the intersecting politics and semiotics of animal welfare, indigeneity, and sovereignty in the Canadian Eastern Arctic from 1950 to 2017. [1] Arctic animals such as seals, sled dogs, wolves, and polar bears often become the focus of Canadian animal welfare activism, fundraising, and policy, a focus that quickly becomes conflict, for these animals are central to Inuit hunting and social relations, whereas many Southern Canadians have never encountered them. Drawing on Frank Tester and Peter Kulchyski's analysis of the twentieth-century welfare state and animal management in *Tammarniit (Mistakes)* and *Kiumajut (Talking Back)* respectively, I argue that in contemporary literature and politics, various politicized groups make covert sovereignty claims as they assert kinship with arctic animals, collecting comprising the *animal welfare state*, which formed in the late twentieth century to circumvent Indigenous activism and continue colonial policies under the guise of concern for animals.

This project also defines and analyzes the appropriated meanings that sustain the animal welfare state. Deploying Roland Barthes' analysis of myth, I develop a semiotic framework that addresses the movements and barriers between Inuit speculative fiction, environmental and animal welfare activism, and political documents. By exposing the mechanics and pressure points of the animal welfare state's mythological structure, I also show how its apparent resilience belies a deep instability and vulnerability.

[1] The Canadian Eastern Arctic includes Nunavut, Nunavik (Inuit lands in Northern Québec) and Nunatsiavut (Inuit lands in Newfoundland and Labrador).

Consider, for example, when People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) used the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics as a platform to protest Canada's seal hunt by releasing the image of a stylized inunnguaq (plural, inunnguat)[2] beating an already bloodied seal pup with a club. The campaign takes up the Vancouver Olympics logo, which depicts an inunnguaq replicated in the colours of the Olympic rings, though here it stands in for a sealer as it holds a club over its head and leans forward to put its full weight into the swing. Its mouth is wide open, like it is bellowing out a perverse war cry as it delivers the fatal blow. The seal pup is made to look helpless in the face of this predator. The pup's tiny body faces the viewer, as though it were appealing to us for help before being overtaken. It twists its head to face the inunnguaq, its mouth gaping with horror. Beneath the gruesome scene is the five-ringed Olympic logo dripping blood from the red ring. The visual parallel between this dripping blood and the pooling blood beneath the seal pup links the Olympics to the seal hunt: to support the Olympic games and the decision to hold them in Vancouver is to support the cruelty in Canada's back yard.

The symbolic force of the inunnguaq operates in at least three contexts: as a marker used by Inuit who construct them in their territory, as a signifier for Canada in the logo for the Vancouver Olympics, and as a signifier for seal-clubbing in the PETA campaign. Regarding the first of these contexts, Inuit construct inunnguat to communicate information about the land and the events that occurred at the site. In *Tukiliit: The Stone People Who Lived in the Wind*, Norman Hallendy explains the history and function of various stone markers, noting how they have

[2] Here and elsewhere, I used the standardized spelling taken from *Ulirnaisigutiit: An Inuktitut-English Dictionary of Northern Quebec, Labrador and Eastern Arctic Dialects* (86), and I adopt other spellings when quoting directly from other sources.

become conflated and commodified by Euro-settlers.[3] He clarifies that *inuksuk*[4] (plural, inuksuit) is frequently taken to be a categorical term that includes a variety of meaningful stone sculptures, although a more appropriate term would be *tukiliit*, "that which has meaning" (28). An inuksuk, "that which acts in the capacity of a human" (60), is a "helper" that communicates the bounties and dangers of the land, offering information about terrain, navigation, or the locations of animals, and that sometimes functions as a hunting aid that herds caribou to desired locations (61-2).

Inuksuit take a variety of forms, but the human shape is not among them—these markers are called *innunguait*, "the likeness of a person" (28). An innunquaq "may be a doll, a small stone shaped like a human or a large figure constructed of stones and placed upon the landscape" (28-29), and it carries a relative few meanings:

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[3] I prefer to use the term "Euro-settler" in my criticism of colonial power, though in the Eastern Arctic "Southerner" is often more popular. In the introduction to an interview with Mini Aodla Freeman, author of *Life Among the Qallunaat*, and the editorial team of the 2015 edition, Keavy Martin, Julie Rak, and Norma Dunning, interviewers Rebecca Fredrickson, Brandon Kerfoot, Orly Lael Netzer, and Katherine Meloche clarify that "'the South' is a geographic location below the treeline, where non-Inuit modes of perception and action create unfamiliar codes and rules of decorum" (112). (Since I have been behind the curtain, I can confirm that this definition is Fredrickson's). A "Southerner" is therefore someone from the South, where non-Inuit ways of knowing take prominence. This term has the benefit of centring Inuit modes of perception, and in this way, it makes sense to use it in the context of a project about the Eastern Arctic. The disadvantage of the term, however, is that it creates a uniform assemblage of Non-Inuit in the South. In this project, I am critical of the Canadian settler state, of which I am a part, but it is important to clarify that this nation-state derives from British and French colonizers and their descendants. I would not argue that, to take an example, a first-generation Chinese-Vietnamese Canadian is implicated in the colonization of the Eastern Arctic in the same way that I am, as a British-French settler whose most recent family immigration was three generations ago (from France) and whose family, therefore, was in Canada at the time. Southern Indigenous nations should most definitely not be lumped into such criticisms. For these reasons, I find it productive to direct my criticisms specifically at Euro-settlers, which I take here to be even more refined than the term might suggest, targeting specifically English and French colonizers and their descendants. For similar reasons, I rarely use the term Inuktitut term *qallunaat*, which is often translated as "white people" and is often assumed to mean literally, "people who pamper their eyebrows." According to Mini Aodla Freeman, however, the term refers to domineering attitudes: "The word implies humans who humans who pamper or fuss with nature, of materialistic habit. Avaricious people" (86). The term "qallunaat" importantly centres Inuit perceptions of colonizers, though it, too, does not quite capture what I am critiquing in this project, and I therefore maintain my use of the term "Euro-settler."

[4] Here and elsewhere, I follow scholarly convention by italicizing words when referring to them as words and when they name unique concepts. I also follow the trend of italicizing foreign words, such as Latin terms. When I italicize Inuktitut words, it is for the former reason; Inuktitut and other Indigenous languages are not foreign to Canada.

> During the nineteenth century, Inuit who lived in areas visited by Scottish whalers would construct *innunguait* in the spring to let the whalers know Inuit were nearby. Often the whalers took local Inuit hunters aboard their ship to act as pilots through the shoal-infested waters of the Arctic coast. In more recent times, an Inuk (Inuktitut for 'person') might erect an innunguaq at a place he loved dearly or, more rarely, as a memorial to a cherished person. In the days of bows and arrows, young hunters made innunguait out of snow to use as targets. Shamans also made innunguait from snow and other materials at hand, though their purpose was more sinister: like voodoo figures, the innunguait were likenesses of specific people, which the shaman then cursed. The Inuit believed these actions could cause great harm, perhaps even death. (29-30)

Despite these finite meanings, the inunnguaq has come to be widely mistermed an inuksuk and taken as a symbol for the Arctic, used to sell unrelated products and events (30).

Hallendy pushes against appropriated versions of tukiliit by foregrounding Inuit ways of understanding them, which involves contexts lost in appropriated versions. Describing how to interpret inuksuit, he writes:

> each inuksuk's unique shape is its primary message. For the Inuit, the faculty of visualization—being able to record in the mind every detail of the landscape and the objects upon it—used to be essential to survival. Part of this skill was the ability to memorize the location of placed in relations to one another, and in stretches of featureless landscape, an inuksuk was a great helper. Skilled hunters memorized the shapes of all the inuksuit known to the elders, as well as their locations and the reasons they had been put there. Without these three essential pieces of information, the messages the inuksuit contained where incomplete. (88)

Whereas appropriated versions of tukiliit may be read as signifiers for a variety of products and ideologies, these local readings require contextual information that can only be attained by careful study of the land and by maintaining close relationships with those who built the tukiliit in the region. Such contexts become obscured in appropriated versions like the Vancouver Olympics logo, which appeals primarily to the symbolic vitality of the image.

Roland Barthes' delineation of myth offers a productive framework to articulate and interpret such strings of appropriation. In "Myth Today," Barthes analyzes myth formally, as a type of speech, rather than as an object or concept (109): myth is a *second-order semiological system* wherein the first-order sign becomes the second-order signifier (114-5). Here, Barthes draws on Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, which defines the linguistic sign as a link between a concept and sound pattern, which Saussure terms the *signification* and *signal* respectively (66), though in Barthes these terms are transmuted to *signified* and *signifier*. In myth, a complete sign is repositioned to function as a signifier for a new, second-order sign. To take the example of the inunnguaq, the first-order sign system is the meaning that it holds to the Inuit who build them and rely on them to communicate information, and the second-second order sign system is the Vancouver Olympics logo, which uses the inunnguaq sign as a signifier for Canada. As the PETA campaign demonstrates, this process can continue *ad infinitum*, as the Vancouver Olympics logo is adapted to signify Canadian-bred cruelty against seals, which is itself vulnerable to re-signification by other myth-makers.

To distinguish between the two semiotic orders of myth, Barthes terms the first-order sign system *language* and the second-order sign language *myth*, a metalanguage used to speak about *language* (115). In the first-order system, the signifier is *meaning* and the sign retains the name *sign*; in the second-order system, the signifier is *form* and the sign is *signification*; and each of

the signified are *concepts*, undistinguished because they are not in competition (117). The distinction between *language* and *myth* is significant for Barthes because Saussure is clear that "*the linguistic sign is arbitrary*. There is no internal connexion, for example, between the idea 'sister' and the French sequence of sounds *s-ö-r* which acts as its signal" (*Course* 67, emphasis in original). Linguistic meaning derives not from the intentions of the individual speaker but rather from convention, or collective habit (68). Myth, in contrast, is deliberate. Drawn to the symbolic vitality of the first-order sign, myth-makers deliberately reshape it to their own ends, sometimes against the grain of conventional use. In this way, "the fundamental character of the mythical concept is to be *appropriated*" (Barthes 119, emphasis in original).

The crucial component of this appropriation is the overlap between *language* and *myth*, where the same referent functions as both *meaning* and *form*. Here, Barthes complements Saussure's formal linguistic analysis with a discussion of historical contingency: *meaning* has already built a linguistic signification, rich with its own history and symbolic function. When *meaning* becomes *form* in *myth*, it leaves behind this historical contingency and is assigned a new one—in the case of the Vancouver Olympics Logo, the inunnguaq now evokes the history of Canada. Importantly, the *meaning*'s historical contingency is not destroyed, only displaced: "the essential point in all this is that the form does not suppress the meaning, it only impoverishes it, it puts it at a distance, it holds it at one's disposal" (118). Barthes calls *meaning*'s history a "tamed richness" that can constantly be drawn on for nourishment in the service of the *myth* (118): because *meaning* already has a long history of repetition, the second-order concept can be assigned to it and, through this one gesture, spread out over this vast expanse of established signification (120). In this way, the myth constantly flips between two modes of signification:

> In myth, the first two terms [signifier and signified] are perfectly manifest (unlike what happens in other semiological systems): one is not 'hidden' behind the other, they are both given *here* (and not one here and the other there). However paradoxical it may seem, *myth hides nothing*: its function is to distort, not to make disappear. (121, emphasis in original)

In this sense, the Vancouver Olympics logo uses the inunnguaq to refer to both Canadian nationalism *and* to tukiliit—indeed, it is the history and significance of the innunquaq that makes it a suitable sign for myth-making. In terms of power dynamics, the *signification* takes prevalence over the *sign*, as the political and discursive authority of the Canadian nation state overwhelms Inuit signs. In terms of semiology, there is no mechanism that privileges one meaning above the other in the myth: both meanings are always present, and although myth may seek to distort *language* to its own end, it does not—cannot—undermine or destroy it, for such a destruction would unravel the myth. This overlap is therefore a site of ambiguity and ambivalence, as the myth relies upon the meaning it appropriates, even as it distorts this meaning for its own ends.

Contemporary scholars of critical animal studies and Native studies have drawn on semiological definitions to analyze their politico-historical case studies. In *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*, Chickasaw scholar Jodi A. Byrd evokes a mythological structure when she analyzes *Indianness* as the necessary, though spectral, figure in American empire upon which nation-building discourses rely but refuse to name (xix). In her expansive analysis, Byrd charts the genealogy of "the Indian" in the political history of the United States and Hawai'i, and in intellectual projects like poststructuralism and literary criticisms of Caliban in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. She argues that

> U.S. cultural and political preoccupations with indigeneity and the reproduction of Indianness serve to facilitate, justify, and maintain Anglo-American hegemonic mastery over the significations of justice, democracy, law, and terror. Through nineteenth- and early twentieth-century logics of territorial rights and conquest that have now morphed into late twentieth- and early twenty-first century logics of civil rights and late capitalism, the United States has used executive, legislative, and juridical means to make 'Indian' those peoples and nations who stand in the way of U.S. military and economic desires. (xx)

Byrd identifies "the Indian" as the term of negative comparison that enables American territorials claim and political legitimacy, but her language of the "hegemonic mastery over the significations of justice, democracy, law, and terror" is telling here, for it uses semiological terminology to articulate the role of "the Indian" as the ontological premise for these projects, a terminology to which she returns in other key moments of her analysis.

For example, Byrd addresses primitivist figurations of *Indianness* in poststructuralism. In Derrida's *Writing and Difference*, this figuration takes the form of the "tattooed savages," borrowed from Gustave Flaubert, that "play on the edges of Derrida's text as signs of raw, primal irrationality, primitivism, and myths of dominance" (8); this configuration distorts the history and significance of Indigenous peoples and their tattoos, re-assigning them collectively as a flattened signifier for primitive Indigeneity. Similarly, in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, "[t]he "Indian" becomes an event, an 'alien,' instilling the presignifying semiotic into the despotic signifying regime" (17). Further criticizing this recourse to primitivist configurations of indigeneity, she writes,

> The Indian is simultaneously, multiply, a colonial, imperial referent that continues to produce knowledge about the indigenous as "primitive" and "savage" otherness within

> poststructuralist and postcolonial theory and philosophy. As a philosophical sign, the Indian is in transit, the field through which the presignifying polyvocality is re/introduced into the signification regime, and signs begin to proliferate through a series of becomings—becoming-animal, becoming-woman, becoming-Indian, becoming-multiplicity—that serves all regimes of signs. *And* the Indian is a ghost in the system, an errant or virus that disrupts the virtual flows by stopping them, redirecting them, or revealing them to be what they are and will have been all along: colonialist. (19)

In these passages, "imperial referent," "sign of primitivism," and presignifying semiotic" each gesture to a semiotic reading, made all the more cutting because she is analyzing their use among poststructuralist thinkers. The Indian sign here operates as the cornerstone of myth. In the first order, "the Indian" is polyvocal, simultaneously referring to multiple Indigenous nations with distinct histories, legal systems, and intellectual and spiritual histories; in the second order, this vast network signifies "primitive" otherness, focused on whatever counterpoint a scholar needs it to be—pre-writing, pre-signification, or pre-politics. Since the flow of meaning must pass through this appropriated Indian sign to reach its desired signification, any meaning that follows will be irrevocably colonial in its understanding of Indigenous peoples as specters and referents. But this flow of meaning also positions the Indian sign as a point of resistance, for here signification can be altered and redirected: Flaubert's and Derrida's "tattooed savage," for instance, becomes disrupted when tattoos are treated not as reference points for primitiveness but are taken up in the context of specific cultural practices, which position them within a semiological order more focused on living Indigenous peoples than on Europeans' impoverished imaginings of them. The ghost becomes corporeal again. The disruptive potential of the Indian

sign is exhaustive, for, as Byrd meticulously shows, it is a critical component in all colonial projects.

Byrd offers three conceptual tools to help readers move beyond such reductive sign systems: transit, cacophony, and parallax viewing. Evoking the transits of Venus across the sun in 1761 and 1769, and how they motivated European movement/conquest across the globe to chart the celestial events, she writes,

> As I use the term here, transit as a concept suggests the multiple subjectivities and subjugations put into motion and made to move through notions of injury, grievance, and grievability as the United States deploys a paradigmatic Indianness that functions as the transit of U.S. empire arises from how the United States was constituted from the start, not just in the scientific racisms and territorial mappings inaugurated through Enlightenment voyages for knowledge, but in the very constitutionality that produced the nation." (xxi)

Picking up on Byrd's recourse to semiology in her analysis, I take *Indianness*' "transit of empire" to mark a route along a multi-tiered semiological system that always passes through a mythological configuration of "the Indian" as signifier for primitive indigeneity, and that always arrives at a signification that supports Euro-settler empire—in Byrd's analysis, the United States, and in my analysis, Canada. In this way, Byrd identifies the common myth that brings together a wide range of intellectual and political projects supported by the transit of empire.

This myth, however, only accounts for one register of Byrd's analysis, for throughout her study she becomes invested in the myriad of significations that fall outside of the mythological binary established by the transit of empire. Developing a strategy to disrupt hierarchical and appropriative theorizations of imperialism, she posits that "one such strategy is to read the cacophonies of colonialism as they are rather than attempt to hierarchize them into coeval or

causal order" (xvii). In this way, Byrd evokes a mythological structure when she identifies the transit of empire, yet she does not name this structure as such to avoid binding herself to it, which would risk centering settler-colonial appropriations of indigeneity. Instead, she identifies and embodies *parallax viewing*, which requires constant movement and analytical readjustment as scholars measure up what they see against known standards while accounting for the way that "colonialist discourse functions as a distortive effect within critical theory as it apprehends 'Indianness,' where shifts across space and location serve to distort further whatever trace of the Real lingers and make it even less likely to link such moments back to their discursive colonialist core" (30). Here, Byrd separates her analysis of *Indianness* and the transit of empire, which she positions as diagnostic (31), from her endorsement of parallax viewing, which disrupt this transit by focusing on Indigenous peoples rather than on "the Indian" as discursive mechanism. Similarly, I deploy Barthes' mythology descriptively, as a diagnostic tool that helps to illuminate the structures and points of connection between seemingly disparate texts and contexts.

In a structurally similar mode as *The Transit of Empire*, Nicole Shukin takes up semiology to articulate the role of animality and animal signs in the construction of nation. In *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times*, Shukin interrogates the animal sign's overlap of material and symbolic meaning, which she ties to her larger analysis of the intersecting biopolitics of capital and animal management. In her opening vignette, she analyzes a Roger's advertisement in Maclean's magazine in 2002, which portrays Canada as a dissected beaver above the caption, "Canada: In Depth" (2). The beaver, she argues, already functions as an iconic symbol for Canada because it was instated as Canada's official emblem in 1975 in reminiscence of the fur trade (3). She writes,

> The Canadian beaver constitutes a powerful nodal point within a national narrative that nostalgically *remembers* the material history of the fur trade as a primal scene in which Native trappers, French coureurs de bois, and English traders collaboratively trafficked in animal capital, at the same time as it advantageously *forgets*, through the symbolic violence of occupying the semiotic slot of indigeneity, the cultural and ecological genocides of the settler-colonial nation form mediating capital's expansion. (4, emphasis in original)

She goes on to write that animal signs become powerful alibi for a "particularist political ideology" because "'the animal,' more arguably more than any other signifier by virtue of its singular mimetic capaciousness. . . operates as hinge allowing powerful discourses to flip or vacillate between literal and figurative economies of sense" (5). To use Barthes' language, this hinge directs the flow of meaning to the first-order sign, which brings into focus the first-order signified—the material history of beavers in the fur trade—and the second-order signifier, the beaver as national icon. In this instance, the flow also distorts colonial violence against Indigenous peoples by filling the symbolic slot of indigeneity with an indigenous animal rather than Indigenous peoples.

In this regard, the beaver as an animal sign participates in what Byrd terms the transit of empire, for it constructs indigeneity as a figuration that upholds the settler-colonial nation-state. In light of this overlap, I would argue with Shukin's superlative assertion that animal signs are the most successful at flipping between figurative and literal modes and at naturalizing political ideologies. From a semiological vantage point, both animal signs and signs of indigeneity function as hinges that direct the flow of meaning within the mythologies they uphold. To take the example of the Vancouver Olympics logo, the inunnguaq functions mythologically in the

same capacity as does Maclean's beaver: it transfers the symbolic force of indigeneity to settler Canada, thereby naturalizing and legitimizing Canadian claims to territory. Shukin's slide between the beaver's animality and indigeneity further attests to this structural similarity, which is why I introduce her work here, despite the inunnguaq not being an animal. I will return to this overlap in my articulation of the *animal welfare state* in chapter two.

In Shukin's overarching analysis, the animal sign operates structurally in ways that are reminiscent of Barthes' myth, though Shukin distances herself from semiological frameworks, to a degree. She offers *rendering* as a concept to articulate and think through the movements between literal and figurative modes, for it draws on a double-meaning that "signifies both the mimetic act of making a copy, that is, reproducing or interpreting an object in linguistic, painterly, musical, filmic, and other media. . . *and* the industrial boiling down and recycling of animal remains" (20, emphasis in original). She positions this double-entendre as a mechanism to avoid becoming reductively materialist or reductively culturalist, a risk that comes with her Marxist materialist framework (25-6). This risk, she argues, is more manageable than the risk of semiological approaches, which fold social space into linguistic codes:

> Following from Saussure's claim that "*language is a form and not a substance*," semiological approaches that read capitalism strictly as an economy of signifiers conflate an economic logic of exchange value with a logic of linguistic value conceived as empty and formal, one in which the contingent 'substance' of the sign is reduced to irrelevance. (26, emphasis in original)

While Shukin here articulates a scepticism of semiological frameworks, she returns to semiological terminology immediately after eschewing it. She writes,

> I would like to propose "distortion" as the form that a dialectical practice inspired by the double entendre of rendering might take once it recasts itself in the mode of immanent critique, relinquishing the possibility of a clear oppositional vantage point. Distortion, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, involves a "change in the form of (an electrical transmission) during transmission, amplifications, etc." Distortion disrupts what Debray calls a telecom model of "*painless transmission*" by routing the semiotic vector of an animal sign through a material site of rendering. . . Like Mary Pratt's notion of "*code-switching*," *distortion* connotes a strategic switching back and forth between rhetorical and carnal modes of production of animal capital with the aim of interimplicating and crossing their signals. (27, emphasis in original)

Although Shukin turns to the *Oxford English Dictionary* to explain her understanding of *distortion*, her definition is consistent with Barthes' use of the same term. When articulating the relation of *deformation* that unites the concept of myth to its meaning, Barthes writes,

> In myth the meaning is distorted by the concept. Of course, this distortion is possible only because the form of the myth is already constituted by a linguistic meaning. In a simple system of language, the signified cannot distort anything at all because the signifier, being empty, arbitrary, offers no resistance to it. But here, everything is different: the signifier has, so to speak, two aspects: one full, which is the meaning. . . one empty, which is the form. . . What the concept distorts is of course what is full, the meaning. . . but this distortion is not an obliteration: the lion and the negro [and the inunnguaq] remain here, the concept needs them; they are half-amputated, they are deprived of memory, not of existence: they are at once stubborn, silently rooted here, and garrulous, a speech wholly at

> the service of the concept. The concept, literally, deforms, but it does not abolish the meaning; a word can perfectly render this contradiction: it alienates it. (122-3)

I take Shukin's claim that "*distortion* connotes a strategic switching back and forth between rhetorical and carnal modes of production of animal capital" to correspond to Barthes' articulation of how the concept distorts meaning by alternating between meaning and form. This parallel is further strengthened by Barthes' chosen analogy of the turnstile, which, like *rendering*, emphasizes the movement between modes of signification: "the signification of the myth is constituted by a sort of constantly moving turnstile which presents alternatively the meaning of the signifier and its form, a language-object and metalanguage, a purely signifying and a purely imagining consciousness" (123). So, too, are Shukin and Barthes aligned in their view of alibi. Barthes writes, "Myth is a *value*, truth is no guarantee for it; nothing prevents it from being a perpetual alibi: it is enough that the signifier has two sides for it always to have an 'elsewhere" at its disposal" (123). He continues, "there is never any contradiction, conflict, or split between the meaning and the form: they are never at the same place" (123). In this way, animal signs are mythological: when Shukin uses the language of *rendering* and alibi to argue that the animal sign strategically alternates meaning between figurative and material modes, she echoes Barthes' analysis of the *turnstile* that alternates between meaning and content, first-order and second-order sign systems.

I do not identify these similarities in the spirit of exposé, but rather to show the structural parallels between the analyses. Although Shukin distances herself from semiology, she does not go far: she may do away with some of semiology's vocabulary (but not all, as the term *animal sign* confirms), but she draws structurally on semiological analysis to solve the problem that supposedly it created. Shukin's shift from semiology to Marxist materialism allows her to focus

productively on questions of biopolitics, but I dwell on myth in this study because it shows the similarities between seemingly disparate analysis, such as Shukin's *animal sign* and Byrd's *indianness*, while also providing the flexibility to ride the turnstile between different sign systems, opening up pathways between the various contexts and textual forms with which I engage in this project.

One such pathway connects language with social space, which, in Shukin's view, risks becoming overgrown in semiology. Although Saussure's sign indeed focuses on form and codes in a way that treats specific political and social contexts as examples at best, Barthes myth focuses at least as much on social forces as on language structures, since it homes in on instances of appropriation. As Barthes clarifies, "[t]his is the case with mythology: it is a part of semiology inasmuch as it is a formal science, and of ideology inasmuch as it is an historical science: it studies ideas-in-form" (112). This project studies such "ideas-in-form," and, as I will show, the pairing of semiotics with social analysis is productive because the intersection of animality and indigeneity in Canadian political and social life is mythological.

**The Animal Welfare State and Arctic Sovereignty**

If Barthes' analysis of myth identifies the form of the *animal welfare state*, then Peter Kulchyski and Frank Tester are most influential in identifying the ideas to which this state appeals, for the *animal welfare state* does not emerge in the late twentieth century as Athena from the head of Zeus; it is an adaptation of the mid-twentieth century *welfare state* that Kulchyski and Tester identify. In *Tammarniit (Mistakes): Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic 1939-63*, they argue that in the 1940s to early 1950s, the Government of Canada actively promoted Inuit hunting and traditional economies to avoid dependency on the government (7). In this mindset, the

government strategically neglected Inuit when the fur trade declined during this time. Slowly, the government mindset shifted, and administrators intervened to expand social services in the Arctic, resulting in a series of policies that regulated Inuit (7). Tester and Kulchyski note that these government interventions and relocations in the Eastern Arctic operated under the umbrella of welfare policies (6), and they argue that the racism of the welfare state took on a humanitarian guise as the federal government imagined itself to bring housing, education, and health care to the Arctic in the spirit of benevolence (xi). This argument exposes the alibi that allows Canada to celebrate its image as a multicultural, peace-keeping nation even as it abuses, relocates, and kills Inuit.

One of the common threads in these welfare initiatives was the federal government's mass relocation of Inuit. During this time, the Canadian government encouraged and sometimes coerced Inuit to relocate to permanent settlements, erected around whaling stations, trading posts, and military installations.[5] I will return to this centralization in chapter two, which addresses the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's (RCMP) mass slaughter of Inuit dogs that accompanied the move to settlements. The Indian Act (1920) made it mandatory that "Eskimo" (Inuit) and "Indian" (status First Nations) children be taken, sometimes forcibly, to residential schools where they were provided with a diluted Euro-settler education while being dispossessed

[5] Centralization in the Eastern Arctic is almost unanimously regarded as a coercive relocation. In *Arctic Migrants / Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic*, David Damas speaks against this position, configuring centralization as a natural extension of the long history of whaling and trading in the Arctic. Damas sets out to comment on a conflict: Inuit testify that they were coerced into moving to the settlements, and the Government of Canada insists that the migrations were voluntary. Though he claims to weigh in on a conflict between two parities, he falls into a familiar scholarly trap when he regards written texts as more authoritative that oral testimonies. As a result, he researches government documents and archival materials extensively while ignoring oral Inuit knowledge, and the resulting book reads like a government press release.

from their lands, families, language, and culture.[6] Inuit with tuberculosis were separated from their families and sent to hospitals and sanatoria in the South for treatment.[7]

While the federal government relocated some Inuit in the name of welfare, others were moved to prevent their dependency on it. In the 1950s, the Government of Canada issued a series of "experiments" where they rounded up Inuit from areas they determined to be overpopulated and moved them to the high Arctic. These high Arctic relocations differ from the wide-spread centralizations throughout the Arctic: the centralization initiative consolidated Inuit from the many small camps in a given area into a large, permanent settlement built around an existing settler outpost, whereas in the "experimental" high Arctic relocations, the federal government moved eight Inuit families from Inukjuak, in Northern Québec, to Grise Fiord on Ellesmere Island and Resolute on Cornwallis Island, at the northernmost fringe of Canadian territory. Alan Rudolph Marcus writes about the impetus for these relocations in *Relocating Eden: The Image and Politics of Inuit Exile in the Canadian Arctic*. The Government of Canada required a citizen presence on Ellesmere Island to shore up claims to sovereignty, particularly against the United States, whose military personnel outnumbered Canadians in the region as a result of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, and against Greenland, whose hunters regularly travelled to Ellesmere Island to hunt because they considered it "no man's land" (53-55). The relocations

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[6] In 2015, the federal Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its executive summary, "Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," which declares explicitly and officially in its opening paragraph that Canada's residential school system was a project of genocide (1). Many survivors have made their testimonies available on *wearethechildren.ca*. For an analysis of the role of literature in healing from the legacy of the residential schools, see Sam McKegney's *Magic Weapons: Aboriginal Writers Remaking Community after Residential School*.

[7] In Benoît Pilon's film *Ce qu'il faut pour vivre*, hunter Tivii is forced to leave his family when he is relocated to a sanatorium in Québec City for tuberculosis treatment. Surrounded by French-speakers who do not understand him, he falls into a deep depression and refuses to eat. A nurse at the sanatorium, Carol, advocates for the transfer of an Inuk orphan, Kaki, to the sanatorium, and together Tivii and Kaki heal from the loneliness of being held in a foreign land. Though Carol's transfer benefits both Tivii and Kaki, it also highlights the conceptual limits of health care professionals: relocating Kaki is the only solution that Carol can offer to ease Tivii's depression at being relocated.

were also appealing to the government because they alleviated welfare payments: the government took Inuit from areas that it deemed "overpopulated," sent them to regions that were low in human population yet supposedly rich in wildlife, and then ceased welfare payments, except in extreme cases (88). The relocations were an overwhelming failure, and many Inuit starved to death as a result. [8]

In the same historical moment, the federal government became increasingly invested in managing animal populations. In *Kiumajut (Talking Back): Game Management and Inuit Rights, 1900-70*, Kulchyski and Tester chart the emergence of wildlife science and is effect on Inuit populations, as well as Inuit resistance to such policies (10-11). Framing their analysis as a complement to *Tammarniit* (6), they argue that policy makers inconsistently vacillated between protecting endangered species and exploiting animals for commercial gain, often basing their decisions not on wildlife science—which did not provide the evidence they sought—but instead on cultural norms and values (23-4). For example, Euro-settler anxieties about the "firepower" that Inuit gained from rifles created the narrative of "wanton slaughter," which presumed that Inuit would inevitably mass-slaughter caribou because their access to guns would overpower their self-control (25). As a result, the Canadian government "manufactured" a caribou crisis in the 1950s and 60s by fleshing out incomplete data about caribou populations with racist and ethnocentric assumptions about Inuit (80-1). Meticulously analyzing wildlife management policies and the "authoritative" sources upon which they rely, Kulchyski and Tester expose the weaknesses and contradictions in these policies; for example, by showing how policy recommendations were made based on reports explicitly stating that they cannot offer sufficient

[8] Descendants of the survivors have made their testimonies available at *iqqaumavara.com*. See also Frank James Tester and Peter Kulchyski's *Tammarniit (Mistakes): Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic 1939-63* and "The High Arctic Relocation: A Report on the 1953-55 Relocation," a book-length report from the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*.

data to justify policy changes (61), and by exposing how caribou population estimates were based on incomplete (and now widely criticized) aerial survey techniques (66).

In the context of the current study, the most relevant overlap between *Tammarniit* and *Kiumajut* lies in Kulchyski and Tester's analysis of the high Arctic relocations and the development of polar bear hunting laws, which were implemented, in part, to protect Canadian sovereign claims against Greenland. On August 20, 1967, W.J. Fitzsimmons of the "G" division of the RCMP wrote a note, to the director of the Northern Administration and Lands Branch of Northern Affairs and National Resources, which detailed the movement of Greenland Inuit to Ellesmere Island to hunt polar bears (*Kiumajut* 111). Such incursions into Inuit territory were part of the impetus for the high Arctic relocations, but they also encouraged the development of hunting laws within Canada to strengthen the federal government's stance against Greenlandic hunting in the region (111). This need for legislation, paired with assumptions about Inuit's penchant for "wanton slaughter," are contributing factors to the development of laws that restricted Inuit hunting without sufficient data to justify the changes. For example, Kulchyski and Tester note that polar bear conservation was becoming an increasing concern as the 1960s approached, but the only available information about bear populations came from RCMP reports of how many polar bears Inuit killed each year (112). In September 1965, a group of wildlife experts met at College, Alaska to discuss the status of polar bears internationally. Though no Inuit or other Indigenous peoples were included, there were representatives from Canada, Denmark, Norway, the USSR, and the United States (116). According to the meeting minutes, the group concluded that there was not enough scientific data to provide solid foundation for policy and, in contradiction to this observation, they recommended that policies should be implemented to protect female polar bears and their cubs (116).

This example also demonstrates how Inuit relationships with animals and the land were being reconstituted by federal policy. Kulchyski and Tester note the Inuit resistance to game management laws, which were based on Euro-western concepts of human-animal relationships and disregarded Inuit knowledge about animals. In the context of policies that specify the age and gender of animals to be hunted, they write,

> The idea of preserving the older members of a species because they have wisdom essential to protecting younger members is not supported by the so-called logic of western science, where the oldest members of a species should be killed since they have reduced reproductive capacity and are soon to die (and therefore "go to waste") anyway. Inuit here applied to other species the same logic underlying respect for Inuit elders. (132)

Although Inuit hunters understand the contributions made by variously aged and gendered animals, the federal government ignored such relationships and instead took a bureaucratic relationship with animals that mathematically measures their reproductive capability. This example shows how welfare and hunting policies manage bodies without taking seriously the subjects who occupy them and without acknowledging the network of relations to which they belong. This conflict between Inuit and Euro-settler relationships in the Arctic is the crux of this project, as I analyze claims to human-animal relationships in Arctic literature and politics as a sovereign expression.

My understanding of sovereignty in this context comes from Daniel Heath Justice's (Cherokee) analysis of the intersection of nationhood/peoplehood, kinship, and literature. In "'Go Away, Water!": Kinship Criticism and the Decolonizing Imperative," Justice advocates for kinship as an interpretive lens for Indigenous literatures, positioning it as an act of sovereignty in the decolonial context. He writes that nationhood extends political independence to include "the

tribal web of kinship rights and responsibilities that link the People, the land, and the cosmos together in an ongoing and dynamic system of mutually affecting relationships" (151). In this way, nationhood centres on *peoplehood*, "the relationship system that keeps the people in balance with one another, with other peoples and realities, and with the world. Nationhood is the political extension of the social rights and responsibilities of peoplehood" (152).

Literary expression, as a manifestation of these relationships, therefore speaks to the project of decolonization by asserting Indigenous nationhood (150). He writes,

> The decolonization imperative in our literature both *reflects* indigenous continuity of the past and present and *projects* that continuity into the future. Stories—like kinship, like fire—are what we do, what we create, as much as what we are. Stories expand or narrow our imaginative possibilities—physical freedom won't matter if we can't imagine ourselves free as well. To assert our self-determination, to assert our presence in the face of erasure, is to free ourselves from the ghost-making rhetorics of colonization. Stories define relationships, between nations as well as individuals, and those relations imply presence—you can't have a mutual relationship between something and nothingness. (150, emphasis in original)

Here, Justice notes both the descriptive and prescriptive register of decolonial literature that fortifies Indigenous nationhood, crucially identifying how "stories *define* relationships." My analysis of the *animal welfare state* focuses on the capacity of literature to define, and re-define, relationships between humans, other animals, and the land. Although Justice emphasises stories of Indigenous nationhood and the decolonizing imperative, the case studies that follow show that this kinship model of story-telling is pervasive, emerging from Inuit literature but also substantiating the settler-colonial state, which constantly reiterates its own kinship networks

through nation-making narratives. For this reason, Justice's link between kinship and sovereignty in literature crucially underscores the narrative mechanisms of the *animal welfare state*. Defining sovereignty capaciously as "*the going on* of life—the living" (152, emphasis in original), Justice shows how nationhood, kinship, and literature operate in the service of sovereignty, and, in the process, he advocates for kinship as a central concern for literary criticism (153).

Justice's call for kinship analysis speaks to a form of land-based sovereignty that is prominent in Native Studies and Indigenous Literary Studies. For example, in *Red Skins White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, Glen Sean Coulthard (Yellowknives Dene) rejects Canada's liberal discourse of reconciliation, which is fundamentally incapable of moving beyond its genesis in a colonial, racist, patriarchal state (3). I will return to Coulthard's critique of reconciliation and the politics of recognition in chapter four, which analyzes sealing and anti-sealing modes of critique, but here I focus on Coulthard's alternative to Canada's recognition:

> Stated bluntly, the theory and practice of Indigenous anticolonialism, including Indigenous anticapitalism, is best understood as a struggle primarily inspired by and oriented around *the question of land*—a struggle not only *for* land in a material sense, but also deeply *informed* by what the land *as a system of reciprocal relations and obligations* can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in nondominant and nonexploitative terms—and less around our emergent status as "rightless proletarians." I call this place-based foundation of Indigenous decolonial thought and practice *grounded normativity*, by which I mean the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experimental knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements

> with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time. (13, emphasis in original)

Coulthard foregrounds land in his discussions of decolonization, emphasizing both land repatriation and the "system of reciprocal relations and obligations" that are embodied in relationships to land. Such relationships can be seen in the rapid rise of Indigenous activism and sovereignty in the Arctic in the late twentieth century, as Coulthard identifies:

> In 1969, when sixteen Dene chiefs convened at Fort Smith under the sponsorship of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, it was decided that the Dene needed a more independent and aggressive political body to represent their communities' concerns. It was at this meeting that leadership established the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories, or IB-NWT (renamed Dene Nation in 1978). The Inuvialuit followed suit and established the Committee for Original People's Entitlement, or COPE, in 1970. In 1971 the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada was formed to address the concerns of all Inuit in Canada, including those within the NWT. And finally, in 1972 the Metis Association of the Northwest Territories was set up to represent the interests of the Métis and nonstatus Dene population. Although each organization differed in its specific concerns and visions regarding the scope of northern development, all three would nonetheless mount a push to defend the interests of Indigenous peoples against the vision of economic and political expansion that state and industry began to aggressively impose the previous decade. (57-8)

In the late-twentieth century, Dene, Inuit, Métis and nonstatus Indigenous peoples each mobilized to protect their sovereign and economic interests against the encroaching settler state. This rapid and wide-reaching political mobilization of Indigenous peoples in the Arctic helps to

explain the rise of the *animal welfare state* in the same historical period: as this study will show, various settler institutions and protest groups claim relationships with animals, discursively constituting a relationship between Euro-settlers, animals, and land in a way that bypasses Indigenous peoples altogether and therefore does not engage with Indigenous claims to sovereignty and self-determination.

The *welfare state* was able to transfigure so rapidly into the *animal welfare state* because a precedent had already been set in Euro-settler literature to regard the Arctic as a land shaped by the imagination. In *Canada and the Idea of North*, Sherrill Grace interprets the vast literary and scholarly efforts to imagine and define the North, and she argues that ideas of North are discursively constructed and that the North is raced, classed, and endlessly made and remade (15). Grace maps out what she identifies as three dominant narratives of the North,[9] and she suggests that regional and national, insider and outsider understandings of the North together comprise an ongoing discursive formation: "The discursive formation of North includes *both* in an ongoing and unfinalizable process of identity- and nation-formation. North coexists with the norths, and *together* they construct the complex, always changing, imagined community of Canada" (68, emphasis in original).

Grace's analysis persuasively accounts for a wide variety of texts that have historically situated the North as a discursive entity in the project of Canadian nation-building. For example, Carl Berger argues in "Canadian Nationalism" that Canada fixated on its North in the nineteenth century as part of a self-conscious effort to "find suitable myths and symbols around which a

[9] The first category is the configuration of North as "the image of our worst fears or the nexus of complex ambivalent desires of attraction and compulsion, escape and freedom, failure and death" (32); the second comprises of studies that critically analyze issues of "ethnography, aesthetics, and the representations of specific Arctic and sub-Arctic experiences and locales" (32); and the third includes theoretical and analytical projects to deconstruct and reconstruct the North, sometimes turning to the personal and philosophical (32).

national spirit might rally" (215). He shows that northern nations, by virtue have having thrived in harsh climates, imagine themselves to be strong, enduring, and masculine, in contrast to southern effeminacy, degeneration, and decay, a project that was as racialized as it was gendered: "The result of life in the northern latitudes was the creation of and sustenance of self-reliance, strength, hardness—in short, all the attributes of a dominant race" (217). Such a Darwinian understanding of northern climates is echoed by Ken Coates and William R. Morrison, who argue in "Winter and the Shaping of Northern History: Reflections from the Canadian North" that the idea of North is bound to winter, which creates a uniquely northern social world configured as isolated and lonely and by a struggle to survive (30). This image, they importantly identify, is developed largely by the exaggerated accounts of explorers, who made the land seem more dangerous than it was in reality:

> These descriptions—powerful, exaggerated, and focused on northern exceptionalism (that which made the North different from other regions)—entrenched the image of the North as an inhospitable and dangerous, albeit dramatically beautiful, land. More to the point, they created the impression—one which is not totally inaccurate—of the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions as lands of perpetual winter. (29)

In additional to exaggerated accounts from explorers, famous Canadian writers and artists have also weighed in on the image of North: Margaret Atwood suggests in *Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature* that the North is a femme fatale, an uncanny, awe-inspiring entity that becomes alluring to white men even as it remains hostile to them (19); and Glen Gould, the ultimate and unapologetic northern outsider, suggests in "'The Idea of North': An Introduction," that the North is a solipsistic exercise in that imagination: it is "an opportunity to examine that condition of solitude which is neither exclusive to the north nor the prerogative

of those who go north but which does perhaps appear, with all its ramifications, a bit more clearly to those who have made, if only in their imagination, the journey north" (393-394). These examples show a wide-spread acceptance among scholars and writers that the Canadian North is frequently and historically configured as a frigid and hostile land as treacherous as it is captivating.

These configurations of the North have fallen under heavy criticism by those who seek greater representation of the political realities of Northern life. In "Enduring Themes?: John Moss, the Arctic, and the Crisis in Representation," Joanne Saul criticizes John Moss' *Enduring Dreams: An Exploration of Arctic Landscape*, an anthology of critical work on the Arctic (to which Coates and Morrison contribute). She argues that

> By refusing to historicize or contextualize [the North] within a material reality . . . Moss' text ultimately helps to strengthen the mythic nature of the north rather than challenge it. Like that of the explorers, adventurers, ethnographers, and artists he draws on, Moss' white, male, southern perspective creates a web of mystery around the north that effectively silences the land and the communities of people in the north. (94)

Saul goes on to condemn Moss' solipsism (103) and the way that in the book, "the Arctic dissolved into its written representations so that it ultimately vanishes" (104). Saul's criticism importantly identifies the danger of relying solely on Southern Euro-settler accounts of the Arctic, for they emphasize the impoverished imaginings of outsiders above the lived experiences of Arctic inhabitants. Such a criticism speaks to Justice's kinship criticism and Coulthard's grounded normativity, for it exposes the kinship networks—and their gaps—that emerge in Euro-settler Canadian Arctic literature: in many cases, the Arctic is imagined as a barren landscape that offers Euro-settlers a platform to play out their kinship fantasies. In other words,

Euro-settlers write their ideal kinship networks into the Arctic landscape, at once naturalizing their relationship models and configuring the Arctic as the extension of their imagination. This model is inherently antithetical to the political realities of Arctic inhabitants, who are working through their collective relationships between humans, nonhumans, and land. This project engages with the tensions and alignments between these various claims to animals and to the Arctic, focusing especially on the models of sovereignty evoked by these claims.

**Land-based Sovereignty and Divine Sovereignty**

In this project, my analysis of sovereignty in the Inuit context focuses on Rachel Qitsualik's "Inummarik: Self-Sovereignty in Classic Inuit Thought," where she tethers Inummarik—the real Inuk—to Land, Water, and Air. Qitsualik begins by contrasting the English and Inuktitut words for sovereignty. In English, the term *sovereign* names a supreme ruler—the monarch, who represents the Earthly will of God (23). The Inuktitut word for sovereignty is *aulatsigunnarniq*, a portmanteau invented to translate the concept, and it means literally, "the ability to make things move" (26). Noting that this translation of sovereignty removes all reference to divinity, Qitsualik moves away from the fallacy of terminological equivalence and instead explores what classic Inuit thought poses in the place of divine sovereignty (26). Here, she makes a distinction between anthropogenic (AN) cultures, and non-anthropogenic (NAN) cultures: AN culture centres the human subject and "grows the expectation that an environment is responsive to the human will" (27). From this world-view comes organized city blocks, roads, and geometric precision imagined to be the expression of a higher natural order:

> The AN geometry becomes self-reflexive; so, that which is disciplined, tidy, orderly, even *perfect*, is declared via the unconscious assumption of an AN standard. The AN standard

> may be further extended to access all of nature, known or imagined, so that that which does not conform to the expected geometry is simply undisciplined, untidy, disorderly, and imperfect. Heaven itself is envisioned as a place of ideal structure, reflecting the AN-standard geometry. Hell is a violation of such. Indeed, that which lies too far afield of the AN is dismissed altogether as "chaos" or "evil."
>
> (As with the assumption that Netsilik practices were devilish). (27, emphasis in original)

This passage shows Qitsualik's Judeo-Christian atheism, which sees divinity as an extension of the human mind and discursive reality rather than an expression of the perfect God (an atheism that I share). From this position, the presumed supremacy of order and geometry is not divine but cultural, as AN cultures reshape the environment and all its inhabitants according to their own ideals, constructing a hierarchical view of the world that positions the human subject as sovereign ruler.

NAN cultures, in contrast, see humans as one component of many in a vast world that can never fully be understood:

> Unlike the AN mind, in which human will almost exclusively shapes reality, the NAN mind relies upon responsiveness to a reality outside of the human condition. The NAN mind cannot expect to impose geometry upon the world, since it is the world itself dictating all conditions . . . The NAN, therefore, possesses neither the inclination nor need to extend such responsive, adaptive geometry to the cosmos, since implied necessity is learned from the cosmos itself. In this sense, the NAN may at first seem like a passive player, at the mercy of a capricious world—though this is but an AN way of perceiving the NAN. In truth, the NAN is an active participant in a dynamic system; and therefore not

> striving against any perceivable chaos, but rather working with and within an acceptable whole that has little to do with human absolutism. (27-8)

In Inuit thought, this unknowability of the cosmos is reflected in the concept *nalunaktuq*, translated literally as "that which causes confusion," which articulates the uncanny sense that there is more about the land that is not known than what is (24). In this framework, human effort to shape the land in its own image is doomed to fail. Though Qitsualik presents AN and NAN cultures as opposite poles, this binary seems more rhetorical than conceptual if understood as a response to the colonial agents who approached Inuit culture as "devilish" and "disordered" compared to Euro-settler ideals, a discourse that Qitsualik evokes in the aforementioned passage. In the context of this study, I find it productive to locate both the NA and NAN components of the texts under discussion, to unpack when and how human will shapes the environment, and in what ways the Land is beyond human influence.

Qitsualik continues to identify the symbolic elements that organize Inuit's sovereign relationship with the cosmos: *Imaq* (Water), *Nuna* (Land), and *Sila* (Air or Sky). *Imaq* is the foundation of corporeal life and is associated with *uumaniq*, the raw essence of life, instinct, and appetite (28-9); *Nuna* is the cosmological middle-point between *Imaq* and *Sila* and is associated with *inua*, self-awareness and "human" essence (29); and *Sila* is a super-concept, most closely associated with God, that is the highest animating life-force of the cosmos and is associated with *anirniq*, the life-breath, which temporarily borrows *Sila* (29). Qitsualik explains that each of these elements comprise the Inuk:

> The triune complex of Water-Land-Sky urges, then, is not only accessed by Inuit as a way to view relation between environmental forces, but also psychological and spiritual ones; hence, the complex of Water-Land-Sky is reflected in the human condition as *uumaniq*-

> *inua-anirniq* (e.g., life instinct—awareness—higher potential). The balance and interaction between these urges creates what is known as a "person" (actually, these urges are found everywhere in different admixtures, but Inuit focus on how they manifest in the human). The interaction between Water and Land (in the human, *uumaniq* + *inua*), may therefore be said to result in isuma: the personal thoughts and feelings unique to an individual. On the other side—though not in conflict, but balance—the interaction between Land and Sky (in the human, *inua* + *anirniq*), may be said to result in tarniq: the subtle selfhood or "soul" of an individual. Thus, in each case, is the midpoint, individually *inua*, cosmologically *Nuna*, the urge that is refined and defined by oscillation between infra- and ultra-personal aspects of selfhood. Further, we can now observe that—just as it is the substance of the Land, modified by the accidents of Water and Sky interplay, that must preoccupy Inuit for the sake of workday subsistence—it is the substantial humanness, modified by the accidents of uumaniq and anirniq interplay, that must remain of interest to Inuit on psychological, spiritual, and social levels. (30)

Although humans are most closely aligned with "that very cosmological reflection of *inua*: the *Nuna*" (30), they must balance this nature with *uumaniq, anirniq*, *isuma*, and *tarniq* (I will return to a discussion of *isuma* in my analysis of polar bears, one of the few non-human animals to possess it, and of *tarniq* in my analysis of animal welfare and seal-hunting). The person who has balanced each of these concepts has achieved sovereignty:

> This is sovereignty, by the Inuit definition: the True Human [*Inummarik*] . . . is a ghost-concept, a model alone, though it is one toward which Inuit have aspired since ancient times. This model is the free human, sovereign over self, respectful of the self-sovereignty of others. It is the human whose awareness not only renders self-sovereignty possible, but

> comprehends how self-sovereignties—those of others in society—synergize toward a system of self-perpetuating health. (32)

This definition of sovereignty differs from the term *aulatsigunnarniq*, "the ability to make things move," through its inclusion of an Inuit replacement for divinity—the *Imaq-Nuna-Sila* complex and its expression in the human subject. In this way, the inummarik reverberates with Coulthard's *grounded normativity* and Justice's kinship analysis, for each of these thinkers appeals to the ongoing network of relations between humans and land.

Qitsualik's articulation of the inummarik helps to articulate the limits of Euro-western theories of sovereignty, which do not adequately explore relations between humans and land and which sometimes uphold the power dynamics they criticize. These tensions are displayed most prominently for my purposes in the works of Jacques Derrida and Giorgio Agamben, both of whom identify and critique the relationship between divinity and the human/animal divide in their analyses of sovereignty, and both of whom appeal to wider relationships with nonhuman beings and entities in coded and sometimes underdeveloped ways. Giorgio Agamben argues that the political subject self-constitutes in an act of sovereignty by which they excuse themselves from their capacity to become *bare life*. In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Agamben posits that "*the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity sovereign power*" (6, emphasis in original). This biopolitical body is bare life, the life of *homo sacer*—he who can be killed but not sacrificed (82). At the core of Agamben's politics is a zone of indistinction opened up by the sovereign withdrawal of the law wherein the boundaries separating inside from outside, life from death, sacred from profane become blurred; *homo sacer* is the figure captured within this space where life is not perceived as life and death is not registered as death (82-3). As the human experience of the zone of indistinction, bare life has a

paradoxical double trajectory: it is the concealed nucleus of sovereign power, and its production is the first act of sovereignty (6). Key to Agamben's figuration of bare life is the way that it remains at the core of all rights-bearing subjects:

> Modern democracy does not abolish sacred life but rather shatters it and disseminates it into every individual body, making it what is at stake in political conflict. And the root of modern democracy's secret biopolitical calling lies here: he who will later appear as the bearer of rights and, according to a curious oxymoron, as the new sovereign subject . . . can only be constituted through the repetition of the sovereign exception and isolation of *corpus*, bare life, in himself. (124)

Though the first act of sovereign exception opens up a zone of indistinction and creates *homo sacer*, this bare life does not remain contained in a space 'outside' of sovereignty. Indeed, such a composition would undermine the indistinction that characterizes this figure. What Agamben outlines here is the way that bare life fractures and disseminates into the citizenry, rendering impossible the characterization of bare life as wholly other. When life and politics meet up in the zone of indistinction, "all life becomes sacred and all politics becomes the exception" (148). The biopolitical body that precedes individual subjects is already marked by bare life; the distinction between private life and political existence is rendered indistinct (187). This is not to say that all subjects experience bare life but rather that all subjects carry the capacity to become bare. Given that the political order into which the subject is born has always been marked by the sovereign exception and bare life, the only way to become a subject before the sovereign and to gain rights under his political regime is to isolate and excuse oneself from the capacity to become bare life. This process is, paradoxically, an act of sovereignty at the ontological level that ensures subjection before the sovereign.

Although bare life operates in the zone of indistinction, its duel trajectory is rarely taken up in scholarship on Agamben. In order to render bare life and the zone of indistinction usable concepts, many scholars partially galvanize them so that they remain indistinct enough to blur boundaries but concrete enough to become applicable figures. Agamben himself creates precedent for such readings when he splits the trajectories of bare life into two subsequent books: *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, which takes up bare life as the product of the sovereign state of exception through the figure of the camp and the *muselmann*, and *The Open: Man and Animal*, which explores bare life as the concealed nucleus of sovereign power in the *anthropological machine*. Reflecting on his time spent as a prisoner in Auschwitz, Agamben discusses the *muselmann*, a term that inmates deployed to describe the status of the living dead, those who were traumatized beyond trauma, becoming uncommunicative and unresponsive to pleasure and pain in ways that disturbingly placed them on the threshold of life and death:

> At times a medical figure or an ethical category, at times a political limit or anthropological concept, the *Muselmann* is an indefinite being in whom not only humanity and non-humanity, but also vegetative existence and relation, physiology and ethics, medicine and politics, and life and death continuously pass through each other. This is why the *Muselmann*'s "third realm" is the perfect cipher of the camp, the non-place in which all disciplinary barriers are destroyed and all embankments flooded. (48, emphasis in original)

According to Agamben, "in Auschwitz, ethics begins precisely at the point where the *Muselmann*, the 'complete witness,' makes it forever impossible to distinguish between man and non-man" (47), although the *muselmann* is himself notoriously *not* witnessed, for "the *Muselmann* is universally avoided because everyone in the camp recognizes himself in his disfigured face" (52).

For my purposes, I will set aside the question of witnessing and testimony, the crux of Agamben's analysis, to dwell on the relative popularity of *Remnants of Auschwitz* over its companion analysis, *The Open*. In Native studies, bare life as the product of sovereign power is evoked to explain Indigenous subjectivity in the settler-colonial state. Byrd, for example, draws on an analysis of bare life that is aligned with the expression of sovereign power, which might help to explain her references to the Indian as a "ghost in the system" of poststructuralist and postcolonial theory (19) as well as Justice's references to the "ghost-making rhetorics of colonization" (150). These references are descriptive rather than prescriptive, and the implied connection between Indigeneity and the *Muselmann*, the embodiment of *bare life*, names the colonial tendency to perceive Indigenous peoples as already dead. In an attempt to push back against this Euro-settler fantasy, I find it productive to turn away from the *Muselmann* and to focus instead on Agamben's *anthropological machine*, which better articulates the fallacy of settler-colonial sovereignty.

In *The Open,* Agamben argues that sovereign subjects define themselves as such by discursively isolating and separating out the animality within them, a tension that constitutes internal caesurae that divide life and enable the distinction between human and animal (12). This separation of human and animal life occurs at our closest and most intimate space and becomes the ontology on which all politics is founded (15-6). Given that the human is discursively created by these caesurae, Agamben maintains that *homo sapiens* is not a species but a production of the *anthropological machine*: a process of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion that produces the appearance of human subjects already presupposed (37). The *anthropological machine of the moderns* operates by "excluding as the not (yet) human an already human being formed of itself,

that is, by animalizing the human, by isolated the nonhuman within the human" (37). In symmetrical contrast, the *anthropological machine of earlier times* inverts this trajectory:

> If, in the machine of the moderns, the outside is produced through the inclusion of an inside and the inhuman produced by animalizing the human, here the inside is obtained through the inclusion of an outside, and the non-man is produced by the humanization of the animal: the man-ape, the *enfant sauvage* or *Homo ferus*, but also and above all the slave, the barbarian, and the foreigner, as figures of an animal in human form. (37, emphasis in original)

Both machines have in common a core that establishes a zone of indifference where the distinction between human and animal emerges—the zone that Agamben identifies as "perfectly empty" and that produces neither human nor animal life, but disavowed *bare life* (38). Through this process, the human subject constitutes itself as a makeshift sovereign, hovering between the divine and the corporeal: "The anthropological machine of humanism is an ironic apparatus that verifies the absence of a nature proper to *Homo*, holding him suspended between a celestial and a terrestrial nature, between animal and human—and, thus, his being always less and more than himself" (29).

In the context of this study, I find the *anthropological machine* a productive way to understand and articulate the formation of the settler-colonial nation-state, which isolates and disavows Indigeneity to legitimize itself as a nation (although, as Byrd shows, this disavowal is ambivalently contingent upon the continued presence of Indigeneity in the transit of empire). The *anthropological machine* acknowledges the colonial violence of Canada's genesis without implicitly comparing Indigenous peoples to the *muselmann*, a comparison that makes especially little sense in a project that engages with Indigenous art and scholarship. I will return to this

discussion of the *anthropological machine* in the next chapter, to articulate the formation of the animal welfare state, but here I want to dwell on the curious sequence that follows Agamben's articulation of sovereignty, which approaches something akin to a Land-based kinship network only to pull away at the last moment.

In the two short chapters that follow "Anthropological Machine," Agamben begins to expand beyond the human subject and its relationship to animality and divinity, moving into a wider network of relations. In "Umwelt," he dwells on the work of the Baron Jakob von Uexküll, a prominent German zoologist and one of the founders of ecology. Unlike the thinkers before him, Uexküll is unpersuaded by a world view that constructs a hierarchy of descending value from God to human to animal to land:

> Where classical science saw a single world that comprised within it all living species hierarchically ordered from the most elementary forms up to the higher organisms, Uexküll instead supposes an infinite variety of perceptual worlds that, though they are uncommunicating and reciprocally exclusive, are all equally perfect and linked together as if in a gigantic musical score. (40)

Agamben goes on to identify Uexküll's collapse of the distinction between *Umgebung*, objective space, with *Umwelt*,

> the environment-world that is constituted by a more or less broad series of elements that he calls 'carriers of significance' (*Bedeutungsträger*) or of 'marks' (*Merkmalträger*), which are the only things that interest the animal. In reality, the *Umgebung* is our own *Umwelt*, to which Uexküll does not attribute any particular privilege and which, as such, can also vary according to the point of view from which we observe it. (40-1)

Uexküll replaces the fallacy of objectivity with a series of *Umwelts*, as multiple beings and entities with varying perceptive abilities interact with one another, sometimes without full awareness, composing the world as a "musical score." There are common threads between Umwelt and Land-based reciprocal relations (though I would not go so far as to suggest a terminological equivalence), and between Uexküll's musical score and the unknowability of the land, nalunaktuq. None of these understandings centre the human or the divine, instead situating both within a vast network not fully knowable to humans. In other words, there rests in this chapter a potential point of connection between Land-based sovereignty and Agamben's articulation of divine sovereignty.

Agamben takes this line of thought one step further in the next chapter, "Tick," where he considers Uexküll's case study of a tick that drinks mammal blood despite having no concept of it as such. When Uexküll offered the tick a variety of substances, he found that she would drink any liquid that was thirty-seven degrees centigrade, the temperature of mammal blood (46). Agamben writes,

> The example of the tick clearly shows the general structure of the environment proper to all animals. In this particular case, the *Umwelt* is reduced to only three carriers of significance: (1) the odor of the butyric acid contained in the sweat of all mammals; (2) the temperature of thirty-seven degrees corresponding to that of the blood of mammals; (3) the typology of skin characteristics of mammals, generally having hair and being supplied with blood vessels. Yet the tick is immediately united to these three elements in an intense and passionate relationship the likes of which we might never find in the relations that bind man to his apparently much richer world. The tick *is* this relationship; she lives only in it and for it. (46-7, emphasis in original)

Agamben's reference to the "much richer world" of humans refers to Martin Heidegger's hierarchy of worldliness, which posits that humans are rich in world, animals are poor in world, and the stone has no world, a reference that anticipates the next chapter, "Poverty in World," which contextualizes Uexküll's tick in Heidegger's theory. Agamben's sequence from *anthropological machine* to *Umwelt* to the assertion that the tick *is* the relationship she inhabits begins to open up his analysis of sovereignty and the human subject to a wider network of relationships. Because Agamben notes that humans do not have access to *Umgebung,* but only to our own *Umwelt*, there is room to read a slide between the tick and the human: if the tick is so engrossed in her carriers of significance that she becomes ontologically bound to them, then human *Umwelt* should operate in the same mode, for Uexküll's analysis undoes the premise that humans operate differently than do other entities. This slide would lead Agamben toward a model that contextualizes humans within a vast, non-hierarchical network, one that could stall the anthropological machine by allowing it to fall into disrepair. Yet this moment is fleeting, for he immediately turns back, as though he does not trust the relations he is approaching. Rather than thinking through the human's *Umwelt*, Agamben instead falls back on a familiar theoretical hierarchy that separates humans from the Tick's full and unknowing surrender to her carriers of significance. And so, Agamben maintains and relies on the anthropological machine that imagines humans as sovereign, animals as subordinate to them, and Land as object.

As this example shows, Euro-western thought is reluctant to embrace non-hierarchical kinship networks, and this turning away constitutes a point of divergence between Agamben's theorization of sovereignty and *bare life* and Qitsualik's articulation of *Imaq-Nuna-Sila*. A similar divergence emerges in the works of Jacques Derrida, who offers a thorough genealogy of divine sovereignty as it pertains to the human/animal divide—or, more precisely, to the overlap

of beast, sovereign, and God. In *The Beast and the Sovereign*, *Volume 1*, a posthumously published series of teaching lectures, Derrida identifies the overlap between bête (beast) and sovereign:

> sovereign and beast seem to have in common their being-outside the law. It is as though both of them were situated by definition at a distance from or above the laws, in nonrespect for the absolute law, the absolute law that they make or that they are but that they do not have to respect. Being-outside the law can, no doubt, on the one hand (and this is the figure of sovereignty), take the form of being-above-the-laws, and therefore take the form of the Law itself, of the origins of laws, the guarantor of laws, as though the Law, with a capital L, the condition of the law, were before, above, and therefore outside the law, external or even heterogeneous to the law; but being-outside-the-law can also, on the other hand (and this is the figure of what is most often understood by animality or bestiality, [being-outside-the-law can also] situate the place where the law does not appear, or is not respected, or gets violated. (17, brackets in original)

Derrida resembles Agamben insofar as he is preoccupied with the status of being-outside-the-law in a similar mode as Agamben's suspension of law in the zone of indistinction. Each of these analyses presupposes a hierarchy of divine sovereignty that inherently places deity above humans and the law, and therefore they search the terrestrial for corporeal manifestations of this mechanism.

Unlike Agamben, Derrida breaks down the presumed hierarchy of divine-human-animal. Elsewhere, he troubles these distinctions in his theorization of the *animot*,[10] and in *The Beast and*

[10] In *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, Derrida interrogates the abyssal limit of the human at which humanity declares itself as such (12). Departing from a philosophical tradition that demarks humanity from "the animal," Derrida argues that "the animal" contains a heterogeneous multiplicity of the living that cannot be divided by a single limit (31). He suggests that limits feed from abysses of difference (29), so the limit between "the human" and

*the Sovereign*, he undermines the distinction between the figures of the divine hierarchy, focusing in particular on the way that the beast, criminal,[11] and sovereign "have troubling resemblance: they call on each other and recall each other, from one to the other; there is between sovereign, criminal, and beast a sort of obscure and fascinating complicity, or even a worrying mutual attraction, a worrying familiarity, an *unheimlich,* uncanny, reciprocal haunting" (17, emphasis in original). Tellingly, Derrida is here troubled and worried (a couple times over), but why should the overlap of beast, sovereign, and criminal be something uncanny, worrisome, troubling, and haunting? In the model of Land-based sovereignty, such overlap is a given, yet here, in a model of divine sovereignty, the resemblance between three figures that ought to be distinct threatens to undermine the whole system on which they are built. Derrida writes:

> In the metamorphic covering-over of the two figures, the beast and the sovereign, one therefore has a presentiment that a profound and essential ontological copula is at work on this couple: it is like a coupling, an ontological, onto-zoo-anthropo-theologico-political copulation: the beast becomes the sovereign who becomes the beast; there is the beast *and* [*et*] the sovereign (conjunction), but also the beast *is* [*est*] the sovereign, the sovereign *is* [*est*] the beast. (18, emphasis and brackets in original)

Derrida goes on to explain how the human sovereign stands in for the word of God on Earth, and he expands this couple to constitute the sovereign triad of sovereign-beast-God:

> What remains on the table in this seminar is what remains to be thought of this metonymic contiguity between the beast and God, the beast, the sovereign and God, the human and

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"the animal" must multiply to account for the abysses of difference and the set of relations that organize the multiplicity of the living (31). He refers to this multiplicity as the *animot*, a verbal body that allows the plural to be heard in the singular (the French word *animaux* (animals) and *animot* are homophones), that draws attention to the power of a name (the suffix *mot* is French for *word*), and that challenges the idea that an inability to name oneself marks a deficiency (48).

[11] Derrida returns frequently to figures of delinquency, such as the rogue and criminal, which I take up in chapter one through the Qallupiluq, a shape-shifting, sea-dwelling monster.

> political figure of the sovereign being right there, *between* the beast and God, the beast and God, the beast and God becoming in all senses of the word the *subjects* of the sovereign, the sovereign subject of the sovereign, the one who commands the human and sovereign, and the subject subjected to the sovereign. These three figures replace each other, substitute for each other, standing in for each other, the one keeping watch as lieutenant or stand-in [*suppléant*] for the other along this metonymic chain. (54, emphasis and brackets in original)

This passage seems reminiscent of Qitsualik in its parallels between Beast-Sovereign-God and *Uumaniq-Inua-Anirniq*, though one notable difference is that Qitsualik identifies a cosmological triune complex of interrelated parts, whereas Derrida identifies the metonymic slide that allows three seemingly disparate terms stand in for one another, and in doing so undermining the presumed hierarchy of divine sovereignty. In this way, Agamben, Derrida, and Qitsualik form something of a triune complex of sovereign theory: Agamben shows how the distinction between the sovereign and *bare life* is artificially created and maintained, Derrida shows how divine hierarchy collapses in on itself, and Qitsualik shows a different model of sovereignty that embraces the similarities that divine sovereignty works hard to deny. These three thinkers are crucial to this project, granting the vocabulary to name and critique the mechanics of the *animal welfare state* and to contextualize it within Inuit modes of sovereignty.

**Chapter Summary**

In chapter one, I analyze the uptake of Nuliajuk, the Mother of Sea Beasts (known more commonly in the South as Sedna), in Alootook Ipellie's *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* and Rachel Qitsualik and Sean Tinsley's *Ajjiit: Dark Dreams of the Ancient Arctic*. Although these

speculative texts do not contribute to the construction of the *animal welfare state*, I nevertheless begin with them for contextual and polemical reasons. Drawing on Justice's kinship criticism, I analyze the kinship networks established within these texts, as Nuliajuk, who moderates Inuit hunting of her animals, becomes central or peripheral to the sovereign worlds established in the texts. I show how the relationships modeled in the stories depend upon Nuliajuk, either to function as an authority who maintains ongoing relations, or as a powerful figure to be overthrown in the quest for new relationship models. These choices, I argue, construct narratives of Arctic sovereignty in ways that extend beyond the texts' fictional worlds. I begin with Inuit literature to provide context for the *animal welfare state*, which responds to and undermines such stories, and to resist its ongoing project to eclipse Indigenous relationships with animals and the land.

In chapter two, I analyze the case study that most powerfully exposes the animal welfare state and its operating mechanics. In the 1950s and 1960s, the RCMP slaughtered Inuit dogs, stranding Inuit in permanent settlements while reshaping Inuit relationships with surviving dogs and with the land. In the same historical moment, animal welfare activists mobilized to protect tundra wolves from legally-sanctioned culls. I analyze the RCMP's final report of its internal investigations into allegations of illegal dog slaughter, reading between the historical moment of the slaughter and the submission of the report in 2005. I show how the RCMP, through their preoccupation with managing "dangerous" dogs, evoke their predecessor's preoccupation with managing "dirty" Inuit, in both cases configuring Inuit kinship networks as a problem to be solved by settler intervention. In this way, the RCMP mythologically appropriates Inuit dogs and repositions them to signify obsolete and dangerous relationship models, undermining Inuit sovereign claims in the process. I compare this figuration to Farley Mowat's fictionalized

autobiography *Never Cry Wolf*, which became a rallying point for wolf protection advocacy, generating sympathy for wolves by describing them as heteronormative settlers. By writing this kinship network into the wolves' "natural" state, Euro-settler activists naturalize their own relationship models, writing themselves into the land and setting up future claims to sovereignty.

In chapters three and four, I address two case studies that complicate the animal welfare state's limited configuration of kinship. In chapter three, I analyze the polar bear as the mascot for environmental activism. Comparing Inuit and Euro-settler literary traditions, I show how environmental activism configures the polar bear as irredeemably vulnerable and in need of paternal care, inviting distant viewers to intervene in Arctic politics on behalf of polar bears. Inuit literature, in contrast, understands polar bears to be intelligent, adaptive, powerful, and vengeful against those who would condescend to them. In this framework, presuming that polar bears are incompetent and incapable of adapting to a changing environment is a grave offense. I bring these disparate histories to bear on BBC's *Planet Earth* and *Frozen Planet*, and on Ian Mauro and Zacharius Kunuk's *Qapirangajuq: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change*. I analyze how Inuit and Euro-western relationship models influence the films' aesthetic techniques, and I interpret and critique how such techniques invite viewers to establish sovereign relationships with polar bears and the Arctic.

In chapter four, I interrogate anti-sealing activism and its impact on Inuit communities. Although anti-sealing campaigns nominally target the Canadian East-coast seal slaughter, conducted by Euro-settlers, Inuit communities have been ravaged by them, both by the campaigns' de facto attack of Inuit hunting and on the economic depression following the 1983 European Economic Community (EEC) ban on imported seal products. I analyze the autobiographical work of two prominent anti-sealers, Paul Watson and Brian Davies, to show

how their rally against sealing contributes to the *animal welfare state* by naturalizing paternalistic, heteronormative relationships between humans and seals and by configuring all hunting relations as malicious. These campaigns are successful, I argue, because they tap into an existing infrastructure of colonial disgust for Indigenous peoples, a style of criticism that I put into conversation with two anti-anti-sealing texts: Alethea Arnaquq-Baril's *Angry Inuk* and Alootook Ipellie's *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*. I analyze Arnaquq-Baril and return to Ipellie to explore styles of critique in Inuit literature, which condemn appropriation and outbursts of anger, and appeal instead to understanding, conversation, satire and dark humour. I show how these texts mobilize their styles of critique as sovereign claims to push back against anti-sealing furor, and I reflect on the lessons that academia can learn from such conflicts.

As these case studies show, the *animal welfare state* is pervasive because it is so widely dispersed: multiple groups with various political agendas each return to the same structures and narratives to justify their intervention into the Arctic. Though I do not argue that the *animal welfare state* is always mobilized deliberately, it is no coincidence that its popularity has boomed in the late twentieth century, alongside Northern Indigenous political mobilization. My selection of case studies has therefore gravitated towards texts that have gained traction in public discourse: I analyze prolific and popular Inuit writers and filmmakers, prominent anti-sealers, widely circulated environmental documentaries, and government documents drafted specifically to respond to Inuit protest. By analyzing these diverse texts, I chart and analyze their common patterns, extending the works of Kulchyski and Tester, which focus on government documents and Inuit communities, to consider how and to what end other social narratives create a slide between claims to animals and claims to sovereignty.

# Chapter One

## Writing Nuliajuk, the Mother of Sea Beasts:

## Land, Sovereignty, and Literature

This chapter is born from fracturing relationships. The story of Nuliajuk relates the creation of the sea animals, and it is a story of abuse, vengeance, and sporadic reconciliation. I focus my analysis not on the traditional story of Nuliajuk but on its uptake in contemporary fiction, where she becomes situated within authors' worlds in ways that redefine her position and authority in the Arctic. These configurations are potent negotiations of kinship and sovereignty that ripple throughout the authors' stories, making them productive entry points to work through the conflicts that this project has identified. I turn to Alootook Ipellie's *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* and Sean A. Tinsley and Rachel A. Qitsualik's *Ajjiit: Dark Dreams of the Ancient Arctic*, short story collections that re-imagine Nuliajuk stories in the service of world-building. I argue that each of these texts mobilize figures of sovereignty to naturalize the worlds they create, and I explore the implications of the kinship networks that they establish and uphold.

The story of Nuliajuk,[12] which I wish to be clear is a history rather than a fictional story, despite Euro-settlers frequently referring to it as a myth or legend, is among the most widely recorded and studied of Inuit tales, rivalled only by the epic of Kiviuq. As Michael Kennedy

[12] The Mother of Sea Beasts, or the Sea Woman, goes by many names, the most common of which I have encountered are Sedna and Nuliajuk. Sedna, writes *Nunatsiaq News* columnist Rachel Attituq Qitsualik (Igloolik, now living in Iqaluit), is a misnomer, an English distortion of "sanna," which means "down there" ("The Problem with Sedna: Part Four, the Mythic Being" n.p.). Though "Sedna" is used with increasing popularity in Southern and Inuit literature and art, my preference is for the name "Nuliajuk," which I use to push against the colonial project of renaming Indigenous place names and persons. My use of this name is also a preference: it is the name most commonly used in the literature from Baffin Island, the Arctic region with which I am most familiar. In my own thinking and analysis, I use of the name "Nuliajuk," though I adapt to the names used by Inuit writers when engaging with their works. For a more thorough list of the Sea Woman's names, the regions in which they are used, and their English translations, see Neil Christopher's *Kappianaqtut: Strange Creatures and Fantastic Beings from Inuit Myths and Legends, Vol 1: The Mother of Sea Beasts and the Giants of the North* (13-15).

notes in "The Sea Goddess Sedna: An Enduring Pan-Arctic Legend from Traditional Orature to the New Narratives of the Late Twentieth Century," Nuliajuk's story spans a wide range, from Siberia and Alaska in the West to Labrador and Greenland in the East (211). Anthropologists Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten have offered perhaps the most extensive review of Nuliajuk in *The Sea Woman: Sedna in Inuit Shamanism and Art in the Eastern Arctic*, which combines compilations of ethnographic materials with their own analysis of art pieces and interviews with Inuit artists. They note that the surge of artistic representations of Nuliajuk comes largely from young artists; Elders, in contrast, regard her as one figure among many and are more interested in the skills and knowledge of their ancestors and angakkuit, shamans (25).[13]

Notably, Nuliajuk has become more benevolent in these recent iterations. In *Kappianaqtut*, Neil Christopher compiles and analyzes various versions of the Nuliajuk story, and he notes that modern accounts cast Nuliajuk as a benevolent being who watches over and helps Inuit, though older stories portray her gaze as a dangerous one: "To draw her attention can be dangerous to individuals and their families. Dearth, hunger, sickness, and misfortune are the tools with which she punishes those who offend her. And she is easily offended" (30). Such accounts are reflected in one of her names, common in Iglulik: *Takannaaluk*, "the terrible one down there" (14).[14] The more benevolent depictions of Nuliajuk have emerged recently and often include tuutaliit, the people of the sea, sometimes translated as mermaids, who are half human and half whale. Laugrand and Oosten chart the artistic representation of tuutaliit in the South Baffin Region,

[13] I use the Inuktitut term angakkuq (plural, angakkuit) rather than the English translation "shaman" to remain focused on the texts under analysis and on their configuration of angakkuit, steering away from anthropological analyses of shamanism as a religious archetype. As with my use of "Nuliajuk," I use "angakkuq" in my own thinking and analysis, adopting the term "shaman" only when interpreting Inuit authors who use the term.

[14] In *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos*, Knud Rasmussen records and reflects on the story of Takánâluk arnâluk (the terrible woman down there) told to him by Orulo in Iglulik (63-71). Rachel Qitsualik and Sean Tinsley's account of the Nuliajuk story share many consistencies with Orulo's story, including the combination of the dog-husband and sea woman stories, which in some regions are distinct, and the emphasis on Nuliajuk's wrath.

which they argue do not clearly distinguish tuutaliit from helping spirits or from Nuliajuk (113), and they recount multiple stories of tuutaliit helping humans in need of assistance (116-119). The texts that I interpret in this chapter make little mention of tuutaliit and focus on Nuliajuk as the moderator of the hunt, and I therefore proceed with this analysis aligned with the stories that Christopher and Laugrand and Oosten might term historical—the stories that caution against incurring Nuliajuk's wrath.

Rachel Qitsualik and Sean Tinsley portray Nuliajuk in such a manner. Inuit-Scottish-Cree writer Rachel Qitsualik-Tinsley was born and raised in the Arctic in the 1950s and has worked as a language specialist and consultant and as a writer who focuses on pre-contact Arctic stories that showcase Inuit philosophy, and throughout this chapter I return to several of her columns in *Nunatsiaq News*. Scottish-Mohawk writer Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley is a folklorist and fantasist who focuses on fiction and non-fiction for young audiences. They have written prolifically together and independently. Here I recount Rachel Qitsualik and Sean Tinsley's version of the Nuliajuk story from *Stories of Survival and Revenge from Inuit Folklore*.[15]

Nuliajuk was a beautiful and frequently wooed girl of marriageable age who refused all suitors. When hunters came to visit, she would hide behind a particular stone, which one day transformed into a dog that she came to love and marry. Her father was disgusted by her choice of husband and her litter of half-human, half-dog children. He killed Nuliajuk's husband and, listening to Nuliajuk's pleas, spared her children but forced her to send them away to the distant corners of the world.

[15] I cite this version of the story to remain focused on Qitsualik and Tinsley. For an Inuktitut version with English translation, see Alexina Kublu's telling of the story "Uinigumasuittuq: She Who Never Wants to Get Married," as told to her throughout her childhood by her father, Michel Kupaaq Piugattuk (Oosten and Laugrand, ed. *Interviewing Inuit Elders: Introduction* 153-161).

After the departure of her children, Nuliajuk again lived alone with her father, unmarried and wooed. Again, she refused these advances until finally a handsome suitor secured her interest and she went to live with him. When she arrived at his home, she realized that she had been fooled:  her husband was not a human but a petrel-spirit, and she led a life of neglect and poverty.

Nuliajuk's father, concerned that she had not returned home to visit him, sent his helper-spirit, a bird, to check on her. Upon discovering that Nuliajuk was being held captive, he set out to rescue her. As they attempted to escape on his qajaq, the petrel spirit discovered them and transformed into clouds that summoned a powerful storm to capsize the qajaq. In an attempt to save himself, Nuliajuk's father threw her overboard. When Nuliajuk tried to climb back aboard, he cut off her fingers with his knife. These detached fragments grew and morphed into the first seals and whales, and Nuliajuk's rage and sadness transformed her into the sea woman. She vowed never again to live among selfish and fearful humans. To this day, Nuliajuk remains at the bottom of the sea, watching over humans with the aid of her helper spirits, and when they enrage her with their evil treatment of each other, she hides away the sea animals until a powerful shaman visits her and abates her rage so that hunters can resume their hunt. (3-23)

Like many, I am ensnared by Nuliajuk. I am compelled by the way that her power derives from the rage she feels towards her father, which substantiates the figure of the abused child in Inuit literature: a child, usually an orphan, will acquire great power and exact revenge on those who harmed them.[16] But Nuliajuk's defiance precedes her transformation, first rearing up when she rejects her many suitors and when she chooses an unconventional dog lover to marry. As a

[16] In some versions of the Nuliajuk story, including the first version I encountered, Nuliajuk is an orphan thrown overboard by adults who no longer want to carry the burden of her existence ("The Story of Nuliajuk" *National Museum of Man*, 1-2).

queer raised in an individualistic society, I admire Nuliajuk's refusal to marry a human despite social pressures, as well as her choice to marry a dog despite her father's disgust. This part of my reading, however, evaluates the story according to the standards of my own culture and politics. A less ethnocentric interpretation must acknowledge that Nuliajuk fails to fulfill her obligations, which extend beyond personal desire and help others to thrive.[17] As Qitsualik writes, the story of Nuliajuk is in part a cautionary tale against those who are too picky: "It's a tale that states this: as bad as you think things are, it can always get worse—somehow, a very Inuktitut lesson" ("The Problem with Sedna: Part Four" n.p.).[18] I therefore resist (to a degree) my admiration of Nuliajuk as a hero figure, and I read her story rather as a demonstration of what happens when everyone behaves selfishly. The story of Nuliajuk points to the consequences of failed obligations; it is a story of fracturing relationships.

The resurgence and adaptation of the Nuliajuk story in the late twentieth century is noted by virtually every contemporary study on the topic, and it is the focus of this chapter. My analysis, however, does not quite engage with the story directly, since both *Ajjiit* and *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* explicitly distance themselves from traditional stories. In the introduction to *Ajjiit*, for example, Qitsualik and Tinsley write,

> *Ajjiit*, in the Inuktitut tongue of Inuit (Aivilingmiutaq dialect, most specifically), means "likenesses." It is an appropriate title, we think, because that was what we posed in our

[17] Lee Guemple writes in "Gender in Inuit Society" that marriage is a union of male-coded hunting and women-coded sewing skills, each essential to survival, and that marriage readiness is measured in terms of proficiency with gendered labour (22).

[18] In the same article, Qitsualik attributes the popularity of the story to its entertainment value rather than to a deep significance to Inuit: "The story, in all its variations, is perhaps the most favourite of Inuit. Every different Inuit group has had its own version, and although folklorists like to gab about its etiological significance (you know, the origin of the sea mammals and all), the real factor that has kept this tale alive throughout the ages is sheer fun. Basically, it's a combination horror-adventure story, and its real value lies in entertainment" (n.p.).

> stories: likenesses of Inuit lore. Again, we did not rewrite traditional folktales, but instead created works of actual fantasy fiction utilizing the Arctic as a backdrop. (3)

This declaration is important to my analysis because it resists ethnographic interpretations of Inuit literature. By distancing themselves from folklore, Qitsualik and Tinsley foreground themselves as fiction writers rather than as cultural informants.

Part of what is at stake in this distinction is the relationship between unikkaaqtuat and fictional representations of historical figures. Unikkaaqtuat, often translated as "traditional stories," are the legends that tell of significant persons and events in Inuit history. In *Stories in a New Skin*, Keavy Martin explains the various translations of unikkaaqtuat and how they differ from other stories like unikkaat (modern stories) and inuusirmingnik unikkaat (life stories) (10). *Unikkaaqtuat* carries a temporal meaning in one of two ways: it refers to stories that happened long ago and have been passed down between generations; or, in other interpretations, they are stories that are long, and the temporal marking of unikkaaqtuat denote their internal story length rather than their age (42-43).

Other translations emphasize the purpose of unikkaaqtuat over their temporality. In "Shooting the Breeze," Rachel Attituq Qitsualik translates unikkaaqtuat as "that which you play at telling," and she writes that unikkaaqtuat are significant not because they are old and/or long, but because they are world-making:

> These *unikkaaqtuat* are our worlds. They reflect our minds as well as our lives. When we see ourselves thus reflected, it is as though our thoughts have birthed new realities based upon our shared ancestry. We are lifted from the mundane, transported back along the lines of ancestral thought. (n.p. emphasis in original)

This description carries the temporal component noted by Martin, as unikkaaqtuat evoke Inuktitut modes of thinking not bound to the contemporary moment. Such an emphasis reflects the argument of Qitsualik's article: unikkaaqtuat may share similar themes to stories from other cultures, but such thematic parallels are not an indication that the stories derive from the same template. Unikkaaqtuat, Qitsualik insists, are the road to the Inuit mind, for they contain within them Inuit worlds (n.p.). This point is echoed in Qitsualik and Tinsley's introduction to *Ajjiit*, where they write that their main objective is "to illustrate a sort of cosmological thinking particular to Inuit culture—a mystic tradition, if you will, that is not unlike the Arctic itself: barren to the superficial eye, yet filled with riches for those willing to fix a deep and non-judgemental stare" (1-2). Like unikkaaqtuat, the stories in *Ajjiit* reveal their meaning to those who are patient and willing to engage with the story on its own terms.[19] In this way, unikkaaqtuat operate at Justice's intersection of kinship, peoplehood, and sovereignty, for they are stories that constitute and negotiate kinship networks between humans, nonhumans, and the land. When Ipellie, Qitsualik and Tinsley draw on unikkaaqtuat in their speculative fiction, they evoke and respond to these kinship models, opening up new possibilities that speak to the contemporary moment.

**Writing Nuliajuk: Sexual Violence and Sovereignty**

Alootook Ipellie was an artist, cartoonist, translator, and writer born in 1951 at Nuvuqquq, a hunting camp near Iqaluit, and he passed away in 2007. *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* is a collection of short stories and pen drawings that chronicle the lives of a thousand-year-old soul.

[19] Martin similarly writes against superficial engagement with Inuit literature in her analysis of the unikkaaqtuat "Angusugjuk and the polar bears:" "*panic* about non-understanding often leads us to make our worst critical decisions, as we search desperately for methodologies that will make quick and easy sense of the unruly text. For students, this kind of relief is our worst enemy—it means the end of struggle, the end of learning" (*Stories in a New Skin* 58, italics in original).

The collection began as a project to create fifty pen drawings for a gallery exhibition, but during the process, Ipellie created stories in his mind to go along with the drawings, and he revised the project to be a selection of twenty drawings paired with short stories ("Introduction" xviii). In the opening sequence of stories, the narrator is killed by a polar bear and ascends to the heavens, where he observes his father and brother exact revenge on the bear who killed him. The remaining stories chart the narrator's lives and experiences as his soul reincarnates through multiple bodies.

Scholarly treatment of Ipellie has focused largely on his life and voice, exploring his upbringing and cultural hybridity to identify and analyze how and to what end Ipellie draws on both Inuit and Euro-settler influences to articulate his voice as a writer. In "Dreaming an Identity between Two Cultures: The Works of Alootook Ipellie," Kimberly McMahon-Coleman argues that Ipellie's work draws on shaman figures to navigate the complex layering of Christianity and traditional spirituality, one that positions Inuit culture as living and adaptable rather than as a tableau vivant (108). This position becomes McMahon-Coleman's analytical lens, as she identifies and interprets Ipellie's hybridized, shamanic insights throughout *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*.[20] Furthermore, she argues that he writes himself into his stories as a shaman-narrator (108). This argument is substantiated by the series of interviews and articles, containing extensive biography, published from her dissertation, “Indigenous Diasporic Literature: Representations of the Shaman in the Works of Sam Watson and Alootook Ipellie.” While McMahon-Coleman persuasively argues for Ipellie’s hybrid subjectivity, I dedicate my attention

[20] The power of shamans stems largely from their ability to see what is hidden, a sight termed *qaumaniq*, the shaman's "enlightenment" or "lighting" (Rasmussen 112). This vision permits shamans to communicate with spirits and to establish relationships with tuurngait, helper spirits, who assist shamans with their tasks (113). (I have used here the common spelling for qaumaniq and tuurngait, rather than Rasmussen's linguistic spelling.) Rasmussen also relates a full account of the initiation procedure for shamans, consolidated from accounts he heard from Aua and Ivalo (Iglulik), building on acknowledged lessons from Angutingmarik (Aivilik tribe, from Padloq) and Inugpasugjuk (Nitsilingmiut living in Pikiqleq) (110-115).

to the particular kinds of relationships that Ipellie celebrates and dismisses from Christianity, the settler state, and Inuit spirituality and social norms, beginning with his configuration of Nuliajuk in “Summit with Sedna.”

Ipellie’s representation of Nuliajuk differs from Qitsualik and Tinsley because he focuses on the shaman's descent, the ritual that shamans use to travel to Sedna's home and appeal to her to release the sea animals. Knud Rasmussen writes that this descent is one of the primary duties of shamans, alongside healing, predicting the weather, and travelling to the land of the dead (*Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos* 109). He relates Aua's (Iglulik) full account of the shaman's descent to appease Takánakapsâluk, "The Bad One" (123-129),[21] and I focus here on the initial encounter between a shaman and the Sea Woman:

> When the shaman enters the house, he at once seeks Takánakapsâluk who, as a sign of anger, is sitting with her back to the lamp and with her back to all the animals in the pool. Her hair hangs down loose all over one side of her face, a tangled, untidy mass hiding her eyes, so that she cannot see. It is the misdeeds and offences committed by men which gather in dirt and impurity over her body. All the foul emanations from the sins of mankind nearly suffocate her . . . The shaman must now use all his efforts to appease her anger and at last, when she is in a kindlier mood, she takes the animals one by one and drops them on the floor, and then it is as if a whirlpool arose in the passage the water pours out from the pool and the animals disappear into the sea. This means rich hunting and abundance for mankind. (127)

An essential part of appeasing Takánakapsâluk's anger is for community members to confess to the offences that led to her suffocation on human misdeeds (127-128). Aua's story of the

[21] This translation of Takánakapsâluk is Neil Christopher's (*Kappianaqtut* 14). Rasmussen consistently uses the English epithet "The Mother of Sea Beasts" when translating her names.

shaman's descent importantly highlights Takánakapsâluk's anger, apparent to shamans immediately upon their meeting with her, and it mentions the motifs of her tangled hair and demand for confession consistent across the many various of the story. There are also less common accounts of the Sea Woman demanding that shamans have sex with her (“Inummarik” 28), and it is these tales that become the basis of Ipellie's story.

In "Summit with Sedna, the Mother of Sea Beasts," the narrator, a powerful shaman, is called on by his community to discover the cause of the famine and find a solution. He goes on a spirit journey to communicate with his fellow shamans in other communities and confirms that starvation reigns throughout the land because Sedna is withholding all sea mammals, but not because Inuit have misbehaved. She withholds them because she is sexually frustrated, and she is starving Inuit until a shaman can bring her to orgasm, an act that the narrator describes as "a **sexual misconduct** that had the potential to wipe out the Inuit nation from the face of the earth" (36-37, emphasis in original). This motive reverses Sedna's role as the moderator of good behaviour. Here, it is she who behaves poorly by using her power for sexual assault.

When the narrator visits Sedna to negotiate the release of the animals, he learns the reason for what he calls Sedna's “impotence.” As a human child, Sedna was raped by her father regularly and for hours at a time (39). The trauma of this prolonged abuse has left her unable to achieve orgasm and, in desperation, she seeks the help of a shaman (39-40). The narrator then unleashes his helping spirit, a version of “Frankenstein” created by melding together the helping spirits of all the shamans in the area, who sings a magic song that lulls Sedna into a trance. In this "forced-sensual-dream-trance," Sedna meets her counterpart on the other side of the universe: Andes, a God of the Sea (41). Andes succeeds where humans have failed, and Sedna

releases the sea animals in a "perpetual explosion of orgasmic juices" (41). His task complete, the narrator returns home and boasts about his accomplishment.

Though the narrator seems convinced that "Summit with Sedna" is a story about his triumphs, the drawing that accompanies the story emphasizes Sedna and her weakness. Superficially, Sedna appears to emerge triumphant in the story as well, because she achieves her long-desired orgasm, but the circumstances and conditions of this orgasm undermine her agency. The drawing that accompanies the story, for example, eternalizes her in a moment of fear and smallness during her encounter with the narrator's helping spirit:

> Frankenstein stood up and towered over the tiny body of Sedna. Sedna shrieked the hell out of her lungs. She begged the monster to stand back, extending her webbed hand toward the monster's eyes which were streaked with crimson and glowing like gold! (40-41)

Figure 1: Alootook Ipellie, “Summit with Sedna, the Mother of Sea Beasts”

This drawing grants viewers a Frankenstein's-eye view of Sedna as we gaze down her shrieking throat. Her hands, held high in a defensive posture, are important. Perhaps most notably, they are

complete, a clear deviation from the unikkaaqtuat, which indicates that the sea mammals were formed from the fragments of her broken fingers. Her intact fingers suggest that her father did not break them and that he did not throw her into the sea. Though Ipellie erases this act of violence, he replaces it with another—sexual assault—and Sedna's abusive father shifts from the figure who prompts her transformation into the Sea Woman to a figure who leaves her with a legacy of trauma. Though Ipellie imagines Sedna to be more complete in body than she is in the unikkaaqtuat, he invents a childhood abuse that leaves her broken in spirit.

Sedna's hands also contain a second set of large, lidless, bloodshot eyes that look up at the world. In some ways, these eyes pay homage to Sedna's watchfulness and omniscience, freeing the eyes in her face to serve a primarily emotive function. Given, though, that the Frankenstein-like spirit presently looms over her, they may instead serve to complicate Sedna's emotional state. The eyes in Sedna's face are downturned and accentuated by a diagonal curve that suggests worry or sadness, an expression that seems to be at odds with her shrieking mouth. The eyes in her hands, wide with fear, seem more in line with the situation. The result is a diminutive view of Sedna, as viewers tower over her to witness her fear and sadness. This is not the Sedna who releases the sea beasts in a flood of orgasmic juices but the cowering Sedna who precedes her by mere moments. The drawing eternalizes Sedna not in her bliss, but in her profound misery. It is worth remembering that Ipellie drew the images first and then wrote stories to accompany them (xviii). This process reveals that a depiction of a strong Sedna was never under consideration: "Summit with Sedna" was only ever going to be a story about conquering the most powerful woman in the Arctic.

Notably, this disturbing story is not designed to be taken as a model for good behaviour; Ipellie offers rather a projection-based critique by showing the consequences of egotistical

actions. In the closing lines, the narrator reflects on his success in returning the sea animals: "From this day on, the Inuit were assured survival as a vibrant force in what was oft-times [an] inhospitable Arctic world. And, more importantly for me, in the eyes of my people, my reputation as a powerful shaman remained perfectly intact" (42). For the narrator, the story ultimately serves his ego, as he admits that his primary concern is his reputation rather than the fate of all Inuit. The hyperbolic hubris of this ending exposes the narrator's pettiness, ruling him out as a role model and showing that everyone has behaved badly by abusing their power. Such is Ipellie's style of critique: he hurls readers into unsettling situations to show the shortcomings of violent relationships without offering an alternative. I will return to this style of critique in my analysis of anti-sealing in chapter four. But even if the story functions as a critique, the rape narrative is a problem because it is reserved for women: as the next story shows, men's authority is undermined through gentler means.

Sedna is the first of two powerful beings undermined in *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*. The second is God. In "When God Sings the Blues," the story immediately following "Summit with Sedna," the narrator describes his annual visits to God, a Mafia-like money launderer who lives in a Magical Kingdom at the edge of our universe, which he funds by collecting ten percent from all the donation plates in all the churches in the world and by owning exclusive rights to the best-selling title, *The Bible* (49). Saddened that his income is diminished by a global recession, and that prayers have gotten pettier of late, God becomes depressed and sings the blues with the narrator.

The story opens as the narrator embarks on his annual visit to God's Magical Kingdom, which is adorned with trillions of fax machines printing human prayers and is outfitted with a

high-powered telescope that allows the observer to see all of humanity simultaneously and to hear their thoughts (48). The narrator says of these annual trips,

> These visits were the most challenging for me since they were always intellectually stimulating. They were also refreshing because they gave me the opportunity to try my hand at outwitting this particular God. I used to find it a little ironic that He liked to call Himself by the Inuktitut name, **Sattaanassee**, which meant Satan. I never found out whether or not this was his real name since He had a way of convincing you that He was always telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth. He had picked such a contradictory name when His job description included an eternal occupation railing against everything His arch rival, the Satan, stood for. This was one of the main reasons why I was extremely fond of Sattaanassee. He never took himself seriously, not even His own Godliness. (45-46, emphasis in original)

This characterization maintains Sattaanassee's power, but in each moment when He exercises it, the narrator diminishes His authority by rendering Him facetious. Throughout the story, Sattaanassee maintains His omniscience and omnipotence, though their expression takes absurdly human shape, as celestial power comes from tools like fax machines and telescopes rather than divinity. The Christian protocol of capitalizing God's name and pronouns are maintained, but the gesture is undermined when God takes on his preferred name, Sattaanassee. By donning Sattaanassee's name, God takes on his characteristics and blurs the distinction between hero and rival, creator and creation.[22] As a result, Sattaanassee's divinity is not taken

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[22] Inuktitut naming emphasizes relationship lineages, as a person will take on some of the characteristics of their namesake. Rachel Qitsualik writes, "Traditionally, the name relationship prevails in a social situation. For example, one of my cousins named her son 'Gideon,' after my father. Sharing the same name with my father forever bonds them together. In a sense, the 'energy' — I'm speaking very figuratively here — that is Gideon is shared between

seriously either by Himself or by the narrator. Furthermore, the narrator presents himself as a friendly rival to Sattaanassee, whom he seeks to outwit during their "intellectually stimulating" encounters. Such a relationship has the simultaneous effect of elevating the narrator to the status of one who can spar intellectually with the omniscient while diminishing Sattaanassee to one who can potentially be outwitted by a mortal.

The friendly rivalry between the narrator and God establishes a level of intimacy not replicated in the narrator's relationship with Sedna. In "Arctic and Outback—Indigenous Literature at the End of the Earth," McMahon-Coleman compares the Canadian Arctic with the Australian Outback as two examples of landscapes represented in the European consciousness as a "blank canvass for the imagination" (46). She analyzes the works of Alootook Ipellie and Sam Watson (Mullenjarli/Birri Gubba), arguing that both authors explore Indigenous Diaspora through shaman figures (50) and concluding that both authors create spaces for cultural subjectivity through their narratives (56). McMahon-Coleman interprets "When God Sings the Blues" to be the only story where the narrator expresses affection for another. She notes the narrator's celibacy throughout the volume: though he meets and describes other men who are sexually active, he does not have any sexual relationships of his own, and even his "seduction" (read "sexual assault") of Sedna relies on a proxy (54). Given the narrator's isolation, McMahon-Coleman reads his visits with God—visits permitted to the narrator alone—as a private relationship that implies a level of intimacy unique to this story (54-55). She reads this encounter as a queer moment that hints towards a homosocial relationship between God and the narrator (54-55). I am hesitant to call this relationship queer or homosocial (friendly rivalry between men

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them. As is proper in Inuktitut, I refer to my cousin's son as, 'Ataataga — my Father,' and he calls me, 'Paniga — my Daughter' ("Word and Will — Part 1: My Big Sleeve" n.p.).

strikes me as normatively masculine), but the relationship does imply a closeness between the narrator and God.

McMahon-Coleman's analysis is evocative because it reveals the selective intimacy of the narrator: his closeness to God emphasizes his distance from Sedna. McMahon-Coleman analyzes "Summit with Sedna" through the lens of cross-cultural dialogue, focusing on how Ipellie's depiction of Sedna varies from traditional stories and Christian appropriations to create a distinct world of his own ("Dreaming" 119-120). This reading makes a strong case for Ipellie's creation of a unique world, but I approach this world with more cynicism than does McMahon-Coleman. Whereas she emphasizes and celebrates Ipellie's cultural subjectivity and the transformative potential of his shaman narrator, I am stuck on the parts of the world that he refuses to change, here emerging in the disparity between men and women in the volume. A comparison of "Summit with Sedna" and "When God Sings the Blues" reveals that in Ipellie's stories, women are subjected to the most explicit acts of violence: it is not incidental that Sedna's authority is undermined through rape and God's through karaoke.

"When God Sings the Blues" and "Summit with Sedna" appear side-by-side in *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*, undermining in rapid succession two of the most influential figures who dictate social relationships and ethical imperatives in the Arctic. As a result, kinship models are left open to negotiation: without Sedna's rule, the narrator is free to negotiate his own relationships with animals, and with God's authority diminished, he moves through a world unburdened by the Christian denial that animals have souls and that meaningful interactions between humans and animals are possible. These stories do important work in constructing the world of *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*, a world where spirits and deities cannot be relied upon for guidance and where humans and other animals must make their own decisions and face the

consequences that ensue. But when Ipellie undermines Sedna and God, he replaces them with a single male narrator. This approach has the benefit of constructing a powerful, dynamic character capable of surmounting or outmanoeuvring almost any obstacle, but it has the disadvantage of winning these victory at the expense of women, whose authority withers for men's benefit.

This tendency is demonstrated powerfully in Ipellie's depiction of a traumatized Sedna. Sedna is made subservient first to her father, who raped her repeatedly as a child, and then by the narrator, who teams up with all the male shamans in the area to create a helper spirit who overpowers her and puts her into a "forced-sensual-dream-trance" (Ipellie 41). Sedna's authority falls hierarchically beneath the power of men, creating an Arctic terrain governed by the narrator and his male companions, a world where Sedna's wrath abates and her rules become suggestions. This quality of Ipellie's writing is perhaps most poignantly revealed by the disparity between the images accompanying Ipellie's "Summit with Sedna" and Qitsualik and Tinsley's "Nuliajuk." Unlike "Summit with Sedna," which subjugates Sedna before the narrator, Jeremy Mohler's original artwork for "Nuliajuk" captures her rage and power at the moment of her transformation. Though the blood from her mutilated hands colours the water around her, the image focuses on a close-up of Nuliajuk's face, contorted into an enraged snarl. Even in the moment of her abuse, her power is emphasized. There is a world of difference Mohler's Nuliajuk and Ipellie's Sedna.

Figure 1: “Summit with Sedna”

Figure 2: Jeremy Mohler, “Nuliajuk”

In contrast to Ipellie, Qitsualik and Tinsley consistently celebrate the strength of women and girls throughout their works, including (or perhaps, especially) in their treatment of unikkaaqtuat. For example, in *How Things Came to Be*, a collection of creation stories written and marketed for youth, they relate the story of "How the Sun and Moon Arose," and it is a story of shame. In the Ancient Arctic, the earliest powers had already settled on night and day, light and dark. This was a time when the world was more pliable than it is today, when people became what they felt. In this world, there was a brother and sister who vowed to each other that they would tackle any problem together as the ultimate team. This cooperation made them experts at lampblack, a game of stealth played in the children's shelter where they would snuff out the light of the oil lamp, and a chosen person would creep about and rub soot on people's noses. The brother and sister always avoided a soot nose while blackening many others. Until one day, the sister felt the brush of a finger on her nose. She was initially embarrassed, but this embarrassment became unrelenting shame when she discovered that it was her brother who got her and humiliated her in front of everyone, betraying their pact to work together always. As she ran from the shelter, she grabbed a torch, and her humiliation stoked the flames, which stoked

her being, as her will carried her into the sky, away from the site of her shame. There, she became Siqiniq, the sun. Her brother, chasing after her with a weaker will resulting in a paler light, became Taqqiq, the moon, and he has never stopped trailing behind her. (33-40)

Qitsualik and Tinsley's telling of "How the Sun and Moon Arose" is a story of humiliation, betrayal, and the strength of will. But notably absent from the story is sexual assault. The story of the Sun and the Moon is a well-published and frequently told story, and in other versions of the story, the brother's betrayal does not come from a child's game: Siqiniq is raped multiple times during the night, when darkness hides her attacker. One night, she rubs soot on his nose, and in the morning, she discovers that it is her brother who has been raping her—this is the betrayal that provokes her transformation. She cuts off one of her breast and throws it to him, inviting him to devour her flesh since he enjoys it so much. She lights her second breast, and its flames transform her into the sun.[23] To my knowledge, Qitsualik and Tinsley are the only ones to tell the story using the lampblack game. Their treatment of the Sun and Moon story therefore reads as a declaration: in this moment (the book was published in 2015), the world does not need a story about an Inuk girl's rape, even if it is consistent with unikkaaqtuat. So, they divert focus away from the details of the injury and emphasize Siqiniq's feeling of shame (anger in other versions) and its outcome, a shift that importantly avoids the victim-blaming narrative that teaches girls to be ashamed when rapists target them. Qitsualik and Tinsley emphasize the power of Siqiniq's will and strength rather than her sexual assault.

The gendered differences in Ipellie, Qitsualik and Tinsley's treatment of unikkaaqtuat productively speak to Justice's kinship criticism. He writes,

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[23] For examples, see Ivaluardjuk (Iglulik) "How the Sun and Moon First Came" as told to Rasmussen (77-81); "Origin of the Sun and Moon" in *Unikkaaqtuat: An Introduction to Traditional Inuit Myths and Legends* (35-36); and "aningagiik taqqirlu siqininnguqtuuk / Brother and Sister Become the Sun and the Moon" as told to Alexina Kublu by her grandfather Michel Kupaaq Piugattuk (Oosten and Laugrand *Introduction*, 178-181).

> Literary expression—in its broadest and most inclusive definition—is a profoundly powerful exercise of the ways in which that relationship [between humans and the rest of creation] is made manifest. This is the heart of the decolonization imperative of indigenous literatures: the storied expression of continuity that encompasses resistance while moving beyond it to an active expression of the living relationship between the People and the world. (150)

Ipellie, Qitsualik and Tinsley point to the decolonial imperative insofar as they affirm and extend Inuit relationships with other beings in ways that challenge Euro-settler norms or simply ignore them, appealing instead to the lessons learned in the Ancient Arctic. Nevertheless, they each appeal to different "storied expressions of continuity" in their articulation of these relationships: Ipellie frequently emphasizes the authority of powerful men, depicting women and girls in violent and degrading ways that upholds a patriarchal kinship network throughout the volume.[24] Qitsualik and Tinsley, in contrast, consistently locate power and authority in women and girls, who hold men accountable for their abusive behaviour.[25] Though these authors' treatment of unikkaaqtuat exposes their kinship models most explicitly, the values articulated in these stories ripple throughout their volumes, re-emerging in various contexts with remarkable consistency. In

[24] In "Hunting for Skins and Furs," the narrator encounters Romeo, a hunter from another culture who "hunts" exotic dancers, spirit women who appear to sexually gratify men and then disappear into a puff of smoke. In "The Dogteam Family," the narrator recalls the exciting experience of seeing a family of Dog People, who appeared human except that that the man was riding his wife as a sledge, who cried in pain as she was pulled by her infant children still attached to her with their umbilical cords. Though these stories are satirical, it is no coincidence that Ipellie's narrator is male in all his reincarnations, and that women are frequently dejected.

[25] In "Oil," Suqqivaa tends to her qulliq, her soapstone lamp fuelled by seal oil, as she repairs her husband Irnginnak's clothing. Through the story's main action and a series of flashbacks, readers learn that Irnginnak is abusive: he berates, rapes, and beats Suqqivaa, and often disparages her while devoting attention to his younger wife, who remains nameless. At the end of the story, we learn that Suqqivaa is an angakkuq, and that her qulliq is a helper spirit who ensnares Irnginnak's mind with the illusion of a younger wife, which distracts him from abusing Suqqivaa until she can gather enough resources to leave him. Not only does Suqqivaa protect herself from her abusive husband, she makes him contribute to his own imprisonment by hunting the seals whose oil feeds the qulliq.

this way, Ipellie, Qitsualik and Tinley write their ideal relationships into the land, as Qitsualik and Tinsley show most powerfully in their stories about transformation.

**Narrative Sovereignty and the Limits of Transformation**

I will return to Ipellie's kinship network in chapter four, where I explore his representation between humans and animal souls. For the remainder of this chapter, I focus on Qitsualik and Tinsley's construction of Land-based sovereignty that punishes malice and insists upon respectful relationships. In "The Qallupiluq Forgiven," the only story in *Ajjiit* to reference Nuliajuk explicitly, the Qallupiluq, a bloodthirsty, sea-dwelling shape-shifter, has overheard a young girl say by the sea ice that she wishes to see a Qallupiluq, a taboo act that permits the Qallupiluq, according to the ancient laws of the Land, to kill her for her indiscretion. The Qallupiluq's bloodlust, however, is not sated: the young girl is an angakkuq, and her helper spirit, a dog, chastises the qallupiluq for its malicious intent and casts it back into the sea, where it must face Nuliajuk's judgement. (45-55)

The Qallupiluq's authority to kill the girl is presented as sovereign. Qitsualik and Tinsley write,

> Even as the child had left the ice-crack, the Qallupiluq had felt a ripple in the Strength of the Land, hearing the child uttering the words: 'I wish I saw a Qallupiluq.' Since the time of those foolish words, the ancient laws of taboo had lent the Qallupiluq the necessary Strength to seize that child. (48)

Throughout *Ajjiit*, stories make reference to the Strength inherent in the Land (Nunaup Sannginginga), which Qitsualik defines in "Inummarik" as an expression of sovereign power:

> This is an impersonal power, responsive to will and emotion, that finds variable expression in the oral lore of Inuit. Inuit did not believe in magic, as per the common definition, though they did believe in what we might term a subtle "psycho-mechanics," normally latent in nature, which could find exterior expression when the human microcosm stimulated the macrocosm of the Water-Land-Sky complex. To the author's knowledge, *Nunaup Sannginginga* was first phrased, as such, by the late Gideon Qitsualik of Pond Inlet, Nunavut. (29, emphasis in original)

When the Qallupiluq draws on the Strength of the Land to reshape itself in human form, it draws on the sovereign triune complex in the service of the ancient laws of the Land. This authority, however, is fleeting, for throughout the story, Land, Sky, and Water are mobilized against the Qallupiluq, resulting in its downfall.

The Qallupiluq openly despises Nuna, which does not accommodate its natural formlessness. As the story opens, the Qallupiluq hauls itself onto the sea ice, dreaming of form:

> The Qallupiluq detested the very feel of form, since form meant discipline, and discipline meant control. Of all the *inuunngittut* (non-human beings), the Qallupiluq's kind most despised anything that threatened to burden it with the shackles of order. But this Qallupiluq knew that it was out of the water's sheltering darkness, and now on the open *Nuna*. There were different laws upon this, the Land; and of all domains, the Land demanded discipline. (45-6, emphasis in original).

This passage introduces a dichotomy between the realms of Water, the dark home of the Qallupiluq, and Land. That the Qallupiluq finds "sheltering darkness" in Water suggests its proximity to *uumaniq*, expressed in this story as bloodlust. In contrast, the Qallupiluq's hatred for Nuna's "shackles of order" speaks to its rejection of *inua*, which is further emphasized by the

narrative identification of the Qallupiluq not only as a non-human being but as the inuunngittut that most adamantly distances itself from humanity. Indeed, it is only the appeal of killing the girl that provokes the Qallupiluq to leave *Imaq* and temporarily accept *Nuna*'s order.

Though the Strength of the Land grants the Qallupiluq the power to enter *Nuna*, this Strength is revoked by the angakkuq girl, who calls on *Sila*. When the Qallupiluq enters *Nuna*, it mimics the form of a young woman it killed years ago, but it fails to imitate the peculiar quality that it has always dreamed of tasting—her breath: "the chimera also knew that its mask was near-perfect, but for breath. There was no vapour in the moonlight, for the Qallupiluq's false lungs could do nothing to simulate the girl's *anirniq*—the life-breath that had been hers alone" (47, emphasis in original). Qitsualik writes in "Inummarik" that anirniq links the human to Sila:

> *Anirniq*, like *uumaniq*, is life. However, while uumaniq is temporary and specific to animation of a given animal/human body, *anirniq* is the impersonal and imperishable aspect of life; symbolically, a life-breath that is merely borrowed from the Sky (in concordant symbolism, the Highest of Breaths) for a period of time. The *anirniq-Sila* relationship is therefore one of part-whole, with the notions of separation and distinction, in this matter, rendered a matter of perspective alone, and questions of true birth or death rendered faulty. (29)

The qallupiluq's inability to replicate anirniq is more than a biological idiosyncrasy: its breathlessness severs it from Sila and forbids it from entering into the cosmic series of relationships that flourish because of it.

The significance of *anirniq* is further emphasized when it undoes the Qallupiluq's form. As it drags the young taboo-violator back to the water, it hears her singing in Tarriummak, the language of angakkuit and the Strong inuunngit, and her magic song freezes the ice crack that

was meant to be the qallupiluq's escape and undoes the Strength that held together its human form (52-53). When the agony of its return to formlessness subsides, the Qallupiluq is met by the girl's helper, who reveals her identity: "you must also know that she is the daughter of the girl you took by the ice-crack years ago. She bears her mother's name, and therefore something of her mother's *anirniq*, the life-breath which you would have stolen" (53). Here the *anirniq* is linked to atiq, the name, which connects the girl to her mother. Qitsualik clarifies that the name's influence is not merely social but comes from the power of directed Sila: since words are formed by the will and uttered with breath, they carry the power to imprint certain characteristics upon the named entity; this is what grants names their power and songs their magic ("Sila" n.p.). Because the girl carries the name of her mother, she carries also a part of her *anirniq*, which she uses to sing the song that overrides the Strength granted to the Qallupiluq because of her indiscretion. The Qallupiluq finally tastes breath, to its peril.

Although the Qallupiluq is banished back to the Water, even this is no longer a refuge. The final punishment of the Qallupiluq is not the girl's vengeance, but her appeal to a higher authority—Nuliajuk. As the Qallupiluq bitterly comments on the girl's presumed thirst for vengeance, her helper informs it of her alternative plan: "you are to return to the sea, to throw yourself upon the mercy of *Nuliajuk*, she who is the greatest Agony of the deep. The Deep Mother, then, will be your judge" (55, emphasis in original). This passage importantly breaks the mould set by the Qallupiluq (and by Ipellie's narrator): the girl is not motivated by a personal vendetta, nor does she seek to redefine unilaterally the relationship between humans and qallupiluit. She defers rather the authority of Nuliajuk, whose terrible power sets the rules that she and the Qallupiluq are to follow. In "Inummarik," Qitsualik identifies Nuliajuk as the symbolic seat of power for *Imaq* (28). At the conclusion of the story, the Qallupiluq is left still

without access to *Sila*, no longer able to enter *Nuna*, and subjected to Nuliajuk's power over *Imaq*: the sovereign complex that initially sanctioned its quest to kill the girl has turned against it.

This turn of fortune is the core of Qitsualik and Tinsley's sovereign world-building in "The Qallupiluq Forgiven." It is important to note that the Qallupiluq's authority to kill the girl is legal, granted by the ancient laws of the Land. The Qallupiluq's crime, therefore, is not attempted murder but malicious intent. When the dog-helper confronts the Qallupiluq, before he has kidnapped the girl, he identifies this crime. In response to the dog's insult against its bloodlust, the Qallupiluq responds,

> "My mission is a sacred one. A cleansing one." Then the chimera pointed at the iglu next to it, adding, "Here is a Human calf who has violated taboo. I am authorized to act upon her. The Land demands it."
>
> "Is it the Land's demand?" the dog asked. "Or your own?"
>
> The Qallupiluq said nothing, but stood staring at the dog with hateful human eyes.
>
> "Consider the path you tread," the dog went on. "There is correct and incorrect behaviour, yes. But woe to the one who takes up the burden of executioner as though it were a gift. It is a little thing, the forgiveness that Humans practice amongst each other. But it has Strength above Strength. (51)

The Qallupiluq appeals to the Land's authority to justify its mission, and although the Land does grant the Qallupiluq the Strength to enter Nuna, the dog warns that in some cases, intention supersedes action. In this way, Qitsualik and Tinley mobilize the *Imaq-Nuna-Sila* complex in the service of their politics, writing respect and forgiveness into the Laws of the Land and creating a

kinship network that punishes malicious intentions while forgiving taboo-violators their momentary transgressions.

The power of forgiveness is reiterated at the story's conclusion, as the dog asserts that the Qallupiluq is likely to be forgiven. The Qallupiluq laments that the girl and her helper have damned it by sending it to Nuliajuk, who cannot possibly forgive it for killing her animals for sport, but the helper rejects this assumption:

> The dog stood up, its eyes burning. "You," the Helper answered, "who use 'sin' as an excuse to commit evil, now claim to understand the workings of forgiveness? The Deep Mother was a girl once, and understands more of Human ways than you might guess. This is your punishment, Qallupiluq: to have what you have denied others." (55)

This ending is compelling because it configures forgiveness as both a mercy and a punishment. The girl, her Helper, and Nuliajuk, they presume, are each prepared to forgive the Qallupiluq for its misdeeds, but it still cannot grasp the nature of this forgiveness, since it is cast as human, stemming from *Nuna* and *inua* rather than from the Qallupiluq's voracious *uumaniq*.

It is tempting to interpret this ending as an expression of the *anthropological machine*, which in this context would isolate and outcast the Qallupiluq and its *uumaniq* to create a sovereign land where *Nuna* and *inua* thrive. Given, though, that the Inummarik holds *uumaniq*, *inua*, and *anirniq* in equal balance, this ending seems rather to warn against the imbalance that comes from excessive *uumaniq*. Such a reading accounts for the story's resistance to untampered *uumaniq*, but it does not account for the Qallupiluq's form, or lack thereof. Interestingly, Qitsualik and Tinsley seem to reimagine the qallupiluq a shapeshifter: in all other qallupiluq stories I have encountered, it is a sea monster with a solid form. According to Neil Christopher,

in *The Hidden: A Compendium of Arctic Giants, Dwarves, Gnomes, Trolls, Faeries, and other Strange Beings from Inuit Oral History*,

> the qallupilluit are a race of shy, aquatic beings. It is said that they possess bodies like humans; however, they are covered in slimy, green-grey skin (not unlike the sculpin), with fins and enlarged, webbed hands and feet. Many elders have commented that they usually wear an amauti that is made from eider duck skins" (137).

In contrast, Qitsualik and Tinsley do not grant the Qallupiluq a stable form, instead tethering *uumaniq* to formlessness, which creates a link between the Qallupiluq's bloodlust and its shapeshifting body and that creates an air of suspicion around shapeshifting that also appears in other stories.

For example, "The Wolf Wight's Dirge" focuses on Ikumaniq, an "*Amaruq Inuruqsimajuq*: a Wolf who knew Human form" (110, emphasis in original). Ikumaniq's community possesses a finite amount of innua, "the essence of all that was Human" (109), which they use to transform temporarily into humans, and they have developed a culture that makes use of both forms, hunting as wolves and becoming human for verbal communication, tool use, and ceremony (109). The Amaruq Inuruqsimajuit are at a crisis point, for their communal innua is fading, and the story centres their investigation of the theft (112). Initially, they assume that the culprits are either humans or the Amaruq Inuruqsimajuit's longstanding enemies, the Nanurlualuit, chimeras who favour the form of polar bears, though there are, as with the Qallupiluq, some discrepancies, such as the dearth of white fur, the tears in the skin "offering glimpses of mottled and glutinous motion underneath," (117) and seven, spider-like eyes that have the power to ensnare the *isuma* of any who gaze into them.

The story includes investigatory debates and a horrifying battle between the Nanurlualuit and the Amaruq Inuruqsimajuit, but for my purposes here, I am most interested in the story's configuration of shape-shifting and with the final revelation of the culprit: The Grand Mother, the matriarch of the Amaruq Inuruqsimajuit. As the community feels the last of their innua falling away, the Grand Mother, who had been secluded, emerges in full human form, with two infant wolves who could transform into perfect humans, a skill that the Amaruq Inuruqsimajuit gain only in adolescence (122). Ikumaniq, having lost the ability to speak, confronts her with directed thought:

> *Mother of Us All, have You taken our innua?*
>
> The Grand Mother seemed to sense the question, and her features softened, becoming sad. "Long have I ceased to be a mother to you," she spoke aloud, with a voice as of dancing water, "for you have taken a path that I will not tread." . . . "Do you yet not understand? It was you who forsook your innua. I cannot take such a thing from you, even by the Strength of the Land. Long have I watched you all, guided you in vain, while your ways have ever favoured Wolf over Human. There is but one nature that must rule, in the end. And my first family has chosen." (122)

The Grand Mother reveals that, despite her name and title, she is no longer the mother of the Amaruq Inuruqsimajuit, who have chosen a life as wolves. This figuration of transformation positions it as a test: the shape-shifting culture of the Amaruq Inuruqsimajuit comes to its inevitable conclusion, as nature forces upon them the choice that they have been reluctant to make. The productive possibilities in this figuration are therefore located not in transformation but in *choosing* a stable form and accepting the responsibilities that go along with it.

This distrust of transformation emerges in the narrative description of shapeshifting, which positions kinship as contingent on *innua*. Ikumaniq's transformation is configured as a shift between two poles: "as the innua, the Humanity, seemed tenuous within him, so it left only his *uumaniq*—the rawest, most vulgar stuff of animal life. He cried out, then, loosing something like a canine yip rather than a Human wail, before his sister, Puajuq, distracted him with a hand upon his shoulder" (110, emphasis in original). The denotative contrast between *innua* and *uumaniq* is reflected connotatively in the passage through the "canine yip," an animal sound that contrasts the speech and songs of humans, and through an expression of intimacy, as Puajuq distracts Ikumaniq from his yip by placing her hand on his shoulder.

The story makes clear that such expressions of kinship rely on *innua*. As Ikumaniq witnesses Qissurtuq mourning his wife, Tununiq, who saves Ikumaniq's life and, as a result, falls prey to a Nanurlualuk's hypnotic gaze, he notes the deep hunger that emerges as uumaniq gains prominence: "The absence of innua was now akin to starvation. Ikumaniq could think of little other than the need for that Human essence. All sentiment, all kinship, might wither before that hunger" (120). This hunger comes immediately after Qissirtuq's mourning, a plot sequence that emphasizes Ikumaniq's dread that the hunger might nullify the need for mourning at all. Such moments deepen the impact of the Grand Mother's condemnation of choosing wolf form over human. Such a choice is not merely a matter of preference; it is a move away from kinship.

The Amaruq Inuruqsimajuit, enraged by the Grand Mother's perceived theft, descend on her, fangs bared, but the last of their *innua* fades before they lunge, and they forget to exact vengeance. As the Grand Mother sings a dirge to her first family, their *uumaniq* solidifies:

> The song seemed to stand outside of time, so that Ikumaniq was unsure of how long he listened, his mind a mist within which crept a miscellany of feelings, but little memorable thought.
>
> Then, when the sun was low and the shadows he cast his gaze about, realizing that the woman on the hill had ceased in her noise. And he was very afraid, for he knew not where he stood, nor what to expect of this strange place. There were snarls and yips of pain behind him, also to his sides, and he turned to behold wolves. They were fetid with terror, with anger and confusion alike to his own, and had therefore set teeth to one another. Many others, he saw, had simply fled, so that the distant specks of them receded in several directions.
>
> The wolf that had been Ikumaniq turned back to the slope one last time, noting the lingering Human scent, though there was now but a hole to view. Then he turned and fled: for the simple wolf, as with his kith, and with his kin, was all that was left to him. (123)

This ending conveys the death of Amaruq Inuruqsimajuit. Ikumaniq and the others fully become wolves, and in this form, they perceive the former Great Grandmother as a Human, for they forget the bonds that formerly held them together. The wolf formerly known as Ikumaniq loses his atiq, and therefore his position within a community. His cogent, memorable thoughts dissipate, leaving only a "miscellany of feelings" that compel the former community to attack one another before dispersing in different directions. The hunger of the wolf pervades, and Ikumaniq loses all sentiment and kinship, as he feared he would.

Such a conclusion compellingly complements the Qallupiluq, who is ejected from community and whose formlessness is positioned as the reason for its bloodlust. Similarly, the Amaruq Inuruqsimajuit maintain kinship bonds only when they take human form, and their

ability to transform into wolves becomes their undoing when they over-indulge in forms that deviate from *innua* and the kinship it enables. Here, transformation becomes cautionary, as readers witness the isolation that comes to those who are ensnared by the appeal of formlessness.

This configuration of transformation complicates the celebrations that it typically enjoys among scholars, who frequently see vast potentials in shifting forms. For example, Keavy Martin deploys figurations of human-animal transformation to articulate her politics and hermeneutics. In *Stories in a New Skin*, Martin draws on the prominence of animal skins in Inuit literature to articulate the strategic adaptation of Inuit intellectual traditions to new political realities. In Inuit stories, beings can wear animal skins, as one would wear clothing, to transform into different animals, including humans (7); Martin uses the figure of skin-wearing to articulate the ways that "Inuit intellectual traditions might similarly 'dress in new 'skins' for the purpose of infiltrating the academy" (8). Similarly, in "The Hunting and Harvesting of Inuit Literature," she interprets depictions of human-animal transformation in Tanya Tagaq's short film *Tungijuq*, which Martin translates as "'he, she, or it transforms," or 'shapeshifts'" (448), positioning the film and analysis as a productive point of departure for her wider argument that texts are "animal-like, or meat-like" and that readers should engage with Inuit texts by following the protocols of food sharing (453). To take an example beyond print, it has become increasingly rare to attend a conference without hearing about the transformative potential of animals, new sites of human-animal relationships, tricksters, cultural adaptation, intersectionalism, and interdisciplinarity. These analyses are powerful and persuasive, attending to the complexities and nuances of transformation and avoiding simplistic explanations. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of so many celebrations runs the risk of generating an unearned trust in figurations of transformation, which, for all their strengths, do not always solve the problems with which they grapple, for

systems of oppression are also transformative and are quite capable of following the transformer to their new body. As the story of Nuliajuk shows, transformation is also not sufficient to repair damaged relationships: even after she becomes the Sea Woman, she must develop and uphold the rules of engagement between her animals and humans, who cannot always be trusted to maintain ethical relationships on their own, as she discovered when her father betrayed her. Transformation does carry the potential for new imaginings, but it introduces just as many new dangers, and trusting in it too much risks obfuscating such problems.

Sometimes I wonder if literary scholars ask too much of their books, expecting them to present just the right trope, that magical configuration that readers can use to imagine themselves out of the intersecting forms of violence in the world around them. As this study will shown, no such trope exists. Each case study that I analyze constitutes a political and social microcosm of its own, and, as I will show, the discourses that have gained the most success among activists who seek new models of ethical engagement are the ones that form alliances with resilient and long-standing systems of oppression. Such findings should not suggest, however, that readers and scholars give in to cynicism and despair: there are productive possibilities to be found in transformations, but it is equally necessary to approach these spaces with skepticism, to assume, if only temporarily, that transformation is a move away from responsibility, a rejection of kinship.

# Chapter Two

## Slaughtering Dogs and Saving Wolves:

## The Rise of the Animal Welfare State

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Canadian government encouraged and at times coerced Inuit relocation from seasonal camps to permanent settlements, and although conducted under the rubric of welfare, the move marked for many Inuit a transition into poverty. One of the reasons that this move became permanent was the near-obliteration of the dog population that ran concurrently with it, not only leaving many Inuit without a mode of transportation and the means to hunt but also launching an overt attack on Inuit social relations. According to Inuit testimonies, the RCMP slaughtered dogs without consultation with Inuit communities, without notification or explanation to dog owners, and without regard for the importance of dogs to Inuit. The RCMP responds that the only dogs killed during this time were those that became a threat to public safety and so were "destroyed lawfully." This chapter begins with a cross-examination of the trinity of reports that characterize the investigation of the slaughter: the RCMP's "Final Report: RCMP Review of Allegations Concerning Sled Dogs" (hereafter "RCMP Report"), the Qikiqtani Inuit Association's "Qikiqtani Truth Commission Final Report: Achieving Saimaqatigiingniq"[26] (hereafter "QTC Report"), and the Makivik Corporation's "Submission to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs for the Government of Canada and to the Ministere délégué aux Affairs autochtones for the Government of Québec Regarding the Slaughtering of Nunavik ‘Qimmit’ (Inuit Dogs) from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s" (hereafter "Makivik Submission").

[26] Saimaqatigiingniq: "when past opponents get back together, meet in the middle, are at peace" (“QTC Report” 6)

While the RCMP was slaughtering Inuit dogs, politicized groups were mobilizing around texts like Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* to protect tundra wolves and challenge the anti-wolf sentiment imported to Canada by English livestock farmers. This shifting concern for arctic canines is the focus of this chapter. The RCMP's slaughter of Inuit dogs that previously they inoculated and protected is cause for alarm and criticism of the colonial violence that it enacts. It is also cause for some confusion: dogs are one of the few animals that Euro-settler Canadians value enough to protect, so why does the RCMP slaughter them in the mid-twentieth century? Why do Euro-settler Canadians and Americans mobilize, in the same historical moment, to protect the wolves that previously they feared and despised? How does the RCMP justify their actions fifty years later? In this chapter, I explore and delineate the narratives and politics of animal welfare as it emerges in the late-twentieth and early twenty-first century, arguing that it pathologizes Inuit relationships with dogs as it naturalizes Euro-settler heteronormativity. In the previous chapter, I drew in kinship criticism to argue that Qitsualik and Tinsley mobilized the *Imaq-Nuna-Sila* complex to support their politics. In this chapter, I show how the *animal welfare state* deploys a similar mechanism, writing Euro-settler kinship models into the Land.

**The Dog Slaughter in Context**

The Makivik Corporation[27] is a political organization in Nunavik (Northern Québec) that protects the rights, interests, and financial compensation of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (1975) and the *Nunavik Inuit Land Claim Agreement* (2008). In January 2005, the Makivik Corporation submitted "Makivik Submission" along with a documentary about the importance of dogs to Inuit, *Echo of the Last Howl* (2004), to the Government of Canada and

[27] Makivik: to rise up (*Makivik.org*).

demanded a public inquiry into the slaughter of Inuit dogs in Nunavik, 1950-1970. "Makivik Submission" alleged that Canadian and Québécois government officials and representatives slaughtered Inuit dogs in Nunavik to near extinction in a manner that was arbitrary, abusive, and dangerous to Inuit (12). The allegation resulted in internal investigations from the Québec Government and the RCMP. On March 3, 2010, the allegations were confirmed in Québec in the "Final report of the Honorable Jean-Jacques Croteau retired Judge of the Superior Court regarding the allegations concerning the slaughter of Inuit sled dogs in Nunavik, 1950-1970" (hereafter "Superior Court Report"). Justice Croteau declares the slaughters an illegitimate application of the *Act Respecting Certain Abuses Injurious to Agriculture*, which permits farmers to protect their livestock from predators (124). He rules that police officers in Nunavik had an obligation to discuss concerns about dangerous dogs with Inuit in Inuktitut and that they failed to meet this obligation (131); he finds the Government of Québec liable for the dog slaughter in Nunavik (136); and he recommends an apology and compensation, to be paid to Inuit non-profit organizations that organize sled dog races, promote Inuit art and sculpture, or promote teaching and use of Inuktitut in Nunavik (138). In Québec, the Makivik Corporation received the acknowledgment of wrong-doing that it sought.

The RCMP internal investigation yielded different results. "RCMP Report" found that some dogs were "destroyed lawfully" by the RCMP and that many others died from a combination of factors including canine epidemics, the introduction of the snowmobile, and Inuit participation in a market economy (7). Since the dog slaughters extended into the Northwest Territories (including what is now Nunavut), dogs were subject to *An Ordinance Respecting Dogs*, which gave the RCMP and their representatives the authority to kill or capture dogs that were not tied down, muzzled, or under the care of somebody sixteen years or older. Francis

Lévesque charts the history of this ordinance in "An Ordinance Respecting Dogs: How Creating Secure Communities in the Northwest Territories Made Inuit Insecure." The first version of the ordinance, emerging in 1928 and supported by government officials but not by Inuit dog owners, decreed that dogs could not roam free unless muzzled (83). Dogs found in violation of the ordinance were captured and returned to owners, upon payment of a fine, and those not claimed after five days were auctioned off, with those not bid on shot (83). In the years following, there were cases of loose dogs mauling and killing children. In 1937, John Thomas Smith in Hay River was killed by loose dogs while he was going to school (84); in 1942, eighteen-month-old Bryan Smith was attacked non-lethally in Yellowknife (85), and in 1945, six-year-old Helen Whiteford was bitten on the leg (85). As the dog attacks on white children[28] increased, government officials became increasingly resolved to tighten the regulations of *An Ordinance Respecting Dogs*. In 1946, an amendment added that dogs in settlements must be muzzled or under the care of qualified persons at least sixteen years of age (85). In 1949, a new version of the ordinance eliminated the five-day holding period for dogs and gave the RCMP the authority to decide, based on the officer's personal opinion, if captured dogs should be killed earlier for humanitarian reasons or for public safety (86). In 1950, an amendment lifted the condition that dogs be captured: officers could now shoot dogs on the spot based on personal discretion (86-87). By 1955, *An Ordinance Respecting Dogs* applied everywhere in the Northwest Territories and civil servants were appointed in communities to enforce it (87).

*An Ordinance Respecting Dogs* becomes a bullet-proof vest for the RCMP in "RCMP Report." Since the ordinance gives full authority and discretion to officers to shoot loose dogs,

[28] Lévesque notes that the RCMP were preoccupied with ensuring the safety of non-Inuit children, citing case files from Caporal R.G. McDowell of the Pangnirtung RCMP detachment, who anxiously monitored the four white children in the community in 1937, hiring "older Native children" to protect them while they played outside (84).

the RCMP acts in accordance with the law even as they slaughter Inuit dogs. *An Ordinance Respecting Dogs* has come under attack from scholars and Inuit for the enormous power that it gives government agents over Inuit. Lévesque argues that the ordinance, which sought to make Northern communities more secure, increased Inuit insecurity because it disrupted Inuit communities and prevented Inuit from hunting (78). The Qikiqtani Inuit Association criticizes the law, which is out-of-touch with Inuit dog-rearing practices, as well as the RCMP's blind faith in its efficacy. The Qikiqtani Inuit Association is a designated Inuit Organization under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, and it represents Inuit in the Qikiqtani (Baffin) region of Nunavut. On October 20, 2010, "QTC Report," which creates a history of Inuit experiences of federal policies in Qikiqtaaluk, 1950-1970, was submitted to the Annual General Meeting of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association. "QTC Report" is a corrective to "RCMP Report," providing the holistic account that Inuit organizations had hoped would result from the RCMP internal investigation.[29] "QTC Report" criticizes *An Ordinance Respecting Dogs* because Inuit dog-owners consider it deeply inappropriate: muzzles rendered dogs unable to eat snow to hydrate and unable to defend themselves against predators, and Inuit adulthood and allocation of responsibility is determined by ability rather than by the arbitrary age of sixteen (22-3). Perhaps

[29] In "'A Flash Point in Inuit memories': Endangered Knowledges in the Mountie Sled Dog Massacre," Susan McHugh analyzes how "QTC Report" explores the epistemological differences between RCMP understandings of sled dogs and Inuit understandings of qimmit, arguing that "the QTC documents the rupture and recovery of the value of human-canine interspecies intersubjectivity at the heart of its culture. Thus it lofts hopes alongside warning of dangers for a multispecies version of Hardt and Negri's multitude, namely, that human-animal relationships felt as historic and vital to a nomadic culture can provide important material as well as ideological means of mutual escape from the forces of settlement that would otherwise will them to enslavement and eradication" (172-3). I agree with McHugh that "QTC Report" explains and emphasizes Inuit kinship models as a corrective to "RCMP Report," though I often find her explanations of *why* this is the case to be unpersuasive. For example, she interprets the word *qimmit*, translated as "many dogs" in "QTC Report," to gesture to a sense of multiplicity that she goes on to read in the context of Deleuze and Guattari, and Negri and Hart (149-50). Though McHugh is intrigued that the QTC passes up on "simply the plural 'dogs'" (149), I read the clarification "many dogs" to be grammatical, signaling that the term *qimmit* is plural in the three-or-more case rather than in the dual case, a distinction that is present in Inuktitut but absent in English. I am not convinced that such grammatical clarifications substantiate the theorizations of multiplicity on which McHugh draws, and I find that her frequent appeal to prominent Euro-western thinkers obfuscates rather than clarifies the Inuit relationships she seeks to uplift.

most importantly, Inuit historically permit their dogs to move freely in camps to better socialize them to human companionship, and even the dog-owners who decided to comply with the law and tie up their dogs met with difficulty because the necessary chains were insufficiently stocked and extremely expensive (22).

Since *An Ordinance Respecting Dogs* contradicts proven methods of raising dogs effectively, many Inuit testimonies indicate that the factors increasing dog aggression stemmed largely from government policies and the move to permanent settlements. Though dogs are potentially dangerous animals, Inuit have successfully trained, managed, and socialized them with other dogs and with humans for countless generations ("QTC Report" 22). Once Inuit moved into settlements, their relationship changed. Inuit with wage employment found themselves without time to hunt for their dogs, so dogs were often left to forage beyond to the confines of the owner's house. The sheer number of families and dogs that were introduced to each settlement also posed problems for dogs, who were socialized to deal with smaller groups (22). "QTC Report" indicates that many dogs did become more dangerous in this transition but that the danger arose as a direct result of government initiatives to relocate Inuit. Rather than allow a period of transition during which Inuit could retrain and socialize their dogs to settlement life, the RCMP intervened swiftly and relentlessly to cull Inuit dogs.

My analysis navigates the gap between RCMP and Inuit understanding of dogs and of appropriate relationships between humans and dogs. For what it is worth, I agree that the RCMP acted in accordance with the law, though I find the law violently stacked in their favour. I do not, however, weigh in on questions of liability, compensation, or recommendations for future actions. As a literary scholar, I am invested in the stories that circulate about the slaughter, and my intervention focuses mainly on the configuration of Inuit dogs in "RCMP Report." More

precisely, I analyze the narrative surplus of the report, the story that it tells to justify the dog slaughter morally as well as legally. I identify two key mechanisms of this story: the reduction of Inuit dogs from cultural participants to obsolete labourers, and the configuration of sled dogs as a danger to settlements.

**Naming Sled Dogs: The Strategic Ambivalence of the Animal Sign**

When the Qikiqtani Truth Commission travelled to Inuit communities to invite testimonies regarding the changes imposed by the federal government from 1950-1970, it was the dog slaughter that became the "flash point in Inuit memories" ("QTC Report" 23). Over and over, Inuit would recount the day their dogs or their family's dogs were shot, and they relived the pain of losing their dogs and their independence (23). Papikattuq Sakiagaw of Kangiqsujuaq notes that the dog slaughter coincided with the rise of government management of Inuit lives: "In those days, the Qallunaat had begun domineering our lives for a while. It was in the 1960s that the Qallunaat had started manipulating the lives of the Inuit, at the same time they slaughtered our dogs and we were left without anything" ("Makivik Submission" 15). The dog slaughter marks a traumatic loss for Inuit because dogs are valued partners. When "Makivik Submission" demands an inquiry into the slaughters, it repeats that the importance of dogs to Inuit "cannot be overstated" (1, 4). Dogs have historically helped Inuit with sled travel over great distances, locating seal breathing holes by smell, and navigating through blizzards (3). In periods of extreme starvation, Inuit ate their dogs as a last resort, though when food was available, dog-owners would sometimes prioritize feeding their dogs over their families, since the dogs were essential for future hunting (3-4). There is also a spiritual dimension to the relationship, as dogs take on illnesses directed at their owners so that Inuit communities will remain healthy (4).

The social relationship between Inuit and dogs extends beyond labour and survival. In *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths*, a documentary accompaniment to "QTC Report," Peter Audlaluk from Igloolik testifies to the cultural significance of dogs when he speaks about the slaughter:

> When we were training our pups in a team, they became members of our family. They became extremely important to us. It was the dogs that taught us about our land . . . Even in a whiteout they would lead us back to the igloo. On a hunt, it was the dogs that would find the animals. Humans would see nothing, but the dogs would smell the animals . . . So when the massacre happened, we were devastated. We totally depended on the dogs. It was like my father or my brother being killed. It was horrible. They were our companions. (Gjerstad and Sanguya: 2010)

Audlaluk's testimony echoes "Makivik Submission" in its description of the hunting and navigation skills that dogs contribute to Inuit communities, but dogs are also unique because they are the only animals with individual social identities. Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten identify in *Hunters, Predators and Prey: Inuit Perceptions of Animals* that each dog has an atiq, which they explain organize and reproduce Inuit communities as babies are named after deceased ancestors (40). These babies become protected by their namesakes and will sometimes take on their characteristics (40). Passing on an atiq also does a service to the deceased, since a soul is not at rest until its atiq has been given to a baby. As John Bennett and Susan Rowley point out in their collection *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut*, naming is a union, as the spiritual entity of the atiq joins with the child to protect her (3).

Dog atiit take a variety of forms and may describe the dog's behavioural traits or physical markings, restore the atiq of deceased members of the team, or take on the atiq of a human.

Martha Paniaq from Arviligjuaq, recalls that her great-grandmother named one of her son's dogs after herself:

> The old dog's name was Qingannuaq after an old lady, who was my father's grandmother. She named it after herself saying, "I'd like to be able to help you when times get rough." She told [my father] to always seek her help whenever he was in a helpless situation. She told him this the day the dog was born. One day my father [who was in a bad situation] said he thought of his grandmother as he approached the dog for her help. To suddenly pull a loaded long sled by herself was a lot to ask of an old dog that hadn't pulled anything for a long time.
>
> This is my earliest childhood memory, watching my father and the old dog running up the slope with a pair of long runners, which should have been too heavy for either one man or an old retired dog to pull, and there they were going so fast. (282, brackets in original)

Paniaq's account shows how a family member offers protection through a living namesake. Qingannuaq names a newborn dog after herself so that her relationship with her son will be reflected in his dog. When Paniaq's father requires Qingannuaq, his dog, to accomplish a particularly difficult feat, he appeals to Qingannuaq, his mother, to offer assistance through her namesake. The appeal works, and Paniaq's aged father and retired dog are able to carry a load that ought to be too heavy for them. The emphasis on relationships also comes through in Paniaq's inclusion of herself in the story. Though she is not directly involved in pulling the heavy runners, she affirms that observing the event is her earliest memory, thus contextualizing her relationship with the story, her father, and both Qingannuaqs.

The importance of dogs to Inuit is actively undermined in “RCMP Report,” which deploys the moniker "Inuit sled dog" despite an explicit explanation of the wider importance of dogs to

Inuit in "Makivik Submission" and despite an internal investigation yielding 42 000 pages of records, including over 190 interviews and consultation with scholars who could explain how the role of dogs extended beyond sled-pulling ("RCMP Report" 4). The introduction to "RCMP Report" betrays the RCMP's knowledge that dogs are more than mere labourers: “Inuit sled dogs fulfilled a key role in the Eastern Arctic, in terms of transportation, hunting, homing instincts in blizzard conditions, search and rescue, warmth and companionship, and even as a food source, when the harshest conditions prevailed” (8). With this introductory remark, the RCMP acknowledges the various ways that dogs are important to Inuit. The list is somewhat mechanical in its focus on skills and labour acts, and the full complexity of the relationship remains understated, but it is at least acknowledged.

Despite this initial acknowledgment of the cultural significance of dogs to Inuit, the remainder of the report reduces dogs to "Inuit sled dogs" in both name and function. The "findings" section of the report best exemplifies this process. In a subheading titled "Inuit Sled Dogs," the report identifies a waning need for sled dogs in the Eastern Arctic:

> Inuit culture, prior to the introduction of the snowmobile in permanent communities, was deeply connected with and dependent on the Inuit sled dog. The Inuit sled dogs were used to hunt, to relocate, and to transport. The introduction of the snowmobile in the 1960s was a significant factor in the demise of the Inuit sled dog and the culture based upon them. Snowmobiles were fast, modern, and did not need the care and attention of a dog team. Trips that would have taken up to a week by dog sled could be made in a day on a snowmobile. (14)

The use of the past tense to articulate the way that Inuit culture *was* deeply dependent on dogs *prior* to the introduction of the snowmobile and permanent settlements creates a narrative of

progress that imagines snowmobiles to be the advanced model of dogs and that imagines permanent communities to be an improvement upon seasonal camps. The artifice of this narrative is evident in the RCMP's misrepresentation of chronology. It is true that many Inuit hunters adapted quickly to snowmobiles and that hunters whose dogs were not yet shot sometimes preferred snowmobiles to sleds, but "RCMP Report" profoundly misrepresents the relationship between the demise of dogs and the popularity of snowmobiles. As this passage indicates, snowmobiles were introduced to the Arctic in the (late) 1960s, whereas the dog slaughters began in the mid 1950s. This passage indicates that the introduction of the snowmobile played a key role in the demise of dogs, yet the evidence does not support such a claim, since snowmobiles did not gain popularity in the Eastern Arctic until the end of the RCMP dog slaughter.[30] Unable to account for the gap between the culling of dogs and the introduction of snowmobiles, "RCMP Report" instead reverses the narrative and implies that the introduction of snowmobiles precedes the slaughter. Here, the RCMP betray their investment in colonialism by knowingly, as trained investigators, misrepresenting the evidence to support their preconceived notions: having already decided that settlements are an improvement upon camp life, they actively reshape events to narratively support this idea.

As "RCMP Report" binds dogs to the past, it celebrates snowmobiles as a progression in Inuit cultural evolution. In this passage, the RCMP praises settler-introduced snowmobiles as faster and more modern than dog teams, though the claim that snowmobiles do not require equivalent care and attention is simply untrue: gasoline is expensive and vehicles require constant check-ups and repairs. In some ways, snowmobiles require more care than feeding a dog team, since it presupposes Inuit assimilation into wage labour and commodity relations. In

[30] "Makivik Submission" cites Taamusi Qumaq's testimony that when his dogs were slaughtered in 1968, there were only two or three snowmobiles in each village—certainly not enough to undermine the need for dogs (12).

“Can the Sled Dog Sleep? Postcolonialism, Cultural Transformation, and the Consumption of Inuit Culture,” Frank Tester argues that the transition from sled travel to snowmobile marks a tremendous existential shift in Inuit culture as commodity relations replaced other kinds of social relations. Though dogs have use value and are integrated into social relations that involved giving dogs as gifts to demonstrate friendship and solidarity, there was no market for dogs prior to colonialism and they had no exchange value: the relationship between Inuit and dogs was not a commodity relation (10). The transition from dog sled to snowmobile is substantial for Tester because it forces on Inuit a movement from social relations to commodity relations (10). Whereas travel by dog sled is contingent on a close relationship between dogs and their owners, the snowmobile is a mere object that has no personality and cannot respond to the character of the hunter as dogs do (10). Tester's analysis offers a useful way of understanding how the commodification of dogs in "RCMP Report" grafts the commodity relationship between humans and snowmobiles onto the social relationship between dogs and their owners. When the RCMP speak of "Inuit sled dogs," they reduce dogs from cultural participants to a figure representing a single act of labour: pulling sleds. Since this labour act can be accomplished by a snowmobile, the RCMP imagines dogs to be unnecessary. This commodification of "Inuit sled dogs" allows the RCMP to view them as symbols of a dying nomadic culture, replacing dog atiit with a different title: obsolete.

This reconfiguration of dogs speaks to the mythical appropriation of the *animal welfare state*. As Barthes clarifies,

> A signified can have several signifiers: this is indeed the case in linguistics and psycho-analysis. It is also the case in the mythical concept: it has at its disposal an unlimited mass of signifiers . . . this means that *quantitatively*, the concept is much poorer than the

> signifier, it often does nothing but re-present itself. Poverty and richness are in reverse proportion in the form and the concept: to the qualitative poverty of the form, which is the repository of a rarefied meaning, there corresponds the richness of the concept which is open to the whole of History; and to the quantitative abundance of the forms there corresponds a small number of concepts. This repetition of the concept through different forms is precious to they mythologist, it allows him to decipher the myth: it is in the instance of a kind of behaviour which reveals its intention (120).

Barthes goes on to say that in myth, "the concept can spread over a very large expanse of signifier. For instance, a whole book may be a signifier for of a single concept; and conversely, a minute form (a word, a gesture, even incidental, so long as it is noticed) can serve as signifier to a concept filled with a very rich history" (120). In the example that opened this project, the inunnguaq, as an image, becomes easily appropriated by nation-building rhetorics. In "RCMP Report," the mythical appropriation is more fragmented: it is not the dog as tidy image or word that is appropriated; rather, it is the complex relationship between dogs and humans that becomes the raw material for myth. When "RCMP Report" resignifies Inuit dogs to stand in for obsolete modes of labour and social organization, it reaches into the full history of Inuit dog-rearing, overwriting centuries of Inuit-dog interactions and superimposing upon them the looming figure of a ticking clock. In this way, the myth of the *animal welfare state* is insidious and resilient: it cannot be overthrown by reasserting Inuit relationship with dogs, since this relationship is precisely what has been appropriated. Each assertion is immediately reconfigured by the *animal welfare state* as an expression of the past, which may be romanticized but never taken seriously. Such is the turnstile alibi of the *animal welfare state*: it undermines Inuit relationship with dogs

by representing it as out-of-time, even as it purports to respect and admire Inuit, so long as they remain, imaginatively, in the past.

In some ways, “RCMP Report” collapses in on itself when it reverses the chronology of the dog slaughter and introduction of snowmobiles, exposing the RCMP’s colonial investments, which here come at the expense of sound investigation. In myth, however, it makes no difference if a narrative stands up to scrutiny. As Barthes argues, “myth essentially aims at causing an immediate impression—it does not matter if one is later allowed to see through the myth, its action is assumed to be stronger than the rational explanations which may later belie it” (130). This clarification helps to explain the transparent incompetence of the RCMP’s chronological mishap: logic was never the point. The purpose rather was to create an appropriative narrative that would justify discursively, through the mythical structure, what the RCMP could not justify morally.

This commodification of “sled dogs” initiates a shift in the trajectory of "RCMP Report." As the report continues, it redirects focus away from allegations that the dog slaughter was a means to force Inuit relocation and toward the narrative of progress. The section titled "Socio-Economic Factors" exemplifies this point. Reproduced in its entirety, the section reads,

> The Inuit population went through social changes during the time frame in question. Factors such as
>
> - social benefits to which the Inuit people had access for the first time, including government education, health care, government housing, and government family allowances within settlements
> - the collapse of the fur trade in the late 1940s, and

- the introduction of the snowmobile, *contributed to a reduced need for the Inuit sled dogs*. (15, my emphasis)

The factors raised here are a curious inclusion because they appear to have little relevance to an investigation concerning the existence of a mandate to kill dogs as a means to force Inuit relocation. Social benefits, the collapse of the fur trade, and snowmobiles do not kill dogs in the same way that starvation, disease, and RCMP bullets do. At this point, the report no longer accounts for the death of dogs but instead suggests that "sled dogs" were no longer necessary and that they were doomed to be phased out at this moment of Inuit history. When "RCMP Report" regards "Inuit sled dogs" in a way that ignores Inuit social relations and that composes a narrative of progress, it establishes a relationship with dogs that treats them as superfluous life and establishes a patronizing relationship with Inuit, as Euro-settler Canadians imagine themselves to usher them in the modern era.

Though no material evidence has surfaced to suggest that the RCMP had an official mandate to slaughter sled dogs to force Inuit relocation, many RCMP officers voraciously carried out the Dog Ordinance law to “destroy” those dogs they deemed superfluous. Though the Dog Ordinance law dictates that dogs may be “destroyed” only if their owners cannot be found and the dog cannot be captured, “it became easier simply to shoot qimmit than to go through the process outlined in the dog ordinance” (QTC Final Report 23). The result was, in some regions, wide-scale dog killings that occurred without consultation with Inuit dog owners and often without any explanation. As Louis Uttak from Igloolik testifies, “They killed our best dogs before we had a chance to tie them up. I can feel the pain; that’s how it was” (Gjerstad and Sanguya: 2010). The difference between this report and “Superior Court Report” is remarkable, for Justice Crouteau recommends compensation to Inuit whose dogs were slaughtered because he

finds no legal precedence for the scale of the killings. It is important to note, however, that Justice Crouteau's report and the RCMP final report carry markedly different agendas. The purpose of the RCMP internal investigation is to determine if the RCMP is guilty of the allegations of a mandate to force Inuit relocation, and Justice Crouteau had to find if compensation was due at a provincial level. Nevertheless, reading these two documents alongside one another helps to shed light on the colonial forces at work in the killings. When Justice Crouteau comments on the sheer scale of slaughter by both the Québec provincial police and the RCMP, he writes that the provincial police "also killed dogs arbitrarily because they believed the owners, who were now settled permanently in villages, no longer needed them for sustenance" (136). He also notes that many dogs were shot on the spot without consultation with their owners (135). Though there is no direct correlation between the RCMP and the Québec provincial police, this provincial report accounts for Inuit testimony and the scale of the dog killings in a way that the RCMP report does not. While the killings may not have been part of an expressed relocation mission, their overzealous and ultimately untenable application of law, in practice, killed dogs as part of the process of relocation.

Justice Crouteau's legal condemnation of the scale of the dog slaughter in Québec declares explicitly what I argue the RCMP report implies: those government officials charged with controlling dog populations acted partially in accordance with the law and partially in response to a narrative of progress. Notably, the RCMP was ordered to "encourage" Inuit dog owners to kill their dogs once they were no longer necessary ("RCMP Report" 17). This expressed agenda complicates matters because it implies a priority to kill superfluous dogs *in anticipation of* their becoming dangerous in the permanent settlements. As Frank Tester explains it, "Some RCMP officers were not inclined to shoot dogs because they had a better appreciation than other RCMP

officers of the importance of dogs to Inuit. Others didn't have that insight, didn't have those kinds of relationships and those were, I guess you'd call them trigger happy" (Gjerstad and Sanguya: 2010). The killing of dogs, then, came down to the individual officer's cultural understanding of dogs, with officers' willingness to shoot dogs shaped largely by whether they viewed dogs as culturally significant or as obsolete labourers. "RCMP Report" capitalizes on this misunderstanding to emphasize a messy contact zone between RCMP officers and Inuit where the name and significance of dogs is unstable.

This zone, where symbols do not have stable referents, gives rise to contrasting Inuit and RCMP accounts and clarifies the RCMP's hyperbolic refusal that the dog slaughter contributed to Inuit relocation to the permanent settlements by rendering them unable to leave. The RCMP and Inuit do not mean the same thing when they talk about and engage with dogs, so it becomes easy for the RCMP to dismiss Inuit accounts as an unfortunate misunderstanding. But something more is at work here, since Justice Crouteau is able to acknowledge these different systems of representation without dodging accountability. Such a discrepancy suggests that "RCMP Report" *strategically* mobilizes this misunderstanding as a receptacle for accountability. This process is different from creating a scapegoat figure because it is devoid of culpability: anything resembling responsibility or accountability for the dog slaughter dissolves into the crevices between Inuit and RCMP understandings of dogs. Importantly, this discursive violence emerges decades after the initial, material violence of the dog slaughter: "RCMP Report" offers an after-the-fact justification that warrants historicizing, not only in the mid-twentieth century, when the slaughter took place, but of the contemporary moment, when the report was penned.

**From the Welfare State to the Animal Welfare State**

In 1947, the federal government circulated the first edition of *The Book of Wisdom for Eskimo*, a brief document that purports to teach Inuit how to be healthy and happy. Written in English and Inuktitut syllabics and accompanied by a set of sketches, *The Book of Wisdom* is co-authored by the Department of National Health and Welfare and the Bureau of Northwest Territories and Yukon Affairs, then housed in the Lands, Parks and Forest Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources. Part one is framed as a story about a government Doctor who stopped the spread of illness in a settlement, and it invites the reader to learn how the government Doctor accomplished this task so that they, too, can stop the spread of disease.

*The Book of Wisdom* is particularly preoccupied with dirt and bodies, providing a set of instructions designed to educate Inuit about Euro-settler standards of hygiene and cleanliness. In "Arctic abstersion: *The Book of Wisdom for Eskimo*, Modernism and Inuit assimilation," Paule McNicoll, Frank Tester, and Peter Kulchyski note that the locus of cleanliness lies not merely with the body but with the skin. Citing the section titled "Clean Bodies," they write that *The Book of Wisdom* is preoccupied with dirty, lice- and sore-ridden skin that can be cleaned with soap and water, all the while ignoring other pertinent body parts like eyes, mouths, ears, internal organs, or hair (this last omission is especially curious given the references to lice) (210). McNicoll, Tester, and Kulchyski attribute this preoccupation with dirty Inuit skin to a long-standing colonial association of cleanliness and purity with white bodies, and dirt and filth with the dark bodies of racial others (210). This racist impetus to purify the colonial other, they suggest, becomes especially clear upon review of the recommendations regarding cleanliness that *The Book of Wisdom* offers, which are deeply out-of-touch with camp life. The recommendations are typical of Euro-settler standards of hygiene: readers are encouraged to

wash their hands and skin with soap and water, wash their clothes, and boil drinking water. Such recommendations do not make sense for Inuit: carrying a seasonal supply of soap between camps provides logistical concerns, boiling water on an oil lamp is so time-consuming and expends so much fuel that it becomes impractical, and cleaning skin clothing would ruin it (210-211). These recommendations presuppose a settlement life, and *The Book of Wisdom* addresses Inuit as though they have never contemplated cleanliness before, despite the array of Inuktitut words describing different kinds and degrees of dirtiness (211).[31]

In light of *The Book of Wisdom*'s preoccupation with Euro-settler standards of hygiene and purity, McNicoll, Tester, and Kulchyski argue that the book becomes a symbol of the modernist agenda that plagued the Arctic in the mid-twentieth century (200). Published in the wake of two world wars, an economic depression, and a global influenza outbreak, *The Book of Wisdom* reflects the popular optimism of the time, which imagined that global conflicts could be resolved by increased welfare initiatives and that humankind could be improved by advancements in science, technology, and reason (200, 202). Since modernity imagines the advancement of a humanity unified by global capitalism and reason, it becomes conveniently mobilized in the service of assimilation in colonial states. The role of Inuit in this modern development of humanity is to do as they are told. Amidst the animated figure of germs and lung sickness in *The Book of Wisdom*, there is but one piece of advice for those who have already fallen ill:

[31] Some of the advice in *The Book of Wisdom* is so hyperbolically condescending that it becomes comedic: "When we breathe we take air into our bodies and let it out again" (6); "A new baby cannot talk, so it cries" (13). In one scene of Mike Sandiford's *Qallunaat! Why White People Are Funny*, a group of women read out passages from *The Book of Wisdom* and laugh at the government's assumption that Inuit mothers are unaware that language is a learned skill. The mock documentary combines real interviews and footage from government films with depictions of the fictional Qallunaat Studies Institute, where Inuit researchers take cranial measurements of Qallunaat heads, distribute Qallunaat identification discs, and develop a prototype of the *Qallunizer 2000*, a vacuum-like device whose powerful suction activates in the presence of Qallunaat blood (Standiford: 2006). The film returns the ethnographic gaze to Qallunaat to lay bare the absurdity that such studies often take and to expose the dehumanizing violence that emerges from treating people as mere bodies to be categorized.

What must a person that may have early lung sickness do?

Right away he should go to the doctor or nurse.

Then he must do what he is told.

People with early lung sickness can get better in a hospital.

Then they cannot spread the sickness to other people. (16)

Those living with somebody who has contracted lung sickness receive similar advice:

What must a person do who has lived with a lung sick person?

Right away he should go to the doctor or nurse.

The doctor can tell who has the early start of lung sickness.

He will tell you what you must do.

People with early lung sickness can get better. they must obey the doctor. (16)

These passages advise Inuit three times in the span of a page to obey the doctor or nurse. Such advice is commonplace, even among Euro-settlers, but it is striking in this context because it is the only advice concerning the care of those who are ill. *The Book of Wisdom* offers no information about first aid for tuberculosis, a dangerous omission given that many Inuit lived in camps and required substantial travel time before reaching a doctor or nurse. It is also a curious omission given that other first aid advice appears, such as how to treat frostbite and hypothermia—ailments that Inuit knew how to treat before the arrival of Euro-settler doctors. The passage suggests that the most effective cure for disease is to give oneself over to the authority of a doctor who knows what to do yet is apparently unwilling to share such insights. In the context of *The Book of Wisdom*'s configuration of Inuit bodies as dirty and diseased, this passage reads like a narrative of racialized progress that cleanses Inuit bodies of disease only

after subjecting them to Euro-settler authority, a narrative that will reappear decades later in "RCMP Report."

Inuit subjugation to Euro-settler medical authority did not remain a discursive implication but became a grim reality as Inuit with tuberculosis were separated from their families and sent to hospitals and sanatoria in the South for treatment. "QTC Report" relates the experiences of Inuit and their family members during medical relocations: Inuit did not know where their loved ones were taken and were often not informed about their deaths until years after the fact, if at all; paperwork was often lost or ineffectual, resulting in Inuit being returned to the wrong district or never being sent home at all; some children were kidnapped by medical staff who imagined themselves to be providing a better life for them, and others were subjected to disciplinary abuses like spankings, force-feeding, and being tied to their beds for hours at a time (25-26). It was common for family members to be sent South for treatment and never be heard from again.[32]

The welfare alibi that justified such relocations resurfaces in "RCMP Report" to naturalize the killing of Inuit dogs. In the conclusion of the report, the RCMP mourns the loss of Inuit dogs and the death of Inuit culture:

> The review team did find evidence that Inuit sled dogs were destroyed by members of the RCMP, as authorized by law. The destruction of Inuit sled dogs, and other dogs, was undertaken by RCMP members for public health and safety reasons, in accordance with the law, to contain canine epidemics, and at times, at the request of the dogs' owners. There

[32] Mini Aodla Freeman writes about her experience as a nurse and translator in Ottawa in her autobiography *Life Among the Qallunaat*, where she identifies one of the more common and upsetting sentences that appeared in letters from family members of patients: "'Qittungara anniakuvimmut aullalaursimajuk suli tusangilara naningimaat tusarumavunga iqaumainarakku isumaalugillugo' . . . 'Some time ago, my child went away to be hospitalized, but I have not yet heard of his (or her) whereabouts. I would be pleased to hear as I think and worry about (her or) him a great deal, and my mind does not rest from worry'" (53-54). Freeman does not write at length about missing family members in her memoir—this quotation is the sentence that she chooses to illustrate the linguistic challenges of translation. Such is Aodla Freeman's style of critique: not to accuse directly but to place incriminating evidence in plain view.

> was a startling drop in Inuit sled dog population, particularly during the 1960s; this decline can be associated with a number of factors, including canine epidemics, the collapse of the fox fur trade in the late 1940s, the introduction of the snowmobile in the late 1960s, the migration of the Inuit people into settlements, and the participation in the market economy rather than living on the land.
>
> There is clearly a collective mourning for the loss of the traditional Inuit way of life that was independent and worthy of great respect. The demise of the Inuit sled dog has come, for many, to symbolize the cultural loss of identity and dignity. (23)

This passage is worth citing at length because it conclusively consolidates all of the RCMP's colonial alibi and links them to welfare. The passage conflates causes of death for dogs, such as bullets, with presumptions that dogs are no longer necessary because of snowmobiles, settlements, and capitalism. This conflation is notable because it emerges in the context of danger: in the preceding sentences, the report twice notes that the RCMP killed dogs to protect the public from canine epidemics. This health and safety concern is immediately followed by a narrative of progress that imagines dogs to be superfluous after Inuit assimilate to Euro-settler modernity. Such sequencing implies that the relationship between Inuit dogs and their owners are not only obsolete but dangerous, an implication given weight by the RCMP's disparate application of lethal force. Though this passage suggests that the RCMP shot Inuit dogs "and other dogs," this claim does not hold up to scrutiny: "QTC Report" indicates that many Inuit resented the RCMP because RCMP dogs ran free but were not killed.[33] The RCMP does not appear to have been concerned with canine disease in general but with Inuit sled dog disease in

[33] "Inuit also observed that dogs belonging to the RCMP, Inuit special constables or Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) employees were rarely shot . . . This special exemption often created animosity between Inuit whose dogs were killed and those whose dogs were always spared, even if they ran at large" ("QTC Report" 23).

particular. This revelation emphasizes the leap that the RCMP makes between concern of *canine* disease and the slaughtering of *Inuit* dogs. Just as the *Book of Wisdom* focuses on the supposedly "dirty" bodies of Inuit as the locus of disease transmission, despite lack of evidence, so "RCMP Report" shows that the RCMP is particularly concern about Inuit dogs as the danger that threatens modern settlements.

"RCMP Report's" focus on Inuit dogs as a danger to be mitigated is as much a product of its time as is the *Book of Wisdom*'s focus on the hygiene of racialized others. Whereas the *Book of Wisdom* was published in the wake of a global influenza outbreak, "RCMP Report" emerges in the wake of pandemic panic surrounding species-leaping diseases like SARS, mad cow disease, avian flu, and swine flu. As Shukin argues, species-leaping diseases mark a "biomobility," a capacity for pathogens to travel along the social networks of a globalized world to leap between bodies and between species (*Animal Capital* 182). Species-leaping diseases are particularly influential because they generate pandemic speculation and fear that justify violence against animals and racial others long before the disease reaches the anticipated levels of harm, if ever it does (186-187). Anxieties surrounding avian flu, for example, racialized Chinese bird-rearing practices as exotic and out-of-touch with Western standards of hygiene (210-211). Pandemic speculations, Shukin writes, "routinely racialize non-Western subalterns as backward primitives who need to be enlightened to the new demands of global hygiene, civility, and kinship to be prevented from communicating disease and mass death to the large family of man" (211). "RCMP Report" participates in such pandemic speculation when it repeats that RCMP officers only shot dogs to protect communities and to prevent the spread of disease within settlements. It bears repeating, to push against this narrative, that the RCMP shot only Inuit dogs, and they only began the slaughter after Inuit moved to settlements. Tester and Kulchyski note that before

relocation, when Inuit hunters were active participants in the fox fur trade, RCMP and other administrators encouraged Inuit to live in seasonal camps and to rear dog teams because they were necessary conditions for Inuit to hunt effectively. In fact, settlement around the trading posts was actively discouraged for fear of creating "post-Eskimos" who did not contribute to the fur trade and became depended on the government (*Tammarniit* 54). During this time, the RCMP would inoculate Inuit dogs to protect Inuit independence ("RCMP Report" 15).

In the 1950s, when the fur trade had collapsed and movement into settlements was underway, RCMP attitudes towards dogs shifted. Frank Tester testifies that Inuit dogs were perceived as dangerous only after Inuit began moving to settlements: "So the move into settlements takes place, and dogs become a liability in the eyes of qallunaat. I'm talking about the way in which the white folks living in these new settlements that were developing started to see and understand dogs" (Gjerstad and Sanguya: 2010). Whereas dog teams were considered necessary assets during the fox fur trade, the RCMP and other officials did not understand the function that they served within the new settlements. Because Inuit dogs in the settlements had no discernible job yet had become potentially hazardous to humans, "RCMP Report" understands them solely in terms of danger they pose and, deploying pandemic speculation to construct a narrative that says the dogs must be culled as a pre-emptive strike. The RCMP's targeted use of lethal force suggests that the RCMP dog slaughter has less to do with protection against disease transmission than against the perceived threat of Inuit social relations: the RCMP pathologizes Inuit relationships with dogs.

But pandemic discourse contains a second trajectory to imaginings of interspecies kinship. Shukin theorizes that "in the current era of globalization, the crossing of species lines is produced not only as a pathological object of fear but also as an object of intense desire" (188).

In the context of the Eastern Arctic, this ambivalence regarding interspecies kinship is reflected in the near-simultaneous slaughter of Inuit dogs and protection of tundra wolves, for even as the RCMP slaughtered Inuit dogs, the Canadian and American publics were mobilizing to protect wolves in the Arctic.

## Dangerous Indigeneity and Euro-Settler Heteronormativity in Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf*

The protection of tundra wolves in the second half of the twentieth century was a dramatic overhaul of the longstanding anti-wolf sentiment that preceded it. In "Wolves and Humans," Steven H. Fritts, Robert O. Stephenson, Robert D. Hayes, and Luigi Boitani extensively research and chronicle human relations with wolves in a wide range of contexts. Regarding the post-settlement Americas, they write,

> European colonists brought to America a fear and hatred of the wolf based largely on Old World myth and folklore. Attitudes were strongly negative even in the earliest settlements (Young and Goldman 1944; Young 1970; Nash 1967; Lopez 1978; Fogleman 1988; McIntyre 1995; Hampton 1997). There were rational reasons to impugn the wolf, as its depredations on livestock posed a real threat to early settlements (see references in Fogleman 1988 and McIntyre 1995). The wolf ultimately became a metaphor for the environmental challenges the new North Americans had to contend with and felt a moral obligation to subdue. The goals of subjugating wolves and wilderness became synonymous. (293)

As a result of these attitudes, settler North Americans killed wolves with even more ferocity than did Europeans (293). In the mid-twentieth century, attitudes began to shift, facilitated largely by

literature: Aldo Leopold's essay "Thinking Like a Mountain" (1949) was one of the first popular, Euro-settler articulation of a Land-based kinship system, and Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* (1963) was one of the first and most well-received texts that depicted wolves in a positive way (294). By 1970s there were a number of activist groups tasked specifically with wolf conservation (295). For my purposes, I am primarily invested in Mowat's positive depiction of wolves, which contributes to the development of the *animal welfare state*.

Farley Mowat's 1963 autobiographical novel *Never Cry Wolf* became an instant bestseller and rallying point for those concerned about the fate of wolves in Canada and the United States. In the novel, Mowat relates his time as a biologist in the Barren Lands, 300 miles northwest of Churchill, Manitoba, where he studied wolf predation. The impetus from the study comes from the House of Commons, which puts pressure on Mowat's department—the Dominion Wildlife Service—to confirm that caribou populations are in decline because of overhunting by wolves (14-15). Armed with two rifles, a revolver, two shotguns, and a case of tear gas grenades, Mowat is instructed to smoke wolves out of their dens, shoot them, and examine and preserve the contents of their stomachs to determine what they were eating (18). Mowat deviates from these orders, opting instead to learn what wolves eat by watching them eat. He discovers that the wolves survive primarily on mice and that when they hunt caribou, they target the weak and sick, therefore strengthening rather than damaging the herd. Framed as an exposé of bureaucratic ineptitude and a replacement of it with a "true" account of wolf life, *Never Cry Wolf* seeks to correct the false image of the wolf as a blood-thirsty predator.

In the course of his research, Mowat sets up camp in direct line of sight of a wolf den, where he observes the wolves daily and notes that they are more settled than wild: "I had learned a good deal about my wolfish neighbours, and one of the facts which had emerged was that they

were not nomadic roamers, as is almost universally believed, but were settled beasts and the possessors of a large permanent estate with very definite boundaries" (81). In this passage, Mowat establishes that wolves are not nomads but Euro-settlers—and wealthy settlers at that, since they not only establish territory but possess "estates." This passage is particularly intriguing because Mowat offsets his observation against the "universal belief" that wolves are nomadic wanderers, a belief that seemingly comes out nowhere, since in 1963, it was common knowledge that wolves are territorial pack animals. Throughout the novel, Mowat undermines what he calls common knowledge and popular belief, even as what he "discovers" is already widely known. John Goddard writes about such discrepancies in his essay "A Real Whopper," which compares *Never Cry Wolf* with Mowat's field notes and with knowledge about wolves at the time to show that Mowat exaggerates or fabricates popular and scientific ignorance about wolves (n.p.). I am intrigued that Mowat positions familiar knowledge as though it were a new discovery: it seems that Mowat, who seeks to soften the image of the wolf, presumes that his readers will respond more sympathetically to wolves if they are positioned to "learn" that wolves are settlers rather than nomads.

After marking the territory surrounding his camp in a lupine fashion, Mowat intensifies his appeal to Euro-settler sympathy by projecting Euro-settler gender roles onto the wolf pack that he observes. He notes that the male wolves "went off to work" in the evenings and that the females stayed at the den and would be "reasonably active about her household chores" (87-88). This configuration borrows the gendered division of labour in Euro-settler heteronormativity to describe the wolves, as the men do not hunt but "go to work" and the women do not merely stay at the den but see to their "chores," though Mowat never specifies what kind of chores the wolves complete so vigorously. The full force of Mowat's projection of Euro-settler

heteronormativity onto wolves comes through in his characterization of individual wolves: George, the alpha and father, and Angeline, the mother. Mowat describes George not in relation to the pack but in relation to his mate and children:

> George was a massive and eminently regal beast whose coat was silver-white. He was about a third larger than this mate, but he hardly needed this extra bulk to emphasize his air of masterful certainty. George had presence. His dignity was unassailable, yet he was by no means aloof. Conscientious to a fault, thoughtful of others, and affectionate within reasonable bounds, he was the kind of father whose idealized image appears in the wistful books of human family reminiscences, but whose real prototype has seldom paced the earth upon two legs. George was, in brief, the kind of father every son longs to acknowledge as his own. (91)

This passage presents George as the pinnacle of Euro-settler masculinity. He is large and domineering, though such physical strength is redundant given his strength of character. George has compassion and affection yet remains in control of these emotions, expressing them only "within acceptable bounds." His only fault appears to be that he is conscientious, and this, of course, is not a fault at all but the kind of fault-as-hidden-strength that one might expect to hear about at an amateur job interview. Unlike his human counterparts, George successfully embodies the Euro-settler ideal of masculinity found in "wistful books." Furthermore, Mowat contextualizes George within a lineage of men, as the masculine ideal that he upholds is most appreciated by his sons.

George's embodiment of the masculine ideal is second only to Angeline's femininity. Immediately following his description of George, Mowat has this to say about Angeline:

> His wife was equally memorable. A slim, almost pure-white wolf with a thick ruff around her face, and wide-spaced, slightly slanted eyes, she seemed the picture of a minx. Beautiful, ebullient, passionate to a degree, and devilish when the mood was on her, she hardly looked like the epitome of motherhood; yet there could have been no better mother anywhere. I found myself calling her Angeline, although I have never been able to trace the origin of that name in the murky depths of my own subconscious. I respected and liked George very much, but I became deeply fond of Angeline, and still live in the hopes of finding a human female who embodies all her virtues. (91-92)

In this passage, Mowat immediately positions Angeline in relation to George, introducing her as George's wife and concluding by anxiously framing his admiration for Angeline as respect for George, a gesture that shores up George's masculinity and reinforces the patriarchal gaze that regards women as men's property. In accordance with such patriarchal standards, Mowat admires Angeline first for her slim, white beauty, then quickly affirms that while Angeline is devilishly charming, she is also a good parent: she has masterfully balanced her responsibility to be a nurturing mother with her responsibility to remain sexually available to George. Angeline knows when to be a devil and when to be an angel (though Mowat claims not to understand why he settled on the name Angeline, the book's dedication reveals this ignorance to be feigned: "For Angeline, the angel!"). Like George, Angeline embodies an ideal gender norm, and Mowat laments that he has yet to meet a human woman as angelically nurturing and as devilishly sexual as Angeline.

Angeline's femininity and George's masculinity reach their apex in heterosexual union. Mowat writes,

> Angeline and George seemed as devoted a mated pair as one could hope to find. As far as I could tell they never quarreled, and the delight with which they greeted each other after even a short absence was obviously unfeigned . . . I discovered that physical lovemaking enters into the lives of a pair of mated wolves only during a period of two or three weeks early in the spring, usually in March. Virgin females (and they are all virginal until their second year) then mate; but unlike dogs, who have adopted many of the habits of their human owners, wolf bitches mate with only a single male, and mate for life.
>
> Whereas the phrase "till death do us part" is one of the more amusing mockeries in the nuptial arrangements of a large portion of the human race, with wolves it is a simple fact. (92-93).

The final sentence of this passage reveals that Angeline and George are mated in a way that mirrors marriage, and what is more, they are better at marriage than humans. Their daily lives appear to operate seamlessly, as they never fight and only ever greet each other with delight. Mowat seems most impressed, however, by their puritan sexuality: Angeline remains a virgin until her wedding night; neither she nor George stray from their wedding bed; and they have intercourse only in the spring, for reproductive purposes. Angeline and George not only mimic marriage but master it: they remain monogamous with ease because they have not been corrupted by the influence of humans, who would turn Angeline from a virginal wolf into a promiscuous dog.

George and Angeline's hyperbolic adherence to the nuclear family signals the beginning of a new trend in wolf narratives in the mid-twentieth century. Karen Jones charts two waves of North American wolf narratives in "Writing the Wolf: Canine Tales and North American Environmental-Literary Tradition," where she notes that nature writing has a long tradition of

becoming a platform for tales of pioneer endurance and individual expression, arguing that the wolf in nature writing functions as a "'carrier animal' for sentiments of identity, progress, ethnicity and gender" (202). In the early twentieth century, wolf and dog narratives like Jack London's *White Fang* and *Call of the Wild* focus on survival of the fittest as they celebrate strong, hardened canine heroes (226). In the 1960s, a second wave of wolf narrative emerged, as white guilt over colonization, paired with ecological awakening, becomes the lens through which to explore issues of human-animal relations and species extinction (226). For Jones, *Never Cry Wolf* is a prime example of a second-wave wolf narrative, as Mowat eschews his scientific training in favour of an intuitive and empathetic relationship with the wolves.

Though Jones identifies the literary wolf as a carrier species for larger social ideals, she does not take up Mowat's projection of heteronormativity onto wolves. She begins by critiquing first-wave wolf narratives for their expansionist and hyper-masculine ideals, but she launches no such critique against heteronormativity, content to acknowledge that it is anthropomorphic while praising Mowat for his intuitive approach to understanding nature. For Jones, Mowat's time with the wolves "drew the biologist away from rationalist dictates and Euro-American prejudice and towards a more empathic, reverential, and indigenous perception of the land" (214). Pitting measured science against experiential knowledge, Jones holds up Mowat as an example of how a biologist can grow after suspending the notion that he has access to objective truth. Her claim that Mowat adopts a more Indigenous perception of the land is a problem. The bar for Indigeneity that Jones sets is mockingly low: by her standards, a Euro-settler can go on a brief camping trip; observe a pack of wolves; maintain a tense, sporadic relationship with two Inuit hunters;[34] and emerge Indigenized. Jones conflates Indigeneity with any form of reverence for

[34] Ootek and Mike. I will interpret these characters shortly in my discussion of the 1983 film adaptation of *Never Cry Wolf*.

nature, which explains her declaration that Mowat acquires an Indigenous perception of the land even as he retains a fierce allegiance to Euro-settler heteronormativity.

Jones' romanticized conflation of Indigeneity with Mowat's excursion betrays her normalization of the Euro-settler subject. As she celebrates Mowat's work for forging empathetic pathways between humans and wolves, she acknowledges that these pathways rely heavily on what she identifies as anthropomorphism. On *Never Cry Wolf* and other second-wave animal narratives, she writes,

> Such works humanised the beast for the purposes of entertainment, empathy and environmental rehabilitation, as well as creating a narrative structure in which to situate animal behaviour. Anthropomorphism offered a route towards cross-species identification and advocacy, even though the ability to 'cross' into the world of the wolf meant transforming that social terrain into a human one. Thus *Never Cry Wolf* presents the pack as a humanised band of endearing, anthropomorphic figures, a nuclear family that fitted the social mores of the 1950s more than the nature of lupine society. (215)

Jones makes five references to anthropomorphism and humanisation in this passage, and she identifies the 1950s nuclear family as the anthropomorphic narrative in *Never Cry Wolf*. I would suggest that anthropomorphism becomes a misnomer in Jones' analysis because the nuclear family is not a human universal but a Euro-settler ideal: Mowat's wolves are not merely humanized; they are rendered white, middle-class Euro-settlers. This slippage is intriguing, for Jones glosses over the prevalence of the nuclear family in *Never Cry Wolf* even as her essay sets out to examine the literary wolf as a "carrier species" for gendered and racialized values. Though Mowat importantly represents a relationship between humans and wolves that does not centre on

human domination, he shifts the focus instead to a form of Euro-western heteronormatively that has been part of Canada's colonization of the Arctic, and of Canada more generally.

In *When Did Indians become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty*, Mark Rifkin explores the relationship between "U.S. notions of sexual order and shifting forms of Native American political representation," and he shows "how attempts to cast native cultures as a perverse problem to be fixed or a liberating model to be emulated both rely on the erasure of indigenous political autonomy" (8). Rifkin complicates Justice's decolonial kinship analysis by exposing how kinship operates in the service of Euro-settler nation-building, consolidating especially around discourses of heteronormativity. He argues that

> The effort to *civilize* American Indians and the attendant repudiation of indigenous traditions can be understood as significantly contributing to the institutionalization of the "heterosexual imaginary," in Chrys Ingraham's evocative phrase, helping to build a network of interlocking state-sanctioned policies and ideologies that position monogamous heterocouplehood and the privatization of single-family households as the official national ideal by the late nineteenth century. Such an analysis of the history of federal Indian policy enables discussion of the ways questions of kinship, residency, and land tenure lie at the unspoken centre of the heteronorm, which itself can be understood as always-already bound up in racializing and imperial projects. (6, emphasis in original)

When Mowat appeals to a heteronormative ideal to garner sympathy for wolves, he taps into an existing heteronorm that is already bound up in a history of gendered and sexual policing, as well as questions of kinship and land-based sovereignty, and he projects this ideal onto wolves. In so doing, he draws on the same mechanism as "RCMP Report": he resignifies wolves to stand in for

perfected heteronormativity, which naturalizes Euro-settler ideal as an inherent component of the Arctic.

In light of Rifkin's analysis, I am not as convinced as Jones that Mowat's emphasis on Euro-settler heteronormativity is benign. Though Jones notes Mowat's heteronormative anthropomorphism, she forgives it as a convenient method to arrive at a "powerful ecological narrative that prioritized interaction and community over competition and struggle" (215). Comparing Mowat's nuclear family to the competition and struggle in first-wave wolf narratives, she suggests that Mowat crafts a narrative that will forward an ecologically responsible relationship that builds rather than destroys relationships between humans and other beings (216). This point resonates with her earlier essay, "*Never Cry Wolf:* Science, Sentiment, and the Literary Rehabilitation of *Canis Lupus*," where she argues that Mowat's anthropomorphic narrative is a self-conscious piece of propaganda (79) that challenges anthropocentrism and generates a misanthropic agenda that undermines modernist ideals and promotes ecological awareness (83-84). Speaking to the protests from the scientific community that *Never Cry Wolf* deploys inaccurate and misleading information, Jones defends Mowat as a nature writer more invested in raising sympathy for wolves than in providing "objective" knowledge. Jones' acceptance of the nuclear family in *Never Cry Wolf* is therefore tied to authorial intention: if Mowat self-consciously writes the nuclear family into his narrative to render George and Angeline more sympathetic, then it remains unworthy of analysis because it does not illuminate anything not already known. Both Mowat and Jones take for granted that the nuclear family is inherently sympathetic, yet this sympathy is gained in the text at the expense of its counterpart: dangerous Indigeneity.

Though *Never Cry Wolf* exonerates wolves from the charge that they are bloodthirsty killers, it replaces them with Inuit hunters so eager to kill that they become a danger to the nuclear family. This transference of bloodlust is most evident in Carroll Ballard's 1983 film adaptation of Mowat's novel. Though the film remains relatively consistent with the plot and tone of the novel, it extends the presence of two Inuit hunters, Ootek and Mike. Tyler (Charles Martin Smith)—Mowat's fictional equivalent—is rescued by Ootek (Zachary Ittimangnaq) when he first lands on a frozen lake with an eclectic array of useless goods such as light bulbs, a canoe, and a bassoon. Tyler briefly stays with Ootek until he gains his bearings, and then he establishes his own camp near the wolf den. Ootek and his adopted son, Mike (Samson Jorah), periodically visit Mowat throughout the film to learn about his research and to teach him about wolves. Tyler's sporadic relationship with Mike is particularly tense, as Tyler learns that his motives as a wolf researcher are at odds with Mike's intention as a hunter. When Tyler wonders aloud why wolves howl, Mike tells him that they howl to communicate their location and their loneliness, and he informs Mike that his preferred hunting tactic is to imitate a howl to lure wolves to him. Tyler becomes visibly distressed, and Mike explains,

> "To me, wolves mean money. It's a way of making a living. One wolf pelt is about $350. And I've got to feed my family, my children. Buy a snowmobile, food, rifle, bullets, whatever."
>
> "You wouldn't—ah—I mean—ah—you wouldn't kill these wolves?"
>
> "These ones, oh. No, I don't think so. Besides, you would get mad if I killed one of them, and your gun is bigger than mine" [he smiles at Tyler]
>
> [Tyler smiles back] "yeah."
>
> "I'd like to though." (Ballard: 1983)

The power dynamics in this scene are compelling. Throughout the conversation, Mike appears to hold the position of authority: though his voice is soft, he speaks with certainty as he looks directly at Tyler to explain how he provides for his family. Tyler, on the other hand, is visibly distressed by the revelation. His eyes constantly flitter over the landscape and the sky, returning Mike's gaze only occasionally, and his speech is uncertain: he stumbles over his words, and when he finally asks Mike if he plans to hunt these wolves, his voice is weak and timid—pathetic, even—and he comes across as a powerless child. Mike's response, however, shows the power that Tyler has in this situation: a bigger gun. Though Tyler is a visitor to Mike's homeland, he brings with him the authority of the federal government, and the racialized disparity in their power surfaces when Mike reveals that he wants to hunt the wolves but is deterred by Tyler's inevitable wrath. They exchange a tense smile as a temporary truce when they realize that their relationships with the wolves are in conflict with one another.

At the end of the film, Tyler returns from an extended hiking trip to find that Angeline and George have vanished, leaving their cubs alone in the den. He finds Mike in his tent, taking a radio and packing a bag. Tyler confronts him about Angeline and George's whereabouts:

> "Have you seen the wolves? Have you seen George and Angie?"
>
> "No—they must have gone North" [Mike picks up his rifle as he packs]
>
> "No, no, the puppies are still here; they wouldn't go off and leave the pups—"
>
> "—stop worrying about the pups and start worrying about yourself. This thing that's happened is too big for you. It's a question of how to survive. Survival [he smiles] of the fittest." (Ballard: 1983)

Both Tyler and Mike become more aggressive in this encounter. Tyler's previous meekness vanishes as he speaks with an accusing resolve, and Mike interrupts Tyler, scolding him for

worrying about wolves and insisting that he should care only about himself. Mike's smile is significant. Throughout the film, Mike smiles with a single upper tooth, explaining to Tyler, "that's what happens when a meat eater becomes a sugar eater" (Ballard: 1983). In this scene, Mike smiles with a full set of artificial teeth, and the heavy-handed implication is that Mike has killed Angeline and George to pay for his dental work. As he reveals his new smile, he preaches to Tyler the value of survival of the fittest. In Jones' language, Mike adheres to the principles of first-wave wolf narratives that focus on individual strength and perseverance, whereas Tyler's intimacy with the wolves position him as a more empathetic community-builder. This portrayal of Mike as a lone survivor cleaves him from his family. Though Mike previously states that he hunts so that he can provide for his family, this scene positions him as a loner who hunts in the service of his personal well-being. Importantly, Mike's wife and children do not appear in the film, nor does Mike talk about them except when he explains to Tyler why he hunts. Mike's family is erased and replaced with Angeline and George's family—a family that Mike destroys for money.

This added scene marks the film's significant detour from the novel. Angeline and George remain alive and well in Mowat's version, and he concludes the novel by pointing the finger of blame not at Inuit hunters but at colonial agents. In the epilogue, Mowat writes that in the winter of 1958-1959, the Canadian Wildlife Service set cyanide "wolf getters" near wolf dens in the Keewatin Barrens and laid strychnine bait throughout the region. The ominous closing line reads, "It is not known what results were obtained" (247). This passage portrays the Canadian Wildlife Service as callous wolf-killers who set traps without bothering to return and learn about the results of spreading poison throughout the landscape. Ballard's projection of this callousness onto Mike reveals the underlying racism of the film at the same time that it records the racism of

federal policy: when the federal government became satisfied that wolves were not responsible for the decline in caribou populations, they pushed the blame squarely onto Inuit shoulders, accusing Inuit hunters of "wanton slaughter" and strictly regulated Inuit hunting (Kulchyski and Tester *Kiumajut* 25). In contrast, Mowat positions himself as a whistle-blower, and *Never Cry Wolf* became a rallying point for environmental and animal rights advocates in the 1960s and 1970s, prompting letter-writing campaigns to the Canadian Wildlife Service from disgruntled citizens who explicitly named the book as the reason they changed their opinions about wolves (Jones "Writing the Wolf" 216-217). This change of heart is unsurprising: Mowat replaces the image of the savage wolf with a nuclear family that reflects Euro-settler social relations back at presumed Euro-settler readers, a gesture intensified by the film adaptation, which positions Inuit as the true threat to wolves. Meanwhile, the RCMP was slaughtering Inuit dogs under the public radar, in the name of public safety.

**Conclusion: Animal Welfare and the Politics of Concern**

The correlation between slaughtering Inuit dogs and saving tundra wolves exposes the politics of concern surrounding arctic canines. In “On Canicide and Concern: Species Sovereignty in Western Accounts of Rwanda’s Genocide,” Jesse Arseneault analyzes the clusters of Western concerns that culminate around the United Nations’ (UN) mass killing of wild dogs in 1994, following the Rwandan genocide. The UN justified their cull by positioning the dogs as a “health threat” because they were eating the bodies of the eight hundred thousand mostly Tutsis Rwandans who were murdered, an explanation that resulted in criticisms from human rights groups that the UN was willing to protect dead Tutsis from dogs but not living Tutsis from

genocide, as well as from Western animal welfare activists who advocated for the dogs (133-34). In this context, Arseneault

> theorizes concern as a technology of relationality that affectively orients how we associate with others across interpersonal, international, and interspecies contexts, one that accompanies processes of narration and representation to produce certain lives as subjects of legitimate ethical engagement, and others as objects for whom ethical engagement is not, or does not have to be, a consideration. (126)

Arseneault argues that the UN troops culled the wild dogs as a "desperate" act of sovereign power motivated by their inability to act during the genocide (they were ordered to fire only if fired upon), and he suggests that the stray dogs, who fall outside of scope of concern for UN troops, became the bodies on which the troops could "stake a claim to sovereignty, in order to re-place Western actors at the centre of global relations of concern" (132) and to restore the presumed sanctity of the human body (139).

There are obvious limits to a comparison of the UN's cull of wild dogs after the Rwandan genocide and the RCMP's cull of Inuit dogs alongside their coerced relocation; I draw on Arseneault not to imply an equivalence between the two atrocities but to unpack the matrix of concern that directs his analysis. The UN's production of a biopolitical body posing a "health threat" to humans resonates with the RCMP's frequent appeal to public (read, Euro-settler) safety. Arseneault's theorization of concern as a technology of relationality therefore offers a productive way into understanding why the RCMP slaughtered dogs, one of the few animals that Euro-settlers consider companions, and why Euro-settlers would mobilize to protect the wolves that previously they scorned. These changes in concern for arctic canines are best understood as practices of relationality that reveal the allegiances of those concerned. Though Euro-settler

concern for arctic canines may appear to be shifting from dogs to wolves, my analysis exposes concern to be relatively stable: canines associated with Euro-settler values and social relations remain protected whereas canines associated with Inuit values and social relations fall under threat. This pattern explains why sled dogs were protected by the RCMP during the fur trade, when their relationship with Inuit protected Canadian economic interests, but were later slaughtered during Inuit relocations to permanent settlements, when the RCMP deemed them obsolete and dangerous. It also explains why wolves are treated with disdain when they pose a danger to livestock but not when they are understood as heteronormative vermin hunters. In the previous chapter, I showed how Qitsualik and Tinsley mobilize the Strength of the Land to support their values; here, I argue that the *animal welfare state* operates inversely, by writing Euro-settler values into arctic canines and using them to delineate protected and dangerous life. In the next chapter, I develop this argument further by showing how relationships between humans and animals inform relationships between humans and land.

# Chapter Three

## Powerful and Vulnerable Polar Bears:

## The Animal Welfare State as Land-based Sovereignty

Polar bears are dying virtually everywhere. They are dying on magazine covers and in environmentalist campaigns, advertisements, newspapers, and wildlife documentaries. The cause of death is clear: human-induced climate change has melted polar bear habitats and left them exposed in a new arctic landscape. Once the apex predators of a hostile landscape, polar bears have become refugees in their own homeland.

Though the iconic image of a polar bear stranded on a melting iceberg is a recent development, Canadian fascination with polar bears is nothing new. CBC Documentary *Polar Bear Fever* explores this fixation as it charts a shift in the profile of polar bears from animals of enormous strength to figures of absolute vulnerability. Polar bears have long been prominent figures in advertising campaigns, but they have often been configured as ferocious and dangerous. Coca-Cola was the most influential in softening this image when it released commercials in the 1990s showing anthropomorphized polar bear families drinking coke while tobogganing with penguins or enjoying a night at home around the fire (CBC Learning: 2008). The Coca-Cola bear has since been supplanted by the polar bear no longer at home in the Arctic. This depiction of polar bears is a staple in conservation campaigns that use polar bears as ambassadors for the dangers of global climate change. Conservation groups find that for many people, polar bears elicit a visceral, maternal reaction. By capitalizing on polar bear charisma, conservation groups put conversations about climate change in the spotlight as they protect polar

bear habitats and, in the process, protect other arctic species under threat (CBC Learning: 2008).[35]

Inuit knowledge and literature stands in stark contrast to these narratives by presenting polar bears as powerful and capable, one of the few non-human animals to possess *isuma*. In *Never in Anger*, anthropologist Jean Briggs defines *isuma*[36] as "all functions that we think of as cerebral: mind, thought, memory, reason, sense, ideas, will" (359). Though Briggs discusses isuma in its human manifestation, Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten show that polar bears also possess it. In *Hunters, Predators and Prey: Inuit Perceptions of Animals*, Laugrand and Oosten compile interviews about Inuit relationships with animals, illuminating that "the bear was considered the most intelligent of the animals . . . said to have *isuma* (the capacity to think like humans)" (184, italics in original), and that they "taught Inuit many hunting skills" (201). Such similarities are more than coincidental: as Mary Kamookak (Gjoa Haven) attests, "the first polar bear was a human that turned into a polar bear. That is where we believe they came from" (Keith et. al, *Inuit Qaujimaningit Nanurnut* 73). Scholarship surrounding Inuit relationships with polar bears, such as Bernard Saladin D'Anglure's "Nanook, super-male: the polar bear in the imaginary space and social time of the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic," engages with a complex

[35] As a literary analyst, my primary interest lies in the visual and textual representation of vulnerable polar bears. It is worth noting, however, that the spread of "polar bear fever" is not restricted to visual media. Knut, a polar bear cub born in the Berlin zoo in 2006, gained international renown and charmed visitors into a frenzy when his mother rejected him. After four years, Knut died a toddler from brain swelling (Emily Mobley, "Knut the Polar Bear Died of Autoimmune Illness Usually Found in Humans." n.p.). In the summer of 2014, thousands of people signed an online petition to transfer Arturo, "the world's saddest animal," from the Mendoza zoo in Mendoza, Argentina to the International Polar Bear Conservation Centre in Winnipeg, Canada (Jane Gerster, "Thousands Sign Online Petition to Move 'World's Saddest Animal' to Winnipeg." n.p.). Arturo became depressed after his companion died in 2012, and he has no way to cope with the summer heat in Argentina, which reaches 40 degrees Celsius (Patrick Hill, "Arturo the Polar Bear—'World's Saddest Animal' Alone in Zoo in Scorching Desert Zoo." n.p.). The transfer was rejected and Arturo died two years later at the age of thirty (Meagan Campbell, "A Sad Ending for the 'World's Loneliest Polar Bear.'" n.p). Knut's and Arturo's fame are striking because it is bound to their helplessness. Polar bears, it seems, are most captivating when they are imprisoned in the desert, orphaned, or endangered.

[36] Briggs uses the term *ihuma*, as expressed in Western dialects. I use *isuma*, as expressed in Eastern dialects, to remain consistent with the majority of research regarding the isuma of polar bears.

network of material and symbolic relationships including hunting, shamanism, and gender identity, each interacting around established protocols of respect. Such studies indicate that polar bears are complex figures whose appearance in Inuit literature cannot be explained adequately by way of symbolic gestures. Since polar bears possess *isuma*, they are best understood as psychologically complex beings whose experience of the world must be taken into account.[37]

In this way, polar bears in Inuit literature emerge as fully-developed characters rather than as symbolic projections. Greenlandic ethnographer Knud Rasmussen recorded what remains the largest written repertoire of unikkaaqtuat as he traveled through the Canadian Arctic for the Fifth Thule Expedition, and it includes Rasmussen's descriptions of the story-tellers and the contexts in which the stories were told. He relates a story told to him by Ivaluardjuk about a polar bear who takes in a human child and teaches him to hunt seals and to fight off other polar bears who steal his catch (*Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos*, 274-276). In another story, also from Ivaluardjuk, a barren woman adopts a polar bear cub and raises him as though he were a child. Though the bear child is ostracized by the community, he becomes a great hunter who provides lifelong bounty for his adopted mother (267-268). Rasmussen also relates a story about a human who transforms into a bear (267-268), a bear who transforms into fog (263-264), and a bear who is severely injured in a strength contest with a caribou whom he underestimates (279-280). In one of my personal favourite polar bear stories, Leah Idlout's "The Little Arctic Tern, the Big Polar Bear," a polar bear adopts an abandoned tern egg and, through this act of devotion, transforms the foetus into a winged polar bear (*Paper Stays Put: A Collection of Inuit Writing*, Ed. Robin Gedalof, 21-26).

[37] Elsewhere, I have argued in favour of reading polar bears as characters, rather than as metaphors, by tracking the development of the polar bear in Markoosie's *Harpoon of the Hunter*. Such an approach, I argue, brings into focus the material relations that risk obfuscation when bears are interpreted metaphorically ("Beyond Symbolism: Polar Bear Characters and Inuit Kinship in Markoosie's *Harpoon of the Hunter*")

Polar bear characters in Inuit literature often maintain a position of prestige and power. Of particular note is the resurgence of stories about the nanurluit, giant polar bears. In the second issue of *Pivut* magazine, geared toward Inuit youth, Neil Christopher offers an explanation of these powerful beings in his article "Nanurluit: The Giant Polar Bears of the Arctic." Nanurluit were as colossal as icebergs, making modern polar bears seem like lemmings in comparison, and their massive appetites drove them to hunt anything they could find, including whales, walruses, seals, and Inuit (25). For a time, their population was kept in check by the giants who hunted them, but when the giants began to disappear, the nanurluit were left without any natural predators (25). Nanurluit were greatly feared in the Ancient Arctic, but they were not invulnerable. In the same issue, *Pivut* printed "Nakasungnak and the Ice Covered Bear," recorded by Henry Rink in Greenland in 1875. In this story, Nakasungak kills the ice-covered bear (A nanurluk who has gathered so much ice in his fur that it serves as an impenetrable armour) by allowing himself to be swallowed whole and then cutting his way out of the nanurluk's stomach (27). Though the victory ensures the survival of his community by providing safety and meat, Nakasungak later dies when he ignores recommendations to hide from giant gnats, who swarm him and eat every bit of flesh from his bones (27-28). Rachel Qitsualik offers a retelling of this story, titled "Nanurluk" in her collection of children's stories *The Shadows the Rush Past*, replacing gnats with mosquitoes and emphasizing Nakasungak's overdeveloped pride. Jose Angutinngurniq's *Giant Bear: An Inuit Folktale* tells the story about a hunter who outsmarts a nanurluk whom he finds sleeping beneath the sea ice. The hunter covers the nanurluk's breathing hole with ice, leaving it too small for the bear to climb out of. Though the nanurluk is strong enough to break through the ice, it takes time. When he is able to fit only his head through the ice, the hunter strikes, gouging out his eyes and stabbing at his nose with his

harpoon. Unable to see or track prey, the nanurluk dies. The third issue of *Pivut* features Malcom Kempt and Curtis Jones' "Pijunnarnulik," the beginning of a graphic serial in which a young hunter awakens a power to encapsulate his body in flames to kill a bear and protect his grandfather.

Though these stories end with the polar bears' deaths at the hands of skilled hunters, they are not stories that emphasize polar bear vulnerability. Killing these dangerous animals is a triumph not only because it is difficult but because it ensures the safety of the community: polar bears are the only animal for whom Inuit are prey. The proliferation of stories about dangerous polar bears in children's and young adult literature signals that Inuit youth are encouraged to respect and fear polar bears, and it reveals the contrasting motifs of strength and vulnerability in Inuit and Euro-settler literatures respectively. My purpose is not to debate whether polar bears are dangerous or vulnerable—they are both. My interest here is to think through what is at stake in these stories and to understand why the contrast is so stark: Euro-settler representations of strong polar bears are in rapid decline, yet I have heretofore not encountered a single Inuit text that represents polar bears as powerless victims. Furthermore, my literature survey reveals that stories featuring strong polar bears are typically set in the Ancient Arctic, whereas the image of the refugee polar bear emerges in the contemporary Arctic landscape. To understand this discrepancy, I turn to figurations of polar bears in climate change narratives, which deploy different tropes to accommodate these understandings: In Zacharius Kunuk and Ian Mauro's *Qapirangajuq: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change*, a series of anecdotes provide evidence of capable polar bears, as elders and hunters expound how they engage with polar bears with respect for their abilities. In environmental campaigns, such as the BBC documentaries *Planet Earth* and *Frozen Planet*, the vulnerable polar bear consolidates around synecdoche, which

transfers the polar bear's vulnerability to the Land, inviting viewers to imagine themselves in a paternal relationship with polar bears and the Arctic. In the previous chapter, I argued that Euro-settler configurations of tundra wolves and Inuit dogs naturalized heteronormative values while degrading Inuit social relations. In this chapter, I extend this analysis by showing more clearly how relationships with animals inform relationships with the Land.

**Anecdote in *Qapirangajuq: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change***

Although literary scholars are advised to avoid binary thinking, it is difficult to avoid in this context, since there is so little overlap between depictions of helpless and powerful bears. For example, reporter Jon Mooallem demonstrates a hesitation to acknowledge polar bear competence in *Wild Ones: A Sometimes Dismaying, Weirdly Reassuring Story About Looking at People Looking at Animals in America*, where he explores the polar bear as a symbol for climate change and charts how it attracts media attention. The text addresses a Southern audience and follows a linear, first-person narrative of Mooallem's research and experiences. It is written clearly and spells out its logic carefully—except on one notable occasion, when Mooallem struggles to make sense of local hunters' relationship with polar bears.

When Mooallem is in Churchill, he is surprised and disheartened that many of the locals do not think polar bears are in immediate danger. They discuss the many ways that they have noticed climate change affecting their environment, but diminishing bear populations is not among them. Locals remind Mooallem that polar bears are resourceful and adaptive: they always seem to find food throughout the summer, and there is no reason to presume that they will lose this skill (39-40). Mooallem conveys these claims only to dismiss them immediately, and the section culminates when he pits science against local knowledge:

> But the argument in Churchill wasn't really scientific anyway. It was, I realized, a more philosophical fight about what the animal is capable of, the character of the beast. People in Churchill live in the bear's world and see the bears do clever and creative things. It's impossible not to anthropomorphize the animals, to see them as having a humanlike capacity for problem solving that makes them, like us, nearly invincible, and to assume that they'll adapt, even if we never thought to expect such ingenuity from a less impressive critter like the copper-striped blue-tailed skink, a lizard in Hawaii, when the ecology it was part of changed. (The skink was last seen on Kauai in the 1960s; in 2012, the government officially declared it extinct.) In other words, biologists recognize the polar bear as just one cog in a Darwinian machine—one that will drop out when the structure holding it up deteriorates. But people in town see it as a menacing and capable agent of its own fate. It was obvious that they expected the same resourcefulness and perseverance out of their polar bears that they themselves showed after the military left. (41)

Mooallem notes that he and the locals have fundamentally different ideas about the nature of polar bears: they see polar bears as capable agents, and he does not. Or so he claims. Mooallem concedes that polar bears have been seen doing clever and creative things, yet in the next sentence, he condemns as anthropomorphic the claim that polar bears can problem-solve. This strikes me not only as an incorrect use of the term anthropomorphism (problem-solving is not a uniquely human trait) but also a contradiction: one wonders how Mooallem defines problem-solving such that it does not involve clever and creative behaviour. Even as he dismisses local claims that polar bears are problem-solving agents, he does not disagree with the underlying premise of that claim.

In lieu of challenging the premise that polar bears are clever and creative, he creates a comparison that implies it: we cannot expect polar bears to adapt because copper-striped blue-tailed skinks did not. This comparison is strategically misleading, for it aligns polar bears with a species that is already extinct. It also undermines the appeal of charismatic mammals, who attract compassion and ensnare imaginations, as I will address later in this chapter. By comparing polar bears to a small reptile that does not garner the same attention, Mooallem implies that the idea of polar bear adaptability stems from desire rather than fact: it is not that polar bears are any more capable than copper-striped blue-tailed skinks; it is just that locals *want* them to be, and that desire leads to the "anthropomorphic" projection of agency onto a species that is already marked for extinction. Here, Mooallem condescendingly repositions Inuit knowledge about polar bears to be the result of uncritical desire rather than astute observation and engagement. He further emphasizes this point by using the metaphor of sight to construct an ethnocentric appeal to scientific authority. People in town "see" polar bears as human-like through their limited organs of sight, whereas scientists "recognize" the bigger picture conceptually and understand the polar bears' position in the Darwinian machine. This paragraph relies on rhetoric to produce the effect of naïve locals, yet at no point does Mooallem provide an argument to undermine their claim, nor does he demonstrate a critical awareness of his own position, which falls into the well-worn trap of presuming that polar bears are helpless. At the end of this rhetorical maze, polar bears retain their cleverness and creativity, yet Mooallem nevertheless sees them as incompetent.

This paragraph is especially noteworthy because it reverses Mooallem's use of logic and rhetoric. Throughout *Wild Ones*, Mooallem carefully lays out his logic and uses rhetoric to breathe life into it, but here he relies on rhetoric to produce the appearance of a logic that never takes shape. I do not raise this point to condemn Mooallem or his research, which I find

otherwise thoughtful and engaging. I dwell on this moment because it demonstrates the ongoing hesitation of Euro-settlers to take Inuit knowledge about animals seriously. Even when evidence of polar bear agency stares Mooallem in the face, he refuses to see it.

In contrast, Zacharias Kunuk and Ian Mauro foreground Inuit accounts of animals and the Land in *Qapirangajuq: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change*, an Inuktitut documentary with English subtitles that compiles a series of interviews with Nunavut elders, hunters, scientists, and politicians on the topic of climate change. Among the reports of melting glaciers, floods, acid rain, changing wind patterns, and the planet shifting on its axis, many elders and hunters speak at length about polar bears. The consensus shared by those interviewed is that global warming has no adverse effect on polar bears. In fact, Simon Idlout from Resolute Bay reports recent increases in polar bear populations (Kunuk and Mauro: 2010). The greatest threat to polar bears is not climate change but the wildlife biologists who study them: Jamesie Mike from Pangnirtung opines that polar bears who have been "tampered with" through the tag-and-release method become more aggressive and more likely to break into cabins; Abraham Ulayuruluk from Igloolik reveals that Inuit have discovered the bodies of polar bears overdosed on tranquilizers; Simon Idlout from Resolute Bay argues that the sound of helicopters, an unprecedented disruption to a silent landscape, deafens polar bears; and Nathaniel Kalluk from Resolute Bay reports that he has seen starving polar bears with radio collars bound to their necks, preventing them from hunting seals at breathing holes (Kunuk and Mauro: 2010). Not only do Southern scientists misidentify the threat to polar bears, they actually *become* the greatest threat when they meddle in the lives of animals.

*Qapirangajuq* powerfully undermines the presumed benefits of wildlife biology by emphasizing the need for first-hand experience: Inusiq Nashalik from Pangnirtung says, "they

[polar bears] have been so disturbed and are going everywhere and starving. They are constantly tampered with, by Southerners, who only know them by what they read, and have never interacted with them. We know our wildlife intimately" (Kunuk and Mauro: 2010); Noah Mettuq, also from Pangnirtung, comments on the telling absence of scientists: "Scientists say with great authority: 'Polar Bears are in decline and will go extinct!' When I go out hunting, I never see these scientists. Not even one!" (Kunuk and Mauro: 2010). Part of what emerges in the lengthy sequence of comments about polar bears is a critique of scientists who spend relatively little time in Arctic communities before returning South to analyze their data. According to the hunters and elders in *Qapirangajuq*, these scientists have a serious gap in their knowledge because they have little or no experience, and as a result, they end up harming more than helping the polar bears. Locating knowledge in personal experience is part of the film's project, as hunters and elders share with viewers what they have observed and learned for themselves. In this vein, interviewees frequently begin with the stories of their birth, upbringing, and family members, and they are introduced textually in the film by name and community.[38] The hunters' criticisms of scientists share in this investment, as they accuse scientists of causing problems for bears not only because they act in haste but because they interact with animals according to alien social protocols.

This polar bear section, filling a significant portion of the film, initially struck me as a curious inclusion, one that I read as a detour. If the consensus is that polar bears are not threatened by climate change, but rather by meddlesome Southerners, why include these testimonies so prominently in a film about climate change? This section seems almost to break from the main narrative to provide a pre-emptive counterclaim to inevitable concerns about the

[38] There are two notable exceptions to this rule: Mary Simon is introduced as the National Inuit Leader, and Sheila Watt-Cloutier is introduced as a Nobel Prize Nominee (Kunuk and Mauro: 2010).

well-being of polar bears. I no longer read this section as a detour, which would centralize Euro-settler ideologies and rely on a presumed compartmentalization that rarely emerges in Inuit literature. The polar bears are there for a reason, emerging alongside the other animals in the film to contribute to a full account of Inuit observations, experiences, and relationships. On the topic of increasingly thin seal skins, for example, Alukie Metuq from Pangnirtung comments about their declining quality: "I went to ask my mother-in-law. Seals should not have summer fur in the dead of winter. This got my attention;" Dora Padluk from Resolute Bay adds, "Sealskins used to be of very fine quality, the fur was wonderful. Now with mining activity and climate change, the furs have rotten patches and the skin tears easily. Now when you stretch the skins, holes appear as if they were burnt" (Kunuk and Mauro: 2010). Both of these comments point to the changes that seals have undergone as a result of a shifting environment, changes that also affect the hunters and skin workers who rely on them. These personal narratives about working with seal skins demonstrate what Mary Simon, the National Inuit Leader, marks as a key difference between Inuit and scientific ways of understanding the world: "Scientists talk about climate change with studies on pollution and toxins. Whereas Inuit discuss the effects as they occur within our lives" (Kunuk and Mauro: 2010). This emphasis on first-hand experience is key to the film's project of offering Inuit knowledge about climate change through a series of interviews, and it also offers a reading strategy for the film. In many interviews, hunters and elders share their knowledge and observations about changes to the environment, emphasizing not only the observations themselves but the relationships implicated in them.

Nicole Shukin notes the prominence of personal observation in the film, which she terms the motif of “noticing” that can be linked to a representation of temporality that differs from Euro-settler understandings of climate change. In “Materializing Climate Change: Images of

Exposure, States of Exception," Shukin compares *Qapirangajuq* to Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey's 2005 "ice slides" project. Ackroyd and Harvey are British artists who created the slides on the Cape Farewell expedition to the Arctic in 2003, an expedition founded by British artist-educator David Buckland that brought a mixed crew of artists and scientists to study and understand the impact of climate change (189). The resulting "ice slides," Shukin argues, constitute a strong example of the state of exception that opens around climate change, demanding swift and drastic intervention:

> For in crystallizing climate change as a crisis-event writing the short time frame of an Arctic excursion, the ice slides of Ackroyd and Harvey inadvertently bring something else into view as well: a state of exception excited by a sense of ecological emergency, one that justifies dramatic efforts to avert a global catastrophe. By contrast, *Qapirangajuq*'s engagement with the crisis of climate change complicates the Western cultural and political habit of pronouncing states of emergency as exceptional time-spaces in which a strong state or individual exercises licence to suspend the rule of ordinary life. (190)

She continues: "in placing climate change within a larger history of Arctic incursions and exercises of sovereign power, as well as within a long practice of Inuit environmental attention and adaptability—Kunuk and Mauro's documentary refuses to excite the affect of ecological emergency" (191). *Qapirangajuq* does not entertain the state of exception; the film evades the presumed novelty of climate change and instead contextualizes it within a larger history of sovereign incursions into Arctic territory and Inuit adaptation to them.[39] By representing the

[39] This contextualization follows a larger trend that is depicted powerfully in Stephen A. Smith and Julia Szucs' documentary *Vanishing Point*. The film follows Navarana K'Avigak as she retraces the migration route of her great-great-great uncle Qitdlarssuaq and reconnects with distant relatives. As with *Qapirangajuq*, *Vanishing Point* introduces Navarana by locating her home: she was born at Uumannaq, in a region of Greenland called Avanersuaq,

threats of climate change in the context of everyday life rather than the crisis-event, *Qapirangajuq* privileges the situated knowledge of Inuit and explores the ways that Inuit adapt to meet the demands of their changing environment (200-201). In this context, the motif of "noticing," in addition to corroborating evidence gathered by elders from across the Arctic (202), creates a string of "everyday environmental observations by Inuit from various communities" that stand in contrast to the "mobile space of exceptional knowledge" of the Cape Farewell expeditions (201).

There is a risk here of reading Shukin's reference to the everyday as a function of the mundane, placed in opposition to the powerful crisis-point of the state of exception, though I think her analysis operates more strongly in the context of the everyday as extended life experience. Keavy Martin takes up the social and literary significance of experience in *Stories in a New Skin*, where she argues in favour of Indigenous literary nationalism and interprets Inuit literature according to Inuit literary criticism in ways that will be productive for Inuit communities. Introducing the project with an analysis of *Qapirangajuq*, she writes, "knowledge, as Inuusiq Nashalik [Pangnirtung] stated in *Qapirangajuq* (and made clear to me personally), is based on real, lived experience" (5). This principle functions somewhat like a framing device, as

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but the film does not focus on her home as much as it does on her trip back to Qitdlarssuaq's birth place, an area on Baffin Island now called Qikiqtarjuaq. As she meets her distant relatives and goes on hunting trips with them, she meditates on the nature of tradition and adaptation in a world that is always changing: "Living in the Arctic means living with change. It's not something we can stop" (Smith and Szucs: 2012). Comparing climate change to colonial interventions like forced relocations and the dog slaughter, she says, "new people have come before, new ideas. Some we have adapted to our own use. Some ideas have been forced on us, whether we like it or not. Again we find ourselves on shifting ground. And as the world melts beneath our feet, we must find the best way for the journey" (Smith and Szucs: 2012). Here, Navarana archives climate change not as an insurmountable obstacle but as one of the many changes forced on Inuit from outside influences, one that will be difficult but to which Inuit are capable of adapting; the documentary, therefore, shows how Navarana is preparing for this challenge by shoring up her relationships with distant relatives. Both *Vanishing Point* and *Qapirangajuq* share this approach: they offer Inuit knowledge, experience, and insights in a way that, first and foremost, strengthens Inuit communities.

Martin returns to it in the final chapter of the book, which considers how lived experience features as an element of Inuit literary criticism. Martin draws on a moment in the Introduction to the series, *Interviewing Inuit Elders*,[40] in which Saullu Nakasuk explains that she does not speak on matters she has not experienced herself. Martin engages with the original Inuktitut utterance, relating a linguistic analysis of the root "qauji-," which refers to knowing:

> As the translators make clear, however, "knowledge" refers specifically to something that the speaker knows *from personal experience*, as opposed to the kind of "knowledge" attained at the university, which continues to be primarily derived from secondhand sources, like teachers or books. In the Inuit context, something that the speaker has only heard about—*tusatuinnaqtaminirmik*—does not count as something that is "known." (108, emphasis in original)

This distinction is further maintained in storytelling terminology, which separate life stories, inuusirmingnik unikkaat, from other types of storytelling such as traditional tales, unikkaaqtuat (109). The testimonies offered in *Qapirangajuq* are life stories, inuusirmingnik unikkaat, offering knowledge based on personal experience gained over a lifetime in the Arctic. This understanding of experience offers a productive entry point into Martin's analysis of knowledge, Shukin's understanding of the everyday, and, for my purposes, the anecdotal representation of experience.

The anecdote in literary studies is similar to inuusirmingnik unikkaat, though historically it has not been taken as seriously. In its broadest sense, anecdote refers to a short, nonfictional story, situating it, according to Joel Fineman, as the trope of the real. In "The History of the Anecdote: Fiction and Fiction" (not a typo—I double-checked), Fineman analyzes the anecdote

[40] The series, edited by Jarich Oosten and Frédéric Laugrand, is based on a workshop run at the Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit in November, 1996, for a course on oral traditions.

as a literary technique that differs from other real-world references, such as definition or direct description, by the way that it combines literature and reference to frame the historical event as a *historeme*, the smallest unit of historiographic fact (56-7). He argues that

> the anecdote is the literary form that uniquely *lets history happen* by virtue of the way it introduces an opening into the teleological, and therefore timeless, narration of beginning, middle, and end. The anecdote produces the effects of the real, the occurrence of contingency, by establishing an event within and yet without the framing context of historical successivity, i.e., it does so only in so far as its narration both comprises and refracts the narration it reports. (61, emphasis in original)

Fineman's configuration of anecdote is compelling because it accounts for the literariness of the trope that refers to a reality outside of the literary sphere: the anecdote is stylized reality, one that organizes the historical event according to beginning, middle, and end in a way that produces a captivating narrative of real-world events. Anecdote may initially appear to stand in contrast to more symbolically rich tropes, yet Fineman importantly signals this distinction to be illusory, as the anecdote does not merely relate the real but narrativizes it, rendering it discursive. Read in this light, Shukin's analysis of everyday time in *Qapirangajuq* and the state of exception in "ice slides" takes on an aesthetic rather than political focus, as the experiential knowledge of the interviewees pull the viewer into a different kind of discursive space and temporality than does the rhetoric of crisis.

The anecdote importantly remains tethered to the speaker, who remains an integral part of the trope. In "Anecdote," Mike Michael interprets anecdote in the context of social-scientific research, and he argues that anecdote allows story-tellers to write themselves into their stories:

> Anecdotes, insofar as they refer to incidents that have befallen their author, can be a means to writing self into the narrative in order to problematize the authorial voice. This can again evoke the constructedness of the anecdote itself, and indeed the text surrounding it. However, perhaps more crucially, such personal anecdotes can connote how the anecdotal events themselves contribute to the making of their author. That is to say, the author can emerge from the 'incident of private life' that renders the incident "anectoteable" as it were. (28)

Michael highlights the interconnectedness of author and event found in the anecdote: when the testimony becomes untethered from its speaker, rendered abstract and universal, it is no longer anecdote but data. Maintaining the connection between speaker and story is therefore urgent and explicit to anecdote, a quality that can also be seen in Inuit studies, with the emergence and prominence of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ).

In "From TEK to IQ: *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* and Inuit Cultural Ecology," George Wenzel charts and analyzes the shift from Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) to IQ in research and the government of Nunavut. Both TEK and IQ include Inuit knowledge about animals and the environment, based on observation and experience, but TEK was taken up by researchers as a body of knowledge, cleaving speakers from their stories and treating their experiences as a set of data. IQ was therefore introduced as a corrective, since it "encompasses all aspects of traditional Inuit culture including values, world-view, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions, and expectations" (Anonymous, qt. in Wenzel 240). IQ therefore denotes a broader interconnection between knowledge, experience, and culture, and it has swiftly displaced TEK as a scholarly framework: "put simply, the paradigm of TEK—with its propensity toward 'facts' about animals and other elements of the natural world—is almost certain to be increasingly seen

as inadequate in relation to *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, not least with regard to its precepts, which suggests that Inuit attitudes and, often, behaviours toward wildlife are more nuanced than as presented in TEK and other cultural ecological formulations" (239). For my purposes, I focus on one element of IQ that is different from TEK: it insists upon locating knowledge in the personal experiences of specified individuals, resisting the generalizations that come from data analysis. The emergence of IQ as a corrective to TEK speaks to the importance of attributing experiential knowledge to individuals, a figuration that, when emerging in literary texts, could be termed anecdote. It would do a disservice, then, to view *Qapirangajuq* only to glean expert knowledge from elders, for, as Michael reveals, anecdotes are constructed from significant moments in the story-teller's life. Engaging with the anecdote therefore necessitates a reading strategy that engages with the speaker and story as two parts of one whole.

Martin deploys one such reading strategy by foregrounding inuusirmingnik unikkaat in Inuit-authored texts that have strong political interpretations available. Responding to Frédéric Laugrand's argument that oral traditions create a collective social memory, she writes,

> Beyond the creation of a collective memory, the act of remembering and telling stories about the past might itself be thought of as a deeply political act. Elder's testimonies give Inuit a venue in which to tell (or read) their own version of history, and they bring a particular reality to the history of Arctic administration, as Inuit talk about the experience of residential school, of the deaths of their dogs, of life in the settlements, or of relatives who disappeared into medical ships and never returned. In this context, oral histories become acts of resistance, or of healing. (107)

She continues, "none of these political factors, however, would cancel out the possibility of literary readings; literary scholars would simply extend the conversation by exploring the *ways*

in which elder's stories created these effects through the use of careful (and often beautiful) language" (107). Following Martin's lead, I will focus on the aesthetic function of a powerful anecdote in *Qapirangajuq* that I have often cited to highlight Inuit hunting ethics.

Many of the elders interviewed share childhood reminiscences as entry points into the stories they tell about particular concepts or issues. The polar bear section of the film begins with Rita Kanayuk from Pangnirtung, who shares a memory about a polar bear in twilight:

> One of my cherished memories happened one spring. The sun was low and a bear appeared in camp. We chased it by dogteam, father released his lead dog and it ran alone after the bear. The bear was fleeing. The sun was low and you could feel the cold. The bear looked back at us and we saw ice crystals from its breath. What a beautiful sight! (Kunuk and Mauro: 2010)

Rita Kanayuk uses vivid imagery to convey her experience to viewers: she describes the feeling of cold, and the sight of the low sun and the ice crystals forming from the bear's breath (and though she doesn't state it explicitly, I cannot help but hear the sound of barking dogs chasing after the bear). Kunuk and Mauro intensify this effect by including a shot of the sun low on the horizon, offering a starting point for viewers to see the scene that Rita Kanayuk describes and to imagine the polar bear and his breath included in the frame. As she tells the story in her home, surrounded by family pictures, she conveys the joy that the memory brings her: as she exhales the words, "what a beautiful sight!" her body relaxes and she smiles deeply.

The story is beautiful, and so successful at creating an image that when I reflect on the film, I sometimes have to remind myself that the polar bear's crystal breath was described rather than shown. I will address the power of such imagery in the next chapter, but for my purposes here, I want to note that Kunuk and Mauro select Rita Kanayuk's reminiscence and joy to initiate

the discussion of polar bears and the ways that they have been harmed by meddlesome Southerners. By highlighting what Rita experienced prior to the arrival of scientists, Kunuk and Mauro emphasize the effect of loss by showing not only what negative consequences arise from the actions of scientists, but by showing the experiences that they replace, as polar bears are driven inland, becoming a greater threat to Inuit communities.

In the penultimate comment in the section, Rita Kanayuk returns to the screen to chastise Southerners:

> I'm a protector of animals, a real animal rights activist! When animals are mistreated I'm reminded of my late grandmother's teaching: "unless you're going to kill an animal, do not cause it harm." Inuit are lectured: "they're endangered animals, you must not hunt them!" Inuit do not endanger animals! It's Southerners, meddling with Caribou, polar bears, and whales that endanger wildlife! This handling and tagging is what harms animals! Wildlife biologists are the ones endangering wildlife! Then they suspect Inuit overharvesting as the cause. We are told: "You must not touch protected animals." Inuit do not endanger animals nor do they cause needless suffering. We love our animals. (Kunuk and Mauro: 2010)

According to Rita Kanayuk, Southerners initiate a harmful relationship with polar bears by breaking the cardinal rule of animal welfare in the Arctic: do not tamper with animals unless you intend to hunt them. I have quoted this story at conferences and presentations, taking it out of context and reading it primarily for its political salience. In these presentations, I took the common approach of contextualizing Inuit literature within Inuit political, social, and literary history, and I emphasized the disparate ways that Inuit and Euro-settlers establish respectful relationships with animals. I still believe that Rita Kanayuk’s criticism is a strong example of such politics, but I also think that such readings leave too much out, focusing on overdetermined

politics while ignoring, in Martin's words, the *ways* that elders tell life stories. In the context of Rita Kanayuk's childhood reminiscence, this criticism takes on a more affective register, not only capturing Kanayuk's frustration and resistance to condescending outsiders, but also implying a sense of loss and missed opportunity for understanding: the finger-wagging Southerner who will not stop lecturing Inuit long enough to listen will never hear of the polar bear's crystal breath, will never imagine the rich interactions that occur when Southerners are not around to interfere. To read Rita Kanayuk's testimony in a way that emphasizes anecdote is to consider the speaker at least as much as the story, and it brings into focus the aesthetics of kinship by showing how ongoing relationships are central to representations of Land. Such aesthetics are lost when viewers watch *Qapirangajuq* and see only data.

Read in this light, such anecdotes complicate Shukin's interpretation: the testimonies in the film *are* a discourse of crisis. While I agree that the film emphasizes the everyday experiences and adaptability of Inuit in ways that Euro-settler narratives about climate change do not, it does not follow that the film therefore "refuses to excite the affect of ecological emergency" (191). I would suggest rather that the film's testimonies do not avoid the discourse of environmental crisis as much as they represent it in a different register. Compared to the projection-based critiques attached to polar bear campaigns, which I will address momentarily, the personal stories in *Qapirangajuq* are more grounded, less prone to exaggeration and symbolic speculation, but the quiet dignity of these stories should not belie the severity of the events they depict. The declining health of seals and polar bears is not to be taken lightly, and the sudden failure of techniques in navigation and weather prediction that have helped Inuit to thrive for millennia is hardly an everyday occurrence. Such narratives do not depict wide-scale *panic* in the way that Shukin identifies in the state-of-exception, but certainly they depict individualized stories of

crisis, as interviewees relate the new challenges they face as a result of climate change. Shukin seems to slightly romanticize Inuit resilience and adaptability, and although such strength should be acknowledged, it does not negate crisis, and to read *Qapirangajuq* solely as a narrative of everyday resilience and adaptation risks understating the emotional resonance of stories like Rita Kanayuk's, an understatement that becomes problematic given that emotional appeal is the staple in Euro-western climate change narratives.

**The Vulnerable Polar Bear in BBC's *Planet Earth* and *Frozen Planet***

In the previous section, I explored how Inuit relationship with polar bears and climate change are articulated through anecdote. Here, I will expound how Euro-western climate change narratives draw on the tropes of cuteness and synecdoche to emphasize polar bear vulnerability. My analysis of vulnerable polar bears turns to the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) series *Planet Earth* (2006) and *Frozen Planet* (2011), both part of the internationally renowned wildlife documentary series that have become the most watched series in British history and that enjoy international popularity. The two films also uniquely demonstrate the shift from polar bear strength to vulnerability noted in *Polar Bear Fever*. *Frozen Planet* represents the Arctic and Antarctica through the lens of seasonal change. Since the polar bear is one of the relatively few animals to remain in the Arctic year-round (in contrast to migratory birds and mammals), his story spans every episode of the series as the audience witnesses how he adapts to annual melting and freezing cycles.[41] In contrast, *Planet Earth* is framed as a travel narrative, promising to

[41] Both *Frozen Planet* and *Planet Earth* separate the narratives of female and male polar bears. The narrative of female polar bears focuses on the laborious process of raising cubs, and it is a staple in wildlife documentaries about polar bears (this narrative is particularly prominent in *Arctic Tale*, narrated by Queen Latifah). The convention of this narrative is to begin with the mother bear giving birth to the cubs and to follow them through their childhood as they learn the skills they will need to survive. Their vulnerability is frequently emphasized as the story shows how polar bears' traditional practice of hunting seals in birthing dens and on the sea ice is becoming obsolete in an Arctic hard-hit by climate change. The story, however, has a happy ending. Though one cub might die (which is common,

transport viewers to the lingering wildernesses of the twenty-first century (Fothergill: 2006). Each episode takes the audience to a different landscape, and my analysis will focus on the "Ice Worlds" episode. Like *Frozen Planet*, "Ice Worlds" follows the seasonal freezing and thawing of the sea ice in its depiction of Antarctica. In its depiction of the Arctic, however, the episode deviates from this pattern. Though seasonal change is acknowledged nominally, the open sea in the summer is depicted as though it presents new challenges to polar bears: what *Frozen Planet* highlights as seasonal change, *Planet Earth* depicts as an unprecedented and permanently altered environment.

The arrival of summer is paired with a narrative shift from the mother polar bear and her cubs to a lone male polar bear searching for food. The story begins, as do many episodes in *Planet Earth*, with an emphasis on the landscape:

> "As the sun's influence increases, the sea ice seems to take on a life of its own." (Fothergill: 2006).

Cut to time-lapse images of slushy sea ice berating the coast to the sound of grating ice.

> "Glacial waters pour from the land, mingling with the sea and speeding up the thaw. The seascape is in constant flux as broken ice is moved by the winds and currents." (Fothergill: 2006)

The time-lapse images speed up, as clouds and ice briskly dance across the screen.

> "The ice is becoming too weak to support a male polar bear. He attempts to spread his weight, but the ice that has supported him all winter is rapidly disintegrating. Each year, as

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and the reason polar bears typically give birth to twins), a female cub survives to adulthood and gives birth to her own cubs. Though polar bear vulnerability is emphasized in these narratives, they are ultimately stories of resilience and survival, a testament to the strength of heteronormative family structures. This heteronormative polar bear narrative functions similarly to the wolf narrative in Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf*: both narratives write Euro-western heteronormativity into the Arctic. This chapter will complement these narratives by focusing on the lonely vulnerability of the male polar bear.

> the climate warms, the Arctic holds less ice. This is a disaster for polar bears. Without its solid platform, they can't hunt the seals they need in order to survive. This may be a glimpse of the unstable future faced by this magnificent creature." (Fothergill: 2006)

The male polar bear clumsily, though successfully, travels across the ice on his stomach. The polar bear story takes a pause as the narrative moves on to focus on auks, small sea birds.

Strikingly, *Planet Earth* and *Frozen Planet* apply the same sequence to put their narratives into motion. BBC routinely reuses footage in their wildlife documentary series, but the repurposed footage of polar bears is particularly intriguing because the images substantiate contradicting stories of adaptation and stasis. The footage shows a male polar bear swimming through mostly open water, ducking and diving beneath relatively tiny ice chunks.

In *Frozen Planet*, Attenborough informs the audience that such a feat is easily achieved by polar bears, a marine mammal:

> "This lone male has lived through a dozen summers and is perfectly at home in the sea. He can swim up to fifty miles a day. He’s hungry, and he’s searching this ice maze for seals." (Berlowitz: 2011)

In *Planet Earth*, the same images accompany a narrative about polar bear vulnerability. As the polar bear swims through mostly open water, diving underneath icebergs that are visibly too small to support his weight, dissonant flutes crescendo and decrescendo, creating a mournful melody:

> "The male polar bear’s ice world has finally vanished beneath him. While the female is still kept on land by her dependent cubs, the male can take to the sea in search of food. Ducking and diving, he hopes to ambush seals resting on the remaining fragments of ice." (Fothergill: 2006)

Denotatively, these sequences convey similar information: the male polar bear takes to the open water to hunt seals. Their portrayal of the landscape, however, diverges drastically. In *Frozen Planet*, the polar bear is "at home" in the open water, since this seasonal feature is something that he has experienced and survived a dozen times before. In *Planet Earth*, Attenborough refers to the sea ice as an "ice world" and declares that it has "vanished" from under the polar bear, connoting a sense of finality to what he has elsewhere described as a season change. This shift is particularly stark because *Planet Earth*'s treatment of the of sea ice in Antarctica follows the same seasonal narrative as *Frozen Planet*: the melting ice in *Planet Earth's* Arctic stands alone as permanent rather than temporary. Furthermore, Attenborough's narration of polar bear vulnerability in *Planet Earth* precedes the polar bear strength celebrated in *Frozen Planet*, signalling that the discrepancy is the result of a narrative choice rather than a historical shift.

As the slow, sad piano music underscores the lack of seals to ambush, Attenborough feigns shock at the polar bear's swimming ability:

> "In these new surroundings, he is a surprisingly adept swimmer. Once an extremely rare sight, polar bears have recently been seen over sixty miles from shore. There is now no turning back for this bear. He is forced to head out into deeper water." (Fothergill: 2006)

Cut to an underwater side shot of his paws while he swims. This footage is also used in both *Frozen Planet* and *Planet Earth*.

> "His giant front paws help him to fight the ocean currents." (Fothergill: 2006)

He dives. An underwater shot shows how he glides through the water. Straight cut to a shot above water showing him surfacing. The music crescendos.

> "He seems at home in the sea, but he cannot swim indefinitely. He will drown if he doesn't find land somewhere in this vast ocean." (Fothergill: 2006)

An establishing shot provides context for the region where the bear is diving. There are mountains in the background, many miles away. The implication is that these distant mountains are his desired destination, and if that is the case, it will be a long journey for him to get there.

This sequence relies heavily on the trope of polar bear vulnerability. Though a brief mention is made to the bear's powerful paws and ability to swim, this strength is quickly retracted. Whereas the Attenborough narrating *Frozen Planet* declares that polar bears are "perfectly at home in the sea," he hastens to add in *Planet Earth* that they only *seem* at home in the sea and that they will drown if they do not find land. The narrative also suggests that polar bears are in danger of drowning, a claim not made elsewhere in environmental activism: the concern is rather that polar bears will starve because their hunting techniques rely on sea ice and do not transfer well to open water. This is not to say that there is no cause for alarm: each year, the sea ice forms later in the fall, melts earlier in the spring, and becomes thinner throughout the winter.[42] My point here is not merely that the dangers of melting sea ice are emphasized, but that the resilience and adaptability of polar bears is downplayed. *Planet Earth* insists that the polar bear's limits are being tested, and he is losing.

Contradicting this narrative, the film crew relates that polar bears remain strong and adaptable even in this precarious period of rapid warming. In the video diaries, a making-of special feature, the film crew reveals that the greatest threat posed to them during their work in the Arctic was polar bears. During the filming of both *Planet Earth* and *Frozen Planet*, curious polar bears consistently approached the film crew, coming up to their boats and camera stations and entering their camps (Fothergill: 2006). One polar bear even poked his head into the tent of Vanessa Berlowitz, a wildlife filmographer for *Planet Earth* and the series producer of *Frozen*

[42] For a comprehensive analysis of the science and politics of Arctic sea ice, see Alun Anderson's *After the Ice: Life, Death, and Geopolitics in the New Arctic.*

*Planet*. In an interview with CBC, she reminds viewers, "You are dealing with the largest predator in the world. They do want to eat you" (CBC Learning: 2008). In some cases, the film crew manages to scare off the bears with flare guns, but in other instances they have to wait until the unconcerned bears leave of their own accord (Fothergill: 2006). These video diaries are significant because they demonstrate that stories about powerful and dangerous polar bears continue to circulate in Euro-settler literature, though they have been relegated to special features, leaving vulnerable polar bears to carry the main narrative.

This narrative emphasis on polar bears reflects the phenomenon of charismatic megafauna, though I suggest that this term is a misnomer and that the appeal of polar bears and other charismatic mammals comes from what a recent surge in scholarly attention has termed the cute aesthetic. The phenomenon of charismatic megafauna is well-known in environmental activism, and it results in flagship species—animal species that garner so much public attention and sympathy that they become disproportionately represented and protected as a means to defend their habitats and, by extension, their ecosystems. In "Tourism and Flagship Species in Tourism," Matthew J. Walpole and Nigel Leader-Williams defend the use of flagship species, arguing that although they do not accurately represent environmental concerns, which extend beyond the isolated well-being of any single species, they serve an important socio-political function to attract attention and, importantly, donations to environmental organizations that work to protect many species and ecosystems (543). Though they acknowledge the limits of relying on flagship species as a way to understand environmental vulnerability, they argue in favour of casting charismatic megafauna as flagship species as a pragmatic strategy to increase public profile and funds: "whilst more effort could be made to enhance the public profile of other types of organism for potential use as flagship species, it is a fact that 'big, cute, and furry' sells, and

as much should be made of this as possible" (544). John Leape, General Director of World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) International, similarly supports using charismatic megafauna in public awareness campaigns to make the most of limited resources. In an interview with BBC, included in *Planet Earth's* "Saving the Species" episode, he says, "There is something about a panda that touches people, and I can't tell you exactly what it is, but it's something that just reaches people at a different level than other species do, and in that sense, it's a very important ambassador for the wild" (Fothergill: 2006).

The mechanics of charismatic mammals relies heavily on their being 'big, cute, and furry'—qualities of cuteness. In "Cuteness and Commodity Aesthetics: Tom Thumb and Shirley Temple," Lori Merish charts the aesthetic category of cuteness from its emergence in late nineteenth-century America to its present incarnations. She writes that cuteness aestheticizes powerlessness by replicating the physical characteristics of human infants: thick limbs, round form, and a large head and eyes (187). According to Merish, cute figures are frequently placed in humiliating circumstances to intensify their vulnerability—Winnie the Pooh, for example, is at his cutest when his snout is stuck in a beehive (187). In *Cute, Quaint, Hungry, Romantic: The Aesthetics of Consumerism,* Daniel Harris theorizes the grotesque as a type of cuteness that relies on pity to create a loveable misfit who becomes cute because of "a certain neediness and inability to stand alone, as if it were an indigent starveling, lonely and rejected because of a hideousness we find more touching than unsightly" (4). From this perspective, cuteness does not merely function as a quality of childlike vulnerability inherent in the cute object or being; it is something that the onlooker seeks out and creates in the cute object:

> Cuteness, in short, is not something we find in our children but something we *do* to them. Because it aestheticizes unhappiness, helplessness, and deformity, it almost always

> involves an act of sadism on the part of its creator, who makes an unconscious attempt to maim, hobble, and embarrass the thing he seeks to idolize . . . The process of conveying cuteness to the viewer disempowers its objects, forcing them into ridiculous situations and making them appear more ignorant and vulnerable than they really are. (5, emphasis in original)

Though I would not suggest that polar bears are *grotesque* in the way that Harris describes, he importantly shows how the cute aesthetic is projected onto living beings, who are re-imagined to be more helpless than they are. In a similar vein, *Planet Earth* makes a point to emphasize the polar bear's powerlessness, though there is an important distinction to be made between the misadventures of a fictional character like Winnie the Pooh and the hardships that polar bears face in a rapidly warming Arctic. Cuteness scholarship focuses heavily on commodity relations, pondering characters and objects that are designed to be cute,[43] whereas polar bears are not manufactured by humans and their vulnerability is not staged. They *are* vulnerable, and their experiences are not merely aesthetic, but their vulnerability is stylized and commodified in environmental campaigns, making it difficult to accept such narratives at face value.

I suggest that the cute aesthetic explains the success of charismatic megafauna campaigns more fully than does an appeal to the inherent qualities of these mammals. The influence of the cute aesthetic becomes evident in a pair of images: The World Wildlife Foundation's (WWF) bluefin tuna campaign and the "Misunderstood Spider" meme. Both sets of images depict non-mammal beings whose vulnerability is frequently overlooked, yet both rely on the cute aesthetic

[43] For example, Sianne Ngai's *Our Aesthetic Categories: Zany, Cute, Interesting* and Daniel Harris' *Cute, Quaint, Hungry, Romantic: The Aesthetics of Consumerism* both focus on commodities such as dolls, stuffed animals, and characters in books and film—objects that have been deliberately manufactured to be cute—and they tie their analyses to critiques of capitalism. Ngai, Harris, and Merish share the same understanding of cuteness as a figuration of infantile helplessness, a starting point that I share, even as I apply it to a different case study.

to convey their message. The bluefin campaign was developed at the Paris advertising firm Oglivy, by creative director Christ Garbutt, and it depicts a school of bluefin tuna, with the fish closest to the camera wearing the mask of a charismatic mammal like a panda or a gorilla. The caption reads, “Would you care more if I was a panda/gorilla? [In smaller print,] The bluefin tuna is being hunted to extinction. So, like a few other species, it would appreciate your help.”



Figure 3: WWF, “Would You Care More If I Was a Panda?” and Figure 4: WWF, “Would You Care More If I Was a Gorilla?”

The campaign parodically transfers the qualities of charismatic mammals onto bluefin tuna with the use of a mask, an approach that makes no effort to conceal its tactic of redistributing concern for animals. These images expose the phenomenon of the charismatic mammal as a farce: there is no ecological reason to value pandas and gorillas more than bluefin tuna, yet the campaign addresses a target audience who are nevertheless more compelled to protect large mammals, reminding them that other species are also in danger and are equally worthy of their attention. In this way, the campaign operates primarily as a call-out, inviting the presumed-apathetic audience to question why they care more about pandas and gorillas than they do about fish.

In contrast, the “Misunderstood Spider” meme earnestly stylizes an arachnid to fit the cute aesthetic, demonstrating that the tactic is not restricted to use on charismatic mammals. The meme takes the image of a spider originally posted in the now-discontinued culture blog *SodaHead*, in a post titled “Could you kill these spiders?” published on March 1, 2011. Within a

week, the first meme was submitted on *Reddit* with the caption, “Crawling on your arm / Squish him / Just wanted to cuddle” (*knowyourmeme.com*, Literally Media: 2017). Since then, the popular meme has expanded to include variant captions of a spider about to be killed.

The photograph selected for these memes offers an unusually detailed, close-up view of the spider, highlighting the qualities that appeal to the guiding principles of cuteness: the dominant pair of eyes, centered on the spider’s face, are large in comparison to his head; his hair, at this scale, seems reminiscent of soft fur; and his legs are all curled inward, creating the effect of roundness while diminishing the widely-felt unease at the arachnid’s eight sprawling legs. Most significantly, the meme imposes narratives of vulnerability on the photo, imagining spiders who seek friendship with humans only to be killed through conventional methods. Such narratives cast the spider as a loveable, misunderstood figure who becomes pitiable in his vulnerability to humans, who respond to his favours or appeals for help by squishing his wife or murderously approaching him with a rolled-up newspaper. The spider is literally vulnerable, and the meme’s success depends upon the audience’s familiarity with spider-killing tactics, yet the meme is also highly stylized, capturing the imagined innocence of the spider in the moment prior to his death. The spider is eternalized in this moment of helplessness, a stasis critical to his pitiable cuteness: it would be more difficult, I think, to create such a cute meme using the image of a spider drinking the liquified viscera of a wasp or bird.

While I do not wish to be flippant about the real, corporeal vulnerability of all living beings, the excessive, stylized emphasis on particular moments of vulnerability in flagship species warrants critical theorization. The seemingly insatiable need to imagine capable animals in humiliating circumstances has not gone unnoticed: In "Animals on Film: The Ethics of the Human Gaze," Randy Malamud draws on the language of cuteness to note that animals are

frequently mocked in film and visual media, and he suggests that this trend stems from a desire to see animals framed and domesticated (4). He writes,

> The animals we gaze upon in film, on the internet, in advertisements, are prized for their 'cuteness'—in a way that is feminized, and derogatorily so: cute animals are like dumb blondes (note the parallelism between the male gaze and the human gaze). Animals are celebrated for their subservience, their entertainment value, and the extent to which the affirm an anthropocentric ethos . . . The human gazer prizes exoticism in visual cultural representations of other animals, but in a mode (as zoos and aquariums have trained audiences to expect) of profound displacement from their habitat. (7-8)

Malamud compares cute animals to dumb blondes in the context of his larger analysis, which draws on Laura Mulvey's theorization of the male gaze in cinema to delineate what he calls the human gaze. I would argue, however, that this gaze does not feminize animals but infantilizes them by rendering them dependent on humans, often to the point of artificial incompetence and subservience. Though certainly there are strong parallels to the male gaze, which also infantilizes women, it is important to clarify the distinction, to avoid naturalizing the male gaze's diminishment of women. Malamud echoes Harris' grotesque cuteness, which diminishes and humiliates the cute object for the enjoyment of the consumer or gazer, though Malamud importantly expands on this by highlighting the displacement of animals in human fantasies of animal subservience shown on film. Animals are cutest, it seems, not when they are living in their own habitat, but when they are forced into the confines of some humans' impoverished imaginings of them. Read in the context of kinship criticism, this configuration invites a condescending relationship between helpless animals and the humans who imagine themselves as paternal caregivers.

This configuration of animals in film operates in contrast with the purpose of environmental advocacy campaigns, which is to compel viewers to protect animals. Rather than rendering them subservient, this purpose might make use of a different register of cuteness: its appeal to maternal care. As Merish argues, cuteness aestheticizes powerlessness in a way that "stages, in part, a need for adult care" (187). In this sense, "The cute always in some sense designates a commodity in search of its mother, and is constructed to generate maternal desire" (186). I will return to Merish's argument in greater detail in the context of the seal hunt, which I think speaks more strongly to the scope of her argument, but I raise the point here to identify the paradox of the polar bear's stylized vulnerability. Though environmental advocacy campaigns are designed nominally to compel viewers to help flagship species and their ecosystems, an approach that might benefit from the appeal to maternal care that Merish identifies, the polar bear does not elicit this response. The dominant response to these polar bear narratives has instead been defeatist, resulting not in a widespread movement to protect the Arctic and its inhabitants but rather in a collective compulsion to mourn polar bears in advance of their demise.

Consider, for example, Greenpeace's *Save the Arctic* campaign, which includes an image depicting a community of dead polar bears floating in the melted sea ice. Though the polar bear in the foreground drifts alone, there is a pair of bonded bears in the left middle-ground, as one polar bear is draped over the body of a second, creating the effect of two bears having found some comfort in one another as they knowingly approached their inevitable demise, a haunting visual that emphasizes their bond while also configuring the polar bear in the foreground as comparatively isolated, as though his death were painfully lonely, despite being surrounded by other dying bears. The caption reads, "Act now against climate change. Visit greenpeace.org." The image is computer-generated, likely because the scenario has not yet come to pass: the scene

functions as a projection-based critique by imagining and staging the logical conclusion of present actions. The tactic invites viewers to consider the long-term repercussions of their actions, but it also risks pulling viewers into the melancholic space of the already-extinct polar bear.

Such pre-emptive mourning is, according to recent scholarship, the crux of modern figurations of animals. In *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife*, Akira Mizuta Lippit charts a shift in the figure of the animal from a sign of nature's abundance to a panic-inducing sign of waning resources, arguing that animals "exist in a state of *perpetual vanishing*" (1, emphasis in original). Linking the disappearance of animals in the material world to the rise of animal figures in visual media and philosophical reflection (3), he suggests that animals as metonyms for nature became less prominent as they merge with technological advances and became virtual, occupying new meanings (187).[44] In this sense, he reads technology, and the cinema in particular, as a virtual refuge for animals, becoming "a vast mausoleum for animal being" (187). This spectral animal therefore becomes configured in the future anterior, as viewers imagine the death that it will have suffered and construct the haunting figure of a virtual animal that is always vanishing yet never quite dying.

This future anterior mode of the animal constitutes what Karyn Ball terms a melancholic anthropomorphosis. In "Primal Revenge and Other Anthropomorphic Projections for Literary Analysis," Ball reads the global animal[45] as "the chiaroscuro surface of human hope and fear: it

[44] For example, the horse has ceased to be a dominant mode of transportation in urban settings, yet its facsimile remains: the horse-drawn carriage gave way to the steam engine, which was frequently adorned with ornamental plaster horses on their tramcar fronts, and contemporary vehicle engines are evaluated in terms of their "horsepower" (187).

[45] Since publishing this article, Ball has co-edited, with Melissa Haynes, a special edition of *English Studies in Canada* on the global animal, a concept that has gained traction in recent animal studies scholarship. In "Introducing the 'Global Animal': An Insomniac's recourse in the Anthropocene," Ball and Haynes draw on Lippit's theorization of the *animetaphor*, a spectral figure "at once a source of non-human vitality, an irreducible exteriority, and a reflective surface in which humans constitutively misrecognize themselves" (6). They write that the "global animal

brims with harbingers of present and future perils, warnings that might be heeded on time if only one could penetrate the still eyes of this anthropomorphic mirror" (536). In this vein, the animal is frequently configured to "speak on behalf of self-perpetuated threats to our own futurity: to image, store, but then disguise our apprehensions before we have a chance to run the obvious danger off the pasture" (536). Ball draws on this pairing of disguised anxiety with pre-emptive mourning to explore the "ambivalence of anthropomorphosis" (540), which creates a melancholic subject who "eludes the harsh import of his or her own intuition of danger. The event that 'never took place' returns as an ecological catastrophe for which I am *inconsolable in advance*" (543, emphasis in original). Ball's ambivalent anthropomorphosis and melancholic subjects speak directly to the scope of this case study, which explores the configuration of polar bears teetering on the brink of extinction, even as the evidence indicates that they are not yet endangered. I will offer some thoughts on what these coded anxieties might signal, but I am primarily interested in understanding what I perceive as activism's loss of control over the polar bear narrative, as environmental advocacy campaigns and documentaries, with clear and upfront conservationist agendas, feed the melancholic subject, who accepts as mournfully inevitable the very conditions that the campaigns seek to improve. To address this discrepancy, I analyze these campaigns' prolific, though ultimately unsuccessful, use of synecdoche.

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is an animetaphor that accrues affective (anxious and melancholic) intensity from our failure to confront and counteract the unbearable implications of terrestrial destruction. Global animetaphors refract the limitations of those depoliticized environmentalists that reduce animals to pacified symbols of threatened futurity" (7). I am indebted to the concepts of the global animal and the *animetaphor*, which have influenced my thinking and understanding of animal figures, though I do not take them up substantially in this project. This omission is one of scope, since this project focuses primarily on figurations of animals as they are imagined in kinship and sovereign narratives. And although the term *animetaphor* implies a focus on trope, which I take up in this chapter, I regard it rather as a psychoanalytical concept, one more suited to Ball's reading of ambivalence and melancholy than to my exploration of relationships. In *Electric Animal*, Lippit delineates the *animetaphor* through a reading of Freud, who in two crucial moments slides between animality and metaphor in a way that, for Lippit, entwines metaphor with the figure of the animal (165). Though I find Lippit's reading of Freud compelling, I am not prepared to treat Freud's elision of animal and metaphor as an expression of wider discursive trends, and I therefore hold that the term *animetaphor* functions at its strongest when treated psychoanalytically rather than tropologically.

**The Polar Bear as Synecdoche for the Perilous Arctic**

Landscapes feature prominently in *Planet Earth*, and the "Ice Worlds" episode begins with an introduction to the region, drawing on the predicament of the male polar bear to illustrate the shifting landscape. As the bear walks across the sea ice, the low brass plays gentle music beneath the sound of ploughing winds, which become louder as the establishing shot pulls out.

> "Both poles of our planet are covered with ice. They're the largest and most demanding wildernesses of all. Nowhere else on earth is seasonal change so extreme. It forces the ice to advance and retreat every year. And all life here is governed by that." (Fothergill: 2006)

As the music crescendos, the shot continues to pull out until the bear is a tiny speck in front of a vast mountains and snow-covered sea ice. The title "Ice worlds" appears in the centre of the screen at the peak of the crescendo. The sound of a helicopter signals the source of the shot as it circles around the side of an enormous iceberg that towers above the sea.

> "When the first polar explorers headed south, giant cathedrals of ice marked their entry into uncharted territory." (Fothergill: 2006)

The shot pulls out, granting viewers a glimpse of the full iceberg. The architecture of the iceberg seems almost deliberate, as though a long road were designed to lead people out to a sculptured spire. It does, indeed, call up images of cathedrals.

> "Passing the towering spires, they must have wondered what unearthly sights lay in store." (Fothergill: 2006)

Straight cut to a mountainous background, shrouded in mist with icebergs floating in the middle ground and background.

> "As they battled on, the ice became increasingly dominant, but nothing could have prepared them for the ice world that finally loomed into view. *Terra Incognita*: the unknown land." (Fothergill: 2006)

A choir sings an eerie set of elongated notes to create a sense of mystery.

This introduction to the Arctic landscape follows the conventions of early travel narratives: it perpetuates the myth of *terra incognita*, which ignores Inuit territory and imagines the North to be a land untouched by humans before the first European explorers arrived; it maintains the idea of North as a wintered territory of ice and snow; and it frames European excursions into this territory as masculine adventure. The opening of "Ice Worlds" resonates in particular with Ian MacLaren's analysis of nineteenth-century British travel and exploration literature of the Arctic. In "Discovery as Misperception: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Arctic Exploration," MacLaren argues that these writers deploy the picturesque and the sublime to render foreign landscapes relatable to an English audience (15). Though such depictions successfully attracted an English readership, they did so by misrepresenting the landscape and producing absurd, metonymic representations of space—MacLaren notes, for example, that that the picturesque's emphasis on visual imagery makes little sense in an Arctic context, where navigation based on smell and hearing prove more reliable (15). *Planet Earth* similarly draws on familiar figurations of the Arctic landscape as overwhelmingly awesome and mysterious: throughout the episode, a tracking shot of a geographical feature, taken from a helicopter, will pull out to a vast landscape, a visual expansion that is emphasized by musical crescendos and Attenborough's expressions of wonder.

The male polar bear travels vast distances across this landscape in search of food. After breaking up the polar bear's story to show other Arctic and Antarctic animals, the narrative focus

returns to the swimming bear as he approaches an island. The time gap in this sequencing creates the effect that the bear has swum across the sea to reach the mountainous landscape previously depicted. Attracted by the aroma of a herd of walruses, the bear attempts to capture an infant, though he is warded off by an aggressive mother. Such a hunt, Attenborough insists, in an act of desperation, for walruses are much larger and more dangerous than the polar bear's preferred prey, ringed seal (Fothergill: 2006). The failed hunt results in deep tusk wounds to the polar bear's leg, leaving him unable to continue his hunt.

As the polar bear tends to his wounds, he is paired with the melting landscape through Attenborough's narration and a set of straight cuts between the polar bear and the sun. A panoramic shot shows a sunset casting amber light across the open sea, with a river of light reflecting on the surface of the water, flowing from the background to the foreground.

"Only in the height of summer, when bears are on the verge of starvation. . ."

Cut to the bear at the edge of the water. The lighting has changed drastically since the attack scene, from afternoon to twilight. The contrast is so stark that it clearly marks a significant passage of time.

". . .will they risk attacking such dangerous prey. It is a gamble that this bear took, and lost." (Fothergill: 2006)

The gentle music underscores the bear's laboured breath.

"The stab wounds he received from the walrus are so severe that he can barely walk." (Fothergill: 2006)

As he limps forward, his left hind leg gives out. Straight cut to a shot of the walrus herd resting in the amber light.

> "The walruses are calm again, seemingly aware that the injured bear no longer poses a threat to them or their young." (Fothergill: 2006)

The bear paws at the beach in middle-ground as the walrus herd relaxes in the background. He collapses into the sand and pebbles. His left hind leg is exposed, revealing the blood-stained wound on his upper thigh.

> "Unable to feed, this bear will not survive." (Fothergill: 2006)

Straight cut to the sunset. The sun dominates the frame, and it is lower on the horizon than before. Shimmering heat waves obfuscate the cloud-line. Straight cut to a silhouette of the walrus herd in twilight.

> "If the global climate continues to warm, and the Arctic ice melts sooner each year, it's certain that more bears will share this fate." (Fothergill: 2006)

The bear lies in middle ground, sandwiched by walruses in the foreground and background who appear to be undaunted by the dying bear. A shot of the sun hovering just above the horizon concludes the narrative with the sombre implication that the bear will die as the sun sets.

This failed hunting scene is worth citing at length because it demonstrates how *Planet Earth* constructs the polar bear as a synecdoche for the melting Arctic. The selection of this scene, as opposed to a successful hunting sequence, is a potent editorial decision that highlights polar bear vulnerability, which is then intensified by the mournful music and by Attenborough's narration. Most significantly for my purposes, the implied death of the polar bear is paired with the setting sun. This technique is unusual for a BBC wildlife documentary, which typically does not shy away from depictions of animal death (leaving one to wonder if the polar bear in the sequence survives after all). The effect of this sequence is to link the polar bear with the Arctic landscape: as the newly brightened sun disintegrates the sea ice, it dooms the polar bear to

certain death. The dying polar bear becomes a synecdoche for the melting Arctic, consolidating the two around their shared vulnerability to global climate change and inviting the audience to identify with a vulnerable polar bear to connect to the Arctic landscape. In this way, the film invites viewers to extend their relationship with polar bears as the foundation for their relationship with the Land, constituting a land-based kinship network, though this network looks quite different than that of *Qapirangajuq*, which also uses a shot of a low sun to imply a connection between story and Land.

This use of synecdoche is common in environmental advocacy, and scholarship on the topic is unified in its assessment of it: synecdoche as advocacy does not work. In "Culture, Progress and the Media: The Shad as Synecdoche in Environmental News Coverage," Jane Bloodworth Rowe analyses the conflict between the Mattaponi and the City of Newport, Virginia when, in 1987, the City of Newport proposed to damn the Mattaponi River to meet the growing water needs of its citizens (362). The Mattaponi fought against the reservoir, adopting the shad (a species of fish) as a synecdoche for their relationship with the river, a tactic that Bloodworth Rowe argues undermined their position and was unsuccessful at swaying proponents of the reservoir. She expounds two reasons for this failure: the shad carries an unstable meaning, which resulted in Mattaponi's relationship with the shad and the river becoming reconstructed and misconstrued according to settler relationships with land and animals, which are understood to be mere resources (363); and it consolidated complex and abstract relationships (abstract to outsiders) into the too-tangible shad; thus, when engineers developed a filter to mitigate the risk posed to shad eggs, the issue was presented as though it were resolved (373). Let us address the elephant in the room: this case study is an example of Euro-settlers stealing land and resources from Indigenous peoples. It is important to note that the Mattaponi's use of synecdoche is not the

sole reason for the green light on the reservoir project. Such a position would imply that the problem is one of miscommunication, that if only the Mattaponi had found the correct turn of phrase they could have, with one gesture, undone the settler-colonial state and its continued investment in land theft. No such trope exists, and settler-colonial capitalism must therefore be acknowledged as the primary reason for the approval of this and other extractive projects. What I find compelling about Bloodworth Rowe's analyses is her delineation of the limited persuasive currency of synecdoche, which relies on a stability of meaning that so rarely exists in the conflicted politics of land use and occupancy.

Mark P. Moore also exposes the instability of synecdoche in environmentalist discourse. In "Constructing Irreconcilable Conflict: The Function of Synecdoche in the Spotted Owl Controversy," Moore examines the duel role of the spotted owl as a synecdoche for the forest in conservationist discourse and as a representation of the mental and physical state of timber workers in the American timber industry (259). Because the spotted owl takes on competing symbolic currencies, it becomes the site of a distinct rhetorical conflict about the meaning of the bird, obfuscating the larger issues the trope was meant to illuminate (259); thus, the spotted owl opens up a new site of contention, one that severs the part-to-whole relationship of the synecdoche, as the part becomes saturated with other investments too heavy to carry with it back to the whole (259).

In a similar vein, the vitality of the polar bear synecdoche is both the strength and limit of Euro-western climate change narratives. Though the symbolically saturated polar bear successfully captivates the attention of viewers, it, like the spotted owl and the shad, does not maintain a stable meaning: there is no guarantee that viewers will take up the synecdoche and track the vulnerable polar bear back to the perilous Arctic ecosystem. Because corporeal

vulnerability and animal bodies carry complex meanings in various contexts, the synecdoche fragments and proliferates as the polar bear is swept away in the torrent of a vast and intersecting system of meanings and contexts. To rely on synecdoche in advocacy is to cast out the part and trust in the strength of the fishing line to reel it back to the whole, bringing its catch with it. Sometimes it works, and sometimes the line breaks.

In the previous chapter, I argued that the mythical structure of the *animal welfare state* is resilient because it resignifies Inuit relationships with animals in a way that retroactively revises Inuit history. In this way, it is not enough to reassert the appropriated relationships, since they are myth's nourishment. Here, I suggest that the weakness of the *animal welfare state* is the energy required to maintain it: nation-building mythmakers must tirelessly reiterate the primacy of their appropriated meaning, not only against Inuit relationships with animals, but against all other factions that have an investment in polar bears. Their voice must be loud enough to be heard, and this approach is successful in cases where the nation's political and social power can be mobilized in the service of myth, but it becomes more difficult to sustain in cases where, to use Byrd's term, a cacophony of voices obscures the mythmaker. In these moments, the myth is simply ignored, and it sounds like silence.

**Conclusion: An Anecdote**

As I write of this weakness of the *animal welfare state*, part of me remains unconvinced by my own claim, since I am falling back on a familiar position in literary analysis that insists that problems of violent depictions can be solved by reading more varied sources, even when my analysis of the *animal welfare state's* mythical structure undermines such faith. This cynical voice in my head, however, is the *animal welfare state* in motion, as Sunaura Taylor's art has

made clear for me. I encountered Taylor's work fortuitously: she was an invited speaker and artist at a conference I attended called *Decolonizing Critical Animal Studies / Cripping Critical Animal Studies*, held in Edmonton, Alberta on June 21-23, 2016. The conference was organized by Chloë Taylor and Kelly Struthers Montford and sponsored by the University of Alberta's Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Native Studies, and Department of Women's and Gender Studies. The exhibit, *Sunaura Taylor: Selected Works, 2008-2016*, was put on by *Femlab: A Feminist Exhibition Space* in Assiniboia Hall, home to the Department of Women's and Gender Studies. It was at this conference and exhibition that I was introduced to both Taylor's scholarship, which analyzes the intersection of animal studies and disability studies, and her art, which includes self-portraits and representations of animals who are disabled and/or in abattoirs.

The images that immediately captivated me were from a series where Taylor had modified an artist book of photographed arctic animals made vulnerable by climate change. She painted herself into the photographs, positioned to be in relationship with the animals, and she glued together unused pages and blacked out the book title and internal text, redesigning the book to open only the selected pages that feature her art. As I write this (July 2017), Taylor has not released the full set of images on her website, sunauratayl or.org, though one similar image lingers as the feature piece of the exhibition, remaining on the webpages for Femlab and the Department of Women's and Gender Studies.

The image, *Self portrait with Manatee*, depicts Taylor beside a manatee, with a muddy-green background. The piece invites a visual comparison between Taylor's body and the manatee's, whose front flippers resemble Taylor's arms and whose rounded body is reminiscent of Taylor's bent posture. Taylor here evokes a comparison that is already commonly made

between animals and persons with disabilities. In *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation*, she writes,

> Ableism allows us to view human abilities as unquestionably superior to animal abilities; it propels our assumptions that our own human movements, thought processes, and ways of being are always not only more sophisticated than animals' but in fact give us value. Animals, in their inferior bestial state, can be used by us without moral concern, and those humans who have been associated with animals (people of color, women, queer people, poor people, and disabled people, among others) are also seen as less sophisticated, as having less value, and sometimes even as being less or non-human. In fact, certain abilities and capacities are central to definitions of the human; they are thought to mark the boundaries between humanity and the rest of the animal world. In this way ableism gives shape to what and who we think of as human versus animal. (58-9)

Taylor draws on the animal as a term of negative comparison for persons with disabilities and other minority groups, charting the intersecting systems of oppression that imagine both animals and humans with disabilities to be less valuable than able-bodied, neurotypical humans. Her self-portrait with a manatee evokes this comparison to put pressure on it: Taylor does not locate a trite matrix of negative comparisons but finds points of connection that might become sites of mutual understanding. As she states in the quotation that opens the Femlab introduction to the exhibition, "I argue that for humans to stop treating animals as exploitable 'things,' we must actually continue to have relationships with them, relationships that are not shaped by ownership (pets), spectacle (zoos), or exploitation (eating them), but by interdependence…" (Taylor, qt. in mmichellemm: 2016). Taylor's *Self-Portrait with Manatee* invites viewers to imagine new relationships with animals that move beyond exploitation and gawking.

Similarly, Taylor's altered artist book contains self-portraits of her painted into companionship with animals. Unlike *Self-Portrait with Manatee*, which shows a side-by-side comparison, with both Taylor and the manatee facing the viewer, these images show Taylor interacting with arctic animals, for example, when she paints herself to join a herd of arctic bison or positions herself in a face-to-face encounter with a single bison (I, like many Canadians, have been trained to call these animals muskoxen). One image in particular lingers in my mind, in which Taylor cuddles with a polar bear on the sea ice. One of my initial responses to the image was exaggerated skepticism, approaching, or perhaps fully reaching, uncritical callousness. I attended Taylor's talk and exhibition after months of researching what I have called above the stylized cuteness of polar bears, and I had grown weary and wary of depictions of polar bears that undermine their strength and resilience to prove a point. I found it difficult to accept that any polar bear would accept the embrace that Taylor imagined, and my kneejerk reaction was to assume that Taylor was condescending to the bear, a response that is entirely unfair to Taylor, not only because art has no obligation to be literal (and to interpret the image as such is simply bad analysis) but because, as soon became clear, Taylor is not interested in diminishing polar bears or any other animals. The connection that she imagines is sincere, stemming from the corporeal vulnerability that Taylor and the polar bear share, each in their own way. My response did not account for this connection: I upheld the logic of the *animal welfare state*, then projected it onto Taylor and condemned her for it. In any research project, there are moments of disruption and excess that snap us researchers out of the codes and patterns we have inadvertently trained ourselves to locate. For me, Sunaura Taylor's art has become one such moment of rupture, still haunting and holding me. It reminds me not to fall into complacency and self-righteous certainty

upon finding a possible explanation to cultural phenomenon, and it also, therefore, opens up new ways to understand the polar bear synecdoche and the *animal welfare state*.

For all my criticisms of the cuteness of polar bears in environmental advocacy, I cannot deny that, in some ways, such depictions *do* work. In fact, my choice to engage with BBC wildlife documentaries is as much a matter of preference as scholarly justification: their marked success makes them suitable objects of analysis for this project, which seeks to understand why popular texts gain such large and devoted audiences, and, as films, they offer more substance for analysis than do some of the smaller image campaigns I have interpreted. But, in addition to these academic justifications, I selected these documentaries because I was joyfully watching them years before this dissertation begun to take form, and I think that it does important work to critically engage with the texts that we admire. Although I did respond to cute animals with paternalistic condescension, I remember having other reactions to wildlife documentaries, which also compelled me to imagine what happens to the animals offscreen, when humans are not watching, not constructing their own narratives (surely, animals must do more than eat and mate). As Jonathan Burt argues in *Animals in Film*, animal imagery does not merely depict human-animal relationships but changes them (15). Unpersuaded by analyses that use only semiotic modes to understand the representation of animals in film, he suggests that

> Although there are plenty of *rhetorical* animals on screen—animals as metaphors, metonyms, textual creatures to be read like words—much of the power of the film animal derives from the fact that in film human-animal relations are possible through the play of agency regardless of the nature of animal interiority, subjectivity or communication. (31, emphasis in original)

Though Burt does not fully embrace such depictions of agency, which he argues play out as interactions between the surfaces of bodies that do not necessarily engage with a connection of minds (31), he importantly acknowledges that viewers delight in such scenes not only because they are rhetorically familiar but because they prompt imaginings of the agency that film never quite captures. Interpreting a particular scene in *Life on Earth* (1979), in which Attenborough shares a gaze with a gorilla, he suggests, "rather than seeing nature films of this kind as a replacement for reality, they seem more like the point of entry for our engagement with the natural world: an actively moral gaze made possible, even structured, by the technology of modernity" (47-48). Though Burt proceeds with critical skepticism of the human gaze on animals, he importantly highlights that there is more to the film than discursive techniques, that there is a sincere, if problematic, imagining of new relationships with animals happening on screen and in the minds of viewers. Burt reminds me why I loved wildlife documentaries in the first place: because they elicit such imaginings, which I like to think are not entirely reductive and superficial.

In this way, Taylor and Burt break down one of the binaries that opened this chapter: the distinction between first-hand and second-hand experience. At times, it remains politically productive to maintain the distinction—for example, it makes sense to me that Arctic policy be set by the Arctic inhabitants who must live by them, rather than by distant Southerners. At other times, kinship criticism negates a clean distinction between literature and reality. As Justice writes in the context of decolonizing literature:

> Stories expand and narrow our imaginative possibilities—physical freedom won't matter if we can't imagine ourselves free as well. To assert self-determination, to assert our presence in the face of erasure, is to free ourselves from the ghost-making rhetorics of colonization.

> Stories define relationships, between nations as well as individuals, and those relationships imply presence—you can't have a mutual relationship between something and nothingness. (150)

Stories inform our lived and embodied experiences, and this is as true for Taylor's imagined embrace with a polar bear as for Rita Kanayuk's childhood reminiscence: in both instances, Taylor and Kanayuk construct and extend a relationship that acknowledges mutual vulnerability and respect, though they are expressed in different ways (Taylor is vegan and Kanayuk is a meat-eater; I will address food-based animal welfare in the next chapter). This embodiment does not imply an equivalence of experience, since polar bears must relate to Kanayuk in ways that they do not have to account for Taylor, but if stories define the relationships that guide our actions, then Taylor's imagined relationship is no less real than Kanayuk: it becomes the foundation for her relation with other beings. Stories are always about kinship, even if they do not present themselves as such, because they always reveal descriptive and/or prescriptive relationship models.

Similarly, the *animal welfare state* is one expression of Land-based sovereignty: it embodies a hierarchical relationship between (some) humans and the land that subjects all non-human beings and entities and that replicates and extends Canada's heterosexist, ableist, white-supremacist settler-colonialism. The mythical structure of the *animal welfare state* is therefore a formal expression of its operating kinship network: it is no coincidence that settler-colonialism, founded on land theft and the transit of empire, should be attracted to myth, which operates through appropriation. Mythologically speaking, the *animal welfare state* is a pervasive system difficult to undo, but read in terms of kinship criticism, it becomes less ominous: the *animal welfare state's* mythical structure folds into the ideologies it contains, becoming one kinship

model among many. It therefore becomes unnecessary to undo myth—the whole system can be abandoned in favour of different kinship networks, and although the *animal welfare state* will assert its primacy to its dying breath, it will only be because it does not know how to imagine itself as anything other than a dictator.

# Chapter Four

## Hunting Seals:

## Criticism as Kinship in Sealing and Anti-Sealing Literature

"On a quick side-note, people should wear and eat seal as much as possible . . . and fuck PETA." So said throat-singer Tanya Tagaq (Cambridge Bay) during her acceptance speech at the 2014 Polaris Music Prize Gala, where she won Best Canadian Album for *Animism* (Aux Magazine (AUX): 2015). The comment was a self-proclaimed side-note, one comment among many that Tagaq made during her speech, and media coverage seized on the moment to pit Tagaq against PETA in the seal hunt controversy. *Global News* entertainment reporter John R. Kennedy calls Tagaq's comment a conflation of Canada's East-coast hunt with the Northern hunt, and he lists a series of activists and organizations that protest the former but not the latter: PETA, actor Pamela Anderson and *The Simpsons*' creator Sam Simon, Paul Watson of the Sea Shepherd Society, Heather Sullivan of the Protect Seals campaign at the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), executive director Rebecca Aldsworth of HSUS, and comedian and television host Ellen DeGeneres ("Tanya Tagaq takes shot at PETA even though it's not against Inuit seal hunt, n.p.).[46]

Media coverage that focuses on Tagaq's off-hand comment to PETA often fails to comment on her performance during the awards ceremony, when a choir accompanied her improvised throat singing and a scrolling screen displayed the names of 1200 missing and

[46] See also Jason MacNeil's "PETA Responds to Tanya Tagaq's Polaris Slam: She Should 'Read More'" (*The Huffington Post*), "Tanya Tagaq fires back at PETA over Polaris award speech" (*CBC News*), QMI Agency's "'F---PETA,' says Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq" (*Toronto Sun*), Brad Wheeler's "Polaris Prize winner Tanya Tagaq on her controversial acceptance speech" (*The Globe and Mail)*, Thomas Rohner's. "Anti-sealing PETA responds to Nunavut's Tanya Tagaq" (*Nunatsiaq News),* and Sarah Kruchak. "Tanya Tagaq: Anti-Sealing Activists Have Been 'Vilifying Inuit People For Generations'" (*The Huffington Post*.).

murdered Indigenous women and girls. During her ten-minute performance, the list did not slow down. It did not run out. Tagaq's performance was captivating, haunting, and eclipsed by media anticipation of PETA's reaction. As Tagaq poignantly tweeted, "I had a scrolling screen of 1200 missing and murdered indigenous women at the Polaris gala but people are losing their minds over seals" (tagaq, 24 September 2014, 11:12 a.m.).

PETA quickly responded to Tagaq's comment. Their press release following the Polaris Gala reads,

> PETA was surprised by Tanya's ill-informed rant because we've never campaigned against the indigenous hunt. Our fight is—and always has been—against the East Coast commercial slaughter, which is run by white people who bilk Canadians for millions in tax dollars in order to prop up the non-existent seal trade. The international bans that PETA has successfully lobbied for, such as in Europe, exempt indigenous hunts. Tanya should stop posing her baby with a dead seal and read more. (PETA.org)

PETA's response to Tagaq's comment outlines a series of dismissals: they dismiss her critique of their protest movement, which they insist does not target Inuit; her personal experience, which they cast as a poor substitute for reading; her cultural values about hunting, which they imagine to obstruct political and social awareness; and, most significantly for the purposes of my analysis, PETA dismisses the possibility that a campaign lobbied primarily against white Canadians can also damage Indigenous communities. This last point seems to be the driving force of the press release, as PETA declares that its intention to protest the East Coast commercial slaughter renders moot Tagaq's verdict that Inuit communities have suffered heavily as a result of these protests. If Tagaq harbours resentment towards PETA, it is only because she

is too ignorant to realize that she is accounted for in an exemption clause, a clause that PETA imagines not only exempts but forcibly ejects Inuit from the conversation.

PETA's proclaimed surprise at Tagaq's Polaris speech is itself surprising given their 2010 anti-sealing campaign, which I identified at the opening of this project as a mythological appropriation of the inunnguaq and the Olympics logo. Although PETA's insistence that it does not protest Indigenous hunting is nominally true, this campaign reveals the string of appropriations that draws Inuit hunters into the fray as collateral damage, despite PETA's apathy towards them. PETA may have had in mind a protest against the East-Coast commercial hunt, but when they lodge this protest by portraying an inunnguaq engaged in a savage killing, they capitalized on a centuries-old racial slur against Indigenous peoples to extend the reach of their message and to intensify the reaction that it garners. Unlike the EEC, PETA does not include an Indigenous exemption clause. To the contrary, they depend upon a racist infrastructure that links Indigeneity with savagery.

Media focus on Tagaq's comment is therefore not merely a problem of emphasis or distraction, where attention paid to PETA comes at the expense of attention paid to Inuit artists or to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. It demonstrates rather that in Canada in 2014, voyeuristically relishing in Tagaq's frustration with PETA is a more popular story than acknowledging her tribute to the Indigenous women and girls whom Canadians are murdering. As a nation, Canada is tuned into the seal hunt controversy yet so apathetic to violence against Indigenous peoples that when Tagaq pays tribute to Indigenous women and girls in the same evening that she criticizes PETA for their anti-sealing activism, she can be forgotten for the former and villainized for the latter. This discrepancy is not incidental.

As I argue in this chapter, the contemporary anti-sealing campaign perpetuates and relies upon racist sentiments towards Indigenous peoples, and it contributes actively to the construction of a social and political climate that imagines seals to be more human than Indigenous peoples. Such campaigns invite distant viewers to imagine themselves as the protectors who must save seals from savage hunters, perpetuating a paternalistic kinship model between readers and seals. After identifying how this technique operates, I complicate it with an analysis of anti-anti-sealing literature: Alootook Ipellie's *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*, which engages with the seal souls that Euro-Western ethical frameworks ignore, and Alethea Arnaquq-Baril's *Angry Inuk*, which challenges activist aggression with "Inuk-style" education campaigns. I address such modes of critique in the context of Land-based sovereignty, unpacking the kinds of relationships that are championed and undermined with these various discourses.

**Anti-Sealing: History and Context**

Though PETA's protest is recent, it is not new. The seal-clubbing inunnguaq recalls two images sensationalized by anti-sealing campaigns in the early 1980s: the close-up of a wide-eyed seal pup with fur as white as innocence, and the image of a Labrador hunter who raises his club to strike her down. According to George Wenzel in *Animal Rights, Human Rights: Ecology, Economy, and Ideology in the Canadian Arctic*, these image campaigns played a key role in swaying the EEC to ban the import of seal products in 1983. He argues that the tipping point in the anti-sealing campaign came when the spearheads of the movement, Greenpeace and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), ceased campaigning on environmental grounds and instead focused on an animal welfare message (142). To influence public opinion, these

organizations downplayed their environmental position and instead relied on the emotional appeal of the victimized harp seal pup (145).

Wenzel builds on Alan Herscovici's observation that the anti-sealing campaign achieved its success only after it settled on its present incarnation. In *Second Nature: The Animal-Rights Controversy*, Herscovici charts the history of the anti-sealing campaigns, and he shows that they began with animal welfare groups like the New Brunswick SPCA and the Ontario Humane Society that stood against cruelty to animals (22). This first wave of anti-sealing activism is indebted to the 1964 Artek film *Les Phoques* (69). *Les Phoques* was intended to be one segment in a series commissioned by the Québec government to document fishing and hunting in the province, though the brutality of the seal hunt made it a flashpoint for animal welfare activism (69). The film remains controversial because parts of it appear to have been staged: several acts of cruelty are committed by members of the film crew rather than by sealers, and the most gruesome scene, a live flaying, appears to have been commissioned, as sealer Gustav A. Poirier signed an affidavit admitting that he was employed by a group of photographers to skin a seal alive (74). In addition to *Les Phoques*, the article "Murder Island" circulated internationally and spurred activism against Canada's seal hunt. "Murder Island" was written by journalist Peter Lust, and it depicts the seal hunt on the Magdalen Islands in the Gulf of St. Laurence. The article appears in its entirety in Peter Lust's autobiography *The Last Seal Pup* (48-50), and it describes live flaying as a common occurrence, sparking international concern about seal welfare (49). In response to these protests, the Canadian government implemented clubbing as the required kill tactic, and veterinarians agreed that this method is swift and humane (Herscovici 22). The protest movement lost steam.

The second wave of the anti-sealing protests emerged in 1974 when environmentalist groups like Greenpeace entered the fray to protest the ecological impacts of the scale of the slaughter (22). Rather than protesting the kill tactic, Greenpeace warned about the dangers of overharvesting the seal population (22). Greenpeace was founded in 1970 in Vancouver by activists who protested the development of nuclear weaponry, and they rose to international notoriety with their anti-whaling campaigns (79). Like first wave anti-sealing activism, the environmental campaigns relied heavily on media coverage, culminating in what is perhaps the most famous anti-sealing campaign in recent history: French actress and activist Brigitte Bardot's photo shoot with a harp seal pup on the sea ice. The idea and funding came from Swiss philanthropist Franz Weber, who brought Bardot and sixty reporters to Blanc Sablon in March 1977 (82). The photograph of Bardot with a seal pup became an instant success, and as Robert Hunter famously stated, "until her arrival, the seal hunt story was all blood and death. But now it was blood and death and sex. No more potent combination could be put together" (Calvin E. Coish *Season of the Seal* 144).[47] The combination indeed proved fruitful, and the price of seal fur fell drastically and immediately in 1977 (Herscovici 82). Though such campaigns rekindled protests against the Canadian seal hunt, they were ultimately unsuccessful. The Canadian government has a quota-management system, and scientists agree that seal populations are not endangered (22). The seal hunt continued.

The third wave of the anti-sealing protest movement marks the shift from environmental concerns to an animal welfare message: it is morally reprehensible to kill animals at all (22). This shift is particularly noteworthy because it does not remain exclusive to animal welfare

[47] In *Season of the Seal* (1979), Coish offers a thorough history of the Newfoundland seal hunt. Given the scope of this project, my analysis focuses on late twentieth-century anti-sealing activism and its effects on Inuit communities. For more on Newfoundland sealing, see also Janice Scott Henke's *Seal Wars* (1985) and George Allan England's *The Greatest Hunt in the World* (1969).

groups like IFAW: even Greenpeace adopted this tactic, though it does not advocate for animal welfare (22). The third wave of anti-sealing campaigns defines the contemporary political climate in the Canadian Eastern Arctic, as Inuit communities demand to have their voices and traditions taken seriously while activists claim to protest the commercial slaughter rather than Inuit subsistence hunting. As the PETA image exemplifies, however, contemporary anti-sealing campaigns offer little reference to the scale of the Canadian seal hunt or its commodified elements, though this is what protesters claim to oppose. Over and over again, the image presented is a more intimate moment when a single sealer kills a single baby seal, an act depicted as “savage” in a way that implicates subsistence hunting just as much as industrialized slaughter and that hails Indigenous peoples in particular, since "savage" is a racial slur that has been used as a weapon against them for centuries.

As Wenzel notes, this approach is unique to third wave anti-sealing campaigns: early campaigns made little reference to Inuit.[48] Inuit hunters were therefore perplexed by attacks on their seal hunting practices in the 1980s. Environmental activists objected to the harp seal hunt because it had become industrialized: large, profit-driven companies slaughtered harp seals at an unprecedented and unsustainable scale merely for their fur, a luxury item (147). Inuit hunters, on the other hand, saw themselves occupying the other side of the spectrum. They hunted with harpoons and rifles rather than clubs, and although selling seal pelts offered an important source of income, they hunted primarily for food and clothing rather than for profit (147). Despite such differences, public opinion judged Inuit hunting as harshly as the industrial seal slaughter.

[48] Wenzel does not speculate. Here and elsewhere, he supports his observations with meticulously acquired quantitative data. In this case, he supports his claim with a survey of seven major newspapers in Canada, the United States, and Britain during key years between 1970 and 1983. The newspapers surveyed are the *New York Times*, *Star*, the *Globe and Mail,* the *Montreal Gazette*, *The Times of London*, the *Vancouver Sun*, and *Evening Telegram* (144).

Wenzel argues that Southern Canadians frequently mistake Inuit use of technology as evidence that they have lost their roots and become assimilated into Western capitalism (7). In this way, Inuit are perceived to be hunting for commercial gain rather than for subsistence. This argument importantly demonstrates how new technologies are often conflated for a loss of tradition, but I propose that there is something more at work here, something that accounts for the ferocity of public opposition to the subsistence seal hunt, even as abattoirs continue to operate daily, and that accounts for PETA's decision to launch a campaign that harnesses the Vancouver Olympics to reiterate familiar disgust with an industry that lost its market seventeen years earlier. Anti-sealing campaigns, I suggest, construct an adoption fantasy where well-meaning animal welfare activists rescue seals from sealers' clubs and become parental figures.

**Adoption Narratives: Disgust and Savagery in Anti-Sealing Campaigns**

The trope of savagery is a staple of anti-sealing literature, operating as a crucial component of the adoption narrative. PETA's inunnguaq draws on this trope, though the most substantial and sustained examples come from the autobiographies of celebrated anti-sealers, such as Paul Watson's *Seal Wars: Twenty-Five Years on the Front Lines with the Harp Seals* and *Sea Shepherd: My Fight for Whales and Seals*, coauthored with Warren Rogers, Joseph Newman, and Amory Cleveland. Watson is a founding member of Greenpeace and later The Sea Shepherd Society. He has cultivated a powerful media presence by speaking on behalf of seals, and during the slaughter, he stops as many killings as possible by taking a ship out onto the ice and placing his body between sealers and seals. In *Sea Shepherd*, he introduces the Labrador sealing industry with a surprisingly generous characterization of the workers on the ice, acknowledging that some

sealers hate the industry as much as he does. As he addresses the live flaying that occurs during the cull, he reproduces a testimony from sealer Sven Hanson:

> No one really wants to skin live seals. These cases are accidents but sometimes you cannot avoid them. It is cold, the wind blows, it starts snowing. You try to get seals, the club freezes your hand, you aim and miss. You aim again—you hit it, but not too well. You hit three, four times. You are sure it's dead now. So you turn it, open it, and start tearing its skin off. Suddenly it rolls its eyes at you and screams its head off. Yes, it happened to me more than once during a trip. I am not proud of it, but it happened. (77)

This passage grants a first-hand account of the flaying that occurs during the cull, but it does not lay blame on individual workers. Hanson admits with shame that he has *accidentally* skinned a live seal that he thought to be dead. He emphasizes the stressful working conditions to explain why such cruelty occurs: the cold wind and snow reduces mobility and visibility, making it more difficult to hit a moving seal in precisely the spot that ensures an instant kill. The brief time frame granted to fulfill his quota means that he must begin skinning seals as soon as they die, and some living seals are mistaken for dead. This passage attests to the cruelty that occurs on the ice, but it also indicates that this cruelty emerges from the conditions of industrialized slaughter rather than from personal malice.

This account comes from Hanson himself, so it perhaps unsurprising that he presents himself as a victim of circumstance rather than as a villain, but Watson's inclusion of this testimony strikes me as a gesture of goodwill, an acknowledgment that it is inaccurate to present all sealers as blood-thirsty killers. This gesture, however, proves to be short-lived. Immediately after Hanson's account, Watson includes another testimony that introduces the turning point in

the figure of the sealer *Sea Shepherd*. Eric Nielson, a Norwegian sealer, shares his account of the sealing industry:

> It's a miserable tragic business. No, I don't like it all. I think it's the most perverted trade that I have ever been in. I need the money. They pay me money but they cannot make me like what I am doing. This is my last trip. I have not seen any cases of live skinning. You don't need to see it. Sealing is horrible enough without that ultimate perversity. I did see something that you would like to print. One of my shipmates deliberately blinded a mother seal with his gaff. He though it was great fun to watch the poor thing stumble on the ice. I killed her. (77)

Once again, Watson provides an account from a sealer who detests the industry yet feels powerless to oppose it because he needs the money. Nielson's account stands out to me because, against my preconceived expectations, I sympathize with him. It is easy for me to regard wide-spread slaughter and live skinning with disdain as I write from a middle-class perspective, but the fact remains that I do not know what I would be willing to do if I *really* needed money. But there is a second sealer introduced in this account, one who blinds a seal for the perverse pleasure of watching her flail on the ice in pain and disorientation. This sealer, unlike Nielson, is motivated purely by sadism.

By including Hanson's and Nielson's accounts back-to-back, Watson accomplishes three things. First, he acknowledges that some sealers are simply workers who need money, thus appeasing in advance critics who dismiss "armchair conservationists" because they do not understand how and why working-class citizens are frequently compelled to participate in industries that they do not support ideologically. Secondly, he plants the seed of protest within the industry. It is not merely a handful of conservationists on the outside who protest the seal

hunt—it is the sealers themselves who find the industry unforgivably perverse. Finally, and for my purposes most importantly, he creates a distinct split between two kinds of sealers: those working men with whom readers may be able to sympathize, and sadists who intentionally blind defenceless animals for pleasure and who become “barbaric” in this malice.

The second of these sealers gains the most focus in Watson’s works, operating prominently in the opening paragraph of *Seal Wars*, when he introduces the sealers who come to his hotel to object to his protest on the Magdalen Islands, Québec on March 16, 1995. He writes,

> The barbarians were at the gate. The stench of stale tobacco and spilt beer seeped down the hallways into our rooms. The low, nasal snarl of the local French patois was punctuated with bastardized English obscenities. The snarl rose to an ugly growl as a swarm of sealers surged through the hotel hallway, piss-drunk on cheap booze and fuelled by a rabid malevolence born of a history of ethnic feuding and the frustrations of the uneducated and the institutionally unemployed. (17)

In Watson's characterization, sealers are inhuman: they communicate in bestial noises such as "low, nasal snarls" and "ugly growls," and when they do speak, their language is "bastardized." They move in "swarms" and "surges," evoking a mixed metaphor that makes it unclear whether the sealers are like insects or bursts of energy, though in either case, they are not human. They cling to histories of ethnic feuding because they are too stupid and "rabidly malevolent" to move beyond them. They are poor, and they are drunkards. Obviously, Watson is not inclined to depict the sealers with respect: he vehemently opposes their annual seal slaughter, and in this scene, they break into his hotel room to beat him (an assault that should be taken seriously yet, frankly, reads like one of his exaggerations). At the moment, I am not critical of Watson’s contempt for

sealers but of his appeal to a classist and racist rhetoric that creates "barbarians" and locates them on the other side of the gate, beyond the confines of civilization.

Brian Davies shares Watson's allegiance to this discourse in his characterization of sealers. Davies is the founder of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and an influential lobbyist for the European ban on seal products. In *Savage Luxury: The Slaughter of the Baby Seals*, he describes a sealer he encountered on the ice on March 8, 1966:

> I looked at the hunter. Uncomfortable, he stood talking to a fisheries officer. Dirty grey overalls stained black with blood covered a red flannel shirt open at the neck. His poor-quality rubber boots had twisted nails driven into the heels to afford him a sure grip on the slippery surface. A cloth cap covered his head, and in the place of sunglasses to protect him from the brilliant sun, he had smudged blood around his eyes. No gloves, just the steady dipping of hands into the hot blood of the dying seals to keep his fingers warm. Lying beside him on the ice was his short club with a steel hook spliced to one end, and a long rope spliced to the other. I looked around me. This brutal weapon seemed so out of place against the ships, helicopters, and fixed-wing aircraft. At that moment, I think, the sheer inconsistency of the seal hunt became so apparent to me. The primitive and the sophisticated in an unholy alliance. (80)

Like Watson, Davies delights in the sealer's poverty: the sealer's dirty overalls and poor-quality boots rendered into make-shift cleats become thinly veiled metaphors for his dirty and twisted morals. Like the ultimate purchasers of the seal fur, he too wears the seal: he bathes in blood to keep his hands warm and to darken his eyes so he will not have to see too much of the light. He is "primitive" in his brutality and, when paired with modern technologies, dangerous to an

unprecedented degree. Such are the qualities of the sealer that successfully garner public ire: he is deplorable because he is savage, primitive, filthy, poor, stupid, and unenlightened.

Such exaggerated descriptions are intentional and strategic, belonging to a genre of activist campaign that emphasizes the brutality of animal slaughter to raise awareness and to stop millions of animals from being killed. Lisa Haynes analyzes this strategic use of disgust in animal welfare campaigns, defending it, to a degree, in "Regulating Abjection: Disgust, Tolerance, and the Politics of *The Cove*." Focusing on *The Cove*, a documentary exposé about Japanese dolphin hunting, she argues that

> *The Cove* exemplifies the use of affective politics as it seeks to convene and mobilize a global community through extralegal, emotional means. At the heart of the film's strategy is the use of disgust to prove, via viewers' bodily responses, that dolphins and viewers share a common community and that the slaughter of dolphins is therefore intolerable. In many ways, the film's use of this tactic is a problem, as it allows—perhaps even encourages—negative affects to move beyond their original objects, galvanizing racist and potentially violent extralegal responses to the hunt. However, in the years since the film's release, changed response to the hunt within and outside of Japan suggest that the tactic may have had positive effects; the example of *The Cove* does not preclude the possibility that disgust can be a progressive political device. (28)

I will return later to the prescriptive mode of Haynes' analysis. First, I want to explore the role of "viewers' bodily responses" in the politics of disgust. Haynes builds on the scholarship of disgust, which focuses heavily on the relationship between disgust, bodies, and morality, charting the development of disgust as a biological protection mechanism against threats such as

feces and decomposing flesh into a politics and aesthetics of disgust that appeals to moral sensibilities.

As William Miller argues in *The Anatomy of Disgust*, moral judgements consolidating around disgust have a unique resilience to them. Disgust, he suggests,

> has the look of veracity about it. It is low and without pretense. We thus feel it trustworthy, even though we know it draws things into its domain that should give us pause. The disgust idiom puts our body behind our words, pledges it as security to make our words something more than *mere* words. (180-181, emphasis in original)

For Haynes, figurations of the animal speak prominently to this political aesthetics: "the production of animal bodies—visually, affectively, politically, and above all *viscerally*—operates within a global constellation of labour, race, and economics" (28, emphasis in original). I am intrigued by Haynes and Miller's appeal to the visceral currency of disgust, how it "puts our body behind our words" in ways that are aligned with imagery.

Taken in its broadest sense, imagery is the trope of sensory perception that invite readers to construct a mental image of the scene described. Davies and Watson take up the trope to portray sealers' presumed savagery: readers are invited to imagine the smell of stale tobacco and cheap booze; the sound of bastardized English, heard through "low, nasal snarls" and an "ugly growl;" the sight of blood-stained overalls, weapons, and aircraft; and the feel of the beaming sun on the head and in the eyes, the slippery ice made manageable by rusty-nail cleats, and the contrast of cold air and hot blood on the hands. Above all, readers are invited to experience Watson and Davies observing this scene with horror and disgust, a narrative strategy that aligns readers with anti-sealers, inviting readers to share in their disgust for sealing. It is no wonder, then, that imagery and disgust have established such a durable alliance in animal welfare campaigns.

The power of imagery is not lost on anti-sealers, as Watson has made clear. Explicitly naming his investment in imagery, he writes,

> The problem is that when the media are your conduits for educating the general public, you are forced to simplify, even if simplification sometimes results in fabrication and exaggeration. Newspapers and televisions will not tolerate complex explanations that employ science, history, sociology, and statistical arguments. With the media there is one simple rule. KEEP IT SIMPLE, STUPID. Even more important, CREATE VISUALS. The creation of visuals is not restricted to capturing images on camera. What you need is a visual image that captures the public's imagination. (197, emphasis in original)

Watson demonstrates throughout *Seal Wars* that he is familiar with the science, history, sociology, and statistical arguments surrounding the seal hunt, but he keeps this knowledge to himself when campaigning because, he asserts, these facts will not get him as much media attention as vivid imagery. He admits to lying and sensationalizing to gain publicity on behalf of the seals, and in a way, this approach makes sense. As an activist group, the Sea Shepherd Society relies on free media coverage to circulate its message. If imagery achieves this goal, then it makes sense to use imagery. My concern with this approach is twofold: first, lying is categorically different from simplification and imagery. Though Watson admits to lying in this passage, he emphasizes imagery and simplicity with his bolded text, setting up a distraction while inviting readers to see his approach as the logical and inevitable outcome of relying on media to spread a message. I wish to be clear that I do not think his approach is inevitable or justifiable. The merits of imagery and simplicity in public awareness campaigns can be harnessed without relying on boldface lies.

Second, I am critical of the particular image-lie that gains traction in anti-sealing activism: bloodthirsty savages killing cute seals. In a 1978 interview with Barbara Frum, Watson explains the pragmatic motivation behind these campaigns. When Frum asks directly if it is easier for animal welfare organizations to make money by protesting the seal hunt, Watson replies,

> Well it's definitely because it's easier to make money and because it does make a profit because there are over a thousand animals on the endangered species list and the seal isn't one of them. See the thing is, the seal is very easy to exploit as an image. We have posters, we have buttons, we have shirts . . . all of which portray the head of baby seals with tears coming out of its eyes. Baby seals are always crying because . . . they're always . . . the salt tears keep their eyes from freezing. And because of that, coupled with the horror of a sealer hitting them over the head with a club . . . it's an image that goes right to the heart of animal lovers all over North America. (Watson qt. in Arnaquq-Baril: 2016, ellipsis in original)

Clearly, an exposé about anti-sealing rhetoric and imagery is redundant: Frum has already probed Watson on the matter and received a clear answer. Watson is upfront that he and other animal welfare activists knowingly exploit the image of cute seals and horrific sealers because, when paired, they appeal to a target audience of animal lovers. I dwell on these images to think through their underlying mechanics and implications. The anti-sealers' configuration of seals, I suggest, is similar to Mowat's heteronormative wolves and the RCMP's dangerous dogs: seal pups are resignified as pure innocence and used to naturalize paternal relationship models and to justify colonial intervention into the Arctic. The combination of the cute seal and the "savage" sealer capitalizes on familiar modes of racist, classist, colonial disgust to represent seals trapped in an abusive relationship.

A crucial step in establishing this narrative is to construct the harp seal pup as a symbol of innocence. Davies has been instrumental in cultivating this image, and he is often credited for playing a crucial role in the EEU ban on seal produces. In *Savage Luxury*, he introduces "baby harp seals" as "little balls of white fluff with huge dark eyes that cry great tears as hunters approach" (14). In this passage, Davies calls the seals "little balls of white fluff," drawing on a vocabulary that points to the seal's cuteness. The diminutive "little" modifies "ball," a term that does not accurately describe any species of mammal but that implies helplessness: a ball has no hard edges with which to pierce and no limbs with which to grasp or move with precision. At its best, a ball rolls, yet even these seals cannot be expected to roll all that far, as they are so tiny. They are so soft and weightless that they evoke the image of "white fluff," and though the seals are literally white, this passage capitalizes on a visual vocabulary that associates whiteness with innocence and purity. The seals' eyes are "huge," "dark," and "cry great tears as hunters approach." The seals' huge, tearing eyes become a motif throughout Davies' works, giving the impression that seals are always crying or on the verge of tears.

Perhaps most significantly, Davies refers to seal pups as "babies" in a move that transfers the emotional currency of human infants onto seals. In *Arctic Wars: Animal Rights, Endangered Peoples*, Finn Lynge refers to the adoption of the term "baby seal" as a brilliant campaign strategy, and he criticizes the anti-sealing campaign for its reliance on an emotional appeal that ignores or undermines the necessity of hunting in the Arctic (29). He comments that the fate of Inuit hunters was sealed the moment animal welfare campaigns showed a huge, ugly man killing cute baby animals with a baseball bat (29). Lynge remains critical of anti-sealing protesters because their attachment to baby seals is disproportionate: human children are abused, abandoned, and starving throughout the world, yet *these* babies, the seal babies, seem to garner

more outrage than other forms of violence against babies and children (29). Lynge crucially exposes a disproportionate sympathy for baby seals that surpasses sympathy felt for many other species, including some humans, as pushback against Tagaq has shown.

The appeal of baby seals comes from the narrative of vulnerability that animal welfare campaigns attach to them. Though Davies' account of seals is accurate—seal pups *are* small and soft, and they do have large eyes that tear to prevent freezing—it bears a close resemblance to Merish's configuration of cuteness, which draws on the figure of the child to reinforce the need for adult care (187). In the previous chapter, I suggested that this parental narrative is at work in Euro-settler drives to paternalistically protect polar bears through regulatory policies throughout the Arctic, but here this narrative emerges more strongly. Davies draws on the cute aesthetic to solidify the connection between seal pups and human babies:

> The eyes of a baby harp seal seem to reach out and insinuate themselves into one's very soul. Huge, dark, inquisitive, happy, sad, seemingly all at the same time. They give to the baby seal an identity that few other animals can match.
>
> The little fellow I was watching was about ten days old and weighed some 50 pounds. His long white coat stood out around his body in a puff of fur. About the size of a year-old human baby, he wriggled towards me uttering low cries. (24-25)

Davies once again emphasizes the seal's smallness, softness, and vulnerability, though in this depiction, he explicitly compares seal pups to human babies. The "little fellow" that Davies encounters is the same size as a fifty-pound human baby (!), and he "wriggles" towards Davies in a movement that evokes crawling. Davies' seal also "cries." Though this term may denote the act of shouting, its reference alongside a human baby suggests rather that the seal "cries" to signal their dependence on adults. Indeed, Davies' frequent pairing of the sound of crying with the sight

of the seals' soulful, tearing eyes produce the image of a species perpetually in need of care. I wish to clarify once again that, like polar bears, seal pups are not mere replicas of infancy, and their vulnerability is not staged: seal pups *are* infants and they *are* vulnerable. Their lives and deaths are not merely aesthetic. Nevertheless, Davies' description of seals is highly stylized: his seals are small, soft, harmless, and often crying. By drawing on the image of cute seals, Davies implies that seals are always and only helpless. This depiction may not be entirely manufactured, but it positions seals as one-dimensional characters in Davies' Arctic drama that serve to intensify the brutality of their counterpoint, the savage sealer.

The final turn of the adoption narrative is the insistence that seals must be rescued from sealers and protected by animal welfare advocates. As Merish argues, the cute aesthetic is not merely a celebration of innocence: it operates in the service of a family narrative. The primary function of the cute aesthetic is to construct a drama of socialization (or, as a previous library patron poignantly suggests through marginalia, assimilation), one that centres on an understanding of the child as a being in need of adult protection or ownership (187). The cute therefore does not only aestheticize powerlessness; it aestheticizes a particular relationship between adult and child marked by dominance and submission, all in the name of care (188). This configuration enables the narratives of socialization, or assimilation, noted by Merish:

> Focusing on the child—the privileged locus for the transmission of culture and the ("uncivilized") Other in that culture's midst—cuteness represents lines of interpersonal, intergenerational identification, promoting affective bonds of social affiliation and cohesion. Specifically, cuteness engenders an affectional dynamic through which the Other is domesticated and (re)contextualized within the human "family." Cuteness aestheticizes

> the most primary social distinctions, regulating the (shifting) boundaries between Selves and Others, cultural 'insiders' and cultural 'outsiders,' 'humans,' and 'freaks.' (187-188)

Merish importantly ties cuteness to racialized assimilation initiatives, showing how the family narrative projected onto the cute object operates in the service of intersecting, normative power structures. Though the figure of the cute nominally appeals to a maternal desire to care for the vulnerable, the narrative attached to it in anti-sealing narratives ultimately operates in the service of patriarchal power structures.

Watson and Davies draw on this drama of assimilation to adopt seals into a family order of their own making. For Davies, this adoption is literal, as he brings two seal pups, Jack and Jill, back home to his wife, Joan, and his two young children, Nicky and Toni. Jack and Jill are two seals that sealers brought to town for their children to play with. Knowing that the seals would ultimately be left to starve, Davies takes them home with him to Fredericton to care for them (34). The seals live in Davies' emptied basement office, and when his initial attempts to feed them milk with a bottle and saucer fail, he resorts to force-feeding them through a tube with a mixture of butter, milk, eggs, vitamins, and antibiotics, until a procurement of whale oil arrives (40-42). The cost of whale oil prompted the first "Save the Seals" fund, as donations came in from around the country to help Davies nurse Jack and Jill (42). The attempt to rear Jack and Jill in a house inevitably fails, and Davies sends them to the Vancouver Aquarium, where they die shortly after—Jack after six months and Jill after one year (48).

Davies' attempt to nurse Jack and Jill is, frankly, puzzling. His impulse to protect life is admirable, but his execution points to a series of ethnocentric assumptions about what is best for seals. When he initially finds Jack and Jill, he thinks to return them to their herd, though he drops the idea when he is told (by whom he does not disclose) that they would not be taken in by any

seal other than their birth mothers, and he did consider their chances of finding their mother significant enough to justify the attempt (35). This decision is already a violation of Inuit animal welfare philosophy, which forbids meddling with animals, but, as a thought experiment, let us grant Davies the benefit of the doubt and accept his premise that Jack and Jill's best chance for survival rests with him taking them away from their home. Why keep them in his basement office? Surely, he realized that it would prove unequal to the task of raising two harp seals. He ultimately sends them to the Vancouver Aquarium to live out their final days, but only after failing to nurse them in his home.

The chapter on Jack and Jill makes little reference to the process of their placement at the Vancouver Aquarium, and it does not indicate how long they stayed with Davies. What it does expound is how Davies and his family care for Jack and Jill: feeding schedules are established, cleaning duties delineated, and playful baths enjoyed. The Davies family adopt Jack and Jill out of their homeland and incorporate them into a heteronormative order as pets. Davies' failed rescue attempt obviously does not provide useful advice about caring for seals; rather, it carries a primarily narrative function, introducing the whimsical idea that seals could be pets. Though the attempt to allow Jack and Jill a full life is unsuccessful, Davies concludes the chapter by insisting that their lives, though brief, were happy (49). According to Davies, seals are better off as pets to Southerners than as participants in a hunting relationship at home.

Watson takes a different approach to seal adoption: he becomes their shepherd. Part of the work that has earned Watson his reputation is his annual painting of the harp seals. The Sea Shepherd Society uses vegetable dye to paint harp seals red, rendering their furs worthless without harming the seals. Watson recounts his work painting seals in 1979: "By the time the sun surfaced on the icy horizon, we had branded well over 1,000 seals with the mark of the *Sea*

*Shepherd*. Commercially worthless, they were our seals now, ours to return to the teats of their mothers and to the sea" (124, emphasis in original). Though Watson does not literally adopt seals into his home as Davies does, he declares himself their shepherd and names the seals his flock—his property. He "brands" them with the mark of Sea Shepherd just as a farmer would brand his cattle to protect them against theft, though he has found a less painful method than searing the seals' flesh. This is a different kind of normative order, one that does not centre around the family but around the patriarch who "protects" others by owning them. Watson does not literally claim ownership—he metaphorically brands the seals only so that he can return them to the sea; nevertheless, the passage deploys an assimilation narrative. The seals are not merely in need of protection from sealers; they are in need of protection from their home and from the hunting relations that take place there. The solution that Davies and Watson offer is either to adopt seals out of their homelands and into basement offices or aquariums, or to "brand" the seals and declare Euro-settlers the Shepherds of the Sea. In both cases, seals are repositioned within relationships familiar to Watson, Davies, and their presumed Euro-Western audience, and it invites a hierarchical relationship model where humans rule over and protect seals and the land.

This repositioning is made possible through a combination of imagery and disgust, which compels a duel trajectory of pulling in and turning away. The pull of anti-sealing campaigns comes largely from imagery and the appeal of the cute seal; the turning away is a function of disgust. I borrow the phrase "turning away" from Aurel Kolnai's *On Disgust*, credited as the first extended investigation of the topic. He writes,

> From the very beginning there is a shuddering and a turning away from the object, and nausea, either real or intentional. These phenomena may increase in intensity with the continued presence of the disgusting object, and they may get 'darker' in tone, but the tip

> of the intention penetrates the object, probing and analyzing it, as it were, and becoming immersed in its motions or in its persistence, in spite of essential hesitations and a reluctance which may, of course, also lead to a sudden cessation of contact with the object and thereby a disappearance of disgust. (39)

Kolnai importantly notes the ambivalence of the disgusting object, which compels a turning away, sometimes permanently, but that also compels the feeler of disgust to fixate on the disgusting object, to understand its perimeters and movements, if only to delineate *why* it is disgusting, as Watson and Davies do.

This function of disgust has become a lynchpin in contemporary scholarship on the topic, which interprets how disgust functions in the creation of moral communities. In "Raw Matters: A Poetics of Disgust," Sianne Ngai interprets disgust in contemporary experimental writing for its "negative potential as a figure of exclusion, the radical externalization it enacts in facilitating the subject's turn away from the object" (167). Ngai's discourse of turning away is notably similar to Kolnai's, though she compellingly applies the principles of disgust to poetics, delineating what she calls the grammar of disgust and considering how it operates as a reading strategy:

> *The dominant mode of disgust is thus one of exclusion*. As such, disgust deliberately interferes with a reading practice based on the principle that what is at stake in every textual encounter is a hidden object, one that can be discovered by the reader only if he or she reads deeply enough. But in persistently and insistently reenacting the turn *away* from this object, whether it be a signified/referent or another signifier/term to which the present terms might defer, the grammar of disgust poses an obstruction to these normative modes of reading . . . disgust as externalizing exclusion suggests a form of textual engagement other than what is ordinarily described as "close" reading. (185, emphasis in original)

Ngai goes on to consider the productive possibilities of the poetics of disgust's anti-normative reading strategy, in the context of experimental writing. For my purposes, I am most intrigued by her configuration of disgust as a poetics, one that facilitates not only a turning away from the disgusting object but a turning away from the textual object, replacing close reading (an approach favoured by scholars) with a reading strategy that turns readers in other directions. Such a figuration speaks to the polarizing state of anti-sealing literature, which, as I have shown above, dedicates substantial energies to representing sealers but that configures them as one-dimensional villains, refusing to engage with them in a meaningful way, refusing, to use Ngai's language, a close reading strategy that might consider the kinship and politics that substantiate their hunting ethics. I will address such relationships in the next section; for now, it suffices to identify this turning away as a disengagement strategy.

This disengagement strategy is essential to the success of disgust at establishing moral communities. As Miller clarifies, disgust carries "powerful communalizing capacities" to build communities by drawing a clear line between moral insiders and outsiders (195). This task is accomplished relatively easily, partly due to disgust's "capacity for being readily experienced vicariously. Disgust, like indignation, is something we experience as much upon hearing and seeing offenses done to another as those done to ourselves" (195). Sara Ahmed builds further on this line of thought in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, where she interprets emotions as performative acts and analyzes disgust in the context of its adherence to certain bodies. Considering the relationship between the speech act and the disgusting subject, she writes,

> the demand for a witness shows us that the speech act, "That's disgusting!" generates more than simply a subject and an object; it also generates a community of those who are bound together through the shared condemnation of a disgusting object or event. A community of

witnesses is generated, whose apparent shared distance from an event or object that has been named as disgusting is achieved through the repetition of the word "disgust" (94). Taken together, Ahmed and Miller illuminate how the performance of disgust creates a community of insiders who are bound by their condemnation of the disgusting subject or event. In the context of anti-sealing campaigns, this disgust comes, not from the event itself, but from the configuration of a disgusting subject. As Herscovici shows with his delineation of the three waves of the anti-sealing protest movement, seal-killing, in itself, is not sufficient to generate public protest: moral outrage only emerged on a large scale in the third wave, when the campaigns drew on the winning combination of savagery vs. cuteness. In other words, anti-sealing rhetoric does not do much work in *constructing* a community of moral insiders who condemn animal slaughter; they capitalize on existing forms of oppression to appeal to already-formed groups of privileged insiders, who will benefit the most from such figurations if they are white, Euro-settler, affluent, educated Anglophones.

In this context, it is difficult to locate the productive potential of disgust, which Haynes suggests we might find. Haynes importantly notes that *The Cove* relies heavily on racist and classist depictions of Japanese fishers and dolphin hunters, dehumanizing them while simultaneously depicting dolphins participating in "supposedly civilized activities, engaged in play, language, and song, entering familial relationships, mourning their dead, and even creating art (that is, acting according to legible social norms)" (37). Haynes and I are therefore in agreement that in our respective case studies, a community of moral insiders is established, as select animals are initiated into the space of the morally significant while certain humans are simultaneously ejected to make room for them. Though Haynes is critical of such strategies, she is reluctant to declare a full ban on the politics of disgust: she argues rather that disgust might

beneficially be contextualized within a more nuanced depiction of fishers' actions and the reasons behind them, and that disgust-evoking footage of slaughter could complement this discussion and "remind viewers, bodily, of their deep opposition to violence and of the importance of protecting humans and non-humans alike from violent bodily harm" (48).

I find Haynes' position compelling. In the course of this project, I have lost my faith in prescribed, "ethical" tropes and figurations, and, like Haynes, I would not care to assert that disgust cannot ever be used productively in activism. I will admit, however, that presently I cannot visualize such an instance, even with the aid of Haynes' suggestion, which presupposes a degree of nuance that I am not convinced disgust-based activism can accommodate. As Miller notes, disgust "marks out moral matters for which we can have no compromise" (194). When animal welfare campaigns rely on a polarizing configuration like disgust, they presuppose a degree of discursive and moral stability that so rarely exists in complex socio-political issues, especially once we factor in the unavoidable need for humans to eat corpses, whether they be plant or animal. I cannot imagine an instance in which the exclusion of the outsider would be purged of prejudice. To put pressure on disgust-based activism, I therefore turn back to the subject that anti-sealing campaigns would have me reject, the hunter, to engage closely with the kinship models ignored or degraded by disgust-driven rhetoric.

**Animal Welfare and the Soul**

The scholarly field of critical animal studies has been recently reinvigorated by a project to challenge anthropocentric endorsement of violence against non-human animals and to reflect on how a hierarchy of moral sensitivities shapes philosophical approaches to ethics. Many scholars in this field strive to challenge speciesism in its many forms. Coined by Max Ryder, the term

"speciesism" was popularized by Peter Singer in his influential book *Animal Liberation*, where he defines speciesism as "a prejudice or attitude of bias toward the interests of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species" (7). Humans behave in a speciesist fashion when they harm or kill non-human animals in situations when they would not harm or kill a human (19). Drawing on an analogy to racism, Singer positions speciesism to challenge the long-standing philosophical idea that animals are mentally inferior to humans and therefore are morally inconsiderable. Singer turns rather to utilitarian philosophy in his discussion of animal welfare. Extending the work of Jeremy Bentham, Singer declares that the capacity to suffer is the only acceptable moral boundary and that any being endowed with the capacity to suffer has interests that we are morally obligated to consider seriously (8-9), rendering moot other distinctions between human and non-human animals, such as language or tool use.

Paola Cavalieri pushes the moral implications of anti-speciesism further when she dismantles perfectionist schema in *The Death of the Animal: A Dialogue.* Cavalieri objects to perfectionism, the hierarchical arrangement of individuals' moral statuses based on the degree to which they possess certain abilities like language or reason (38). At the bottom of this hierarchy lies the animal: a form of life that lacks all morally considerable qualities and that becomes the standard of negative comparison (3). Though Singer's ethics dismantles "the animal" as a term of negative comparison, he too falls into a perfectionist logic when he declares that animals are morally considerable because they suffer. He may do away with conventional moral criteria like self-consciousness, rationality, and conceptual-linguistic abilities, but he does so by replacing them with a single quality: the ability to suffer. Singer here maintains a moral hierarchy over which a single criterion reigns. He does not dismantle the distinction between human and animal but rather calls for the inclusion of certain animals into the moral space of humanity. As a short-

term solution, this moral framework has a certain appeal, but it ultimately relies on a perfectionist schema. Since “the animal” is, for Cavalieri, the term of negative comparison par excellence, it remains the stronghold of perfectionism. To emancipate non-human animals from their position of moral neglect, she proposes that we must "kill" the concept of “the animal” (40).

Though a hunting culture may initially appear to be at odds with an animal welfare project, Inuit philosophies regarding the value of non-human life share many of the same premises as Euro-western animal rights philosophy, though the key difference that must be addressed is the soul, which Euro-western scholarship often does not account for, either because of an atheist refusal that souls exist or because of a Judeo-Christian belief that humans have souls and other animals do not. As Ivaluardjuk (Igloolik) famously explained to Knud Rasmussen,

> The greatest peril in life lies in the fact that human food consists entirely of souls. All the creatures that we have to kill and eat, all those that we have to strike down and destroy to make clothes for ourselves, have souls, like we have, souls that do not perish with the body, and which must therefore be propitiated lest they should revenge themselves on us for taking away their bodies. (*Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos* 56)

The “soul” to which Ivaluardjuk refers is a translation of “tarniq” (literally, “bubble”) that contains a miniature version of oneself, as Rasmussen explains:

> The soul, the tarniŋa or inuˑsia, is that which gives to all living things their particular appearance. In the case of human beings it is a really a tiny human being, in the case of a caribou a tiny caribou, and so on with all animals; an image, but very much smaller than the creature itself. The inuˑsia (meaning “appearance as a human being”) is situated in a bubble of air in the groin; from it proceed appearance, thoughts, strength and life, it is that which makes the man a man, the caribou a caribou, the walrus a walrus, the dog a dog, etc.

> Where any act of violence is committed against the soul, or any offence by breach of taboo, it becomes an evil spirit, wreaking harm and death in return. But it must not be supposed that all animals are angered when they are killed. Animals have in reality no objection to being killed by humans as longs as the rules of life are observed by the latter. (58)

Rasmussen's and Ivaluardjuk's explanations identify the central conflict in Inuit animal welfare philosophy: animals have souls and are as morally significant as humans, yet Inuit must hunt them for food, clothing, and other materials. What emerges in this tradition is therefore not an ethics of non-intervention, which in the Euro-western South takes the form of an uncompromising veganism that seeks to eliminate the consumption and use of anything made from animals or their by-products; instead, Inuit animal welfare carefully delineates rules of respect and protocols surrounding the hunting of animals, the treatment of animals when they are not being hunted, and the butchering and consumption of animals.

One such protocol is the principle of the instant kill, which demands that animals not be made to suffer unnecessarily. Joanisie Qajaarjuaq (Whale Cove) explains,

> The boys were taught the importance of having knowledge against cruelty to animals from boyhood throughout their upbringing, as they became successful hunters. They were made to know that if they wounded an animal, they must make every effort to get it. Men were taught the instant kill, to make sure the animal they hunted did not suffer as a result, whether it was a land animal, a sea mammal, or any other living creature. People had to respect their existence and avoid any form of abuse or cause any kind of suffering. This is one of the ancient rules that we continue to practice. (Bennet and Rowley 50).

Joanisie Qajaarjuaq here relates how children learn to respect the life that they take. Death itself is not regarded as violent; rather, it is the act of prolonging suffering that is deemed unnecessarily cruel.

Both Inuit and Euro-western animal welfare philosophies share the premise that there is no way to take life without violence, but they diverge dramatically in their understanding of animal souls. In Euro-western models, to kill an animal is to permanently and violently sever a relationship. In Inuit animal welfare philosophy, which extends the relationship between hunter and prey beyond death, the violence of the kill can be mitigated with the instant kill and later appeased by the protocols of respect for animal souls, which, if not observed, may turn animal souls vengeful. Euro-western animal welfare philosophy turns away from the animal at the moment of death, and therefore it does not fully acknowledge Inuit relationships, to its detriment, as Alootook Ipellie shows with his depiction of hunters, seals, and anti-sealers.

## Animals, Souls, and Vengeance: Seal Killers and Killer Seals in Alootook Ipellie's *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*

The narrative frame of *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* is a testament to the soul, for the sequence of stories depicts the narrator reincarnated into a series of different lives. The story that speaks most directly to the scope of this chapter is "After Brigitte Bardot," which portrays an interaction between seal souls and anti-sealer Brigitte Bardot. The story opens when the narrator and his family arrive at their spring hunting site to find that it is occupied by a crowd of photographers and film-makers working to create a 15-second video clip of French actress Brigitte Bardot hugging a stuffed harp seal pup (105, 108). At first, the narrator is amused by the spectacle and offers dumb blonde jokes and comments about Bardot's waning career (106-108). Though he

resolves never to watch her "B-movies" ever again (109), the narrator doesn't dwell much on the curious behaviour of the film crew.

In the autumn, when the narrator takes his furs to the trading post, he discovers that the EEC Parliament had voted to ban the entry of all seal products to Europe: his furs are now worthless. To help explain the collapse of the market, the post manager hands the narrator a newspaper clipping of a story titled, "Bardot Succeeds in Ending Seal Hunt in Canada's Far North." Along with the story is a picture of Bardot hugging the stuffed seal (110). The narrator is not impressed: "That bitch!" he cries, "How could she do this to us?!" (110). The manager responds,

> Politics. The desire to be seen doing something without any relevance to either science or ecology. And for that matter, to the well-being of Inuit. There's a quotation in that story that I find quite amusing. She refers to the baby pup seals as "little balls of wool." Can you believe that? (110)

Bardot and her film crew do not engage with real seals or with the Inuit who hunt them; they bring their own stuffed seal with them for a brief photo-op, which is why they fail to recognize the difference between seal fur and sheep wool. As the manager points out, both with his comment and with the newspaper clipping, the ban is not based on science, ecology, or any form of knowledge and experience at all: it is based on publicity and sensationalism. When the narrator mocks Bardot and her film crew for being clueless, he responds to the ongoing failure of animal welfare campaigns to represent accurately what they are protesting.

The narrator goes on to say that if he had foreseen the disaster that Bardot's campaign would bring about, he would have invited her to join him on that day so that he could teach her about hunting, though he also speculates that this probably would not be enough to change her

mind (111). When the narrator returns to his camp after learning that his seal furs are worthless, he has a vision of a senile Brigitte Bardot walking the streets of France with an Inuk companion. As they are walking, a baby harp seal sneaks up behind them and clubs the Inuk's skull open, spewing his blood and brains on the street. As Bardot desperately tries to scoop her companion's brain back into his broken skull, the seal disappears behind a building (112-113). The narrator says,

> Later that day, I found out the truth of this horrendous act of violence. The ghosts of all baby harp seals that were ever clubbed to death over the years were now avenging atrocities done to them by humankind. The irony is, this was not happening anywhere else on Earth except in France. (113)

Notably, the seal kills Bardot's companion yet leaves Bardot untouched. This target seems curious, since the story centres on the shortcomings of Bardot rather than on those of her companions. Furthermore, this particular Inuk companion is introduced only in the scene where he is clubbed: he is a character whose sole function is to die before our eyes. One way to read this death would be to acknowledge the wrath of Nuliajuk. Inugpasugjuk tells Rasmussen that Nuliajuk does not always punish those who breach protocols, sometimes opting to punish a near relative in the offender's place:

> Inugpasugjuk also stated that Nuliajuk, which was his name for the Sea Spirit, would sometimes carry off human beings, either because they had themselves committed some breach of taboo, or because some near relative of the victim had done so. She did not always punish the one actually guilty, and that was the cruel part of it; for when anyone had done anything wrong, there was no knowing which of his dear ones might suffer for it. Instances were known where Nuliajuk, having carried off a human being, did not kill, but

> turned the victim into some creature of the sea, so that the man or woman in question would have to live on as seal or walrus or one of the animals that belong to her. (100)

The attack on Bardot's companion marks such a displaced punishment, as the seal's soul kills him in a display of vengeance yet leaves Bardot untouched. Bardot's fate becomes something different, speaking to Inugpasugjuk's testimony that Nuliajuk sometimes punishes humans by transforming them into marine animals. In the narrator's vision, Bardot had already half-transformed into a seal at the time of the attack, and it doesn't stop there: "This was actually a transformation she was to endure for a lifetime. She would completely turn into a harp seal when her human life was over. She had willed herself to be reincarnated as a harp seal. And, in true Christian tradition, she was wearing a cross around her neck" (112). Bardot's transformation could therefore function as a form of punishment.

Such a reading speaks to the seals' France-based revenge, which indicates that they are most offended by French humans, since animal souls seek vengeance on those who have disrespected them, not necessarily those who have killed them. The seals are less affronted by the narrator's hunting than by Bardot's campaign. They, like the narrator, are offended by Bardot's presumption that she can declare unilaterally how humans should interact with seals, despite knowing little of the relationship between Inuit hunters and seals. David Pelly explains this relationship in *Sacred Hunting: Portrait of the Relationship between Seals and Inuit*,

> Traditionally, the hunt is a pact between Inuit and the seal. The Inuit hunter is not extracting from the environment but creating a bond between his people and their environment. When the seal gives itself to the hunter, it is an act of sharing in which the seal is transformed from animal to human. Being consumed is a form of rebirth or renewal for the seal (106).

In this tradition from which Ipellie writes, hunting is a deep relationship that goes far beyond the moment of the kill, and it establishes a pact between hunter, prey, and the land. This pact is not respected in Bardot's photo-shoot with a stuffed seal, and it explains why the seal souls only avenge their deaths in France, the homeland of Brigitte Bardot: they push back against the way they are treated by Bardot and her film crew, who presume to know what is best for them despite never having spend a significant amount of time in their home. This presumption, too, forms a pact with the seals and with the land, but Bardot's pact is not based on mutual respect; it hinges on the condescending assumption that she knows best, even if she lives an ocean away. The seals are offended by this arrogance, and they retaliate.

Although certainly a story of revenge, “After Brigitte Bardot” can also sustain another, more hopeful reading. Bardot's transformation at the end of her life mirrors the story of "The Soul that Lived in the Bodies of all Beasts" told to Knud Rasmussen by Naukatjik, in which the soul of Avovange changes first into a seal and then into a fox to exact revenge on those who killed him when he was human. Afterwards, he resolves to take the shape of every animal on Earth so that one day he can tell his peers how other beings live (*Iglulik* 59-60). The conclusion of "After Brigitte Bardot" draws on this story in a generous and hopeful gesture. Bardot wills herself to be reincarnated as a harp seal so that she can learn through personal experience how seals live and die in their homelands. In this reading, Bardot's transformation is less a punishment than an invitation to learn more about the seals that she is so eager to protect.

Figure 5: Alootook Ipellie, "After Brigitte Bardot"

This optimistic reading accounts for the playful tone of the story, which does not fully support a cathartic reading of Bardot's punishment. Though the story captures the narrator's resentment that his economic system has been turned on its head by a French actress, the frequent jokes in the story prevent the tone from becoming too harsh, introducing a lightness mirrored by the pen drawing that accompanies the story. As will soon become clear, Ipellie does not shy away from violence in *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*, which illustrates disturbing and grotesque scenes. This drawing is not one of them. It is playful—cartoonish, even—in its depiction of the seal's revenge. Bardot and her companion are at peace, as Bardot leans into her companion's body as he closes his eyes in relaxation, unaware of the club about to break his skull. The seal, sporting devil horns and a tail, appears goofy rather than menacing: her impossibly upright body jets out from behind them in a sneak-attack that is a common punchline in slapstick humour, and her open mouth has more in common with a smile than with a bellow, such as the one sported by the inunnguaq in PETA's Olympic campaign. This depiction of the

seal paired with the blissful expression of her prey illustrates a killing that is not motivated by bloodlust. Though it is a revenge killing, it is not sadistic: the seal practices the instant kill, taking a life without causing unnecessary or prolonged pain. At the same time, however, the scene is unambiguously violent. The smiling seal appears be playing a game with a human life on the line. She may not be driven by sadism, but her motives are far from benign.

Ipellie turns away from caricatures, and he offers no easy answers. His vengeful spirits are clownish; his well-meaning activists cause damage to local communities in their haste to dictate how others should live their lives; and his amiable locals live on a diet of souls, folding violence into the everyday. I therefore find it unproductive to read *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* in search of a stable system of ethical engagement. Instead, I read it as a series of models that test potential answers to moral questions. In this way, I read Bardot's transformation as a model of the relationships that could flourish if the approach of anti-sealers is put on hiatus. Bardot's punishment grants her the opportunity to experience what she misguidedly critiques. This approach offers a compelling complement to the politics of disgust: whereas disgust, to use Miller's phrase, "puts our body behind our words" in a rejection of the disgusting object, Bardot puts her body behind her words in a different way, by literally becoming the being she seeks to protect and by experiencing the world as a seal does. Ipellie's take on embodiment has less to do with creating a vicarious experience for readers than with depicting characters and narrators whose bodies transform and who must therefore navigate familiar relationships in new modes.

This approach speaks to what Martin interprets as an ethical model of close engagement. In "The Hunting and Harvesting of Inuit Literature," Martin reflects on an encounter she had in Pangnirtung, when she was an instructor with the Pangnirtung Summer School in Nunavut. When she went visiting with students, she found that many of them would refuse food offered to

them, citing concerns about taking too much of their hosts' time, energy, and resources (447). One day, Martin's "young friend" confronted them on this behaviour, declaring "I find it very insulting when you don't eat with us!" (447). This anecdote becomes the entry point for Martin's criticism of the tendency of Southerners to maintain distance from their hosts, to refuse the invitation to enter into relationship with them (447). She ties this criticism to the anti-hunter's quest for an ethical relationship with animals, which avoids the violence of consuming animal flesh by evading sustained contact with animals altogether: "Humans who attempt to remain wholly non-reliant upon animals (and who urge others to do likewise) can boast of only very distant relationships with animals, and they cannot possess the same commitment to long-term and sustainable animal wellbeing that is maintained by hunters" (452). For Martin, such tactics do not sustain long-term relationships, since they take, as their core value, a turning away. Such is the approach favoured by anti-sealers, whose proposed alternative to sealing is disengagement, an approach that does not bode well for Ipellie's fictionalized Bardot. Though she lives most of her life under this model of ethical non-intervention, the seals eventually (inevitably?) exact their revenge, and Bardot is given a second chance to develop a relationship with seals and hunters.

Such a reading would privilege longstanding Inuit traditions of ethical engagement, but *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* appears to have as much faith in Inuit hunting ethics as it does in Bardot's activism. A central motif that emerges is the precariousness of life in the Arctic, as seals, hunters, and other beings perpetuate violence and suffer from it at the hands of others. In the titular story, "Arctic Dreams and Nightmares," the narrator, now in a different life, contemplates the troubling position that humans face in the Arctic as predators of animals who never wanted anything to do with them. The story occurs during sleep, when the narrator oscillates between dreams of paradise and nightmares of hell. There are two versions of paradise,

each criticizing established animal welfare philosophies. In the first vision, Inuit hunting comes under attack: “In paradise, we don't need to go out hunting. Struggling to survive is unheard of. The animals come to you whenever you need them. They come to sacrifice themselves. Kamikaze animals, them. Just like the divine wind, they come with opened arms" (126). In this version of paradise, hunters do not need to wait for days at a breathing hole until a seal comes, since animals simply present themselves to humans whenever they are needed. Here Ipellie alludes to one of the principles of Inuit hunting philosophy, that animals choose to present themselves to hunters who behave respectfully. Peter Aningat (Whale Cove) explains,

> "I'm going to pop my head through a breathing hole that man is waiting from, you pop your head through that other breathing hole" [said the first seal]. But the other seal refused because the man was known to be always lazy to do chores as a child. the seal was terrified of the hunter. . . In the end they decided to go one by one to the one that wasn't lazy because they were pleased about him . . . [he hunted] with the thought of sharing his kill with other people" (Bennet and Rowley 45, brackets and ellipses in original)

Aningat’s story speaks to the pact between hunters, seals, and the land, outlining a hunting philosophy that demands respectful and ongoing relationships. Seals are active participants in this relationship, choosing the hunters to whom they will present themselves based on their assessment of the hunter’s behaviour and mindset.

Though “Arctic Dreams and Nightmares” depicts animals who present themselves to hunters, the story relegates this philosophy to the realm of dreams. Kamikaze animals are a fantasy. Immediately following the previous quotation, the narrator says,

> Dreaming of paradise. We do it because we live on the edge of hell. Some days it is hell itself when an empty stomach beckons the bounty of paradise. These are the days we

> remember most as human beings. Because they make us think. Because they make us suffer. Because they make us cry. They touch our hearts in such unkind ways. What's a human being if he cannot and does not suffer? (126)

The narrator continues his contemplation of dreams: "A world that encompasses no dreamers is a world of chaos. And so a human dreamer, when he dreams, lives a little more humanely" (128). These passages together show how *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* deviates from established ethical paradigms, while also offering a potential reading strategy to make sense of the narrator's often bizarre and disturbing dreams and nightmares. Ipellie explores the productive possibilities of suffering as a shared experience. Part of this project, then, is to take away the principles that might bring comfort to readers, to crumble, before their eyes, the prescribed models of ethical engagement that have served them so well. Kamikaze animals are a fantasy—a humane one, perhaps, but a fantasy nonetheless.

Vegetarians fare no better than hunters. In the second version of paradise that the narrator dreams, he drinks water from a small lake that shrinks him slowly over the course of a year, ultimately rendering him so tiny that he cannot be seen with the human eye. This smallness is his paradise. He becomes so miniscule that even the tundra's tiny plants become an Amazonian rainforest, and the blueberries are so large that they can easily sustain him (129). Furthermore, he has become so small that even if his human relatives knew what had become of him, they would never again be able to commune with him (130). In the narrator's dream, paradise is a vegetarian existence isolated from human pursuits. In his shrunken state, the narrator lives in the low blueberry shrubs that hug the tundra, and he adapts to the vegetarian diet that was impossible for him to consider when he was a full-sized human. The narrator's vision of paradise echoes the

politics of non-intervention that Martin criticizes as a distant relationship, and, in keeping with this criticism, the approach does not work.

The narrator's vegetarian paradise is broken when his own body turns on him. One particularly intelligent blood cell in the narrator's body detects that it is in danger, since the main "nutrients" it has been receiving from the body is alcohol (132). The cell rallies the body's other essential cells, and they join together, become an eagle, and rip through the narrator's chest in an excruciating three-minute escape, leaving him to die and rot like any other vegetation (132-3). Here, the story ends, with the death of the human and the birth of an eagle. This conclusion offers an intriguing complement to the end of "After Brigitte Bardot." Both stories end with figurations of transformation that centre on death and rebirth, but here it is not hunted animals who exact revenge; the narrator's own body turns against him. Throughout the story, he questions his humanity as though he were a stable, singular being, but the massive cell rebellion reveals this not to be the case; his body can and does exact revenge on him. If "After Brigitte Bardot" shows that one does not get to decide for others what counts as an ethical relationship, then "Arctic Dreams and Nightmares" shows that one does not even get to decide for oneself. It is not a unilateral decision, the kind of critical conclusion one arrives at after careful thought and consideration of all the angles, nor is it a politics of non-intervention: I refuse to eat this; I will not do that. Establishing ethical relationships is an embodied process that emerges from relating with others and with the self, dwelling not only in moments of shared joy, but in the moments when fundamental needs as living beings clash. Ethics is a nightmare, and if we have not negotiated when and how we are willing to do harm, then we have not even begun its work.

One way to read Ipellie's explorative treatment of animal welfare is therefore to focus on the question of when and how we are willing to do harm. In "Survival of the Most Violent," what

is for me one of Ipellie's most haunting stories, the narrator kills and eats humans. The story begins as the narrator takes his qayaq out to catch a seal that he has seen in the open water (89). As he paddles to the seal in excitement and anticipation, an unknown force tips his qayaq and holds the narrator underwater until he passes out (89). When he wakes, he finds that he has transformed into a seal and that he now craves human flesh (90). Seemingly unfazed by this transformation, the narrator immediately harpoons a human mother and her infant, relishing in his luck that he caught such a delectable pair and will now be spared the labour of tenderizing the tough meat of human males (90).

The narrator's subsequent description of butchering and eating humans mirrors the butchering practices of seals, as he immediately eats the liver and his fill of meat before sewing up the cadavers and bringing them back to the camp to feed his family (90-91).[49] He also indicates that every part of the human will be used, from bone harpoon heads to fingernail guitar picks (91). The strong parallels between the narrator's description of human-hunting and ethnographic sources on seal hunting lends itself to an exploration of hunting protocols, which accepts the killing of animals for the purposes of survival, provided that proper protocols are observed. "Survival of the Most Violent," however, does not appear to condone this position, instead presenting hunters as superlatively malicious.

The hunt in "Survival of the Most Violent" is unambiguously a gruesome affair, and it prompts the narrator to ponder such "seal" atrocities as the Holocaust and the crucifixion of Christ (92). The narrator concludes that seals are the most violent creatures ever to exist on Earth

[49] Rasmussen relates that when hunters catch a seal, they immediately share the liver: "As soon as the happy hunter had got his catch hauled up on the ice we ran over to him for the purpose of partaking of the feat, which always assumes the character of a ceremony on account of the gravity with which it is eaten. All knelt down, the man who had made the catch on the right side, the others on the left side of the seal. The hunter cut a tiny hole in the belly, through which he took the wound pins so that no blood would run out and go to waste. The liver and blubber were cut up into small squares and eaten in the same kneeling position" (Rasmussen, *Intellectual Culture of the Netsilik Eskimos*, quoted in Laugrand and Oosten *Hunters, Predator, Prey* 295).

(92), and he bemoans that the present age is not mediated by survival of the fittest but by survival of the most violent (94). The drawing captures this sentiment. The narrator peers through a breathing hole in the ice and stands poised to strike the human mother with his harpoon. Waves of darkness emanate from him like tentacles, and he bears two marks of atrocity: the crucifixion at the end of the harpoon and a swastika over his heart, the latter of which is literally the source of darkness in his body. Mere seconds away from the tip of his harpoon are the human mother and her infant. Both bear expressions of complete relaxation, appearing to be at peace, even in the face of such a heinous villain. The movement lines surrounding the mother's body indicate that she hurls herself into the harpoon with enthusiasm.

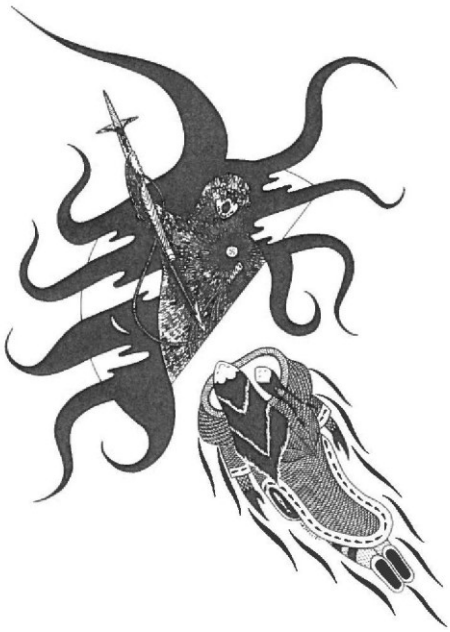

Figure 6: Alootook Ipellie, "Survival of the Most Violent"

The mother and infant are haunting. Why are they so calm? Are they unaware that they are about to be killed? This seems unlikely, since the narrator poses on ominous presence; indeed, he appears to be venturing through the breathing hole and making himself known. The scene does not appear to be an ambush. Is the mother choosing to offer herself and her daughter to the

narrator as food? There is precedent for this, since animals choose to present themselves to hunters. Such a reading also seems unlikely, however, for animals offer themselves to welcoming hunters rather than those whose violent impulses darken the surrounding area.[50] I wonder, then, if the depiction is more symbolic than narrative. In the same way that anti-sealing campaigns capitalize on the image of the cute seal, Ipellie taps into the increased vulnerability that women and children face in a misogynist world. I am as critical of this appropriation as I am of anti-sealing campaigns, yet given that Ipellie's tactic is to force readers into uncomfortable situations, I will dwell on the intersecting violence of this human-hunting seal.

Figure 6: Ipellie, "Survival of the Most Violent"

Figure 5: Ipellie, "After Brigitte Bardot"

The image becomes even more striking when compared to the other images of killing analyzed in this chapter. Unlike the devilishly playful seal in "After Brigitte Bardot," the narrator of "Survival" is hostile and looks as though he might have just escaped from Hell. This contrast is perplexing because it seems to run counter to the politics of the texts. The seal in "After

[50] In James Houston's *Diet of Souls,* Gino Akka from Baker Lake explains how hunters' intentions are visible to animals, in relation to ice fishing: "the ice hole of the one who is favoured by the fish is said to appear bright while the holes of the less fortunate ones look shaded. Fish do not give themselves to those holes that appear dark. They are not inviting" (Houston: 2004)

Brigitte Bardot" is vengeful: she kills not out of necessity but for retribution. The narrator in "Survival of the Most Violent," on the other hand, must kill humans to survive. Though violent, he follows established protocols of respect, yet Ipellie depicts him unsympathetically. In fact, the narrator of "Survival" seems to have more in common with PETA's club-wielding inunnguaq than with his fellow seal in "After Brigitte Bardot." PETA and Ipellie are aligned in their representation of the hunter: he is brutal. The difference between them lies in their representation of prey. For PETA, the seal is a helpless victim. For Ipellie, the human mother appears to be an active participant in her own demise. This vignette criticizes the view that animals choose to present themselves to respectful hunters: the narrator appears to follow protocols of respect in the story, and yet he appears menacing in the image. The image draws on a common anti-speciesist comparison, by reversing the roles of human-predators and animal-prey, ultimately implying that there is no way to hunt that will appear “bright” and “inviting” to the hunted. "Survival of the Most Violent" therefore falls somewhere between anti-sealing campaigns and Inuit hunting philosophies: it grants that hunters behave respectfully and kill out of necessity rather than bloodlust, but it insists that nature has its victims. Hunting is brutal, and also it constitutes a kinship relationship between hunter and hunted. The two are not mutually exclusive, and *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* does not downplay one to bolster the other. Though Ipellie offers no easy answers, he does pose a series of challenges that invite readers to consider what kind of pact they form with animals in a world with no correct answers.

Such a tactic requires readers to lean into discomfort rather than turn away from it, which might explain why I find Ipellie’s images more disturbing than disgusting. Whereas Qitsualik and Tinsley’s depictions of transformation encourage suspicion towards those who will not choose a stable, community-oriented ethical framework, Ipellie’s transformative, embodied

ethics dismantles the assumptions that sustain popular polemics, asking us instead to look for new footholds. The difficulty of working through *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* also becomes a useful analogy for this project as a whole. Though I have delineated many of the internal mechanisms of the *animal welfare state* and advocated in favour of Land-based ethics, doing so has not consolidated a prescribed model of ethical engagement, as part of me has always hoped it might. However, there is an opportunity for a new foothold by using kinship analysis to make sense of various modes of critique. In the previous chapter, I suggested that the mythological structure of the *animal welfare state* is a manifestation of its operating values, which I take to be one type of Land-based kinship model based on hierarchy and appropriation that is expressed in paternalistic attitudes towards seals, polar bears, and wolves and that quickly translates into strict regulation of the Arctic and of Inuit. For the remainder of this chapter, I want to dwell on sealing and anti-sealing advocacy as articulations of kinship.

**Conclusion: Anger and Criticism**

The film that most strongly illuminates advocacy as kinship in this context is Alethea Arnaquq-Baril's documentary *Angry Inuk*. The film debunks the myths surrounding Inuit seal-hunting: Arnaquq-Baril points out that the image of the whitecoat is misleading, since killing whitecoats has been illegal since 1983; that the narrative of fur being used merely as a luxury item does not hold, since food and warm clothing are essential to Inuit; that working with sealskins is mostly done by women at home, not by large, profit-driven corporations; and she importantly contextualizes anti-sealing protesters within a history of other colonial crimes against Inuit, such as residential schools, forced relocations, and increased suicide rates (Arnaquq-Baril: 2016). Such an approach establishes early and often that the documentary is about Inuit communities and the ways that they rely on seals culturally and to participate in the modern global economy.

The opening scenes follow the route of the seal from its death in the hunt to its consumption. Arnaquq-Baril says in a voiceover that some of her earliest memories are of seal-hunting as a family (Araquq-Baril: 2016), and as the film opens, she is on a seal-hunting trip with her relative Joannie and his grandson Isuaqtuq in Kimmirut, Nunavut (she does not specify the relationship between herself and Joannie). It is spring, so they hunt at the floe edge, shooting the seal from the ice and rowing out on their boat to retrieve the carcass. Joannie butchers the seal immediately while Isuaqtuq rinses the skin carefully, without dipping his hands into the frigid water. Back in town, a woman (unnamed in the film) calls to invite others over to her mother's house, and a feast ensues, as pieces of seal are laid out over garbage bags on the living room floor, around which everyone gathers to eat and distribute the meat.[51] The gathering is a social one, as everyone talks and laughs while some post pictures on Facebook and others crowd around a smartphone to watch a gag video.

This opening sequence emphasizes relationships between Inuit. Such an approach is a significant departure from the anti-sealing campaigns discussed above, which condemn seal hunting and its outcomes, as well as other sealing documentaries like James Houston's *Diet of Souls*, which explores Inuit hunting ethics by asking how animals can be one's spiritual equal *and* one's daily bread (Houston: 2004). Both of these genres centre on relationships between humans and animals; Arnaquq-Baril, on the other hand, focuses on the network of social relationships between Inuit that is dependent on the seal hunt, relationships that are misrepresented by anti-sealing activists who would have their supporters believe that Inuit hunters are little more than bloodthirsty villains.

[51] The sequence appears to combine footage from two different hunts: the group feasts on a bearded seal, whereas Joannie and Isuaqtuq catch a smaller ringed seal.

Arnaquq-Baril works this tension into the film's introduction through editing. While the images show Joannie and Isuaqtuq's hunt, she says in a voiceover that she became aware of the anti-sealers at a young age: "At some point in my childhood, I realized there are people out there who don't like seal hunting. Each spring, I'd watch people on the news call seal hunters horrible things" (Arnaquq-Baril: 2016). There is a straight cut to the title screen, followed by another straight cut to Kimmirut. The inclusion of this voiceover during the seal-hunting scene serves the narrative function of introducing the central conflict of the film, but it also has the effect of formally disrupting Arnaquq-Baril's childhood reminiscence and depiction of the social gathering following a successful hunt, a disruption further emphasized by the cut to the title screen, which names what the anti-sealers provoke, an "Angry Inuk." Even when the anti-sealers are nowhere to be seen, their presence looms over Inuit. Arnaquq-Baril's emphasis on Inuit social relations is powerful and significant, for anti-sealing campaigns thrive on reconfiguring hunting, in all its forms, as disgusting and malicious.

As a guiding question, Arnaquq-Baril asks, "how does a culture with an understated anger fight against a group that's infamous for the exact opposite behaviour?" (Arnaquq-Baril: 2016). As Arnaquq-Baril clarifies, Inuit value emotional control and discourage outward expressions of anger. Historically, people who were upset with each other would duel using satiric songs designed to insult the other person. The duelists would exchange their songs until laughter replaced the tension, and if either of the duelists lost their tempers, they lost the duel (Arnaquq-Baril: 2016). Anthropologist Jean Briggs gives a complementing account in *Never in Anger*, where she relates her experience living with Utkuhikhalingmiut (Inuit from the mouth of Black River) and identifies a short temper as one of the most damning traits among Inuit (195). Community members who were prone to anger were dismissed as childish and lacking good

sense (*isuma*) (196), as Briggs discovered when her adopted father, Inuttiaq, scolded and lectured her when she acted in anger (257, 272). Briggs and Arnaquq-Baril each point to the ways that expressions of anger are derided and avoided.

The documentary extends these values as it follows Arnaquq-Baril and Aaju Peter (Iqaluit), a sealskin clothing designer, lawyer, and activist, though some of their engagement campaigns, such as their visit to the European Union to convince Parliamentarians to vote against the seal ban, and their counter-protests against public animal welfare protests. In each case, Arnaquq-Baril places her faith in "Inuk-style" education campaigns that inform and engage rather than attack and propagandize (Arnaquq-Baril: 2016). In one powerful scene, Arnaquq-Baril and a group of Inuit political science students in Ottawa travel to Toronto to stage a counter-protest against an IFAW anti-sealing campaign. Arnaquq-Baril's investment in engagement: she wants to meet and talk to the activists who condemn seal-hunting.[52] IFAW, having seen the counter-protest advertised on Facebook, cancelled their event, and the students ran a public awareness event instead of their planned counter-protest. The relationships modeled in this scene are striking: as they are on the bus to the counter-protests, Arnaquq-Baril coaches the students, reminding them not to follow the anti-sealer's behaviour: "I just want to remind you that we don't have to behave the way that other protesters behave. Just be true to yourself. Remember how your parents and grandparents would want you to behave" (Arnaquq-Baril: 2016). This scene is striking because it emphasizes the relationships at home above the protest: Arnaquq-Baril encourages the youth to behave in ways that will make them and their families proud and to

[52] Anti-sealers, like scientists studying polar bears, are notoriously difficult to spot in the Arctic: virtually every hunter interviewed in the film comments that they would love to talk to an anti-sealing activist, but they have never seen one (Arnaquq-Baril: 2016).

maintain their own values rather than match the behaviour of anti-sealing activists, who are quite comfortable using racist exploitation tactics to extend the reach of their message.

One cynical way to answer Arnaquq-Baril's guiding question would be to chronicle the failures of the approach. For example, Arnaquq-Baril does not get her meetings with anti-sealers, since they frequently avoid her by withdrawing from events and interviews. In some ways, the film shows the limits of subdued approaches, implying that sometimes one must shout to be heard and that one must be willing to be disruptive and jam the gears of powerful organizations that do harm to others.

Such is the approach for which Coulthard advocates in *Red Skin, White Masks*, where he rejects Canada's disingenuous rhetoric of reconciliation. He argues that

> under certain conditions Indigenous people's individual and collective expressions of anger and resentment can help prompt the forms of self-affirmative praxis that generate rehabilitated Indigenous subjectivities and decolonized forms of life in ways that the combined politics of recognition and reconciliation has so far proven itself incapable of doing . . . I suggest that what implicitly gets interpreted by the state as Indigenous peoples' *ressentiment*—an incapacitating inability or unwillingness to get over the past—is actually an entirely appropriate manifestation of our *resentment*: a politicized expression of Indigenous anger and outrage directed at structural and symbolic violence that still structures our lives, our relations with others, and our relations with land. (109, emphasis in original)

For Coulthard, *resentment* is one way to resist the politics of recognition that would compel Indigenous peoples to assimilate into the Canadian nations state. He writes,

> I argue that instead of ushering in an era of peaceful coexistence grounded on the ideal of *reciprocity* or *mutual* recognition, the politics of recognition in its contemporary liberal form promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonialist, racist, patriarchal state power that Indigenous peoples' demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend. (3, emphasis in original)

The politics of recognition bound up in Canada's discourse of reconciliation are echoed in anti-sealers' artificial support of Indigenous peoples, such as when PETA claims not to oppose Indigenous hunting even as they chastise Tagaq and appropriate the inunnguaq. In this way, Arnaquq-Baril's calm invitations for discussion and understanding, extended to those who dehumanize her, feeds into the colonial, racist, patriarchal state constructed by anti-sealers. A different approach, one centred on *resentment*, might better hold anti-sealers accountable for their actions and challenge their disgust-driven, dehumanizing gestures. Such an approach would still enable Arnaquq-Baril to maintain her anti-anger practices at home, with others who share those values, without extending eternal patience to those outsiders who have only ever abused it.

Personally, I am persuaded by Coulthard's argument, but Arnaquq-Baril takes a different approach. Read through the lens of kinship, Arnaquq-Baril models the behaviour she wishes to see in anti-sealers. Had she adopted their tactics, the relationships modeled in the film would centre on tension, aggression, dismissal, and exploitation. Instead, Arnaquq-Baril emphasizes respect, education, and mutual understanding. If we take the film to be a response to its own guiding question, then its answer is to provide alternatives, to show the relationships that flourish under conditions of sincere engagement. Anger need not be readable as such to encourage change.

Similarly, each of the texts I have analyzed in this study rhetorically model the kinship structures for which they advocate: anti-sealing literature draws on disgust to create sharp distinctions between moral insiders and outsiders; Ipellie's shapeshifting makes a mockery of all stabilizing polemics, though, as I argued in the opening chapter, he maintains an ongoing investment in patriarchy; Qitsualik and Tinsley's didactic style creates an ethical community with little room for deviance; Mowat and the RCMP draw on myth's appropriative structure to maintain the colonial state through the transit of empire and the strategic ambivalence of animal signs; Kunuk and Mauro deploy anecdote to show how Inuit experience rapid climate changes in their home; and environmental campaigns draw on cuteness and synecdoche to invite paternal attitudes towards polar bears and the Arctic. For this reason, criticism is one expression of a wider kinship network that, if approached descriptively, can be used as a guide to the critic's sovereign world-view. If approached prescriptively, criticism is world-building.

# Conclusion

## Arctic Place-Making

In this project, I set out to understand a cultural phenomenon that at the time was puzzling to me—Euro-settler Canada's preoccupation with, yet inconsistent concern for, arctic animals. In the course of this research, I have delineated the *animal welfare state*, an extension and adaptation of the twentieth-century welfare state, which assimilated Inuit into Canada under the guise of welfare. Similarly, the *animal welfare state* continues to regulate Inuit and their territory under the rubric of protecting animals. I have exposed the *animal welfare state*'s mythological structure, which relentlessly appropriates animal and Indigenous signs, and have analyzed this structure alongside land-based sovereignty and kinship criticism, which foreground how literature names and participates in ongoing relationships between humans, animals, and the land. Although the *animal welfare state* and land-based sovereignty may initially appear to contrast one another, I have argued that the *animal welfare state*'s mythological structure is the formal expression of its assimilationist ideologies, which operates in the service of the Canadian settler-colonial state, and I have extended these findings to show how each of the texts I have analyzed model kinship relationships through content and form. If this last claim is true, then this dissertation is also an articulation of kinship, and, in my concluding remarks, I will begin working through the implications of my writing and scholarly approach.

Scholars before me have grappled with similar questions. For example, in *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*, Keith H. Basso defines place-making as a type of "retrospective world-building" that becomes the foundation of our social and political lives (5). He writes, "if place-making is a way of constructing the past, a venerable means of *doing* human history, it is also a way of constructing social traditions and, in the

process, personal and social identities. We *are*, in a sense, the place-worlds we imagine" (7, emphasis in original). Basso's articulation of place-making resonates with land-based sovereignty, for he identifies how stories make claims to territory as they imagine, articulate, and/or embody the social terrain of lands and territories.

Basso learns the importance of place-making after inadvertently, yet nevertheless ethnocentrically, undermining the importance of Apache place names. After four failed attempts to pronounce Goshtł'ish Tú Bił Sikąné, "Water Lies with Mud In An Open Container" (12), Basso gives up, telling his guide, Charles, that he will practice later, a proposition that Charles does not accept. He tells Morley, the translator,

> What he's doing isn't right. It's not good. He seems to be in a hurry. Why is he in a hurry? It's disrespectful. Our ancestors made this name. They made it just as it is. They made it for a reason. *They spoke it first, a long time ago!* He's repeating the speech of our ancestors. He doesn't know that. Tell him he's repeating the speech of our ancestors! (10, emphasis in original)

As a Euro-settler scholar, I understand Basso's initial impulse. When a place name is regarded as a piece of data, one that can be recorded now and engaged with later, it becomes easy to gloss over its pronunciation and significance in an eager (greedy?) rush to collect as much data as is possible during always-too-brief research trips. Charles' response, though, reveals that Apache place-names are not data and not merely descriptive: they are the words of his ancestors, spoken with purpose and gifted to future generations. In this sense, "Apache place names might be heard by those who use them as repeating verbatim—actually quoting—the speech of their early ancestors" (10).

This account stays with me as a powerful reminder of the importance of relationships in research. During my initial reading of Basso's account, I fell into an easy dichotomy that separated Apache quotations from Euro-settler academic approach to names, the latter characterized by treating words as units of data and the former as a place-making event that connects contemporary Apache to their ancestors and to places. This misinterpretation was my own, as Basso is quite clear that place-making is a near-universal phenomenon (5), and it derived from reading place-making as though it were descriptive only of Apache. The encounter rather shows two separate and mutually exclusive place-making events. When Basso prioritized the recording and collection of data, downplaying Charles' lessons and explanation, he declared his allegiance to colonial academia and attempted to overwrite Charles and his ancestors in their own territory. The account is, fortunately, the story of a learning moment, as Basso realizes his error and carefully learns the pronunciation of Goshtł'ish Tú Bił Sikąné. I mark this text also as a site where I learned not to read my own assumptions of insurmountable cultural gulfs into the words of others.

Basso's analysis clarifies that stories are place-making events in the sense that we use them to construct the world in which we want to live. Literary scholarship, as the study of stories, cannot help but do the same. I have conducted much of this research in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as my home department, faculty, and university have attempted (with variant degrees of sincerity) to address the legacy of residential schools, land theft, treaty violations, and ongoing colonization in its many forms. As an instructor, I respond by teaching Indigenous literatures prominently, acknowledging territory, and working to make the classroom more hospitable to students who are Indigenous, black, people of colour, disabled, poor, queer, women, and vulnerable to the institution's capitalist, white supremacist, settler-colonial

heteropatriarchy. These gestures feel small compared to the massive scale of settler-colonialism, but then again, each individual is a small piece of larger machines.

In my research and writing, I have worked to centre the texts and the worlds they create. This has meant, in my case, a bit of distance from theory. As an undergraduate and Masters student, I was drawn to theory in ways that eventually became formulaic: I would select a theory and a piece of fiction, and I would then analyze them together, showing what the theory illuminated about the fiction an how the fiction extended or complicated the theory. I found that in these analyses, it was difficult not to privilege one text over the other. Because theory and fiction each create their own discursive worlds, I would intuitively pull one into the other, usually prioritizing theory. In many cases, this approach was fruitful, but at the outset of this project it was obvious that I could not complete the research without analyzing Inuit literature and politics, and it was equally obvious that I could not do justice to Inuit texts by pulling them into the worlds of my favourite animal studies theorists (at the time, Agamben and Shukin). I did not want to approach Inuit literature having already decided that what was interesting about it was Italian philosophy.

At the early stages of this project, after a candidacy that focused largely on critical animal studies, I set theory aside and instead focused on Inuit literature and culture, consulting fiction, documentaries, autobiographies, ethnographies, and anthropological interviews with Inuit to learn how to read Inuit texts according to Inuit literary and intellectual traditions. I began each chapter with close readings and political contextualization of primary texts. From there, I expanded to scholarly conversations about the texts and their contexts; then, I re-entered theoretical conversations in ways that prioritized the chapter's primary texts. In the writing of this project, I have chosen to formally retain something of this process. In each chapter, I focus

my analysis on the texts and the worlds they create, often following these readings with a distinct section that addresses how my analysis contributes to other contexts and conversations. This formal separation is my attempt to give ample space to the texts in their own right before repositioning them according to my scholarly priorities. Though I returned to theory last, chronologically speaking, I included it in the introduction to define my key concepts and to show how I position the *animal welfare state* within scholarship. Throughout the remainder of the project, I return to theory when it helps to explain the case studies. Though a scholarly project will inevitably approach texts through a pre-conceived framework, I have strived to avoid absorbing the case studies completely into theoretical lineages that lead out of the Arctic.

I have also worked to break my habit of writing in the omniscient, third-person mode. The standard in Indigenous literary studies is for scholars to position themselves as researchers and to show where they stand. This may take the form of territorial acknowledgment, national and tribal affiliation, and situation within families and communities. Though some settler scholars can productively foreground their community ties, such an approach seems disingenuous in this project, since I do not have ties to the Eastern Arctic. I am, in many ways, the target audience of the texts that comprise the *animal welfare state*: I am a Euro-settler who is invested in animal welfare and who engages with arctic animals only through a series of texts. Because my relationship to the Arctic is textual, I have foregrounded my shifting relationships with texts, sharing anecdotes about how my interpretations have changed and including sources that were crucial in my understanding of key concepts, even if they are not about arctic animals (such as Mini Aodla Freeman's *Life Among the Qallunaat* and the "Misunderstood Spider" meme). Through these gestures, I have attempted to situate myself and my literary investments, showing readers where I stand (and stood).

I share these stories not to dictate a mode of criticism that will solve the problems outlined in this project, but to show more of myself to readers than if I had kept them to myself. Similarly, this project is more descriptive than prescriptive, identifying the *animal welfare state* and its internal mechanisms without defining a clear alternative, which others have already done. In this way, I contribute to the *truth* component of truth and reconciliation by exposing and undermining the alibis that Canada uses to continue its ongoing colonization of the Arctic. In doing so, I show how texts cannot help but make places and relationships, and we must harness them responsibly and productively. Rather than feeding into the farce of the *animal welfare state*, it is time to prioritize non-hierarchical, land-based sovereignty.

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