SAVAGES, SAVIOURS AND THE POWER OF STORY:
THE FIGURE OF THE NORTHERN DOG IN CANADIAN CULTURE

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Abstract

This research was motivated by a recent pattern in animal welfare texts in Canada that portray northern dogs as "savage" trouble-makers, and indigenous people as backward barbarians incapable of caring for the animals that share their spaces. With this comes the troublesome idea that, yet again, the only positive force in indigenous Canada is the civilizing force of outsider intervention: northern dogs need to be rescued; non-indigenous people are their rightful saviours. It is a story that has been circulating in the dominant culture in Canada for centuries, and has urgent implications for both human and non-human animals in Canada's North.

This dissertation consists of three sections. In the first section, I explore the roots of the colonial figure of the "noble canine savage" through representations in explorers' journals, ethnographic films and tourism marketing texts. In section two, I consider how the represented dog differs in texts created within the framework of indigenous knowledge, including origin stories, indigenous cinema and elder testimony regarding the sled dog cull in Canada's North in the mid-20th century. In section three, I return to the current media texts, and explore how they reproduce the racist rhetoric of the past.

The aim of my study was to validate the indigenous view of northern dogs in order to better incorporate local stories into animal welfare projects in northern Canada. Future interventions in this regard may include the use of cultural exchange activities between indigenous and non-indigenous partners in such projects (e.g. between local community groups and visiting veterinary teams); prioritization of narrative approaches to relationship-building; and the use of more culturally sensitive language in public relations and marketing texts.

Dedication

For Joe, and for Bernie and Belly, and all the others who have shared the prayer road and talked to the gods on my behalf

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Introduction: **Cue the Dog**

In late August 2012, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper made his annual trip north to promote resource development and Arctic sovereignty. It is a trip he has made every summer since he assumed office in 2006. That year, Harper travelled first to a tourism outfit near Yukon's capital city of Whitehorse, then to a copper and gold mine in Northwest Territories, then on to an oil and gas development hub. He went eastward to visit a research station his government funded in Nunavut, then backtracked for the grand finale: a demonstration by an elite team of Canada's military in Churchill, Manitoba. Considering his itinerary, it is evident that these trips are primarily about revenue generating, resource claim staking and nationalist chest thumping on the part of Harper and his government. They are about funding announcements (including one for a renewed search for the lost Franklin expedition), talking points and, of course, feel-good northern photo opportunities[1]. The image most editors chose to represent the 2012 prime ministerial tour was credited to Adrian Wyld of the Canadian Press, and appeared in numerous print and online publications covering Harper's Arctic junket. It showed the PM, dressed casually in a navy blue bomber jacket with the word "CANADA" emblazoned in bold block letters across the chest, and his wife Laureen[2], in a demure navy blazer, posing together at Caribou Crossing Trading Post in Carcross, Yukon. Between them was a playful husky puppy, a young member of "a group of sled dogs in training" (Levitz).

[1] In 2014, Prime Minister Stephen Harper triumphantly announced the discovery of one of Franklin's ships, the HMS Erebus, on the seabed of the Queen Maud Gulf. The find was supported by information gleaned from Inuit testimony (Varga), and was funded in part by the Arctic Research Foundation, an organization founded by former Blackberry mogul James Balsillie, who is Métis (McNab, Personal E-mail).

[2] Laureen Harper is a noted animal activist, focusing her efforts on cats. In 2014, while speaking at The *Just for Cats* video festival in Toronto (wearing black costume cat ears), she was heckled for paying such close attention to feline welfare issues while her husband's government allegedly neglects the more pressing issue of missing, murdered and indigenous women in Canada ("Laureen Harper Interrupted").

In many respects, the dog has become the go-to mascot of Stephen Harper's Arctic-obsessed tenure. His 2008 trip, for example, coincided with the biennial Arctic Winter Games, a gathering of the world's circumpolar athletes, and a showcase for their unique sports and culture. The iconic photo for that particular iteration of the Harper-in-the-Arctic narrative was one of the beaming Prime Minister mushing a team of sled dogs – *solo! for over an hour!* trumpeted the press report – across a frozen bay to attend his ministerial meetings in Yellowknife. He also met with Games' mushers, and stopped to autograph one of the sleds. Of course, behind every politician's photo op, canine-centered or otherwise, is a politician's agenda, and Harper's is clearly articulated each time he ventures beyond the 60th parallel. In 2008, for example, the PM tut-tutted that "[t]here are some here who retain an older, anti-development view of the North". But, he assured his audience, "[o]ur government does not share that [view]. The Great White North is as much a part of Canada's identity as the Red Maple Leaf" (Cotter). In 2012, he called the North and its future development "a national dream" (Levitz). Cue the dog.

This dissertation begins as an exploration of the figure of the northern dog in contemporary Canadian colonial culture, such as the photo ops and press stories cited above. Over the course of my research, I have encountered many versions of this animal in literature, film, fine art, advertising, product branding, poetry, comic books, radio serials, TV shows, song, media reports, and more. Dogs are everywhere, sometimes in unexpected places, often hidden just slightly from view, and the patterns of meaning that I see emerging from such representations, I will argue, have much to tell us about a story that non-indigenous Canadians have been telling themselves and others for centuries: the story of this country as "the True North."

What, precisely, is "North"? For the purposes of my work, it it important to establish that North is a myth, a construct. It is an imagined space, an idealized nation-image of "a place where it is always 40 below and people get around under the northern lights on dog sled" (Francis 1997). But in my quest to understand it, I have collected stories from real northern communities – in Labrador, Quebec and Nunavut, in the reserves of Northern Ontario, and as far west as Alberta and Yukon – and from real, contemporary cultures – Inuit, Innu, Cree, Ojibwe and more. My timeline is likewise expansive. I have encountered represented dogs from as far back as the first attempts at charting the Northwest Passage in the 16th century to the most recent attempts at delivering animal welfare services into northern communities in 2015. Dogs were there in the 19th century dashes to the north and south poles; and they are here, in contemporary Canadian tourism campaigns inviting southern urban dwellers to mush their very own team of sled dogs across a frozen northern frontier.

The term "sled dog" can likewise be a little misleading. Sometimes it is a "husky" we are seeing or reading about, sometimes a northern dog, sometimes a rez (reserve) dog. Maybe it actually pulls a sled, maybe it doesn't now or never did. Breeds vary: Alaskan Husky, Eskimo[3] Sled Dog, Malamute, Labrador Husky, lean racing hound of indeterminate genetic makeup, wolf-dog hybrid. I will leave matters of precise classification to the veterinarians and

[3] The term "Eskimo" remains a controversial one, its origins and rules concerning acceptable usage confusing. The Canadian Kennel Club does use the word in some breed designations (ckc.ca), while the Canadian government contends that its usage is no longer acceptable in reference to people, as it "is the term once given to Inuit by European explorers [and] is derived from an Algonquin term meaning 'raw meat eaters'"("Words First"). In *White Lies about the Inuit*, John Steckley voices his "support for [this] traditional interpretation", which dates back to 16th century English exploration. Later French fur traders used the term "Esquimaux". But he cautions that subsequent etymologies might call this into question. According to Steckley, "eskimo" originated with indigenous cultures with whom the Inuit had contact. Some of these do seem to refer to the term "raw", noting that "[i]t is not unusual for Aboriginal groups to refer to their neighbours in terms of what they eat" (20). However, more recent studies suggest the term actually means "snowshoe-netter" (according to Ives Goddard) or "other-land speaker" (according to Jose Mailhot) (both quoted in Steckley 21). To add to the confusion, the word "Eskimo" is still considered acceptable by the Inuit of Alaska ("Words First").

cynologists. For me, the common thread of note is a rhetorical and ideological equation of a certain figure of canine with a certain idea of "Canadianity". Of all the animal icons Canadian culture embraces (and they are legion: moose, beaver, loon, polar bear, seal), the northern dog occupies a remarkable place at the head of the pack. Intrepid. Adventurous. Instinctual. Courageous. Strong and free.

Prime Ministers know it. So, apparently, do psychology bloggers (this is an interdisciplinary study, after all). In February 2011, a Canadian psychotherapist named Brian Collinson weighed in on the long-standing and powerful national animal symbolism, writing an entry entitled "Psychotherapy and Instinct: Saving Our Inner Sled Dogs":

> In Canada, a sled dog is a highly symbolic creature. Such dogs and their role go far back in our psyche, millennia prior to the time of history in this country, when the European was not even a dream in the minds of the First Nations people of the North. It is said that humans would have never made it across the Bering Strait land bridge to North America in the ice age, had it not been for the sled dog. (Collinson)

He called our connection to the iconic animal "something ancient in the heart" (Collinson).

But whose heart? The northern dog as part of the Canadian psyche, as part of Canadian cultural memory, and as a major figure in Canadian culture, might seem obvious enough; these crucial tropes of interest are placed throughout this project. But immediately, deeper questions arise. Whose ancient heart? Whose history? Whose memory? Whose culture? And, perhaps more to the point, who cares? Or rather, why should anybody care today? I use two terms throughout this dissertation to help define the "who" of these urgent questions: indigenous and colonial. I use the word "indigenous" to refer to First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada. I use the term

"colonial" to refer to non-indigenous people, the State or a certain Eurocentric mindset. This is as much for ease of communication as anything else, used for those times when the need for a collective noun presents itself. "Terminology is a tricky rascal," Thomas King reminds us in *The Inconvenient Indian*. In his own justification for choosing potentially problematic nouns, he concludes, "I don't see that one term is much better or worse than another" (xiii). Thus, while "indigenous" for me comes to stand for a multiplicity of places, cultures and experiences, likewise "colonial" become shorthand for a range of races, eras and processes. Non-indigenous people came to Canada from many places and for many reasons: to visit temporarily or to settle permanently, to collect specimens or to conquer territories, for pleasure and for profit. Along the way, they have altered the environment, its original peoples, their economies and cultures in ways both active and passive[4], deliberate and unintentional. They used weapons as readily as bureaucracy, early assimilationist legislation as well as later mass media and pop cultural production.

An example: In July 2012, the magazine *Canada's History* (formerly *The Beaver*) published an issue commemorating the diamond jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. The cover image comprised a head shot of the young monarch wearing the Imperial State Crown (the one used for coronations, including her own in 1952). The crown, its massive jewels and solid gold insignia, purple velvet cap and ermine band, dominated the frame. The cover headline read "Canada's Queen", a neat parallelism to the magazine's own name, "Canada's History" (CH). An entire doctoral dissertation could be handily spun from the many threads of meaning that comprise this storied magazine alone, indeed, from this singular issue of the publication, as rich as it is in competing images of imperialism and indigeneity, animality and humanity, authenticity, and,

[4] See for example Hicks, Jack. "The Social Determinants of Elevated Rates of Suicide among Inuit Youth." *Indigenous Affairs* 7 (2007): 30-37.

ultimately, of Canadianity. From the tiny logo on the cover's lower left hand corner, which validates CH as a "Genuine Canadian Magazine", to the masthead blurb, which reminds readers that "*Canada's History* magazine was founded by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1920 under the name *The Beaver: A Journal of Progress*", there is within these 75 pages a veritable discursive storm crying out for further analysis. Even the new, seemingly more unambiguous brand, launched in 2010 to avoid online tittering over the sexual euphemism associated with the old, more symbolic one (animal symbolism, no less), seems to cry out for scholarly discussion on the question of who owns this nation, its past, its cultural memory. The seemingly banal possessive case – this is Canada's History, that's it, that's all – is all too simple in summarizing its subject matter. More complicated questions of precisely what – *and who* – constitutes Canada, indeed what view or version of history is catalogued within, bubble just below the deceptively transparent surface.

And then, there is this: tucked in amongst feature stories on the cover girl Queen and the Calgary Stampede, on Tecumseh and the RCMP's northern patrol, is a full-colour, full-page ad for a coffee table book created for the Hudson's Bay Company by chic New York publishing house, Assouline. It is a simple ad, in terms of its layout, text and imagery. The product is described as "a vivid tribute to the past and present of Hudson's Bay Company – told in a series of lush historical and contemporary images" ("Hudson's Bay"). Basic block imagery arranged in a linear style, stacked squares and rectangles, surround the text box. Inside these blocks are close-up photographs of the colour and texture of the famed HBC point blanket, alternating with close-ups of the book itself. The textile imagery is grasped at a glance, its unmistakeable stripes of blue, gold, red and green. The book, opened at strategic spreads, is a bit more subtle, and requires a closer look. Two images were chosen from among the 280 pages and 220 illustrations:

one is a black and white archival photo of an HBC "fort" in Alberta; it is a horizontal shot and forms the base of the ad, along with the logo and title of the book. The other image, full colour and more festive, occupying three graphic blocks, is from a painting of an HBC fur trader, clad in full HBC regalia, leading a sled dog train. The man dominates the foreground of the image; the dog follows behind. The title of this section of the commemorative book, which is revealed to be a pedantic alphabet of Canadiana, is "D [is for] Dog Sled".

That the HBC's history in Canada/of Canada merits "tribute" is already problematic, especially among some indigenous peoples (not to mention fur-bearing animals). I agree with the feminist blogger Emily Yakashiro's contention that the point blanket can be viewd as "colonialsm chic," a fashion accessory that has come to represent the exploitation of Canada's First Peoples, even as it continues to resonate with themes of national pride and patriotism (Yakashiro). But here, tucked within the soft and familiar folds of the still trendy blanket, the ad urges us to look closer. It draws us into the pages of the book it is selling. And there, wrapped within the familiar and the fashionable four stripes, the everyday and the unexceptional woolen weave, there is this ubiquitous figure, yet again, of the northern dog.

Why? What is the animal doing there? What does this animal mean? How does it mean?

My cursory reading of the Hudson's Bay Company advertisement, and the questions that emerge from it, offer a preview of the sort of analysis I propose to start with in this study, as I consider the wealth of Eurocentric cultural production in and about Canada that employs the image of the northern dog. This is a study, then, of *animal representation*: of the dogs in press photos, online blogs, marketing texts and more. This approach stems, in part, from Steven Baker's principle that "the animal [can] **only** be considered and understood through its

representations. There [is] no unmediated access to the real animal" (xvi). This is somewhat true on an individual level; personally, I have little direct relationship with northern dogs beyond what I have read, heard or seen through popular culture, and I would argue that this is the case for the majority of Canadians involved in mainstream culture. I've been a tourist, and taken a quick jaunt by dogsled through Ontario's cottage country, as many have. I had a somewhat rarer encounter (to be discussed in chapter 10) with an animal welfare group in a small First Nation, also in Ontario. I've toured a kennel near my brother's home in the Northwest Territories. But by and large, it is the howling huskies of Hollywood and the spunky mascots of university hockey squads that have coloured most of my experiences. So that is where I begin, with the representions that have shaped my own experience and understanding as a Christian, female, suburban, southern Canadian (more on this in the next section). The end goal of such a project is to rethink and reshape such representations (the dominant language and imagery conventionally used to depict the northern dog) so as to create better futures for both the *real* dogs and the people who share their spaces.

This approach also aligns with the constructivist theory of representation as defined by Stuart Hall. Hall defines "the work" of representation as "the production of meaning through language," language here being "broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system...to produce meaning" (28, 61). Things in and of themselves do not mean; members of a culture construct meaning in the system we use to represent real-world concepts. Hall notes that the representation system does not operate independently of the so-called real world, but rather that representation actually involves "three different orders of things... the world of things.... the mental concepts... and the signs" (61). For Hall, these levels comprise the basic building blocks of a culture, of how members of a culture "talk" to each other in order to be

understood, and to collectively produce meaning. For Canadians who hold membership in the dominant culture of the nation, then, representations such as the ones I touch on in this introduction, emerge from linkages between the real northern dog, what we think about that particular category of dog (as organized in a "shared conceptual map"), and finally, how we communicate with each other about that dog in order to make sense of the world around us.

Finally, as I hope can be seen in my brief textual readings thus far, I am interested in how this meaning reaches the level of myth, according to the definition and methodology of French semiologist Roland Barthes. The mediated northern dog (be it a politician's prop, a blogger's therapeutic touchstone or a corporate marketing totem) is meaningful to members of Canadian culture, meaningful in such a way that we can deploy this image in a variety of modes and still be able to communicate with each other. "We" (the target audience, the dominant culture) understand what the press image, the advertisement and the online musing mean. "We" get it. And we get it so immediately and so easily that the representations become ubiquitous, quotidian, banal. We do not question them. They seem perfectly at home in our everyday discourse. They seem neither historical nor cultural, contrived nor intentional, but rather natural. And here is where Barthes sounds the ideological alarm.

The dog that zips across the pages of the *Globe and Mail* – like the dog that is a comfortable part of popular psychological idiom, or the dog that is buried beneath the soft folds of the HBC point blanket in a magazine print ad – may seem obvious enough. But Barthes warns that these dogs are "falsely obvious" and he cautions us to be on heightened alert when it comes to such "decorative display of what-goes-without-saying" (xix). Members of a culture tend to "consume myth innocently, to see, passively, a natural relationship" between the representation and the reality. "The myth-consumer takes the signification for a system of facts: myth is read as

a factual system, whereas it is but a semiological system" (156). It is a system of signs, of representations that work to construct our reality and shape how we make sense of it. To look more closely at these myths, as I propose to do in the first part of this dissertation, is to follow Barthes as he works to expose the deeper meanings hidden within these seemingly ubiquitous and quotidian cultural products. "If one wishes to connect a mythical schema to a general history," instructs Barthes, "[and] to explain how it corresponds to the interests of a definite society, [what one is doing is] in short, to pass from semiology to ideology" (153). Beyond that, Barthes finds something more sinister: it is "ideological abuse" (xix). Myth as abuse? Small wonder Barthes described the myth system alternately as parasitism, colonization, robbery, predation, prostitution, invasion, kidnapping, degradation, corruption, and zombieism: a speech act that turns the language it feeds upon into "speaking corpses" (158). (The morbid metaphors will take on still deeper meaning later in my tale, as questions of animal deaths enters into the ideological exploration.)

Does a similar representational violence lurk beneath images of athletic sled dogs, cuddly husky puppies, or noble canine characters loping across the pages of a nation's proud history? This is certainly one of the questions driving this dissertation. What **ideological abuse** lies beneath the sign of the sled dog invoked by Harper, Collinson and the Hudson Bay Company? Each appeals to a certain vision of Canadian history and a certain version of Canadian identity, but whose history? Whose identity? Whose ancient heart? Whose memory? That the sled dog is somehow connected to the ancient heart of this country seems "true" enough. We see this spiritual and symbolic connection in the centuries-old cultural obsession with the dog's appearance and exploits, from the "wolfish forebears" of the film that launched a million Eskimo Pies (*Nanook of the North*), to their contemporary cousins in the sled dog tourism industry from

coast to coast to coast. But there are many stakeholders involved in these ostensible manifestations of the beating of an ancient heart: cultural producers and their audiences, indigenous people and state agents, human and non-human animals. And wherever there are stakeholders, especially the kind that fall so easily into such clear binary oppositions, there are questions of power. Who wields the power? Who lacks it? Who benefits? Who suffers? And it is here that my story of the northern dog in Canada really begins.

Notes on Positionality

But first, a bit about my own story. Inevitably when I am introducing myself to a new class of students, or delivering a conference paper or lecture on my research, someone will ask me why I decided to study dogs. My standard joke is that I come from a province that is named after two dog breeds – Newfoundland and Labrador – and so was destined to pursue a canine-centred vocation in one form or another. It is an admittedly feeble attempt at an academic ice-breaker, but one that actually belies some important points on the position from which I necessarily must approach this work.

I was raised in a middle-class suburb in Newfoundland, and am a descendant of the European settlers of that province. My father was of English and Scottish descent. My mother is an Irish Catholic, and my brother and I were schooled in her strong religious tradition. Like many Newfoundlanders, my cultural identity is very much grounded in my European ancestry, and I acknowledge that I am a member of Canada's colonial culture. In Newfoundland, in fact, we share a very intense cultural memory of colonization in that the original people who inhabited the island, the Beothuk, are widely considered to have been rendered "extinct" as a result of contact with my settler ancestors. This legacy is taught, in typically white-washed but slowly

improving ways, to every school child in the province. Of course, the extinction myth is itself a Eurocentric construct. In this case, the 'last of the tribe' trope typically revolves around the figure of Shanadithit (who died in 1829) to the exclusion of another woman, Santu, who lived until 1919. And of course, Beothuk blood still likely courses through the veins of many Newfoundlanders, those who identify as indigenous or otherwise, to the present day. Today there are several thousand Mi'kmaq currently registered with the Federation of Newfoundland Indians; they lived mainly along the island's south and west coasts, and central areas, on the same land they once shared with the Beothuk[5].

Being a Newfoundlander also means that my Canadian colonial membership is not without complications. Neither of my parents was born in Canada, yet both were born in Newfoundland. This conundrum makes sense when you remember that Newfoundland did not enter into the Canadian Confederation until 1949, and my mother and father were born in the 1930s, when Newfoundland was still an independent Dominion. Many people of their generation and subsequent generations believe that the vote to join Canada was fraudulent, and that Newfoundland history post-1949 has been one of exploitation and degradation at the hands of the Canadian federation[6]. Many of the issues indigenous people have faced, and continue to face in Canada today – forced resettlement, theft of resource revenues, loss of culture and persistent racist attitudes – are also felt to some degree by Newfoundlanders.

Then there is the matter of the decidedly dualistic makeup of my province itself. We are (officially, since 2001) Newfoundland *and* Labrador. Newfoundland is the island portion of the

[5] For more information, see Maura Hanrahan's fact sheet "Who are the aboriginal peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador?" available online.

[6] For a popular take on the Confederation controversy, I recommend the feature film *Secret Nation* (1992) written by Edward Riche and directed by Mike Jones. For a scholarly view, see Marland, Alex. "Masters of Our Own Destiny: The Nationalist Evolution of Newfoundland Premier Danny Williams." *International Journal of Canadian Studies / Revue internationale d'études canadiennes* 42 (2010). 155-181. Web.

province, and Labrador is the mainland portion. And if Newfoundland is a unique cultural entity within Canada, Labrador is a unique cultural entity within Newfoundland and Labrador. Its sub-Arctic and Arctic geography and climate are distinct from those of the island, and its current population includes three indigenous culture groups: the Inuit of Nunsatsiavut, the Innu of Nitassinan and the Métis of NunatuKavut. Even in the contemporary Newfoundland island imagination, Labrador still holds a certain mystique, in part due to its vast unpopulated landmass and unexplored wilderness, and in part due to associations with native tradition and spirituality.

Within these borders (actual and imaginary) of my home province, then, there exists a unique duality: Newfoundland and Labrador is simultaneously North and South, indigenous and non-indigenous. These same oppositions also co-exist in me. As a Canadian, I am part of the dominant culture. As a Newfoundlander, I am part of a minority culture that was, according to some, egregiously wronged by a questionable deal with the federal devil that saw our resources and cultural heritage squandered. As a Canadian, I am steeped in such southern sensibilities. As a Newfoundlander and Labradorian, I am connected to the land, and this land includes the indigenous north.

For me, this last point holds a personal significance: my father's family is from Labrador. My grandfather was born in a small coastal hamlet (long since abandoned), and was raised in the traditional northern culture of fishing, trapping and yes, travelling by dog sled. Stories of his exploits, and those of his trapper cousins and uncles, were part of my family lore, even though growing up in a suburb on the island meant I was two generations and a world away from such realities. One popular Riche family tale tells how my grandfather was responsible for transporting, via dog team, the famous medical missionary, Sir Wilfred Grenfell. Another

melancholy yarn recounts the time my grandfather abandoned a sickly sled dog on the melting spring ice, only to have the animal return the following winter.

The Riches of Labrador did not claim any indigenous heritage. In fact, many of them energetically denied it, and self-identified exclusively as settlers of European descent. I personally find it hard to believe that there was no mixing of indigenous and European blood in my family background; so many Labrador families were formed by such intermarriages (and other unofficial unions). Adding to the confusion is the fact that my surname, Riche, was originally Rich, one of the most common Innu surnames in Labrador. In a 1999 book, *The Labradorians: Voices from the Land of Cain*, Lynne D. Fitzhugh addressed the Rich(e) surname puzzle, and in doing so, offered some interesting insight on my family history, and particularly on my grandfather's first cousin, Isaac:

> The Rich family of Rigolet and North West River, said to have a Scots progenitor, also spells its name Riche and Ritch, variants that occur even among siblings. The [Inuk] Isaac Rich of Nain is not considered a relative. Nor are the Innu Rich/Riche families of Davis Inlet and Sheshatshiu, whose ancestors are said to include old Ned Richards, another Métis patriarch from the Gulf Posts, and an [Inuk] woman from Ungava. Isaac (Ike) Rich of the Rigolet-North West River group, a founder of *Them Days*[7], presents himself in his narratives as the quintessential settler. It is recklessly tempting to speculate that his facial features, knowledge of Innu customs and language, and his apparent empathy for the Naskapi reveal a relationship he was reluctant to admit. One can even imagine a marvelously peripatetic and prolific HBC Scotsman on the Labrador Peninsula

[7] *Them Days* is a quarterly magazine dedicated to the preservation of stories of early Labrador. It was founded in 1973. One of the founding researchers was my grandfather's cousin, Isaac Rich.

> in the early days of settlement, a man who by baptism or charm, assured that his progeny by women at each of his assigned posts would bear his name regardless of who raised them. (317)

The same "temptation" to seek indigenous roots has been a part of my own personal journey. The difference is that I do not see it as being reckless. In fact, it promises to be quite positive and productive, a source of great pride. It is a quest that is still ongoing.

Genealogical curiosity aside, I approach the work of this dissertation as a Newfoundlander and a descendant of Labradorians who has a great deal of empathy for and scholarly interest in, but little firsthand experience with indigenous issues in Canada. I must also reiterate that I have little firsthand experience with northern dogs. The dogs in my life have all been pampered pets, not working animals. My grandfather had sled dogs when he was a young man. But I only knew him as an old man who was incredibly introverted and not prone to share stories from his past. As noted earlier, my brother now lives in the North West Territories and once, while visiting him, I was able to take a brief tour of a local sled dog kennel. Finally, as a Master's student, I had the opportunity to complete a practicum by volunteering in Kashechewan in Northern Ontario. This brief stint comprised observing the operations of a mobile veterinary clinic in the community, where I met over a hundred northern dogs, up close and personal.

But I am by no means an expert. My personal interest in dogs and the north comes from my family connection to Labrador. My scholarly interest was sparked by my student practicum in Kashechewan, where I discovered a cultural divide existing between southern concepts of dogs and animal care, and northern indigenous views. My interest moving forward is in exploring my own understanding of northern dogs as it has been shaped by the dominant culture

in Canada, and then in tracing the history of the dog back to its origins on this continent to understand how the human-animal relationship might be different within an indigenous knowledge system.

There were serious challenges for me once I began my work on indigenous dogs, having acknowledged that I am a southern, Christian woman with little firsthand experience of dogs in the North. I did not take these challenges lightly, nor do I profess to have found perfect solutions to writing about the Other, be it human or animal. I found some guides (scholars, writers, teachers) who helped me, along the way, to do this research with rigor as well as respect. And as I described above, I hope that the dualistic cultural aspect of being a Newfoundlander served me well and that I have navigated this difficult terrain.

And so I begin in the domain where I am most at ease. I begin with the dominant culture and my own experience with northern dogs, an experience wholly mediated by the print and film industries. These are the represented dogs of Canadian colonial culture. They have been, much like their human counterparts in indigenous places across North America, depicted as "savage" and in need of intervention and salvation for centuries[8]. It is an attitude which persists into the present day. The twinned futures of indigenous people and their dogs, I will argue, rests squarely on the liberating and empowering potential of story as a vehicle for delivering them both from the confining myths of the Eurocentric cultural circuit, by reconnecting them to their lands and to the knowledge systems that have sustained them since the world began.

[8] For a detailed exploration of the origins of the "l'homme sauvage" trope as it is was applied to indigenous humans during French colonization in the 16th and 17th centuries, see Olive Dickason's *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984). As the title indicates, "savagery" as a marker for indigenous cultures is a myth, one rooted in Eurocentric concepts of evolutionary and racial superiority.

Chapter 1: **Dogs in Early Explorer Narratives**

Scientists from across various fields of study are currently investigating (and debating) the origin of the dog and its relationship to the human. Recent work tracing mitochondrial dog DNA back through the millennia seems to suggest the possibility that dog may have evolved from wolf somewhere in the range of 500,000 years ago, a breathtakingly long and deep history if true. But most likely not: the confusion of what precisely constitutes "dog" – as opposed to coyote, jackal, dingo or wolf – twist and tangle up the double helix here beyond absolute deciphering. Other scholars support a handful of different conclusions based on the more visual certainty of dog and human remains unearthed at various ancient campsites around the globe. The Goyet Cave site in Belgium, for example, featured a skull dated to approximately 31,000 years ago, and was seen in 2008 as a breakthrough in our understanding of canine origins; mainstream press coverage trumpeted the remains as evidence, at last, of "the world's first dog". Another finding in Siberia seemed to support this particular timeline. A skull found in the Altai Mountains was carbon dated to 33,000 years ago and seen as greatly resembling the contemporary breed of Siberian Husky. Most scientists in the field, however, cast their lot with the school of thought that dogs as we know them first emerged between 12,000 and 15,000 years ago, citing sites in the Jordan River Valley and the banks of the German Rhine where dogs were interred in a careful manner with their human counterparts (Coppinger, Derr, Franklin, Morey).

The debate howls on, and centres not just on the where and when of contemporary canine origins, but also the how. Conventional wisdom used to hold that early human ancestors spirited away wolf cubs from their cozy parental dens and employed a sort of rudimentary Ice Age breeding program in order to transform the wild animals into pliable hunters, haulers and companions. This domestication-by-human-design theory is now questioned by science, on the

one hand because it springs from outdated notions of Man at the control centre of evolution, and also because it seems to be technically and technologically impossible. Raymond Coppinger, an evolutionary biologist and sled dog musher, calls it the Pinocchio Hypothesis, because humans turning wolves into dogs is just as likely as a man turning a puppet into a boy, in other words, not terribly likely at all. Coppinger and his followers opt for a version of canine history that gives more agency to the wolves and proto-dogs that succeeded them. His scavenger hypothesis maintains that savvy, social wolf packs hung around human encampments to feed on their rubbish piles. The wolves who displayed less fear of the strange bipeds who were providing them with such marvelous fodder proved better suited to domestication, stuck with it, and eventually evolved into dogs. In this scenario, humans didn't choose wolves; the wolves chose us (Coppinger).

Or perhaps we chose each other. In recent years, these two core schools of thought have been adapted, added to and subtracted from by several other notable thinkers. Mark Derr points out that as hunters with similar skills sets, humans and wolves likely hung around each other for ages, sharing in the kill and wordlessly swapping tips on how to bring down the big game (2004b). The mutually beneficial reliance on the chase led to the evolution of a tamed, then domesticated wolf, i.e. the dog. Jon Franklin took this notion a few steps further, suggesting that this coming together of man and wolf actually affected changes in the size and scope of human and canine brains, a neurobiological cementing of the age-old bond (Franklin 254). Others chalk it up to hormones. Meg Daly Olmert, for one, points to the primary role of women in the creation of the dog, arguing that maternal instinct and in particular, the maternal hormone, oxytocin, drew women to animals. They cared for wolf pups, reared them as camp companions and thus

triggered the evolutionary changes that led to “dog”. Some studies claim that pre-historical women suckled wolf cubs as they would their own babies (Olmert 74).

Debates on origin of the dog, whether you embrace the evidence of mitochondrial DNA or the arrangement of ancient skeletal remains, whether you support the theory of shared brain matter or shared breast milk, all point to one underlying reality and that is this: *dog stories matter*. The ongoing quest for answers on the origin of “dog” demonstrates a passion for the animal and a zeal for representing the animal in the service of human endeavour that is undeniable. It is not just a desire to find facts. It is a desire to tell stories, to represent dogs (their origins, their history, their relationship to us) in a way that is meaningful. Science is story. It is myth. It is representation. It is a way of making sense of the world, and of communicating that sense to others. The narrative rules may differ from, say, film making or literature, but the end game is the same. Unravelling the mystery behind the bond is the scientific impulse behind the work summarized above. You can see it in the sub-titles of popular books, which recount the scientific work currently being undertaken: *The Lost History of the Canine Race: Our 15,000 Love Affair with Dogs* (Mary Elizabeth Thurston,1997); *Made for Each Other: The Biology of the Human-Animal Bond* (Meg Daly Olmert, 2009); *The Wolf in the Parlor: The Eternal Connection Between Humans and Dogs* (Jon Franklin, 2010); and *How the Dog Became the Dog: From Wolves to Our Best Friends* (Mark Derr, 2011).

The origin of the dog in pre-contact North America is framed with slightly more certainty in the scientific discourses (archaeology, anthropology, ethnocynology), this despite perpetual paradoxes. Among these experts, the consensus seems to be “that when the first people entered the Americas, they brought their dogs with them” (Cummins 2002, 15; see also Schwartz and Derr 2004b). It makes for a lovely image. Certainly it is one that dovetails with the impassioned

titles listed above: waves of the tribes of ancient Asia making their way across the grassy, boggy expanse of the Bering Strait land bridge during the Ice Age. Hunting, seeking, roaming, surviving: at their side, a company of brave, loyal, useful canines. That the archaeological evidence is sparse (Cummins 2002), and the written records non-existent (Derr 2004a) does not seem to deter contemporary writers from imagining an ancient and moveable partnership between two sets of prehistoric populations that set up camp in North America. Human and canine: an eternal connection. A 15,000 year love affair. How could it be otherwise? "Often dogs do not even appear in the indexes of early histories," laments Mark Derr. "They were ubiquitous and invisible, taken for granted like beer and rotgut whiskey, cooking pots, the labour of women and children, the diseases that regularly ravished people and animals, even the lives of slaves and indentured servants" (2004a x). Cooking pots, even shards of cooking pots, at least attracted archaeological attention. Animal remains were habitually tossed aside, destroyed, to make way for the real subject matter. Yet despite "scholarly indifference" and "sloppy, selective excavation practises" (Thurston 18, 16), the story persists. "[B]ecause dogs do not exist independently of human society, their story is finally our story as well" (Derr 2004a, x). Indeed, Mary Elizabeth Thurston calls them "the other native Americans" (146). They were "as plentiful as their masters" and as vital to the populating of the New World as the human animal, and as much a part of the mythology of the first and founding peoples of North America as any figure, animal or otherwise (146).

The story of the simultaneous settling of North America by people and dogs is a comfortable fit for the contemporary pet owner's imagination. Likely, the real story is more complicated, less Disney. Indeed, the Western tendency to reduce all things to one thing, to move from complex to simple, from layers and loops of grey to pure, satisfying black and white,

is an important part of the representation puzzle that needs to be addressed. Monoliths need to be approached with curiosity, if not with outright disbelief. From oversimplification emerge dangerous stereotypes. For example, it is erroneous to view all indigenous peoples in Canada as one cohesive group: the natives, the aboriginals, the Indians. In fact, there are 617 First Nations in this country ("Aboriginal Peoples"). Each has a different story. And for those that had or have dogs, each has a different dog story.

Bryan Cummins' book *First Nations, First Dogs* is an ethnographical (he coins the term cynoethnographical) survey of the various dog breeds associated with indigenous Canada. Cummins is among those who contend that when people came to the continent over 10,000 years ago, they had canine company. But as these inaugural settlers spread out across the vast landmass of North America, they developed into different "culture groups" – seven distinct ones to be precise – each ultimately setting down roots in a specific geographical area, and developing different languages, worldviews, economies and social structures. They also had different types of dogs. One of the earliest studies cited by Cummins and others is Glover Allen's *Dogs of the American Aborigines* (1920), which details 17 distinct breeds. Cummins contends there were nine in Canada at the time of contact, and analyzes in detail their specific role in each of these culture groups. Thus, while his work is not without its shortcomings (a reliance on written – read: European – texts is a major one), he does provide an important lesson on the diversity of First Nations people in Canada, and thus, for the diversity of First Nations dogs. "There is no single native breed of dog any more than there is a single Native culture," he states. "Similarly, the value that was placed upon the dog, the work that they performed and the esteem with which they were held varied from nation to nation" (2002, 315).

The seven culture areas around which Cummins structures his analysis are: the Arctic, the Eastern Subarctic, the Western Subarctic, the Eastern Woodlands, the Plains, the Plateau, and the Northwest Coast. The dogs are: the Plains-Indian Dog, the Sioux Dog, the Larger or Common Indian Dog, the Short-Legged Indian Dog, the Little Woolly Dog, the Hare Indian Dog, the Tahltan Bear Dog, the Nootka Dog and the Kimmiq. Cummins demonstrates how the role of the dog varied from culture to culture: some were haulers (of sled or travois) and hunters (or hunters' helpers); some were pets, and very much indulged; some were food, and very much eaten either in times of famine or as a matter of everyday subsistence. Within each culture group, Cummins further identifies differentiated sub-groups, again each varying in terms of the breed associated with the group, numbers of animals kept, their use and the degree of affection (or abuse or indifference) with which the dogs were treated. The Little Woolly Dog, in particular, is a stand out. Indigenous to the Northwest Coast of British Columbia, this creature was purposefully bred by the Coast Salish for its thick coat. Doted upon by Salish women, the animals were twice yearly shorn, their fur skillfully processed and woven to make blankets and clothing. Another indigenous canine notable: the White Dog of both the Iroquois and Ojibwe. It was raised for the express purposes of sacrifice during the sixth and final festival of the year (Cummins), and for Ojibwe medicinal rites (Angel).

Most significant for the purposes of this study is just which of the several breeds of dog that lived here at contact persisted into the mythos of the Canadian cultural imaginary. To be sure, it was not the furry little Salish dog who clothed the people of the coastal Northwest. Certainly, it was not the pure white dog being tossed on the fire to mark the Iroquois New Year. Neither of these animals is seen today on commemorative coins or Olympic merchandise or university sports jerseys. That space is reserved for some variation of the Northern (usually sled)

dog. They were a source of fascination from the earliest days of contact, and first entered into the circuit of colonial representation in the journals of polar explorers. Dogs also played a key role in explorers' exploits, as well as their epic failures. What precisely did the first European people in Canada think of the dogs of the North? The author of one of two significant histories of the dog, Mary Elizabeth Thurston, summarizes it this way: "Numerous accounts from early visitors to North America state that native groups had dogs that resembled coyotes or wolves. Those dogs were ill-mannered, often hungry, and treated casually or harshly, and had more of a howl than a bark" (Thurston 30). I will look at each of these characterizations in their turn, as they form the foundation for a certain image of the northern indigenous dog that persists to the present day.

Several of the first European men to venture into Canada's North wrote about the dogs they encountered, and either compared them to wolves, or labelled them as wolves outright. This signals more than a case of mistaken species identity. The sign of the wolf carries its own weighty mythological baggage, and seems to shed little of it when transposed onto the sign of the sled dog. "The wolf exerts a powerful influence on the human imagination," writes Barry Lopez in *Of Wolves and Men*. "It takes your stare and turns it back on you" (4). Wolves, then, are metaphorical mirrors. What resonates most with us is their knowing gaze, their familiarity, their humanity. To illustrate, Lopez summarizes an origin myth from the Bella Coola (Nuxalkmc) First Nation of British Columbia in which all animals were turned into complete human beings, except for the wolf, whose transformation was partial, so that it retained its human eyes. *And that stare*. As a result of this eerie mutual gaze, Lopez claims, "[p]eople wanted to explain the feelings that come over them when confronted with that stare - their fear, their hatred, their respect, their curiosity" (4). All of these impulses likewise arose when non-indigenous men first discovered the northern dog. More to the point, Lopez concludes, borrowing from Joseph

Campbell's view on men and their gods, that men do not discover their animals. They created them.

Glover Allen (1879-1942) in his still highly cited 1920 monograph *Dogs of the American Aborigines*, created 17 different breeds of indigenous dogs. What follows is his entry on the "Eskimo Dog". It is the first breed he catalogues in the work.

> Size large, appearance wolf-like, but with less oblique eyes, less attenuated muzzle, and more elevated forehead; tail carried curled forward over the hip; teeth much smaller than those of the Wolf. Pelage thick, with a shorter under fur overlaid with longer hair which on the shoulders may be as much as eight inches long; tail bushy. Color whitish, more or less clouded on the back, with dusky, or varying to black, or black and white, or rarely tan and white. (442)

Allen was an American zoologist, librarian and lecturer whose area of expertise was in publishing scientific taxonomies of exotic animals. Among his other titles: *Mammals of China and Mongolia*; *Bats*; and *Mammals of the West Indies*. The *Dogs* text is clearly written in the positivist scientific tradition. It was published in the *Bulletin of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College*, and, on the surface, is a meticulous catalogue of empirical data: observable, objective and universal. But look closer: Allen's ideology is showing. As he elaborates, for example, on his description of the Eskimo Dog, Allen quotes a 1911 article *The Indian sled dogs of North America* from the journal *Recreation*. The author is T.W. Thorndike, a Harvard grad and dermatologist by trade; he was a member of the Arctic Club of America, an explorer and collector. Thorndike claimed that "[i]n general, the Eskimo Dog differs from the Indian variety in being more wolfish and in having less European strain" (445). Thorndike also

claims that “the canine of the American aborigine, or Amerind, was simply a tame wolf” (Ibid.). As a collector of Arctic curiosities and promoter of polar exploration, Thorndike’s imperialist bent is fairly transparent. His description of the northern dog as either “wolfish” or “wolf”, a description subsequently adopted by Allen in his definitive text, displays an ethnocentric bias: the same impulse that characterized indigenous humans as less-than-human characterized indigenous dogs as less-than-dog. In other words, they were untamed beasts, closer on the biological continuum to nature than to culture. The racist tones are apparent even in Allen’s seemingly neutral account of the sled dog colours. They were “whitish” (read: not white), cloudy or dusky (read: not pure), and elsewhere, quite simply, black. This exoticization or Othering of the sled dog can be viewed as operating in tandem with the animalization and Othering of the Inuit. Dark animal fur, as with dark human skin, was readily accepted as a marker of mystery and perhaps evil. There was a hint of something sinister. Darkness was difference. Note Allen’s explanation of the unique tail of the “Eskimo” Dog:

> The fact that the curled tail carried over the hip is so widely characteristic of certain breeds of the Old World dogs, where it seems to have been known from ancient times, implies that it originated there and strengthens the view that the Eskimo Dog *came from Asia* with the Eskimo. (445, emphasis mine)

It is a contention that at once endorses the ancient connection between First People and First Dogs, as well as implicitly the Beringia theory of the populating of North America. However, it also serves to distance these indigenous people and their dogs from their own land, by “strengthening the view” that they are not indigenous at all, but instead Asian. They are from there, not here.

Glover Allen's work represents the culmination and codification of hundreds of years' worth of Arctic exploration, which had occurred by 1922. In *Dogs of the American Aborigines*, he cites for example the voyages of Martin Frobisher (1535-1594). Frobisher was a merchant, explorer, privateer and one of the first Englishmen to sail the northeast coast of the New World in the late 1500s. He made three voyages in search of the fabled Northwest Passage, and is often credited with one of the first sightings of my homeland, Labrador, and of course the Nunavut bay that bears his name. Frobisher's trio of historic treks is often remembered for his ambitious and ultimately futile extraction and shipment of tonnes of gold ore home to England to promote and fund his project. It turned out to be iron pyrite – Fool's Gold. The voyage records also speak of bloody interactions with the Inuit (kidnappings, mutinies and murders); of a desire to introduce the indigenous people to the wares of English trade; and of curiosity and wonderment at the unfamiliar animals of the New World. In one passage chronicling the third voyage, his crew "found a dead fish floating, which had in his nose a horn, straight and torquet, of length two yards lacking two inches" (Hakluyt ch. 5). It was a narwhal carcass; they took it for a "sea unicorn" (Hakluyt ch. 5). In another passage detailing a violent encounter with the Inuit encampment Frobisher would later call Bloody Point, the indigenous people are described as "altogether void of humanity"; a female elder is described as "a devil or a witch, [and the crew] had her buskins plucked off to see if she were cloven-footed." Despite her "ugly hue and deformity," they let her go (Hakluyt ch. 5). In the passages cited by Allen, the Inuit dogs seem to occupy a similar supernatural category as demons and unicorns. They were, according to the expedition logs, "dogges like unto wolves, but for the most part black, with other trifles, more to be wondred at for their strangenesse, then for any other commoditie needful for our use" (Allen 448). Here, the dogs are objects of colonial curiosity: exotic, mysterious and dark. The

description reveals the strictly utilitarian spirit of Frobisher's quest – resource extraction – as the uncanny canines are summarily dismissed due their low use-value. The Inuit dogs are objects of wonderment, not commodities. The attempt to situate the indigenous dog in the discourse of a trade economy would prove to be disastrous in later chapters of Inuit/Non-Inuit relations.

Many others, of course, would travel to Arctic Canada in search of the Northwest Passage. They encountered first peoples and their dogs. And they reacted to both with equal measures of disdain and violence. John Davis came in 1585, and had a memorable encounter at Cumberland Sound:

> The 15 [August] we heard dogs howle on the shoare, which we thought had bene Wolves, and therefore we went on shoare to kil them. When we came to land, the dogs came presently to our boate very gently, yet we thought they came to prey upon us, and therefore we shot at them and killed two: and about the necke of one of them we found a letheren collar, and whereupon we thought them to be tame dogs. There were twentie dogs like mastives with prickt ears and long bush tayles. (qtd. in MacRury 11)

That members of the Davis expedition mistook the dogs for wolves is just the tip of the ideological iceberg in this short personal experience narrative. The entire episode is couched in tacit militaristic terms. Davis is in the middle of a territorial conquest. As the men advance towards the foreign shore, an enemy guard appears and sounds a battle cry: the wolfish, mysterious "howle". Guns are drawn, and the eternal conflict of man versus nature is enacted. Alas, when they have the chance to examine their vanquished foe up close, they find it bears the insignia of their own cause of civilization: the leather collar of a "tame dog". Davis concludes

that these are not wolves after all. They appear to be some breed of mastiff, a known entity, an ally.

Centuries later, the American Elisha Kent Kane came in search of the doomed Franklin expedition, with the hopes of continuing that failed quest for the Passage and also an attempt to reach the North Pole. This was now 1853, the Victorian era, and Kane questioned not only the wild aspect of the wolfish dogs, but also their trustworthiness, and thus, their morality. After taking a team of dogs on board his ship, Kane concluded that they were

> an unruly, thieving wild-beast pack... Not a bear's paw, a basket of mosses or any specimen whatever can leave your hands for a moment without their making a rush at it, and after a yelping scramble, swallowing it at a gulp. I have seen them attempt to eat a whole feather bed, and here, this very morning, one of the brutes has eaten up two birds' nests which I had just gathered from the rocks – feathers, filth, pebbles and moss. (qtd. in Thurston 148)

The animals simply could not be controlled and, on one occasion, they jumped ship and ran off. Kane found the "miscreants, fat and saucy, beside the carcass of a dead narwhal" (Ibid.). Compared to the "noble team of Newfoundland dogs" he had on board already, the "Eskimo" dogs he added to his crew proved to be little more than "ravening wolves" (Derr 2004a 167). They were, in other words, uncivilized.

Another aspect of the northern dog, which seems to have captured the imagination of early polar explorers, and which continues to echo through contemporary representations, was its unique vocalization – the howl. Edward Parry (1790-1855) wrote in *Journal of the Third Voyage for the Discovery of a North-West Passage* that the dogs he encountered "never bark, but have a

long, melancholy howl like that of the wolf, and this they will sometimes perform in concert for a minute or two together" (516). Clearly, this distinctive sound is being interpreted as auditory proof of the indigenous dog's kinship with the wild wolf. They do not bark, as the civilized European dog does; but rather howl "in concert" with their beastly brethren. The howl thus positions these animals as Others, as ones that are foreign and strange, not speaking the same language, as it were, of refined continental canines. These New World dogs speak wolf. This is of course a human projection.

Barry Lopez describes the wolf's howl this way:

> It typically consists of a single note, rising sharply at the beginning or breaking abruptly at the end as the end as the animal strains for volume. It can contain as many as twelve related harmonies. When wolves howl together, they harmonize, rather than chorus on the same note, creating an impression of more animals howling than there actually are. [...] It is a rich, captivating sound, a seductive echo than can moan on eerily, and raise the hair on your head. (38)

Lopez also quotes an Alaskan trapper named Alda Orton who says of the howl: "It was wild, untamed music [that] sent a queer shivering feeling along my spine" (39). George Sutton in 1936 referred to it as "the anthem of the North Country" (Montcombroux 8)

It was music all right, but the tune didn't conform to the conventions of music to which these European and American men were accustomed. It sounded more like the wind: unstructured, uncomposed, random, natural. It did not register with the syntax of the bark, clipped and definitive, like a word or sentence, like a human utterance. It was ethereal and endless. It was also a gross misreading. Subsequent decades of research have revealed that the

howl of the wolf and its descendant dogs is more likely a sound not of loneliness and melancholy, but of socializing and perhaps even "jubilation" (Lopez 38). It is a call to assembly or to alarm, or simply basic communication across great distance (Ibid.). And while it may be triggered by anxiety at separation from the pack, it can also signal "celebration and camaraderie" (39). What explorers such as Parry "heard", then, was an echo of their own fear. They were lonely and unsure of their place in this vast and peril-filled landscape. What they interpreted in the howl of wolf, and subsequently the new breed of dog they encountered, was their own alienation from the land, their own fears projected onto this new auditory experience. What's more, they sought to frame the data, as it were, in a language system that was meaningful to humans, specifically to those of European descent: the language of music. They heard the sounds as a concert, as a chorus, as a harmony. And because it was equated with an expression of human emotion – solitary notes in an ostensibly minor key – the howl was defined as a sound of sadness. Here on a strange frontier where even the most familiar of creatures seemed uncannily unfamiliar, the most quotidian of sounds rang through as strange, sad and sinister. Nature cried out to be captured in the discourse of (symphonic) culture.[9]

As a final reinforcement in the discursive formation, polar explorers and scientists were not content to disparage the indigenous dog. They also felt compelled to disparage the indigenous sled dog driver. In many of these early colonial texts, the "savagery" of the wolfish dog was matched only by the cruelty and ineptitude of the indigenous people who relied on them. Knud Rasmussen (1879-1933) was a Danish explorer and anthropologist, whose greatest claim to fame was as leader of the Fifth Thule Expedition, a massive archaeological and

[9] In her MA thesis on colonial and indigenous discourse of the dingo in Australia, Merryl Parker describes a similar settler misinterpretation of that animal's howl. "We humans expect to interpret the howl without consulting the dingo. The settlers moved to re-establish their authority of the dingo and its howl in two ways": literally, with poison and discursively, through representation (67).

anthropological survey of Inuit lands and culture. He was also of mixed European and Inuit ancestry, and for the most part, exhibited a great deal of respect for indigenous northern people, their knowledge and technology. In fact, as part of his famed expedition, Rasmussen spent 16 months travelling by dog sled from Canada's eastern Arctic westward to Alaska, an endeavour that would be dubbed *The Great Sled Journey*, and recounted in his exploration epic *Across Arctic America* (1927). Not surprisingly, Rasmussen's journals included several sections of commentary on sled dogs. Surprisingly, he seems to have concluded they were not well treated by their Nestilik drivers, an observation seconded by his sled-mate on the Thule Expedition, Therkel Mathiassen.

Netsilik Inuit lived on an expanse of the eastern Arctic in what is primarily modern day Nunavut. In his comprehensive report from the Thule Expedition, during which time Rasmussen lived and worked among the Inuit, the explorer devotes a brief but detailed section, entitled simply "The dog", to his observations on the care, training and lore of the Netsilik canine. "[It] will be only natural," he notes, to include this data as part of his broader work on "life on the sea and ice", thus hinting at the ubiquity and acknowledged utility of the animal. He begins by describing the dog as "the faithful and indispensable domestic animal of the Eskimos" (148). It is a characterization that would appear to jibe with contemporary conceptions of the northern dog as an integral element of traditional northern society. Rasmussen describes how puppies are well cared for and much time is devoted to their development and training as draught animals. They are involved in significant spiritual practises, such as the placement of a seal tooth amulet around the neck to strengthen the dog's bite, as well as in certain cultural taboos: "no man," for example, "may eat dog flesh, and their skins must never be used for clothing or sleeping rugs" (150). Dogs are also named, a practise that would seem to denote their individuality and the intimacy that

they experience in human society. Rasmussen recounts one touching story in which an elderly woman named her dog after her estranged daughter. Feeding the animal gives her comfort, she says, as it convinces her that the namesake child is being well fed also (150).

Yet for all the attention the Netsilik seemed to have paid to their dogs in Rasmussen's estimation, some aspects of his report are at odds with contemporary cultural representations of the northern dog. For one, the Netsilk of the early 20th century kept relatively few dogs – one or two was most common – and relied more on human power to pull their sledges. This is determined to be a result of the difficulties of maintaining large numbers of animals when food was scarce; dogs "mostly live on refuse and bones" (148). Long journeys are rarely made, and when they must be undertaken, an Inuk must cobble together enough dogs from the community to make it feasible. Rasmussen views owning a team of sled dogs as a "luxury"; few Netsilik have what he deems to be "a *real* team" and in his experience "there is no *real* sledge driving" (148, emphases mine). The familiar representation of an Inuk mushing seven or even ten dogs as he ventures across an endless expanse of Arctic wilderness is thus challenged by reality as defined by Rasmussen. The sign of a "team", with its connotations of animal camaraderie, cooperation and even competition, is dispelled. The Netsilik did not have "teams". They had single dogs. Further, Rasmussen concludes, the image of a sled dog as a powerful hauler of the sled is erroneous: "As a draught animal," he writes, "[the dog] might well be dispensed with" (148). The dog's talents as a tracker and killer of large prey far eclipsed its transportation value. It displayed a marvelous knack for locating seal breathing holes, and bringing musk ox and polar bear to bay, activities Rasmussen recorded in great detail. It is interesting to consider this observation in the context of the imperialist discourse already discussed: Rasmussen admired the natural and instinctual displays of a predatory creature; once harnessed by culture, the animal

does not conform, it does not appropriately defer. It is not amenable, like a horse, perhaps, or a yoke of oxen, whatever was the fashion in the fields or streets of 19th century Denmark. These animals might make fine wolves, but they make lousy dogs.

They were wild, untamed, uncivilized, as were the people who kept them. Rasmussen noted in several instance that, contrary to the "great attention lavished on the pups", adult dogs were treated with great cruelty by their Inuit masters. The explorer rationalizes this paradox, saying:

> The general severity with which dogs are treated, often distressingly evident, is by no means the outcome of any underrating of their qualities and whole importance to the community, but simply the lack of feeling towards animals that is so common among primitive people. (149)

That he rationalizes the paradox with another paradox does little to soften his view of the Netsilik's treatment of their dogs.

In his own records, Therkel Mathiassen supported Rasmussen's view of an asymmetrical and abusive relationship between Inuit and the dogs they kept. The ethnographic work of the Fifth Thule Expedition was split among several of its participants, and for his part, Mathiassen tackled the material culture of the Iglulik, a linguistically and culturally distinct nation living north of the Netsilik. Like Rasmussen, he noted that this community of Inuit had few dogs, primarily due to the difficulty of feeding them well and consistently. Like Rasmussen, he also observed that puppies were given names; they were protected and pampered until they were ready for the harness; but then "they often have to be whipped terribly before they learn" (81). Mathiassen, in a section of his technical report with the rather bureaucratic title "Means of

Conveyance", gives a highly descriptive and detailed first-hand account of human-canine interactions, and as Cummins characterizes it, "the picture he paints is not pretty" (59).

Mathiassen credits the discovery of the Iglulik region to W.E. Parry, calling him "one of the greatest names in the history of discovery" (4), and seconds Parry's contention that Iglulik Inuit treated their dogs "as an unfeeling master his slaves; that is, they take just as much care of them as their own interest is supposed to require" (81). This master-slave relationship is further defined in spatial terms. When the divide between animal space and human space is transgressed, the result is physical aggression on both parts. In one episode, Mathiassen illustrates how the animals, driven mad by constant deprivation, attack the camps of their human masters. Like Elisha Kane's experience in Cumberland Bay, these dogs are also represented as the enemy, but instead of a shoreline guard patrol, here they are an advancing army, breaching the border between domestic/wild, master/slave, and human/animal:

> If the dogs break in at night – an experience I have had twice on Southampton Island – it is most unpleasant. A dog manages to get the door open and, in a second, the house is overrun with dogs; they bolt in, overturn the lamp and put the room in darkness, snap up everything eatable. The Eskimos, who have to creep about naked on their rugs, become quite desperate and strike out at the dogs with anything they can get a hold of, axes, snow-knives, snow-beaters, the house soon becoming a battlefield resounding with blows, tremendous yells and the scolding of the Eskimos. (84)

There are connotations here of violation and contamination, as well as of uprising and rebellion. This is a canine mob: one dog inciting the actions of a marauding gang of them. Note that dogs in the cultures Mathiassen and Rasmussen studied are traditionally kept outside: both

men describe the movement of the animals in this habitat as “roaming”, which has further negative connotations of a dangerous or subversive behaviour, one unmonitored, uncontrolled and unregulated. In the passage above, a breach of the socially approved spheres results in a dangerous reversal of essential categories: the dogs act human by opening the door; humans act like animals creeping about naked on fur mats. It is positively apocalyptic: light turns to darkness and a battle is joined. The sacrosanct space of the “house” is transformed into a “battlefield.”

Throughout his report, Mathiassen focuses on the feeding of dogs, which he describes as sporadic, “simple” and, in an interesting turn of phrase, “promiscuous”, as a root cause inciting such attacks. Iglulik dogs are perpetually driven by their disgusting appetites and a quest to “snap up everything eatable”, a potential menu that includes “refuse... entrails... [and] the contents of the stomachs of caribou” as well as tent guy ropes and, perhaps ironically, sledge components such as caribou hide harnesses and lashings (82). In a pair of particularly damning excerpts, he notes:

> Human faeces are regarded as a great delicacy [to the dogs], a circumstance which can involve much unpleasantness if one is not armed with a whip or stick. (83)
>
> If the dogs see anything dark lying on the snow in front [of the sled] – most often dog excrement – the speed increases tremendously in the hope that it is something eatable. (86)

The dogs/slaves are thus motivated by the basest of instincts, violate the most basic of taboos by eating bodily waste, and require constant monitoring and usually brutal control. The humans/masters unfortunately are not particularly up to this challenge, and are depicted by Mathiassen as “exceedingly poor drivers” whose sledge journeys are notable for their “slackness

and disorder" (85). The romantic notion of great northern treks across of many miles of frozen wilderness with noble dogs pulling tremendous loads is "by no means the norm", according to the Dane (87). Instead, the movement of the Iglulik by this traditional "means of conveyance" is represented as slow-paced, arduous, clumsy, and punctuated by generous cracks of the caribou skin whip.

Yet, for all the brutality of Arctic life, Mathiassen ultimately concludes that the Iglulik and their dogs were a happy little crew, an assessment that does not carry entirely positive connotations. Mathiassen and others viewed indigenous people as sub-human creatures who blindly accepted their lot in life, and who were grateful for the small blessings Arctic life tossed their way. They were seen as innocents, labouring away in blissful ignorance in the face of harsh northern reality. So too were their animals. If this seems a familiar depiction, it is because it is virtually a note-for-note analogy to the Happy Slave or Happy Darkey Myth of the American slave era. According to such "impudent images", African Americans were seen as "submissive, singing and dancing, and resigned to their 'proper place' on the plantation of the 'good ol' days'" (Mellinger 4). They were "portrayed as content in their slavery – protected, controlled, and productive" (Ibid.). At the same time, slaves "are seen as unable to adapt to freedom – reverting to the animalistic, violent brutes they 'naturally' were" if the benevolent hand of the Master was taken away (Ibid.).

Similarly, Matthiassen noted that Inuit dogs were

> always very harshly treated, seldom get more food than will keep up their strength, often have to go through long periods of hunger, are thrashed and kicked at every opportunity

> and are often whipped in a most frightful manner; but they are an uncowable breed who remains cheerful in spite of nearly everything." (81-82)

The Inuit themselves

> bear all these trials and troubles with astonishingly good humour and look upon it all as the most natural thing in the world. (90)

In addition to their ostensibly innate cheerfulness, Inuit and their social units were seen, by Mathiassen, Rasmussen and others, as being childlike in status and stature. They are described, quite literally, as "little". Mathiassen uses the term "the little family" in his report; Rasmussen includes the following word picture to illustrate the incompetence of the Inuit in assembling and driving a real dog team. He describes an encounter with "a very unpretentious sledge turn-out – a half-grown boy with a little sledge, drawn by a half-grown dog and a tiny pup" (88). They are "unpretentious", that is without guile or sophistication. They are "half-grown", that is, not developed or evolved. They are, both human and canine alike, immature, childlike, and always decidedly *less than*.

In sum, Cummins was correct. This early character sketch of the northern dog was not a pretty picture. The dogs of the Inuit, European explorers noted as they lived and worked among the Netsilik and Iglulik people in the early part of the 20th century, were not at all like animals in Europe. For that matter, as noted by both Rasmussen and Matthiassen, they were not even like the presumably finer dogs of the Greenland Inuit. The roaming dogs of Canada's Arctic were not tethered. They were not permitted inside Inuit dwellings, and they were fed in what appeared to be somewhat sporadic fashion, all of which contributed to their wild and dangerous aspect. And all of these conclusions, pieced together to create a certain representation of the northern dog,

were crafted according to a decidedly European measuring stick. It was a representation that would shape future encounters between state agents and the Inuit.

One of the interesting paradoxes in the way European and American explorers characterized the dogs of Arctic indigenous people is that, while dogs were often represented as wild, starving, unpredictable and not amenable to the harness, and while Inuit drivers were seen as cruel and inept, the indigenous technology of Arctic sledge travel was readily adopted by many of these same explorers to achieve their own ends. While Rasmussen initially felt that the dogs as draught animals could handily be dispensed with, and while Mathiassen felt the Inuit "were exceedingly poor dog drivers who shouted at the dogs incessantly and used the whip mechanically, as when one is rowing a boat", both men needed canine and indigenous know-how in order to mount their legendary Great Sled Journey (85). For his part, Elisha Kane would learn to appreciate the dogs' "power and speed, their patient enduring fortitude, their sagacity in tracking these ice morasses, among which they had been born and bred" (qtd. in Derr 2004a 167). Indeed, the history of Arctic (and Antarctic) exploration, until recently, seems to rise and fall on the exploits of the northern dog. Those who respected and adopted the traditional mode of transport succeeded. Those who refused the power and wisdom of canine haulers and navigators were doomed to monumental failure.

Sir John Franklin learned that lesson the hard way. In 1822, the British explorer set out to map the Northwest Passage – that hoped for water route through the Canadian Arctic from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast – and to amass untold glory, fame and wealth. What he earned instead was the unfortunate nickname, "the man who ate his shoes". Franklin's crew simply did not pack enough provisions to last them on the arduous journey westward, and they were reduced to boiling their boot leather and drinking the broth to stay alive. Undeterred, Franklin mounted a

second expedition in 1845. This time, rations would be no issue. Franklin's team employed the latest in Western technology to preserve and package over 13,500 kilograms of meat, vegetables and soup in 8,000 tins. He also took 61,987 kilos of flour, 16,749 litres of liquor, 909 litres of "wine for the sick" and 4,287 kilos of chocolate (Beattie and Geiger 15). His two vessels, the *Erebus* and the *Terror*, were modified warships, reinforced with iron hulls and equipped with locomotive engines, cork-screw propellers, "and other advantages of modern science" to cut through the stubborn Arctic ice with ease (12). The ships were further provided with a steam apparatus to warm the berths, de-salinators for the galley stoves, massive libraries of over 1,200 volumes, pianos and the relatively new invention known as the camera. Indeed, "no arctic expedition had ever been so lavishly outfitted" (14). The one item Franklin neglected to take on board would accelerate his infamous downfall: he had no dogs, and no knowledge of the importance of dogs in North. This decision would prove fatal when the ships became stuck in ice and the men had to go ashore to wait for the summer thaw. The Franklin expedition set sail from Greenland on 12 July 1845; by August they were never heard from by Europeans again.

Vilhjalmur Stefansonn, an early 20th century explorer from Manitoba, would later say "the chief failure of the Franklin expedition, and other nineteenth-century British explorers of the Arctic, was in their refusal to respond to the harsh environment by adopting the survival techniques used by the Inuit" (Beattie and Geiger 49). Indeed, Inuit testimony about encounters with the strangely outfitted and foolhardy white men would later confirm that Franklin's men pulled their heavily-laden sledges themselves, "were dressed in white man's clothes" and "had no dogs" (Potter). "The man who ate his shoes" died, dogless, somewhere in the Canadian Arctic. His high-tech ships remained wedged in the brutal ice, and then sank. Some Canadian

researchers believe his men died of lead poisoning from the canned food, although this theory seems to be on the verge of being debunked (McDiarmid).

An 1852 trip to determine the fate of the Franklin expedition offered some too-late lessons on survival in the Arctic. The Canadian William Kennedy led a small crew westward from Aberdeen by way of Greenland, financed by Lady Franklin to search for traces of her husband's doomed journey. Kennedy, the son of a Hudson's Bay Company factor and a Cree woman, had spent time among the Inuit of Labrador being tutored in their survival technologies, and generously acknowledged indigenous know-how throughout his account of the voyage. He credited the success of his project (he didn't determine Franklin's fate, but did return to Europe with no lives lost) to various modes of "Indian" and "Esquimaux" knowledge: snowshoes, snow houses, moccasins, winter clothing, snow goggles, hunting and freezing techniques, and of course, sledges, harnesses and dogs. The dogs are singled out for credit, noted by Kennedy for their navigational prowess (returning to the ship in the midst of a blinding hurricane that stymied the human troop) and guarding skills (scaring a bear away from an encampment). Unlike other draught animals, the harsh Arctic elements seemed to bolster the dogs' spirits: "We found their strength and vigour were the reverse of impaired by their bivouac in the snow" (98). Reflecting on the "six powerful Esquimaux dogs" procured in Upernavik, Greenland, Kennedy wrote: "We soon found that we required the united efforts of both men and dogs to get along at all, and accordingly for the rest of the journey we pulled together in the most amicable and fraternal style imagineable" (95). Ironically, considering the objective of Kennedy's quest, the dogs did quite well dining on shoe leather and other scraps: "On this fare, they not only lived, but thrived wonderfully" (149). The "Esquimaux dog" was, in Kennedy's estimation, "the camel of these

northern deserts – the faithful attendant of man, and the sharer of his labors and privations" (139).

The Northwest Passage would eventually be navigated successfully in 1903 by an intrepid Norseman named Roald Amundsen. Amundsen would lavish credit for his expedition's success squarely on the heads of some 20 members of his crew who, like Kennedy, he had taken aboard during a stopover in Greenland: his Greenland huskies. Amundsen had lived among the Inuit for two years in preparation for his expeditions, and learned firsthand the indigenous knowledge required to live on the frozen land. "This was his real university," says polar historian Roland Huntsford, "and the Inuit were his professors" (*Arctic Passage*). Huntsford says the Polar Inuit who helped Amundsen were a "highly technological tribe," but theirs were technologies of the West that Franklin had placed such misguided stock in. From Inuit elders, Amundsen learned to dress for the climate (in loose garments to let the air circulate, rather than in layers and layers of tightly woven clothes). He learned how to coat the runners of his sledges with moisture to make them glide more easily across the ice. Perhaps most importantly, he learned the value of the dogs. It would take Amundsen an extra year of polar schooling to master this difficult indigenous skill, much to the confusion of his crew, who felt neglected by his affection for the Inuit and unsure of the ultimate value of time spent among them. But Amundsen's tutelage was worth the time taken. Indeed, writing later on another notable achievement – his trek to the South Pole in 1911 – Amundsen criticized fellow explorers who had failed to take into account the necessity of adopting this Inuit mode of survival. Upon encountering his competitor, Robert Falcon Scott, on the race for the South Pole, Amundsen offered Scott's team half of his dogs, but was surprised when

> [t]hey refused. All my experience in Polar work had convinced me that dogs were the only practicable draught animals for use in snow and ice. They are quick, strong, sure-footed, intelligent, and able to negotiate any terrain that man himself can traverse. (Amundsen 67)

Scott, instead, opted to soldier on with his team of "motor sledges, which had immediately demonstrated their impracticability over the surface of ice and snow" and "a number of Shetland ponies" (Ibid.). The motorized sledges failed due to the extreme cold. The ponies were shot because they could not withstand the weather. Scott perished from a combination of hunger, exhaustion and exposure.

Chapter 2: The Northern Dog and the Moving Image: Edison and Nanook

Explorations of all sorts were going on at the turn of the century, concurrent quests for all kinds of holy grails. Some were geographical: the New World, the North West Passage, the earth's prized poles. Some were geological: copper and gold and assorted riches of the earth. Some were ethnographic or entrepreneurial in bent: the mad rush to capture, collect and display exotic people for oddity-obsessed audiences back home. At the same time, as the frontiers of terrestrial space and social science were being opened up, so too were the frontiers of film, an exciting new technology and a thrilling new medium that, like the travels of Kane, Frobisher, Rasmussen and their peers, would forever alter how the West viewed the indigenous people of North America. It would forever alter their lives and (little scholarly attention has been paid to this part of the story) the lives of their dogs.

Jesse Wente is the head of film programming for the TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto. He is also a media commentator, film reviewer, and vocal critic of indigenous representation in the dominant culture. In his curator's notes for TIFF's 2012 series *Films in First Peoples Cinema: 1500 Nations, One Tradition*, Wente describes the early years of motion pictures with a glimpse inside the 1890s laboratory of Thomas Edison: "Among the subjects captured [in his first experimental] one-minute films were a group of Cheyenne and Sioux performers from Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, who performed two traditional dances for Edison's camera" (Wente). Wente does not offer any explanation for why Edison chose this particular subject matter, whether it was availability, audience appeal, or suitability for showcasing his invention. We do know Edison was inspired by Muybridge's earlier kinetescope breakthrough, which strung together a series of still photos of a running horse to create the illusion of movement. We also know that the very first moving image Edison produced was of his assistant sneezing. We can,

then, reasonably hypothesize that his nascent filmic gaze was fixated on bodies, first the movement and musculature of animal bodies and then on the action and secretion of human bodily function, and that a possible next logical step was to examine the movement and function of indigenous bodies in performance. These films would present images that were exotic, dangerous, perhaps titillating (indigenous bodies being, in some instances, naked or nearly so). The text accompanying one of these snippets claimed it featured "a very interesting subject, full of action and true to life" (Library of Congress). Whatever Edison's movie-making motives, we know, according to Wente, that "representatives of First Peoples became some of the first moving images ever recorded" (Wente).

A few years later, Edison took his fledgling film camera to the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, NY. The massive world's fair featured 350 acres of buildings and exhibits, including a simulated trip to the moon, futuristic innovations such as an x-ray machine and neo-natal incubator, and a midway. Part educational opportunity, part carnival, the Expo also featured state and foreign pavilions such as the New England Building, the Minnesota Building and the Canada building. Inside the Alaska Building, which was built of Skagway logs, visitors were drawn to a re-creation of a stereotypical northern tableau, complete with fake snow and a fake iglu, as well as real "Esquimaux" and real dogs. An advertising postcard referred to them as "the cave dwellers" of the northern territory. It was at this site that Thomas Edison created a 55-second strip of film entitled "Esquimaux Village". The official Edison Company text that accompanies the copy of this film currently archived in the United States Library of Congress reads:

> One of the principal features at the Pan-American Exposition is the Alaskan or Esquimaux Village. In this most interesting exhibit, scenes are enacted just as they take

> place in the far away frozen North. In this subject we depict a large number of Esquimaux clothed in their native costumes and seated on their sleds, which are drawn by spans of four Esquimaux dogs. They are engaged in a race and are to be seen running over the ice and snow at a high rate of speed. There is a pond in the foreground of the picture on the shores of which the home stretch of the race takes place. The picture is perfect photographically, and the figures stand out clear and sharp, throwing a most perfect reflection on the pond. (Library of Congress)

As of April 2015, you can still view this strange little snippet on the Library of Congress channel on YouTube, and still read the official blurb, unedited, without contemporary commentary to provide a gloss on the racist language.

"Esquimaux Village" is sometimes referred to as an early example of ethnographic or documentary filmmaking. It is not. While it might be an interesting document of a world's fair, Edison's short is hardly a document of Alaskan Eskimo life. The film was not shot in the Arctic, but on site at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, where the Eskimo and their animals had been put on display. This "village", in other words, was representation. It was theatre; it was a freak show. To call it a documentary film is to summon the spectre of a dizzying hall of mirrors, at the end of which may be some true source, some actual family of Alaskan residents, with an actual iglu and pond, and actual histories and hopes. But they are not to be found here. This is plaster of Paris and celluloid, not reality. To call this exhibit a "village" only serves to highlight the darker side of Edison's illuminating technology, namely that his subject matter – these people and these dogs – were about as far from their village as they could possibly imagine: in a purpose-built cultural pavilion in upstate New York. Sadder still, the 1901 Expo's "Esquimaux Village", and Edison's cinematic record of it, mark just one milestone in a long and

tragic legacy of putting North America's indigenous people on display, usually with tragic results.

John L. Steckley in his book *White Lies about the Inuit* traces a brief history of the 'Exhibition Eskimo' phenomenon, as it laid the foundation for future (mis)representations of northern indigenous cultures. "It is not hard to determine why distorted images of the Inuit have spread," he writes. "The centuries-long European practice of treating the Inuit themselves as collectors' items or showpieces contributed to the exoticizing process" (10-11). Martin Frobisher set the pace: in 1577 he gifted Queen Elizabeth with several Inuit. In the 1800s, several sea captains and explorers likewise brought back human specimens for display in such dubious institutions as P.T. Barnum's American Museum in New York and various European zoos. Most of these people died within months, likely of smallpox, but that did little to quell the public fascination, and expositors in the latter part of the century would continue the practice and add live dogs to the displays. In 1893 in Chicago, 35 dogs were brought to the World's Columbian Exposition midway; the 1904 St. Louis Exposition offered "9 Inuit families, 26 dogs and 'Mac, the Wise Bear'" (12-13). It was to become an enduring ethnocentric cultural phenomenon built on "fact-free fantasies" that sold the Inuit and their animals as "circus freaks" (13).

The visual appeal of the 'Exhibited Eskimo' in zoos, circuses and museums abroad translated easily into mediated cultural products such as Thomas Edison's quirky short. A handful of non-indigenous, male explorers had put the Inuit/Eskimo/Esquimaux in their gaze for the first time when they viewed these new lands and the people and animals that inhabited them. Then, larger and larger groups of European people extended this gaze as they were transformed into audiences (voyeurs?) through the discursive formation of the exhibit. In retrospect, it seems a logical extension of this growing trend that newly discovered primitive peoples and newly

refined film technologies would converge in the manner described by Wente for the First Nations film series. It amounts to an extension of the colonial gaze. Gaze – the act of looking – constructs and solidifies subject/object positions through the cinematic experience. Laura Mulvey's theory of the male gaze (1975) – how men look at women in film; how this trivializes and objectifies women – has since been extended to explain other power asymmetries where the observed becomes defined by the observer. This includes the gaze of the colonizer and its work in shaping indigenous subject positions. Edward Said called this process orientalism, and showed how it reified the imagined divide between west and east, between the dominant European culture and its imagined Arabic other (1978). Likewise, the zoo as a site of the one-way gaze of humans at animals has been taken up by John Berger in his work on looking and the disappointment of the zoo encounter. "A zoo is a place where as many species and varieties of animal as possible are collected in order that they can be seen, observed, studied," he wrote. And no matter the physical proximity to the animal (or the human), "you are looking at something that has been rendered absolutely marginal" (260). As the subject of the gaze, you are always looking at the object. The object is always *to-be-looked-at*, always The Other.

Adding insult to injury for the "Esquimaux" was the fact that this gaze ultimately rendered them not only as Others, but also as clowns. The Edison Company text claimed that the film depicted the people realistically: "In this most interesting exhibit, scenes are *enacted just* as they take place in the *far away* frozen North" (Library of Congress, emphasis mine). But it is theatrical: scenes are "enacted," the people are dressed in "native costumes," and they are engaged in a race, an event that is clearly staged. To the people themselves, of course, their homeland is not "far away"; Buffalo, New York is. And to any member of any culture, the clothes on one's own back are not a "native costume". Obviously, the dominant perspective, the

one constructing the meaning here, is an outside one. "The picture is perfect photographically," continues the text, "and the figures stand out clear and sharp, throwing a most perfect reflection on the pond" (Ibid.). Read in the present day, this banal technological commentary seems ironic considering the grotesque cultural distortion at work here. *Esquimaux Village* is decidedly not a "picture perfect reflection" of northern life. In fact, *Esquimaux Village* was positively Chaplin-esque in its presentation of northern life: bumbling Eskimo men racing their dog sled around a man-made pond, in and out of a fake igloo. A second film in Edison's Expo series comprises 50 seconds of the men playing leapfrog. These men and these dogs have been captured first by an exhibit, then by a film camera, and they are being put on display for the entertainment of a non-indigenous audience. These are Steckley's "circus freaks" and this is exploitation. Think Keystone Cops in anoraks.

Thus, when the northern dog was harnessed by the discourse of the motion picture medium in Edison's 1901 work, another layer of meaning was added to its ongoing representation: that of performer. The dog became a source of entertainment, more specifically, of amusement. As Edison's Alaskan Eskimo human subjects bumbled and tumbled their way through an insulting 55 seconds of cinematic history, their sled dogs were right there with them, "engaged in a race… running over the ice and snow at a high rate of speed" (Library of Congress). Of course, it was neither ice nor snow, but likely papier mâché, and it is doubtful a decent rate of speed was achieved considering the constrictions of the diorama. What's more, it was not even a race. One sled, with one rider, pulled by three dogs enters a "cave" in the rear of the frame. Four other men then run back and forth willy-nilly across the frame. Several of them run towards the cave entrance, and, as the sled re-emerges, it knocks one of the men into the fake cliff. The entire company then continues jerkily towards the camera as the film concludes. It is

hardly a display of athletic grace or competitive excellence. But race or no race, what I want to highlight here is that the traditional mode of transportation of these indigenous people has been reduced to silly spectacle, and the northern dog has been transformed into a canine circus clown.

In "Why Look at Animals?" John Berger charted the broader trajectory of this transformation within the European worldview, delineating a process he termed "the reduction of the animal" (256). Berger laments the loss of the "real" animal over the course of industrialization and urbanization. There was, he claimed, a "rupture" in 19th century Western Europe: human beings became distanced and alienated from "the first circle of what surrounded man", i.e. animals (252). As they moved into the cities and took up their new modes of production in the factories, humans lost the practical, hands-on connection to nature that characterized agrarian life, and the human-animal relationship, once defined as an "unspeaking companionship" was now on its way to becoming an asymmetrical subject-object relationship locked in a one-way gaze (253). Animals became spectacles, mediated exclusively through the human imagination. And the result? Among other manifestations, there came zoo displays, stuffed toys, games and cartoons. With this movement, the "animal has been emptied of experience and secrets," writes Berger, "And this new invented 'innocence' begins to provoke in man (sic) a kind of nostalgia" (255).

The invented innocence of the toy or cartoon animal, and the likewise invented nostalgia for such an innocent animal (i.e. one emptied of its wild secrets), had their roots in the era of early European exploration. Indeed, as Berger has argued, the development of royal menageries and, later, zoos, amounted to "an endorsement of modern colonial power. The capturing of the animals was a symbolic representation of the conquest of all distant and exotic lands" (259). Edison, likewise, captured these men and their dogs. He has enslaved them, and is exploiting

them. In order to make such captives palatable to European sensibilities they had to be, figuratively speaking, de-clawed and de-fanged. They had to be disempowered. Moreover, they have to appear to be enjoying their captivity, perhaps even grateful for it. Even in the writings of Mathiassen, we can see the seeds of this stereotype, as readily deployed for conquered humans as for conquered dogs. He wrote that the dogs of the Iglulik were "an uncowable breed, who remain cheerful in spite of nearly everything… [a dog] would tolerate being beaten by a three or four year old boy without so much as showing its teeth" (82, 84). Thus, in an indigenous social pecking order constructed by ethnocentric eyes and minds, the dog is assigned lower status than a toddler (who, it should also be noted, is seen as being permitted to abuse the animals). The dog is too naive to understand it is being oppressed or abused, and accepts its lot without awareness or analysis. The dog is "cheerful" in the face of its enslaved reality. The reduction of the northern dog here takes on a literal cast. The animal is smaller in stature than a human child, cowering beneath the boot or fist of a toddler, more innocent than the innocent; and equally small of mind to cheerfully tolerate such malevolent kicks and blows.

An innocent and cheerful wolf? This seeming contradiction is not so profound a puzzle if we yet again take into consideration its similarity to the Sambo or Happy Slave stereotype of the slavery era. As African Americas were classified as being less-than-human in order to justify their treatment, they were further characterized as being quite happy about this arrangement, smiling and carefree despite the threat of the master's whip. They were grateful for their lot in life, a gratitude and lightness of spirit that translated into song and dance for White audiences. The indigenous people of North America were similarly represented. They were closer to animal than human; they were in need of and ultimately grateful for "civilization"; they were cheerful, smiling, simple. Their dogs were the same: wild, beastly, and cruelly treated to be sure, but

ultimately of a happy disposition. The Sambo of the slave era was thus discursive kin to the "noble savage" of the colonial era. That "venerable image," Daniel Francis explains in *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*, dates back to a 1670 play by John Dryden called *The Conquest of Granada*, and a bit later and "closer to home", the poem "Tecumseh" by Charles Mair. In both of these examples, Francis explains, the term "savage" meant "innocent, virtuous, and peace-loving, free of the guile and vanity that came from living in contemporary society" (7). So when Dryden writes of a time "[w]hen wild in the woods the noble savage ran", and Muir describes "a soul more wild than barbarous, a tameless soul, the sunburnt savage free" (Ibid.), it seems no great leap to picture either a human or a canine figure. No great leap, either, to see Edison's short film of the Pan-Am Exposition display as indigenous minstrel show, with Inuit dogs as its co-stars.

Film has thus played a central role in the entrenchment of conflicting images of northern indigenous people and their dogs in mainstream culture in North America. And few cultural products have proved as powerful and enduring in entrenching such stereotypes as Robert J. Flaherty's film *Nanook of the North* (1922). "Even today," claims Valeria Alia, "[The very term] Nanook is a familiar name and an emblem for things indigenous, 'primitive' and Northern" (16). During Prime Minister Harper's 2012 Arctic trip, for example, the Canadian military staged an unprecedented public demonstration of its elite team of counter-terrorism experts, the Joint Task Force 2. The exercise was part of what National Defence branded "Operation Nanook... the centrepiece of three sovereignty operations conducted annually by the Canadian Forces in Canada's North" (Department of National Defence). Nanook is also the name of the polar bear mascot of the Canadian Football League's Edmonton Eskimos, an amazing one-two cultural punch in these politically correct times, when one considers that Eskimo is almost universally

considered a derogatory term for Inuit and was officially declared as such in 1977 at the Circumpolar Conference. The term Nanook is not far behind it in being branded racist by some pundits. Despite this, and perhaps most significantly for this dissertation, "Nanook" continues to be a popular name for sled dog kennels and individual pets of the various husky breeds, i.e. dogs that "look" northern. And one is instantly reminded of John Berger's hypothesis when considering that the wildly popular Beanie Baby toy series from the world's largest plush toy manufacturer also christened its first stuffed husky dog Nanook (he was followed by Sledder; Slush; Mukluk; and a pink plush girl named Bonita). The verse that was featured on Nanook's hang-tag read:

> Nanook is a dog that loves cold weather
> To him a sled is light as a feather
> Over the snow and through the slush
> He runs at hearing the cry of mush!

Much has been written about the 1922 film that popularized the name Nanook. It is widely viewed as the first commercially successful documentary film, and its maker is hailed as the progenitor of visual anthropology. Both claims to fame are contested on the grounds that much of *Nanook* was scripted and acted, nonetheless it is still taught today in many film studies classes, and is the subject of numerous articles and books (Steckley 13). Little, however, has been written about the movie's representation of Inuit sled dogs. Sled dogs were an important presence in *Nanook of the North's* narrative and overall aesthetic. The canine images in the film deviated little from the views already at work among the early explorers and exhibitors, and they would serve to set the pace for all the mainstream representations of sled dogs and mushers who would come after.

Robert J. Flaherty (1884-1950) was born in the United States, went to school in Canada, and, in 1913, was an Arctic iron ore prospector with a creative hobby: film making. He created some 70,000 feet of film as he worked his day job, recording the daily lives of the Inuit he encountered along the way. After the loss by fire of his original prints, Flaherty devoted himself full-time to re-mounting the project. And while he was accused of staging several scenes in his ostensibly non-fiction opus, Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* went on to unprecedented commercial success, grossing $251,000 and spawning what one cultural critic termed "Nanookomania", a popular appetite for all things Inuit. Or all things non-indigenous people *considered* to be Inuit. Steckley reports that the film was a major contributor to the commercial success of the ice cream brand *Eskimo Pie*; it introduced Inuktitut words such as "igloo" and "anorak" into the American vernacular; and it spawned a series of cinematic imitators with titles such as *Frozen Justice* and the Oscar Award winning *Eskimo*. Its influence was far-reaching, both in terms of the dispersal and entrenchment of dubious images of the Inuit, and in the commodification of Inuit culture (Steckley 13). Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* also laid some significant groundwork in constructing mainstream cultural images of the northern dog. Three main motifs of interest emerge in a close canine reading of *Nanook*, all of which we have seen in previous texts: the North as a melancholy place, as exemplified in the howl of the dog; the peril and unpredictability of nature as untamed and wild; and the invented childlike innocence of primitive people and animals. The film certainly solidified the position of the animal in the construction of what Daniel Francis has termed "the North of the Mind."

Dogs enter Flaherty's cinematic vision of "life and love in the actual Arctic" early on. The film begins with a clownish scene that echoes the Keystone Kops atmosphere of Edison's *Esquimaux Village*. There are intimations as well of the Little Black Sambo/Happy Slave

stereotype. In fact, in one of the introductory title cards to his silent documentary, Flaherty characterizes the Inuit as "the most cheerful people in all the world – the fearless, loveable, happy-go-lucky Eskimo." In the much-noted-upon scene that follows the protagonist steers his kayak to the shore and disembarks. The kayak is covered in animal skin, the only opening is the one for Nanook's seat. From the impossibly narrow and shallow vessel then emerge, one by one, like clowns from a miniature car, his entire family – his wife [cut to title card with her name, Allea], a toddler [cut to title card], an older child [title card] and finally, a husky pup [title card]. The dog is the exclamation point to this drawn out and highly comic scene, the last little member of a quaint and comical little family. There is also the tacit suggestion that the Inuit way of life is different and strange, that they live in impossibly close quarters with their kin, including animals. Do we not see a similar stereotype with immigrants in many big cities today? The suggestion that they live too many people to a small space, in unsanitary and unpleasant conditions? There is a hint of similar stereotyping in the *Nanook* scene. But above else, like the humans and animals of "Esquimaux Village", they are, like circus clowns, here for your visual entertainment.

Viewers next meet Nanook's dogs at the "white man's 'big igloo'" – the trading post. The early introduction of a colonial agent into the film's narrative is significant on several levels. Nanook has arrived here seeking payment for his furs, an exchange that was at the centre of a shifting economy in the Arctic at the time. The trader is seen as a powerful figure, and the paternalism is explicit, both in the smaller details, such as the faux translation of Nanook's name for the post (big igloo) and in the overall portrayal of a power asymmetry between the two men. This is especially condescending in the famous scene when the White Man introduces the Inuk to the modern technology of the phonograph. Nanook is shown as simple, primitive and again comical here: he laughs at the sounds emanating from the strange device and then attempts to

bite into one of the record albums. Clearly this lack of sophistication is being played for laughs, and no doubt it elicited just that from its target audience in 1922. It was later revealed that the actor playing Nanook had seen record players before; in fact, he owned a rifle, and later, a snowmobile, and was a regular visitor to the modern "big igloo". The entire scene was scripted to highlight the invented innocence of the protagonist. The trader is depicted not just as a fact of life in Canada's north, but as superior and more evolved than the humble Inuk hero.

Along with the phonograph, the dog is also used by Flaherty as a trading post prop. Against a furry white backdrop of Arctic fox and polar bear pelts, we see the trader playing with a litter of six of the Inuk's dogs, as they tumble across a table or platform covered in fur. The dark fur of the dogs is in contrast to the white polar bear pelt underneath them. Again, there may be racial connotations here, as when Glover Allen described the Inuit dog fur as "whitish", "clouded" or "rarely" white (442). The trader playfully jostles one of the pups as Nanook's wife stands at the table, her baby visible from within her parka carrier. The scene cuts to a close-up of one dog, then the title card, which reads, "Nanook proudly displays his young 'huskies.' the finest dog flesh in all the country round." It is a significant choice of words.

Perhaps Flaherty is playing the concept of "dog flesh" for shock value, underlying the exoticism or barbarism of his Inuit subjects with the subtextual hint of dog eating, without the uncomfortable visual. The suggestion surely would have been titillating to non-indigenous American moviegoers in 1922. He plays the subtle connotation sharply against the "cuteness" of the scene, as it builds from the trader's interaction with the pups, to the close up of one dog, and then to the next title card, which reads: "Nyla , not to be outdone, displays her young husky, too – one Rainbow, less than four months old" (Flaherty). Cut to the young toddler of Nanook's family. She is now out of her Mother's parka and is propped up on the table with the puppies, her

naked, chubby baby flesh in communion with the country's finest puppy flesh. The scene is played for cuteness (which creates a closeness, luring the viewer into an intimate and empathetic connection with the subject) but also for dissonance (which creates a distance between the civilized viewer and the exotic Other on screen). The viewer feels the urge to cuddle at the same time she senses there is something untoward being suggested. Do Flaherty's Inuit eat their dogs? Their infants? It would seem the filmmaker is pandering to all sorts of early 20th century American sensibilities, this despite Rasmussen's later contention that canine meat was never a part of Netsilik life. Indeed, it was strictly taboo (See page 37).

The next several episodes of *Nanook* depict his skill as "the Great Hunter", jigging for seals and harpooning a walrus[10]. The dogs here are mostly in the background, quite literally in some instances, as the title cards include a shadowy background illustration of a landscape with dogs, an ostensibly typical Arctic scene. Within the live action, the dogs accompany the family in their spring activities, but are not given much focus. They do not figure into the narrative explicitly until the change of season, when they are harnessed for the winter sled. Flaherty again constructs a thematic link between children and dogs with the title card "To the babies igloo building is a bore" (Flaherty). We see a close-up of the family's youngest child in her mother's parka; and then, a delightful scene in which the older child has harnessed a pup to a toy sled. We also are treated to a cozy scene in which Nanook creates a small den inside the snow house for the puppies. The adult dogs must sleep outside, exposed to the elements. Rasmussen also commented on this seeming paradox in his account of human and canine life among the Netsilik

[10] As Rony has noted, the protagonist of Flaherty's film was given a fake name (Nanook) in lieu of his real one, which is recorded as Allakariallak. In the Inuktitut language, Nanook means bear, and was intended to characterize the movie's hero as a fierce and prolific hunter, like his ursine namesake (104). Through an ethnocentric lens, Inuit were seen as being more strongly connected with an animal nature and with animalistic Nature. In particular, animals in the North were seen as fierce and unpredictable beasts.

Inuit. While adult dogs were treated cruelly, puppies were doted on, and underwent all manner of attentive training regimens to ensure they would be successful draught animals.

As Flaherty shifts his focus to winter life for Nanook and his family, we begin as well to see a shift in the depiction of sled dogs in *Nanook of the North*, from cutesy cultural curio to something a little darker, and more unpredictable. Nanook's springtime huskies were kayak clowns, children's playthings and, perhaps, titillating objects of European food taboos. His winter huskies metamorphose into nemeses. This is a bit of heavy handed pathetic fallacy, perhaps, on Flaherty's part: spring is innocence, winter is cruel. It is also evidence of a decidedly ethnocentric perspective, casting the frozen North as a harsh and unforgiving environment. The indigenous people showcased in the film likely did not share this view. This, after all, is the only environment they knew. It was not remote; they lived here. It was not cruel; it supported them. The indigenous vision of nature is one of harmony and balance, not conflict. But for Flaherty, the Inuit winter is a foe. Now more than ever, it is Man v. Nature. And that Nature includes the wild and wolfish sled dogs.

After the first night in their winter home (Inuit travelled according to the seasons, and constructed dwellings where they went), Flaherty's camera watches Nanook emerge from the tiny entryway into the morning light, and we see that his sled has been expertly balanced atop the round snow house. The title card reads:

> If Nanook had not put his sled on top of the igloo for the night the dogs would have eaten the seal-hide thongs which bind its parts together. (Flaherty)

This is the film's first reference to the dogs as animals to be reckoned with. A similar method for storing equipment was referenced by Mathiassen in his depiction of the treachery of Iglulik dogs:

“[E]verything eatable [has] to be hidden inside the houses or placed on scaffolding where the dogs cannot reach them. Sledge lashings, traces and harnesses are eaten if one is not careful” (83). Thus, in Nanook’s fictive world, eating practises are suspect on both sides: humans covet “dog flesh”; animals covet human implements, notably, the ones made of animal skin and flesh, and the very ones used to exploit the labour of the dogs themselves. With this insinuation, we see that Nanook’s dogs in winter are no longer juvenile members of the family. Their job is to pull these sleds, but they will rebel if given the chance, and destroy that very apparatus. The cuteness of the puppies is now contrasted with the potential destruction by the adult dogs. The puppies are coddled, but the mature ones are cannibals, figuratively for cannibalizing the skins and sinews of their sled; and ultimately, for cannibalizing their own young:

> The tiny igloo Nanook made for the puppies has kept them warm all night and safe from hungry jaws of their big brothers. (Flaherty)

It is literally a dog-eat-dog world, brothers attacking brothers in a desperate attempt at survival. Still further dissolution of family ties is presented as Flaherty’s camera pits children against dogs, lead dog against subordinates, and Nanook himself against his entire dog team. While earlier in the narrative, the older child was seen playing with the puppy and toy sled, now we watch as he idly kicks each of the adult dogs in succession. While “the puppy rides in Cunayou's hood during the day” like a child, the adult dogs in harness must be monitored, policed and treated with force as necessary, as in the scene where “the kingship of Nanook's master dog is challenged” (Flaherty). Here, the soundtrack music reaches a furious tempo as two sled dogs – master and usurper – fight and tear at each other. Nanook separates them with several blows from the handle of his whip.

In the final glimpses of dogs in *Nanook*, it becomes clear that the wildness of the northern dogs is a constant threat to the survival of the Inuit family. In the penultimate dog scene, as the family pulls a seal through a hole in the ice, viewers are shown the following title card: "From the smell of flesh and blood comes the blood lust of the wolf – his forebear" (Flaherty). These dogs are similar to the ones represented by Allen, Rasmussen and Mathiassen: lustful, wolfish, ravenous and dangerous. Cut to a shot of a snarling adult husky, his lip curled back to reveal his teeth, licking his jaws. As the hunters struggle and finally succeed in landing the massive seal onto the ice, the husky sniffs at the air. As they slice into the flesh to prepare the meat, as they peel back the thick layer of blubber, as the entire family pitches in to haul the heavy pelt away from the carcass and sits to enjoy their blubbery, bloody meal, Flaherty cuts back and forth from their travail at the seal hole to the dog as it sniffs and snarls and bare its teeth and howls. Although the sequence fails somewhat for a contemporary audience – Flaherty uses repetitive shots of just one dog, filmed out of context and connected very tenuously with the action of the seal hunt – we nonetheless know that it is meant to evoke menace. It is meant to characterize the northern dog as a "savage" creature.

Nanook of the North ends as the family prepares to leave the seal hunting area and make their way back to their igloo. They feed the last of the seal meat to the wolfish dogs, keeping them at bay with a snow knife (machete) as they toss them bits of blubber and entrail. As the music turns ominous, the huskies snarl and fight over their meat, tangling the traces of the sled and threatening the departure of the family for home. Before the situation can be sorted out, the weather takes a bad turn. And again, the unpredictability of the animals has put Nanook and his kin in peril, as the next three title cards, interspersed throughout this action, indicate:

> It is now getting dark and the family is a long way from shelter, but the dogs cause a dangerous delay.
>
> By the time the team is straightened out, a threatening 'drifter' drives in from the north.
>
> Almost perishing from the icy blasts and unable to reach their own snowhouse, the little family is driven to take refuge in a deserted igloo. (Flaherty)

In these final scenes, the family and the dogs are dwarfed by a looming black sky and an expanse of frozen bleak landscape, the drifting snow obscuring the view. Again, this is a Western literary and cinematic convention: Man v. Nature. The soundtrack augments the conflict: the intense sawing of the string section builds drama, suspense, and is next layered with a haunting flute of flat, melancholy tones. The family takes refuge from the storm in an old snow house. As they work to make it homey and cozy, layering furs over the snow beds and setting up the stove to boil water, the troublesome dogs are left outside in the elements. The humans look relieved, warm and safe, contrasted with the dogs, whose fur is frozen and who are filmed to look slightly dejected, if not stoic. Once again, Nanook makes a cozy den inside for the pups, while the adult dogs remain separated from the domestic sphere. The penultimate title card reads:

> The shrill piping of the wind, the rasp and hiss of driving snow, the mournful wolf howls of Nanook's master dog typify the melancholy spirit of the North. (Flaherty)

Like Mathiassen, Flaherty highlights that animals are not permitted inside dwellings. The Danish explorer recounted, with great detail and mutinous overtones, the dog who opens the door and pitches the entire family into apocalyptic chaos. Flaherty's lens hones in on evidence that, even in the harshest snowstorm, the dogs remain outside. This was likely an accurate portrayal of Inuit life in the early 20th century. Dogs were not household pets according to European

definition. But in typical Western dichotomous thinking, the view seems to hold that if they are not pets, they must be beasts. If they are not domestic, they must be wild. If they are not culture, they must be nature. If they are not indulged, they must be feared. Again, we see the howl of the northern dog defined as an element of nature, comparable to the wind and the driving snow. And again, it is a sound that evokes sadness – the North must be a melancholy place, because it is not 'our' place. Strange that so many cultural producers insist on the North as a mournful and melancholy land when it was populated by such a cheerful and happy-go-lucky people as the Inuit were stereotyped to be.

In *Nanook of the North*, then, viewers see northern dogs as amusing circus clowns and as cute, cuddly puppies. We also see them as wolfish beasts whose appetites and unpredictability threaten the safety of the Inuit family. Fatimah Tobing Rony commented on this dual image, coining the term "canine metaphor" to describe how such depictions of northern dogs were being used to characterize the people associated with them. The Inuit were "repeatedly" associated with animal imagery, from the earliest days of contact when they were seen as animalistic because of their "diet of raw meat" to the *Nanook* era, when they were compared to their dogs, a trope with "dual connotations of cuddly like a teddy bear, and wild like a savage beast" (105). This metaphor would become a key building block in the larger colonial project. Elder, Wolch and Emel explain that "[d]uring the colonial period, representations of similarity were used to link subaltern groups to animals and thereby racialize and dehumanize them. In the postcolonial present, however, animal practises of subdominant groups are typically used for this purpose" (183). We see both strategies at work in colonial representations of dogs in Inuit culture. The Inuit were seen as being like their dogs, as Rony suggested. They were also seen as being cruel and severe in their treatment of the animals, as we saw particularly in Mathiassen's journal.

Further, and perhaps more implicitly, there was the hint that the dogs were, by virtue of their wildness, wolfishness and unpredictability, not sufficiently domesticated, and, as they were the only domestic animal the Inuit kept, this can be seen to reflect the Inuit's ineptitude at practises of pet-keeping or animal husbandry. This Eurocentric attitude was seen throughout the New World. In *Creatures of Empire*, Virginia de John Anderson shows how the battle over American land between settlers and indigenous peoples was, for example, predicated on cattle. "To a remarkable extent," she argues, "the reactions of Indians and colonists to problems created by livestock became a reliable indicator of the tenor of their relations with one another" (5). Native people didn't understand fences and farming; settlers didn't understand roaming animals and communal hunting. "Indians," writes Anderson," conceived of their relationship with animals in terms of balance and reciprocity, not domination, let alone ownership" (5). Settlers wanted to make sense of the New World in terms of "a strict human animal dichotomy" not a worldview that celebrated "a diversity of living beings" (18). In this confusion, it can be safely assumed, northern dogs didn't make any sense at all.

The represented northern dog was thus a happy-go-lucky and cuddly creature – a pet dog in a "lethren collar" – but was also a creature labouring under a cruel and inept human master, the Inuk who failed to fully understand and execute his God-given mandate to dominate. The animal was in a state of arrested development, as unevolved as its "wolfish forebear", wild and deadly, of no real use to the greater imperial project of progress. Representing dogs as exhibiting this dual identity was an effective discursive strategy for "animalizing" indigenous people and thus justifying their colonization. So on the one hand, they must be abhorred and feared. On the other hand, they must be adored and embraced. This discursive formation has been perpetuated by "a long string of previous performers including explorers, colonialists, slave holders, modern-

day racists and xenophobes, and right wing politicians," according to Elder et al. "All of these characters constructed racial difference by casting the other as savage or uncivilized on the basis of their animal practises" (183). This is more complex than mere metaphor, a figurative trope used to characterize a colonized people and justify their treatment. This entire regime of truth had devastating results for indigenous peoples around the world. It also had very real implications for the future of the animal itself.

Tuktu and the NFB Years

Edison's early short "Esquimaux Village" and Flaherty's renowned ethnographic epic, *Nanook of the North*, both exoticize the Inuit and their dogs. They put the Other on display – a display of difference – and they work to visually and thematically increase the distance between Us and Them, between the viewer and the Other. Rony termed this "canine metaphor". Neel Ahuja calls it "animalization, the organized subjection of racialized groups through animal figures" (957). Indigenous people are represented as exotic through the way they treat animals (e.g. the suggestion that they eat dogs, or beat dogs). Indigenous people are exotic because they are like animals (i.e. "savage", wild, dangerous). Concepts like these are the basic building blocks in the construction of the myth of the imagined Inuit, or what Steckley terms "white lies".

A second process involved when the dominant culture represents indigenous images is cultural appropriation. Instead of a deliberate distancing and rendering exotic, the goal here is a cultural proximity, a closing of the gap, and embracing elements of the indigenous culture for the benefit of the dominant culture. This is what Lenore Keeshig-Tobias calls "stealing stories", or "theft of voice" (71). As the film making technology and the documentary genre in particular expanded, and as Canada began to turns the documentary lens on itself as a nation, the

representation of northern dogs took on a new character. They were still seen to exhibit the duality created by colonial cultural producers – wolfish and wild, yet cuddly and comical – but the Othering of the colonial project was now evolving into something different. The dog was being embraced as an icon of Canadian national identity. In particular, the telling of the story of the Inuit dog was appropriated/stolen in several notable instances by the National Film Board of Canada (NFB).

The National Film Board of Canada evolved out of the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau, and was officially formed by the enactment of the National Film Act of 1939. The NFB's original function, tellingly, was wartime propaganda. Today, its mandate is defined by the Ministry of Canadian Heritage, and includes the promotion of themes related to a multicultural Canada. To Canadians of my vintage and perhaps older, the NFB is best known for a series of film vignettes that aired on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) television network in the 1970s, and included titles such as *Home of the Beaver*, *Land of the Maple Leaf* and *Inuit Pipe* ("About the NFB"). The NFB has also produced some noteworthy films featuring Canada's indigenous people, including several featuring the Inuit and their dogs. Three of those films are *Arctic Dog Team* (1949); *Tuktu and His Eskimo Dogs* (1966); and *Qimmiq: Canada's Arctic Dog* (1981).

What is immediately striking about this trio of national heritage films, especially when considered in comparison with *Nanook of the North*, is the palpable non-indigenous presence in each. For all of its flaws, including questionable claims to neutrality, Flaherty's camera is unobtrusive in its appeal to at least appear scientific/ethnographic. What's more, the film is silent (made in 1922, with the use of title cards instead of audio), and while the music soundtrack manipulates the viewer into certain responses, Nanook's voice is absent, as is Flaherty's. The

only white face is the fleeting glimpse of the trader. The Inuit presence is exoticized, but to be sure, the Inuit presence is the only presence. By contrast, *Tuktu* is told entirely in an English-language voice over. This was not an extraordinary technique, particularly in 1966. Nonetheless, the effect is unsettling. The faces are Inuit; the stories are Inuit; but the presenter is a grandfatherly Anglophone, ostensibly Tuktu as a grown man, reflecting on the traditional way of life of his youth. As a former advertising creative director, I could not help but think that, if I had been casting for this voice-over artist, I would have requested a "Wilfred Brimley" type: senior, white, male… a 'folksy' grandfather. The *Tuktu* voice in fact belonged to a Canadian radio actor and NFB regular named Tommy Tweed (1908-1971). A review of *Tuktu* in *Children's Literature Quarterly* rightly criticized the choice, saying Tweed "sound[ed] far too oratorical with [his] trace of a theatrical British accent" (Stott 25). Tweed was meant to be warm and paternal. The effect is paternalistic, especially when this male white European voice of *Tuktu* intones tales of "the Wolf Spirit", or describes the landscape as "the great snows" and "the river that flows from far, far away" (Hyde). It has the same effect as when Flaherty ventriloquizes *Nanook*, portraying the Inuk's view of the trading post as "the big man's igloo". It shifts the tone of the film from characterization to caricature. It infantilizes the Inuit. Of course, by 1966, this sort of stereotyping had already undergone several decades of production, practise and petrification. The racist speech patterns of Native American characters in American film were well and deeply entrenched by this time. Perhaps the most familiar example of this was the character of Tonto in countless Lone Ranger films, who spoke in a stilted pidgin English: "Him say man ride over ridge on horse." Hollywood Indians also tended to speak in a naively poetic excess, especially when it came to descriptions of Nature. The producers of *Tuktu*, mercifully, did not hire Tweed to impersonate an Inuit speaker in this way. However, they did hire him to portray the elder

Tuktu, and in the place where the booming theatre inflections of his voice foregrounds the brief traces of Inuktitut can still be heard in the background, the effect is similar. It sounds as if the European is overpowering the Inuk in a conversation about the Inuk's area of expertise. Theft of voice indeed.

The legacy of *Nanook* is not altogether overshadowed during the patriotic NFB years. Although mainstream audiences might be tempted to consider the portrayal of the Inuit and their dogs as more positive here, there are still negative and heavily stereotyped connotations at work in these later representations. For instance, the titular character of the series is named *Tuktu*. This was likely an actual Inuit word, but not an actual person's name. Like the moniker "Nanook", I imagine that "Tuktu" was chosen or created because it was easy for Anglo viewers and reviewers to pronounce (as opposed to Nanook's real name, which was Allakariallak). It was likely also chosen because it sounded like what non-Inuit imagine Inuit speech to sound like: short, clipped syllables and hard consonants. All of this is speculation, but what we do know with some degree of certainty is that "Tuktu" and "Nanook" are both Inuktitut nouns. Nanook, as indicated above, is the Inuit word for "polar bear", and was used in part to personify the film's hero as a brave northern hunter. "Tuktu" means "caribou". Whether or not that meaning is crystal clear to Canadian or American audiences, the motivation of the film's producers in both instances seems to be aligning its human subject matter with the animal world. This is another subtle example of Ahuja's animalization.

The process of exoticization is hard at work in *Tuktu* as well, despite its overall trend towards cultural proximity and appropriation. The film opens to a shadowy scene, with several Inuit figures silhouetted against a red night sky as they go about some slice of their everyday life. The people are rendered somewhat mysterious – literally living in the shadows – and the

background hints at the traditional view of the North as the Land of the Midnight Sun, a place where even the pattern of day and night is asunder, where the sun shines in the night time. (Australia is sometimes exoticized is a similar way: as the Land Down Under, everything is opposite or backwards.) A dark and mysterious landscape is made still stranger by a soundtrack with a decidedly 'Asian' feel. While not a note-for-note reproduction of the conventional "Oriental Riff" often used to signify Asian place and character subject in western popular culture (think 1974's pop song *Kung Fu Fighting* or *The Siamese Cats' Song* from Disney's *Lady and the Tramp*), the music does bear some of the hallmarks of that cliché, including the reedy instrumental melody, a rising/falling pattern played atop a tom-tom drum beat and tinny cymbals. Perhaps the film's producers did not know what traditional Inuit music sounded like; or perhaps they chose not to use it as it would not have any meaning to the audience. The music that was ultimately produced for the film seems inspired by a conventional pattern that has come to signify the Far East, or perhaps more generally, the exotic. The font used for the film's title would appear to support this effort. Again, taking no inspiration from actual Inuit culture (the Inuktitut language was unwritten for centuries, then scribed in syllabics), the font is a stereotypical Egyptian typeface. Cultural products such as *Tuktu* were designed to appeal in some fashion to the popular appetite for things mysterious, foreign, exotic. That the references were an erroneous mishmash of Asian, African and legitimately Inuit themes seemed not to matter.

This brief exoticism, Othering or cultural distancing is tempered in *Tuktu* almost immediately with the addition of Tweed's "oratorical" voiceover, which begins the narration of the film at the 30 second mark. At this point, the foreign is pulled into the sphere of the familiar. Like spoils of the conquest, Inuit culture now belongs to the (literal) voice of the empire, and it is

at this point that we meet Tuktu's Eskimo Dogs. In the early scenes of the film, we see clumsy puppies, walking unsteadily around their mother and tumbling with their tiny bums in the air. We see cuddly puppies, one young dog's pink nose and tiny pink paws, nestled deeply into a curve of his mother's fur. We see puppies nursing and puppies playing. It is all very entertaining. It is also very safe and familiar. One feels instantly drawn to these animals, and any intimations of a wolfish instinct, or of blood thirst or similar dangerous appetites is summarily erased. "Puppies as you know are meant to be played with by children," intones Tweed (Hyde). *As you know*: these three words mark a direct address to the viewers, a shared intimacy and a shared knowledge. They mark a complicity, an agreement between Eurocentric filmmaker and Eurocentric audience. There is no need for negotiated or oppositional readings. "We" can all agree that dogs are playthings or pets or as Rony would have it "cuddly like a teddy bear".

But what happens when playful puppies grow up? In *Nanook of the North*, we saw that they lost their innocence and were overtaken by their wolfish nature, endangering the lives of their human masters. In the travel logs of explorers such as Rasmussen and Mathiassen, we saw that once these dogs matured, their untamed nature seemed no match for the inept training and driving techniques of the Inuit, who resorted to abuse in order to keep the ravenous animals at bay. Both sets of representations suggest that the dog and, by extension, the human need to be tamed. As Elder, Aheju and others have claimed, this strategy of animalization is a way of designating an ethnic or racial group as less-than-human, a sub-species, and thus somehow crying out for civilizing or enslavement. Depicting animals as wild, out of control and poorly cared for constitute a mode of Othering and, ultimately, a mode of validating the colonial project. But in the newer representations, where the connotations are ones of cultural proximity,

nationalist celebration and, ultimately, appropriation, viewers see a different version of the northern dog. In *Tuktu*, we see the shift from wolf to worker, and from enemy to emblem.

Tuktu's dogs are good dogs, not bad wolves. They have a strong and respectful relationship with the Inuit. They are pliable and amenable. They are well trained. In the summer, "they quickly learn what their legs are for", and are easily taught how to carry heavy packs. This suggests that their inherent nature was not wolfish, as Glover Allen's scientific discourse would have it, but rather made to serve the Inuit: *this is what their legs are for*. In the winter, they eare "trained to the harness and taught the ways of the sled" and across the snow they smoothly go, "brother and sister side by side" (Hyde). Framing them in a discourse of family softens any predatory or violent nature previous cultural producers may have highlighted. Tuktu's dogs are family, to each other and to their human kin, and are motivated by human values such as hard work and fidelity. They were good children, exhibiting good behaviour. For their part, Tuktu's father and uncle are shown to be good providers, firm but gentle leaders, and are grateful for the dogs' contributions to the entire family's survival. "A wise hunter rewards his dogs," we are told. And when the dogs are well fed and pull their weight, Tuktu recalls, "We were thankful" (Hyde). Not fearful, or cruel. *Thankful*.

Several other differences from earlier texts reinforce this new picture of a good northern dog. The imagery of the wolf is still present in places, but it is not used as figurative language to describe the borderline wildness of the dog, or as a means of scientific taxonomy of an ostensibly near-wolf species. Instead, the wolf, when it does make an appearance in *Tuktu*, does so briefly in the stories and songs of the elders. It is not the defining feature of the dogs. Here, the Wolf is drained of its power as a derogatory discursive pillar, and is instead relegated to (this from a Eurocentric perspective) the quaint and primitive space of indigenous folklore. The wolf is now

at a safe distance. It is not a threat. It is not a reason to fear or to dominate/control. It is a reason to celebrate the nature-based spirituality of indigenous people. This is a clear example of the stolen stories phenomenon. It also serves the ethnocentric stereotype of indigenous people as children of nature.

In one springtime scene, Tuktu recalls how his father would sometimes carry the tired boy on his shoulders and sing as they travelled on foot (with their dogs acting as pack animals). Tweed speaks the lyrics of the song in his oratorical English: "I love to go walking/Far and far away/And my soles are worn through/As I pluck the buds of willow/That are furry like the grey wolf's beard" (Hyde). Here, the wolf appears as a passing reference to a plant harvested by the Inuit and celebrated in a folksong. It further appears to be an authentic Inuit song: Knud Rasmussen transcribed (and translated it) in his *Across Arctic America*. The entire lyric as he recorded it is:

I am but a little woman

very willing to toil

very willing and happy to work and slave...

And in my eagerness

to be of use

I pluck the furry buds of willow

buds like beard of wolf

I love to go walking far and far away

And my soles are worn through

as I pluck the buds of willow,

that are furry like the great wolf's beard... (93-94)

Considered in this context, the song is about docility and servitude. It is a woman's song, and thus erroneously attributed by the filmmakers to the male character of Tuktu's father. In fact, it is only one of two songs Rasmussen directly attributes to female singer, noting that in Netsilik society, such performances were extremely rare: "Women as a rule do not sing their own songs. As a rule, they sing songs made by the men" (93). The above lyric is presented by Rasmussen as an uncommon example where a woman was "favoured by the spirits" to express herself (Ibid.). That *Tuktu*'s producers ignored the cultural context is telling in and of itself. But there is more. "Kivkarjok's Song" is one in which the female voice professes willingness to "work and slave... to be of use." This is how Tuktu's dogs are characterized as well. They too will walk until their "soles are worn through"... that is, after all, what their legs are for. The beard of the wolf – an image of a powerful and masculine nature – is here emasculated. It is used to characterize something small and soft, something that can be dominated (plucked) by even tiny human hands. Most significantly, the wolf here is pushed into the realm of figurative language, away from the immediate and embodied reality early explorers had encountered.

In another episode, Tuktu recalls the times when his uncle would join them on their treks. The uncle was known in the family as a storyteller, and regaled the party with a tale of a "bad provider" who failed to give his dogs the nourishment and care they required. As a result, the man was banished and transformed into a "Wolf Spirit" who would eat human flesh. The story is framed as an Inuit "bogeyman" story, a didactic tale meant to convey the importance of proper dog care. Here the dog is a kinder, gentler creature, one whose character and toil merit the attention of the human family, a sharp contrast to the dogs of *Nanook* and his predecessors. For

example, Mathiassen and Flaherty both depicted the ravenous appetites of dogs. The former recounted the use of a whip to prevent the animals from breaking into the home to scavenge for "anything edible including mitts, whips and human feces" (Cummins 2002, 60). In *Nanook*, the dogs are likewise debased. As they fail to maintain a proper composure at the sight of the butchering of a seal, we are told: "From the smell of flesh and blood comes the blood lust of the wolf – his forebear." Blood and flesh and feces: this first iteration of the represented dog is all about animalistic instinct, bodily functions and a baseness of nature. Tuktu's dogs, by contrast, are the very models of good breeding and composure.

> When a seal was caught, our dogs were anxious to share in the kill. 'We have found a blow hole for you,' they say. 'Therefore, we have a right to part of the catch.' (Hyde).

Not only are they patient and capable of practising post-hunt etiquette, these animals, very unlike Nanook's wolfish huskies, possess the capacity for reason and (even though it is clearly in an imaginative sense) language. They have rights. They are not wild adversaries; they are civilized partners. They are also permitted, within limits, to breach the boundary between inside and outside space. There is no dog whip in Tuktu's world. At the end of the hunt, when the meat is hauled back to the village for all to share, the lead dog is brought inside the igloo to partake in his share. He is allowed to eat the leftovers, and lap up the blood, but as the narrator explains, he does not eat his fill, for a hungry dog is a better hunter. And at that, Tuktu's father shoos the animal back outside with a slap on its rump. The blood thirst, sufficiently controlled, is a trait to be honoured and used to the benefit of the community.

Both *Nanook* and *Tuktu* end in similar ways. The human members of each family rest sheltered inside their respective snow houses while the dogs sleep outside. Aesthetically the

weather looks the same in both films. The winter's night, coming as it does at the end of the story, is seen as the climactic event in both narratives. In *Nanook*, this event is a negative one: the approach of inclement weather and the dogs' reckless behaviour threatens the family's escape from it. The weather is characterized as a severe and surprise storm: "a threatening 'drifter'... [accompanied by the] shrill piping of the wind, the rasp and hiss of driving snow" (Flaherty). It is seen as a peril and a punishment. In *Tuktu*, the weather, similarly windy and snowy, is seen in a more positive light: it comes after the culmination of a successful hunt, and thus is no threat to the family. It is not fierce; it is a fact of life. The white, windswept landscape and blowing snow of *Nanook*'s finale are presented as a dangerous Arctic storm. In *Tuktu*, they do not seem out of the ordinary rigors of the season. Finally, that the dogs slumber outside is seen in *Nanook* as some sort of enforced exile due to their malevolent character, and as such it is represented as emblematic of "the melancholy spirit of the North" (Flaherty). In *Tuktu*, the Arctic weather is neither peril nor punishment. It is comforting. It is replenishing. It is not a "drifter" who has come from parts unknown to threaten the family. It is home.

> A dog will keep warm in the snow. Curled up with his nose under his tail, the snow will cover him. Yet he will sleep and rest himself and be eager for the harness. (Hyde)

If we press pause on this image, it becomes clear that we have come a long way in a short century's worth of representation. We began with a wolfish monster dog, a snarling hybrid of the domestic and the dangerous, attempting to dine on human excrement and being driven away by a hard house whip. We end with a naturally gifted hunter and hauler, earning rest and reward for his fine labours, asleep beneath a blanket of soft snow. Along the way, there were circus clowns and museum curios, stars of the Expo and arch-villains of the cruel cinematic north. From first encounters to the first forays into film, colonial cultural producers have taken notice of the

northern dog and its presence in northern indigenous cultures. And, as we have seen, they co-opted the animal into a system of discourse that depicted the North as a land in need of charting, inhabited by a people in need of civilizing, populated by animals in need of taming. Animalization and exoticization worked to legitimate this imperial meta-narrative.

As this analysis moves into Canadian cultural production, and the national heritage films of the NFB, we begin to see some changes in the dominant representation of northern dogs. In a comparison of *Nanook of the North* (1922) and *Tuktu and His Eskimo Dogs* (1966), we see that the sled dogs changed from creatures to fear into creatures to revere: hard-working, highly skilled and well-cared for. The beginnings of this "softening" of the wolfish nature of the dog was evident in the early texts. In the exhibitions, as well as in Edison's short and the early scenes of *Nanook*, we see comical scenes of prancing dogs, as well as sentimental scenes of newborn puppies. But the *wolf-into-dog* metamorphosis reaches a significant apex with the NFB oeuvre. Here, the bad wolf has become a good dog, under control and eager to serve. Perhaps as the colonial project unfolded in the early decades of the 20th century, the white man's alienation from the land subsided. The vast wilderness, so overwhelming and mysterious to newcomers at first, was being tamed, becoming knowable and known. The North was being charted, settled, defined. And at this point the northern dog becomes a trope in the service of Canadian colonial national identity.

Two other NFB films centred on the figure of the northern dog: *Arctic Dog Team* was produced before *Tuktu*, in 1949; and *Qimmiq: Canada's Arctic Dog*, afterwards, in 1981. These are different sorts of films than *Tuktu*, which is billed as 'docu-fiction' and geared towards a youth audience. Nonetheless, they are also significant depictions of dogs in Canada. *Tuktu* presented itself as a glimpse into the way of life of the Netsilik Inuit before the incursion of the

white man into their territory. It was comprised, ostensibly, of the recollections of an elder Inuk about his childhood, his father and various aspects of indigenous knowledge. The choice of an obviously Anglo actor for the voiceover spoils this effect, but the purpose remains clear: viewers are asked to suspend disbelief, and accept that this is Tuktu's voice. The few audio snippets, which allow us to hear the original Inuktitut bubble up through small fissures in the colonial surface, promote this idea. But *Arctic Dog Team* and *Qimmiq* make no such pretense. Each of these films uses a male English-speaking third-person announcer-commentator, narrating the films from an ethnic distance. The imperial omnipresent narrator strips the films' subject matter of its intimacy (even if in Tuktu's case, it was a faux, theatrical intimacy).

In addition to the voice-over narration, the imperial presence is shored up by the subject matter of *Arctic Dog Team* and *Qimmiq*, both of which portray the figure of the dog within the framework of the colonial era of Canada's North. Not surprisingly, the white presence is not depicted here as a bad thing. In fact, the underlying assumption in both of these films seems to be that the white people belong *there* and subsequently that they have a legitimate claim to this mode of transport and the traditions attached to it. As the narrator of *Arctic Dog Team* explains, "Today both Eskimo and White depend on the dog team for winter travel." That is the today; but what about the yesterday? For that, the script casts any Inuit claim to tradition in a pre-emptively suspicious light: "The Eskimo had dogs when the first explorer came into the Arctic. Where they got them is actually not known." From there, the narrative of progress, of civilization continues unquestioned: here a sled dog, there a military airplane; here an igloo, there a mission building; here an RCMP officer, trader, priest, there an Inuk. These features were, in fact, evidence of two worlds violently colliding in 1949, not existing peacefully side by side. The harsher realities of the colonial project are glossed over, set aside. In fact, in *Arctic Dog Team*, the spotlight is torn

away from the Inuit and shone brightly on the colonial agent. The most important episode of the short, a step-by-step display of the technologies and techniques required to travel via the traditional mode of transport in the Arctic, is presented to the camera by the white missionary as he prepares for an expedition. The Inuit are spectators and sometimes helpers to his preparations.

In these final examples from the NFB cinematic trifecta, this casting of the colonist as master of the good northern dog reaches a new level of cultural appropriation. The voice of authority of the documentary narrator has evolved into the figure of a visually active authority in the mission priest, Father Dion, and next into the figure, not just of authority, but of rescue, and of salvation. This film *Qimmiq: Canada's Arctic Dog* (1981) takes place decades into the modern era and into the occupation of Canada's Arctic. This is not *Tuktu*'s time of the happy family hunting ground, nor is it *Nanook*'s time of raging against the dying light of a blinding Arctic storm. In the 1980s, such traditional ways of life in Northern Canada have been forever altered. The 60s scoop, residential schools, two world wars, the DEW line, Spanish flu, tuberculosis, electricity, environmental degradation, alcohol, snowmobiles, television, roads, missions, HBC, the RCMP: change has swept over the North like a cultural tsunami. State agents and technologies are now firmly established in its wake. The traditional Inuit ways of life are fast being obliterated, seemingly abandoned or forgotten.

Set within this cultural and historical context, the story of *Qimmiq* revolves around the efforts of a non-indigenous scientist to revive a pure breed line of "Canadian Eskimo Dogs". Facing the inevitable march of progress across the Arctic, and especially the so-called "snowmobile revolution", the dogs have fallen into disuse. They have also fallen prey to disease and "contamination" i.e. indiscriminate mating with other breeds. Despite benevolent efforts to encourage Inuit to maintain their animals (a government commissioner laments, "I tried

everything in my power to persuade [the Inuit] to continue with dogs" to no avail), the animal population is seen as being in great peril, and so the film's protagonist, a veterinarian by trade, travels across the North to collect 40 purebred dogs. In one particular case, he buys an animal on the spot from an Inuk, who unharnesses and hands over the purchase before continuing on his way. The vet then returns home to his kennel and staff in Yellowknife to breed them. The aim: to create a pure line of Canadian Eskimo Dogs. Within this basic narrative, we see many of the themes of representations past reoccur. The film includes some delightful footage of chubby puppies being cuddled by children and nursed by their mother. We also have a glimpse of their wolfish nature at feeding time: snarling, wrestling dogs with "voracious appetites" fighting for dominant positions in the pack just like "wild dogs". Through the doctor's travels, we have a sense of the dog as a collectable or specimen, a throwback to the days of exhibitions in museums of natural history and science: the explorer ventures out and returns with his living souvenirs. And once again, we have the dominant voice of the narrator – a calm, detached and dispassionate Anglo anchorman, Canadian actor Campbell Lane – drowning out the tantalizing strains of throat singing and Inuit chanting that accompany the archival footage at the beginning of the film.

What is most significant about this particular set of representations, though, is the unifying discourse of Western science that frames them. In some ways, then, we have come full circle, back to Glover Allen's seminal taxonomy of *Dogs of the American Aborigines* in 1920. Like Allen, the filmmakers here provide a taxonomy of the breed in question – its standard, to use the language of the modern breeding industry – including the size and shape of its head; how its fur grows; how its tail is carried. Part of the narrative includes the establishment of a research foundation, under the banner of which the work is carried out. There is footage of the vet's laboratory, where the pups are weighed, the data recorded, and all animals are inoculated against

the diseases to which they have little resistance. There is also an uncomfortable scene where the dogs are given breed tattoos on the tender skin of their gums[11]. Overall, this material easily lends itself to a Foucauldian reading: the birth of the kennel-clinic perhaps? Here, dogs are monitored, their bodies inscribed and regulated, their population meticulously controlled. The protagonist's "monumental achievement", as the film's text terms it, is a matter of genetic manipulations, white man-made conformity to a physical breed standard, and, ultimately, the registration of his product with the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC). The stated aim is "purity." At the end of *Qimmiq*, we learn that the CKC has indeed officially recognized and registered the pure breed that has been (re)created. The standard is still on the CKC books today, and is, like all breed standards, a breathtakingly lengthy and detailed list of required traits (and non-required traits, too: dogs are disqualified from this breed standard for issues such as blue eyes, rear dew claws, or floppy ears, unless such ears are "battle torn" ("Canadian Eskimo Dog"). I will consider such practices in more detail through a Foucauldian lens in my final section.

Mark Derr, an American journalist and author of several books on dogs, has called the contemporary kennel club and dog show industry an "appalling human practice of breeding mutant animals for ego satisfaction" (2004b 186). Its valuation of purely physical and visual criteria over any particular skill the dog may possess is a misguided and dangerous one, according to Derr and his supporters. Animals that are bred to arbitrary club standards are all too often the progeny of generations' worth of inbreeding, and thus suffer from awful congenital defects and other health issues. What's more, the actual nature of the animal, its talent – herding, hauling, hunting – is ignored in favour of the aesthetic *representation* of those jobs. There is no

[11] Starting the 1940s, Inuit (people) were likewise "tagged" to facilitate State efforts to identify and track them. They were given "disc numbers," small leather or fibre discs that were to be worn around the neck like dog tags. See Alia, Valerie. *Names and Nunavut: Culture and Identity in Arctic Canada*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2006.

suggestion that the *Qimmiq* project had any of these problems. And as a matter of fact, many of the dogs were returned back to Inuit communities to continue their work as hunting and draft animals, either in the strictly traditional sense, or in the newer guises of polar bear guard or tourism excursion. Still, questions arise. The decision of precisely what constitutes a "Canadian Eskimo Dog" is being made by outsiders, for one. The act of taking dogs out of the communities in order to "purify" them before returning them to their Inuit families has disturbing parallels to the residential schools project. As well, the conversion of the dog from worker and family member to tourism product has profound implications for both the animals and the Inuit (discussed in more detail in the next chapter). What I hope to focus on with a reading of *Qimmiq: Canada's Arctic Dog* is that with this new text comes a new process at work in the circuit of representation: iconification. We have seen animalization and exoticization in the texts produced by explorers, exhibitors and earlier filmmakers. We saw the shift from the "bad wolf" to the "good dog" in *Tuktu*. Now we are seeing the shift from a good dog to *Canada's* good dog. We are seeing the roots of the northern dog as an icon of Canadianness.

This involves a certain process of sanitation, literally and figuratively. The animal as encountered by early explorers has been purified of its nasty habits and associations. The wolf who eats human feces and engages in bloody fights over bloody chunks of meat, who mates with abandon (perhaps even with wolves, as one explorer observed) and roams at will, is now a compliant, well-behaved, harnessed, tattooed and genetically pure specimen. In this sense, we can see how the reoccurring image of puppies takes on a new level of meaning. They are used to manipulate audience sentiment to be sure, but they also connote concepts of the pure and the innocent, a freshness and newness free of connotations of any impure animal pasts. In the era of exhibition, the "primitive" or "savage" animal (and its "primitive" or "savage" human) were

placed at a safe distance behind the velvet rope, or behind the glass of a museum or zoo display. Similarly, the animal on film has been transformed from the flesh and wolfish forebear of *Nanook* to a CKC-registered breed, engineered in the cold, clinical and sterile environment of the veterinary lab. The wolf-dog no longer exists in the Canadian imaginary. Colonial cultural producers have taken it upon themselves to clean up its act. It is now ready for its close up, ready for its icon status.

This status is exemplified in one particular image in the film *Qimmiq: Canada's Arctic Dog*. When the veterinarian returns to his Yellowknife kennel after collecting canine specimens from Inuit mushers, we see him removing the animals one-by-one from his pickup truck, leading them up the wooden stairs into the facility. In the foreground, the camera lingers on the kennel sign, which reads: ESKIMO DOG (along with its two translations, one into syllabics and then the English version of the Inuktitut, KINGMIK). Beneath that appears the slogan "Part of Northern Canada's Culture and History." It is a brief shot, but worth pausing on, as this sign points the way to the future of the represented northern dog in Canada, as an appropriated icon of Canada's national identity.

The represented dog is a key component in what Shelagh Grant calls "the myth of the North in the Canadian ethos" (15) or to use Daniel Francis' term "the North of the Mind" (152). "To a [colonial] Canadian," claims Francis in *National Dreams: Myth, Memory and Canadian History*, "North is more than a point on the compass. To a Canadian, North is an idea, not a location; [it is] a myth, a promise, a destiny" (152). When "north" becomes "the north", we are no longer operating in the realm of geographical precision or navigational certainty. Indeed, what does north as a geographical term even mean? Is it all that white-coloured landmass at the top of a printed map? Is it what lies above the treeline or beyond the 60th parallel? Is it a latitude and

longitude? Is there a border to mark its perimeters? Is it where we stop seeing brown bears and start seeing polar ones? Is it where Santa Claus lives? It would seem that as the dominant cultural imaginary drifts into this amorphous and ill-defined territory, the map ends, and the myth begins. Indeed, as Samantha Arnold has noted, The North is a place where the majority of Canadians will never travel, except in their "collective imagination" (460). Canada is the true north, strong and free. It is the great white north. It is "a place where it's always forty below and people get around under the northern lights on dogsled" (Francis 158). Many non-indigenous Canadians are quite familiar with this equation of Canada with the North. Now, looking a little closer, we can see how this symbolic and ideological configuration is quite often harnessed to the image of the northern dog. Thus, where the edge of the known, civilized, southern Canadian world drops off into an abyss, mainstream cultural consumers find themselves in a vast and strange land where the only landmarks are movie scenes and mascots, and the only sherpas are novelists and comic book heroes. And to put a modern spin on a medieval turn of phrase: *Here be sled dogs.*

Samantha Arnold, following D.A. West, termed this "nordicity... a discursive structure [that has] echoed throughout political, artistic, and literary works and [has] helped give substance to the enduring Canadian sense of self as fundamentally and uniformly northern" (456). She traces the development of "Canada's self-narrative" as a Northern entity from the Canada First movement of the late 1800s to the rise of Canadian nationalism in the 1950s. Following Confederation, Canada Firsters mounted an official effort to craft a unique national identity in order to distance us, culturally speaking, from the dominance of the United States. This involved promoting the belief that Canadians are all descended from ancient northern races, and are uniquely suited to surviving in and triumphing over a severe northern climate. We are here because we belong here "in the North, in the home of the cold north wind that rocked the cradle

of our race" (455). In the 1950s, following in the footsteps of Herder's German nationalism came the "Quest for the Folk", a second-wave of searching for our authentic national identity, this time in a simpler, more primitive and decidedly indigenous past. It was at this point that we saw the Inuit drawn into the service of national identity as "the quintessential Canadian Folk" (458). One of the major cultural cornerstones of this discursive structure was the American-made, Canadian-produced film *Nanook of the North.*

While Arnold does not highlight the figure of the dog in her article (she focuses instead on the recent popularity of the inukshuk as a Canadian icon), she does successfully expand the discussion of nordicity to show how the Inuit, or rather how the dominant culture imagines the Inuit to be, the idealized Inuit, have become a part of this discursive resource. In doing so, she hits on some key parallels to what I have proposed above as I trace how the figure of the northern dog moves through the colonial circuit of representation over time, and how various processes have acted upon it. To begin, we see in Arnold's work how the concept of nordicity has been used as a marker of difference: the north as Other. Citing Sherrill Grace, she argues that the North is seen as

> a hostile, empty, untamed, and perhaps exotic space in which 'death by nature' is a real possibility. Such imagery sets up the oppositional identity of the southern self as ordered, civilized, modern, and controlled – everything 'the north' is imagined not to be. (453)

In the texts of early polar explorers and exhibitors, as well as in the highly influential *Nanook of the North*, we see the dog take its place within the discursive structure of nordicity as an entity untamed, endangering lives, in need of control, and quite unlike southern animals (such as Kane's noble Newfoundland dogs). Nordicity sets Us apart from Them, South apart from

North, and thus, Human apart from Animal. But to complicate matters, according to Arnold, the dominant culture also embraces nordicity, and the quintessentially Canadian *Inuitness* that feeds into it. North, then, is not just who "we" are not, our Other; it is *who "we" are*. This is the move towards cultural proximity we see emerge in *Tuktu*, when the wolfish Other came to be welcomed into the Canadian family, literally into the domestic sphere of the Inuit snow house, as a noble, hard-working, obedient aide and survivor, the very emblem of the northern Canadian character. So on the one hand, we see John Davis' men fend off an attack of the "dogs we thought [...] came to prey upon us" (qtd. in MacRury 11); on the other hand, we see Amundsen, Rasmussen and Parry celebrate the dogs that were so ubiquitously at their side, and so vital to the work that was being undertaken in mapping Arctic territories. We shoot the wolfish dog that attacks the ship, eats the food, endangers the journey; we cuddle the puppies and praise their gentle mothering skills. Colonial Canada "simultaneously embrace[s] and reject[s]" the discourses that feed our national identity (454). Here, Arnold invokes Said, when she suggests that "the north" thus operates 'as a sort of surrogate and even underground self'". By this account, The North, for many Canadians is a "simultaneous Self and Other" (453).

How does the representation of the northern dog fit into this contradictory discursive formation? Or rather, how might it be *made* to fit? How is the schizophrenic nature of nordicity in its canine form reconciled? Arnold recounts that one of the issues nationalists encountered in their mid-20th-century quest for an ideal folk group in which to ground their national identity, was that this folk – the quintessentially Canadian Inuit – was in the process of a massive transformation. Ironically, as the non-indigenous presence increased in the north, and Inuit culture adapted accordingly, the vision of the ideal Inuit no longer matched the realities of Inuit life. Disappointed, southern cultural producers like Flaherty sought to represent the Inuit not as

they were at the time, but *as they used to be*. For example, a popular critique of *Nanook* was that Flaherty made the actor playing Nanook use a spear to hunt walrus instead of the rifle he used in real life. (See also the previous revelation about Nanook and the trader's phonograph.) They wanted to show, and audiences wanted to see, a version of Inuit culture that was by their definition authentic, or pure. Aspects of the realities of "actual living Inuit" had to be put under "erasure"; "a narrative of lost innocence" was imposed; and the Inuit, in the colonial cultural imagination became "frozen in time"… like Franklin's men (459).

We see a similar movement in *Qimmiq: Canada's Arctic Dog*, as the veterinarian, and by extension the NFB, venerate what they see as an "authentic" northern dog, and attempt to recapture its lost innocence. Canada looked north and saw, not the sled dog of Robert Service and Jack London, not even the wolf-dog of *Nanook*. They saw an obsolete, abandoned and unemployed working animal, one that was infected with outside disease that its primitive constitution could not fight, one whose bloodline was muddied and mixed by dalliances with inauthentic southern breeds. The idealized dog, the one that is promoted on the kennel signage as "Part of Northern Canada's Culture and History", no longer existed. With painful irony, it has been eradicated by white incursions in the North. It is *their* diseases that infect, *their* commercial dog food that the animals are unable to digest. Now it must be redeemed by the same agents that led to its demise. This is what Renato Rosaldo called "Imperialist nostalgia... [a] mourning for what one has destroyed" (107). Rosaldo further explains:

> Curiously enough, agents of colonialism – officials, missionaries, and other figures from whom anthropologists dissociate themselves – often display nostalgia for the colonized culture as it was 'traditionally' (that is, when they first encountered it). The peculiarity of

> their yearning, of course, is that agents of colonialism long for the very forms of life they intentionally altered or destroyed. (108)

I am not here suggesting that the *Qimmiq* protagonist intentionally destroyed northern dogs, and then deliberately set himself up as the messiah of the canine race. I do not believe that he was at the helm of some bizarre canicide conspiracy (although, conspiracy theories and the question of intentional destruction will enter the story of the northern dog at a later point in the plot). Imperialist nostalgia persists down through the generations. It haunts the descendants of perpetrators as well as of victims. And as a white outsider, the film's hero came to the North carrying the burden of an inherited association with colonialism (as do I, I might add) and this necessarily problematizes his endeavours (as it does mine). This burden must be identified, articulated and accepted. It must be brought out into the open, and inserted into the dialogue surrounding the future of the northern dog. He acknowledges that the imperial presence in Canada's North is indeed what put these animals in peril in the first instance: southern technologies, breeds and diseases were among the detritus left in the wake of the first wave of white interlopers in the northern territories. The *Qimmiq* veterinarian is part of a second wave, and as such, runs the very real risk of being implicated in an alleged *neo*-colonial project, this despite his best intentions. How he, his work and the dog come to be represented in this context are key to applying first wave lessons to potential second wave missteps.

Rosaldo further comments on this concept of burden, noting that imperialist nostalgia often includes "a peculiar sense of mission, the white man's burden, where civilized nations stand duty-bound to uplift so-called savage ones" (108). The term "mission" encapsulates the narrative of *Qimmiq* quite perfectly. The mission is to restore the Canadian Eskimo Dog to an imagined state of purity, to rescue the breed from the neglect of the Inuit, who, it is implied, do

not seem to appreciate the value of their own animals, and who lack the knowledge and ambition required to ensure the breed survives. This is also reminiscent of Spivak's infamous sentence: "White men are saving brown women from brown men," only this time, white men are saving northern dogs from indigenous communities. Distilled to its didactic essence, both Rosaldo's burden and Spivak's sentence warn us, simply, to beware of saviours. "Unless we want to be romantic purists or primitivists about 'preserving sublaternity' – a contradiction in terms – this is absolutely to be desired," Spivak writes. "Remembering this allows us to take pride in our work without making missionary claims" (2207). She urges us to "keep 'the sentence' open, to explore the dynamic of the unfolding human relationships without foreclosing narratives by assigning determinate roles" (2195). This applies to unfolding animal-human relationships as well.

One final note on the NFB chronicle of the mission to save the Canadian Eskimo Dog: consider the film's title. Up to this point, we have seen several different names for the animals represented in explorer logs and ethnographic films. In *Tuktu* and Allen, the preferred terminology was "Eskimo Dog". Nanook's dogs were simply called "huskies." In most of the representations, the designation is simply "dog", a curious word choice considering the impulse within these discourses to differentiate the dogs of the indigenous communities (as wild and wolfish) from those of European society (as tamed and admirable). Throughout the *Qimmiq* film text, the narrator uses what would become the official CKC breed name, Canadian Eskimo Dog, also a deceptively neutral term, but one that includes both the overtly offensive word Eskimo, as well as the more tacitly problematic attribution of the breed to the colonial nation of Canada. Yet the title is completely different from all these. Here, and for the first time, we see colonial cultural producers use the Inuktitut word for dog: *qimmiq*. The title of the film is: *Qimmiq: Canada's Arctic Dog*

The connotation here is that the animal belongs to the Canadian nation, not to the Inuit. And with that, we have come full circle in the circuit of colonial representation. The distancing that we saw in the earlier eras of exploration and settlement, when dogs were wolves and the Inuit were primitive "savages", was followed by a movement towards cultural proximity, inaugurated by the nationalist movement and a quest for the folk (both human and, I would argue, canine). Now this movement is more or less complete, a representational foreclosure exemplified in the title of this final NFB product. Canada – colonial Canada, that is – no longer fears the northern dog. *It owns the northern dog*. And now that they own it, it is theirs to sell.

Chapter 3: Desire and Distance: The Northern Dog and Canada's Tourism Brand

Tourism in Canada, as elsewhere in the world, is big business. Statistics from the federal government indicate that the industry generates $73.4 billion and creates 594,500 jobs annually, and that "[m]any of these jobs are in the North, Aboriginal communities and rural areas" (*Canada's Federal Tourism Strategy* 2010). Winter tourism is, of course, a big part of the marketing of Canada at home and around the world. While dogsledding occupies what the industry terms a *niche market* (meaning a narrow, specialized target group attached to a relatively minor dollar figure), it nonetheless is identified as a viable tourism product, with excursions currently offered in every province and territory in Canada with the exception, it seems, of PEI. But economics are just one part of the tourism picture. While dogsledding as a tourism activity is not, on its own, a big revenue generator, it is an important part of the image of Canada, or what the industry prefers to term the *brand* of Canada. It is part of that more intangible part of tourism marketing that purports to "[allow] Canadians to share our heritage with one another and with the world. It forges links, promotes understanding and encourages respect for the natural environment" (*Canada's Federal Tourism Strategy* 2010).

Launched in 2004, the slogan for Canada's national tourism brand is "Keep Exploring. Explorez sans fin." An excerpt from the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) web page explains the function of its marketing brand this way:

> A tourism brand is the imagination and emotion a country inspires in visitors. A set of beliefs and associations they hold about a place. [...] Going back to this country's roots, we put our stake in the ground. We aren't a specialty destination for sun-worshippers who want to lie on the beach for a week. We're a country built by – and for – explorers.

> We attract travellers who want the freedom to express themselves through travel. If Canada is an adventure story, our hero is the curious traveller who thrives on surprising, unexpected and out-of-the-ordinary experiences. (CTC)

It is by no means a stretch to see how the figure of the northern dog, with all of its narrative associations, is a great fit for the national tourism brand. Woven into the image of Canada as "an adventure story" are the journeys and journals of those early explorers; the unmatched cultural heft of *Nanook of the North*; and the warmly nationalist imagery of the National Film Board oeuvre. There are also echoes of the dogs of fiction (Jack London), poetry (Robert Service) and even comic books (Sergeant Preston, who also mushed across the radio waves in the 1940s and 50s). Indeed, one need only do a cursory survey of the company names of Canada's many sled dog tour operators to see this brand in action. Some of these outfitters and kennels include: Wolf Within, Uncommon Journeys, Voyageur Quest, Mad Dogs and Englishmen, and of course, Call of the Wild. Some of the tourism packages currently offered nationwide have titles such as Legends of the Snowy Moon, Ghosts of Fortune, Fire and Ice Adventure, Trapper's Run, and, once again, Call of the Wild. Notably, many sled dog tour operators in Canada have also branded their businesses with indigenous language names: Wapusk, Windigo, Muktuk, Kingmik, Alayak, and Oukiok. These are both instances of a brand direction that harkens "back to this country's roots", and also iterations of the earlier nationalist quest for folk. In those cases where the names are associated with non-indigenous businesses (the biographies of the company owners would appear to indicate many are), they may further be seen as examples of Keeshig-Tobias' theft of voice (i.e. cultural appropriation, in this case of the very utterances of the spoken language). The choice of indigenous language names for sled dog business, as well as for individual animals (a trend I see even in my very urban Toronto

neighbourhood), is used to evoke authenticity, as well as to create a sense of mystical spirituality, romanticization of a lost race, and a re-connection to nature.

For both domestic and international travelers, one of the first places to look for information on planning a Canada vacation is the web site *canada.travel*. This is the official web site of the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC), and one of the core marketing vehicles for the Canada brand. Land on this page, do a quick search on the term dogsledding, and you will be directed here:

http://caen.canada.travel/experience/dogsledding

For the most part, the images and text that comprise this section are typical of the marketing of sled dog tourism in general. In fact, provincial and local tourism partners hoping to avail of the support, financial and material, of the CTC, are encouraged to tie their own marketing efforts into a national brand strategy.

That being said, there are exceptions. Visitors to the CTC dogsledding page can scroll through a series of seven images, the first of which is actually a little unusual in terms of dogsledding photos, indeed unusual for tourism marketing imagery in general. The image, which serves as the main focus of the web page, depicts nine sled dogs in the harness. They would appear to the average site visitor to be of a typical northern husky breed. They are gray, white, black and brown in colour, with thick fur and bushy tails curled back over their rumps. They are depicted in mid-stride, trotting across a snowy landscape, evenly spaced and focused on the trail ahead. What is most significant about this photo, however, is that there are no people in it. Moreover, there is no sled visible, and no scenery. As noted earlier, n a past life I was an ad agency copywriter and creative director in charge of a major tourism marketing account.

Generally, when planning a photograph for a marketing text such as a print ad or web site, one of the first creative priorities is to incorporate people in the scene. This communicates to the target audience that the destination or activity you are promoting is, in fact, accessible and do-able. What message does the CTC driverless dog image communicate?

On one level, the absence of visible human participants here connotes the sense of a pristine and untouched wilderness where few humans have ventured, or can venture. This marks the potential tourism experience as original and exotic, and so aligns with the overall brand strategy, which positions Canada as a boundless space for exploration and discovery. A similar effect emerges in scenic or landscape photography, which might include such images as a rugged mountain trail or isolated beach. If the photographer chooses not to include human subjects, the viewer might conclude that this destination will offer an alternative to crowded, packaged tourism destinations such as all-inclusive resorts or popular urban sites. This also communicates that the destination will offer a singular and authentic experience for the individual: you are different, you are unique. As the CTC brand copy declares, "[Canada] attract[s] travellers who want the freedom to express themselves through travel" (CTC). The driverless dog team allows the viewer of the image to imaginatively insert herself into the action, as the narrative of the image is not yet complete until she does so. Without the human heroine, there is no narrative closure. Each viewer provides it. In the case of the CTC dogsledding image, the dogs are figuratively blazing a frontier trail. The individual human explorer who views the photo desires to follow their lead, and will subsequently purchase a tourism package that allows them to make the image their own reality. This brand strategy – to cast the viewer of an image or the reader of a text in the role of imaginary explorer – received another treatment in 2012, when the CTC released a marketing video entitled *Canada Shared by Canada*. The video consisted of two

minutes of footage culled from over 65 hours of home videos submitted by Canadians enjoying various locations and activities. In much of the video, the camera is being held by the person engaged in the adventure, thus literally fulfilling the exhortation of the tourism marketing image to "put yourself in the picture."

That there are no tourists in the CTC dogsledding image may be interpreted as a manifestation of the overall brand theme of exploration, of staking a claim to a frontier land, and of writing your own Canadian adventure story. However, it must also be noted that there are also no indigenous people/residents depicted in this core image either. Indeed, there is no identifiable location in the image at all, just a flat, snowy surface with no landmark scenery or local faces. At a glance, this dog team could be anywhere in the country. This represents, perhaps, a political move on the part of the CTC, which must be seen as not promoting one region or business over another. The photograph, in fact, was made in Nunavut, which the small print caption at the top explains: "Nunavut, pack of sled dogs from above on snow" (CTC). It is the only one of the seven pictures that comes from that northern territory. The remainder of the images are from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, British Columbia and Yukon. None of those appear to feature indigenous people either.

That there are no Inuit and no visual connection to Nunavut in the main image (despite its real-life locale) means there is no human or geographic presence that is ethnically marked. This effectively severs the animal display from its grounding in an embodied, cultural reality. The composition of the image, in fact, literally severs the dogs from their imagined human counterparts. All we see are the harnesses and traces, which while clearly attached to the dogs, are cut off left frame so that we do not see where they attach to the sled. Samantha Arnold chronicled a similar move in her analysis of the image of the inukshuk logo for the Vancouver

2010 Olympics. An inukshuk is an important feature of Inuit material culture. It is "constructed of stones stacked to resemble the human figure" and serves functional as well as spiritual purposes (460). But according to the Olympic committee, it was also "a uniquely Canadian symbol [that could] represent the entire country" (452). In order for this generalization to occur, however, the inukshuk had to undergo a process of "abstraction.... from the lived context that defines its cultural and historical significance and function" (453). It could no longer be "positioned as marking difference," Arnold contends, because it had to represent us – meaning, "all of us" (453). The CTC driverless dogs on a nameless trail run under the auspices of a similar abstraction.

Still, the equipment components viewers do see are traditional ones, made of animal hide and bone as opposed to paracord or polypropylene. In one sense, then, the image erases Inuit people while spotlighting Inuit material culture, an act that can be viewed as a near textbook case of cultural appropriation. A useful definition to invoke here comes to us from the *Municipal Cultural Planning Project*, a national research project undertaken in 2001-2002. Within the parameters of this study, cultural appropriation "refers to the process by which members of relatively privileged groups 'raid' the culture of less powerful or marginalized groups, and [remove] cultural practices or artifacts from historically or culturally specific contexts" (n.p.). This certainly confirms Arnold's sketch of the journey of the inukshuk from sacred figure to sport logo. And the same process can be seen on the CTC dogsledding web page: a decontextualization that draws authentic images into the foreground (dogs, harnesses, landscape) while it relegates the culture that ensures their authenticity to the background, or removes them altogether. The unusual angle of the photograph, shot from above the dogs, reinforces the power

asymmetry at work. The photographer and the viewer are literally looking down on the dogs from their mutual position of privilege.

The messages, which emerge in the anchoring of the CTC web page with this one stand-out image, include the following: this experience is authentic (as exemplified by the harness); it is natural and wild (there are no humans in sight); and it is placeless and timeless (viewed from above, without landmark or temporal clues, the moment is transcendent). And there is more at work here. In her thesis on indigenous and non-indigenous representations of the Australian dingo, Merryl Parker refers to tourism as "the confused and contrasting discourse of desire and distancing" (261). She illustrated this conflict, this push and pull of the tourism text, with a headline from a 2003 automotive advertisement: "There's no better way to see the interior of Australia than from the interior of a Subaru Outback" (Ibid.). While tourists crave the exotic and the wild, Parker asserts, we simultaneously and paradoxically want it to be accessible, sanitized and safe. Thus, while the first image in the CTC dogsledding series is of driverless dogs in traditional harness, the rest of the images are more typical: people in contemporary winter clothing on modern sleds; wide shots of the entire tableau of sled/dogs/riders/scenery; there is also a shot of a good-looking young couple cuddling as they play with a friendly husky dog. Half of the captions for these six images include references to sunshine, a curious word choice considering the brand statement explicitly declares that Canada is not "a specialty destination for sun-worshippers who wanted to lie on the beach for a week". Still, it seems tourists want even their Arctic adventures to be "in sun", "in sunshine" or even "in open country sunlight". This paradox is perpetuated as the visitor moves on to read the web site text.

Visitors to the CTC dogsledding web page are first presented with a quick snippet of text, which can then be clicked to expand into a longer version. The snippet invites the potential tourist to:

> Find a fluffy husky, glide across a frozen lake, mush through snowy forest, sip steamy hot chocolate. (CTC)

The mood evoked in these four short phrases is one of softness, safety and comfort. The word-image of a "fluffy husky" completely erases any suggestion of a being that is wild, animal or dangerous. The hot chocolate reference warms up the harsh coldness of the traditional North, making dogsledding seem like a light recreational activity. Even the verbs seem soft: *glide... mush... sip*. There is an overall connotation of ease. Everything is pillowy and dream-like, a cushioned cartoon wonderland. Should a visitor choose to read the expanded text, she will find more of the same:

> Find a fluffy husky, glide across a frozen lake, mush through snowy forest, sip steamy hot chocolate.
>
> Hear the panting of your troupe of huskies running ahead of you. Spot a frozen waterfall. Steer off-trail into virgin powder. Pass an igloo. Glide across a frozen sea. Warm your hands by a wood stove. Listen for howling Arctic wolves.
>
> Dogsledding is a classic and traditional Canadian winter way to go. Grab a harness and hitch up the dogs. Shout "Hike!" to get your team running along the trail. Pull up your parka hood and hang on tight as you zoom across a snowy rollercoaster landscape. Listen to the SWOOSH! of sled runners as you wind through narrow forest trails, ice

> crystallizing on your eyelashes. Stop for a picnic lunch amid dramatic mountain peaks with caribou in your sights. Hug a sled-puppy-in-training.
>
> Mush by moonlight. Cheer on the professionals at the Yukon Quest, one of the world's toughest sled-dog races. Join Inuit folks at their traditional mode of transport, then share their piping hot caribou stew and bannock bread. Learn to run the dogs yourself. Go heli-dogsledding.
>
> Cozy up in a chalet or pine-floored yurt. Camp out on the trail. Relish a fondue dinner, sip hot, spiced Glühwein and watch Mother Nature's light show – the Northern Lights – dance green and red across the sky. (CTC)

The stilted syntax of the above excerpt of marketing text is essentially a list of imperative sentences (as opposed to flowing prose). This may have been purposely constructed to evoke action (it seems to propel the text forward in short bursts) as well as choice (there is something in this experiential menu for everybody). It is meant to engage all the senses: sight, taste, sound. We also see a careful balancing of the authentic and the wild with the familiar and the comfortable. This parallels the configuration of the images, which teases with the driverless dogs in animal skin harness, but follows up with the cozy parka people mushing in the pleasant sunshine. In the text, dogsledding in Canada is described as an opportunity to stay in a chalet, sip mulled wine, savour fondue, and hug a puppy dog. Everywhere, warmth – physical and emotional – is evoked. Again, we see the softness of onomatopoeiac verbs: "swoosh", "pass", and "mush". There is even a hint of the carnival midway: "Pull up your parka hood and hang on tight as you zoom across a snowy rollercoaster landscape."

At the same time, you are afforded the opportunity, if you so desire, to see caribou, and hear howling wolves. You can also encounter the Northern lights and igloos. The text makes explicit appeals to individualism – this is *your* troupe, *your* team – and personal discovery – you can find things, spot things. In a particularly odd turn of phrase, the very first line of the snippet text invites a visitor to "**find** a fluffy husky". One is left to wonder if the animal is lost or hidden, as opposed to the more likely scenario of being provided by a licensed tourism outfitter. Where the copy departs from the image is that it *does* make direct mention of cultural context. However, this is a dubious mention at best: "Join Inuit folks at their traditional mode of transport, then share their piping hot caribou stew and bannock bread." It is an explicit appeal to authenticity; it is also imperialist, paternalistic and racist. The phrase "Inuit folks" is almost startling in its connotations of quaint, primitive indigenous people, an unapologetic throwback to the days when Inuit were put on display in zoos, museums and world expos. It is also striking in its fidelity to the movement traced by Samantha Arnold in her article, in which she shows how the idealized Inuit came to be positioned as the "quintessential Canadian Folk" (458). Thus, according to the CTC, dogsledding with the local folk is "a classic and traditional Canadian winter way to go".

Classic. Traditional. Canadian. Authentic. These terms are commonplace in the marketing of dogsledding tourism packages. Indeed, according to the CTC web site, dogsledding is an adventure suited to what it terms "the authentic experiencer", one of nine possible Traveller Types. Below the images and text on the dogsledding web site, visitors are invited to take an EQ (Explorer Quotient) quiz to determine their travelling identity. Again, the emphasis is on creating a sense of rugged, intrepid, frontier individualism, and on the quest for an authentic adventure and an authentic self. Authenticity, further, is filtered through the lens of romanticism, where meaning and fulfillment are achieved via a re-connection with Nature, and by aligning oneself

with successive strata of figures who are perceived as being closer to Nature: first historical explorers; then indigenous "folk"; and finally, animals. If you are interested in taking a Canadian winter vacation befitting your authentic self-identity, your traveler type or EQ is symbolized by an animal image. In 2011, the CTC winter Facebook page also included a series of mini-games, which resulted in a Winterscope. "Like a horoscope, Winterscope identifies the key character traits of your winter personality and aligns you with your winter spirit animal. Are you a Master of the Mountain Moose, a Snowy Owl, or a Polar Bear with Cubs?" (CTC). The connection between Canada, winter and animal is a significant one here, as is the connotation of indigenous spirituality. What, in essence, a future tourist is being assigned is a totem, or doodem. This derives from the Anishinaabe clan system, which as Edward Benton-Banai explains, was originally a gift from the creator, "a framework of government to give strength and order" (74). This system was called "O-do-i-daym-i-wan'" and designated social roles such as spiritual leader or chieftain according to membership in clans such as the Bird Clan or the Loon Clan. It further determined responsibilities inside the society, and as such was profoundly sacred in nature. The CTC abstracts the totem system from its original frame of reference, and repurposes it according to the needs of its winter tourism marketing campaign.

In the final section on the CTC dogsledding web page, visitors are able to investigate what others are saying about this authentic Canadian adventure. Two links are visible. One entitled "Spirit of the Quest" takes you to a *Canadian Geographic* article about the Yukon Quest sled dog race, a competitive sporting event that attracts mushers primarily from the U.S. and Canada, but also the UK, Norway and the Czech Republic. For a tourist, this would be primarily a spectator event, and is thus characterized by *distance.* While tourists might be able to interact with dogs and mushers, and perhaps participate in minor, tourist-friendly events, they would not

participate directly in the race itself. That event is characterized in very different ways than the dogsledding products for the masses. The Yukon Quest is "the toughest sled dog race in the world" and includes "brutal weather" and injury. The athletes – both human and canine – are described as "wind-weary" and "frost-bitten." By contrast a second link, this one to the CTC's own media centre, is entitled "Go Inuit for a Weekend," and so is characterized by *desire*. This story encourages Authentic Experiencers to consider a travel package to Nunavut consisting of a home stay and dog sled race. This option is not an elite sporting event, but rather a smaller community festival, which offers you

> an insider's look at the workings of a typical Nunavut hamlet [and] an intense cultural experience. Think eating traditional "country foods" (AKA caribou and Arctic char), dropping in on carvers at work, ice fishing, scanning for seal and whales at the ice-floe edge and learning to navigate the Inuit's quirky sense of humour. (CTC)

Again, we see the uneasy dance of desire and distancing. The Inuit hosts are characterized in a condescending tone as "quirky", which means that their worldview will appear odd and foreign, if not outright undecipherable, to the visitor. Their worldview is like a foreign terrain that must be "navigated". Still, you can get up close and immersed in the "workings" of the "hamlet", and you are thus guaranteed an intensely authentic experience. Scenes will not be staged for the tourist. You will "drop in" on real Inuit daily life, and you will forgo the fondue and mulled wine for country food such as big game and fish. The highlight of the trip is the experience of the dogs, the mushers and the traditional community festival surrounding the local sled dog race: the Qimualaniq Quest.

In this tale of two dogsled quests, Yukon and Qimualaniq, perhaps the single most intriguing sentence is this one: the title exhortation to *Go Inuit for a Weekend*. The reduction of cultural identity to trifling tourist commodity is at its most startling here. *Inuitness* is seen as temporary. It is something a visitor can put on and take off like a costume. This is an invitation to play; ethnicity or indigeneity is a toy. It is recreation or pastime, something that can be enjoyed in a weekend, when the rigors of the real world are suspended. Moreover, the suggestion here is not that the tourist would like to experience or interact with the Inuit, but rather that it is possible for the tourist to actually *become* Inuit. It is a classic reiteration, syntactically as well as ideologically, of the urge to *Go Native* that emerged in the colonial era. In her book *Going Native: Indians in the Cultural Imagination*, Shari Huhndorf, argues that the "politics of going native are extremely complex", and have offered individuals, over the course of two centuries' worth of encounters, escape from perceived corruption in their own social or cultural sphere, discovery of a redemptive and authentic identity, and also the "naturalization" of past state violence (5). All of these themes can be seen in the CTC dogsledding press release, which, although a minor link in a comprehensive web site, gestures towards one of the key issues of colonial representation in Canada: "While those who go native frequently claim benevolence towards Native peoples, they reaffirm white dominance by making some (usually distorted) vision of Native life subservient to the needs of the colonizing culture" (Ibid.). That is to say, the Inuit do not necessarily benefit from outside interest and immersion in their culture, as it potentially relegates them to a service position. This is, after all, the *tourist's* weekend, not the host's. The host must work, either carving or hunting, while the interlopers look on, immersed, amused, somehow restored. The work/leisure division ensures that the bulk of the benefits, especially the intangible ones, go to the tourist. According to Nelson Graburn, a tourist

> is at leisure, which means that he is not bent on shaping the world, only experiencing or toying with it. If the tourist is to pursue peculiarly touristic goals, others must perform more utilitarian functions. To put it more succinctly, others must serve while the tourist plays, rests, cures, or mentally enriches himself. (45)

That servitude, it can be said, falls to dogs as well as to humans.

Qimualaniq and Yukon were two dog sled products being promoted in 2012 in North America that include the term "quest". Other races include the Nunavut Quest, Cascade Quest and the Hudson Bay Quest. Tourism packages include Voyageur Quest, Soo Valley Quest, Spray Lakes Quest and the Quest Dogsled Expedition. Nelson Graburn has traced the relationship between tourism and what he terms "the sacred journey", comparing the modern vacation to ancient ritualistic patterns of pilgrimage, crusade or spirit quest. It is the profane iteration of a sacred journey. One form of Graburn's tourist quest involves a quest to connect with nature as a means of accessing its "curative" powers of "renewal" (31). This is Environmental Tourism. At another level, the tourist seeks more dialogue than Nature Alone can offer. This is the realm of ethnic tourism, where one seeks "to get close to Nature's bosom… through her children, the people of Nature, once labelled Peasant and Primitive peoples and considered creatures of instinct" (Ibid.). Finally, there is "the use of Nature for her specific attributes", aka Recreational Tourism (Ibid.). Dogsledding incorporates all of these levels of nature and culture tourism in the uniquely Canadian Spirit Quest for a curative Nature and a primitive connection to it. And all of this comes together in the image of the "True North Strong and Free" and the northern dog. In fact, I would argue that the dogsled tour represents a sort of politically correct extension of Ethnic tourism. Where once it was acceptable to exploit primitive people to access their

supposed closeness to nature, we now look to communion with the indigenous animal, and to its connection to the "vast curative vistas" of the Canadian landscape (Ibid.).

These sled dog excursions are marketed as authentic Canadian experiences. "Mushing" is seen as a uniquely Canadian activity. Part of this mythos is a certain conception of wilderness/nature/wildness. The dog sledding activity puts you in touch with nature, and brings you into communion with the animal. It connects you to a past/primitive way of life. It is challenging, it is spiritual, it is a quest. However, it must be noted, dogsledding tourism does all of these things in a safe, comfortable, accessible manner (with hot chocolate, and fondue, and resort accommodation). This is part of what Graburn terms "tourism of the timid": travelers want the magic of the Spirit Quest, "as long as they can carry the home-grown 'bubble' of their life-style around with them" (35). Part of this involves creating northern tour packages that include lessons, accommodation, meals etc. It also involves delivering northern-themed tours in less remote locations: bringing the North to the South, as it were, and delivering winter adventure in areas closer to urban centres, in southern service and transportation hubs, often attached to ski resorts or spa/luxury hotels. Timid tourists, the ones who want their myth of the North complete with chalet fireplaces and fondue dinners, are according to Graburn "likely to have the greatest impact on the culture and environment of the host peoples both by virtue of their greater numbers and by their demands for extensions of their own environments for which they are willing to pay handsomely" (35). What then are the potential impacts of dogsledding as a tourism product? We can consider this on the following three levels.

First, we need to read the marketing of tourism texts as part of the wider discourse, and be aware of its ideological implications. The myth of the North, as described by Francis and Grant, is more than just an exotic setting for adventure fiction or a selling-point for a tourism

brand. The North is more than just a construct of the colonial imagination. It is a real place, or rather, many places. These communities are feeling real and continuing pressures ecologically, politically and more. In a day when the questions of who owns the North and its resources is very much in play on the world political stage, how this discourse works to underpin power structures between North and South, indigenous and White, is critically relevant.

Second, we need to consider the impact on the animals, and what happens when animals are positioned as a tourism commodity. Fennell and Sheppard have done a thorough consideration of the ethics of the Whistler B.C. sled dog cull, which occurred after the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, and which resulted in criminal charges against the individual responsible for the deaths of approximately 100 sled dogs. The Olympic Games were seen as a huge boost to Canadian tourism, but many have worried that once the market slowed down, the dogs were viewed as unprofitable and were cruelly disposed of. Fennell and Sheppard are unequivocal in their conclusion that "[sled] dog owners and other nature-based tourism business that use non-human animals for human animal enjoyment, must assume a moral duty to the non-human animals in their possession" (209).

Finally, we need to consider that the product, which is being sold as a spirit quest for the timid tourist, is in fact a mode of indigenous knowledge. Dogs were a vital part of survival in Canada's indigenous North. In fact, they were considered non-human persons, and as such, were considered as members of indigenous society. As the North changed in the wake of the colonial project, the sled dog fell victim to many factors: disease… progress… the snowmobile revolution… possibly even, government-initiated exterminations. The revival of the sled dog as a tourism product is problematic when we consider it as an example of cultural appropriation. It is even more complex and problematic when we consider sled dog tourism as an example of what

Rosaldo calls “imperialist nostalgia”, “a yearning… for the very forms of life [one has] intentionally destroyed” (108).

Within the paradigm of tourism as imperialism, writes Nash, “The tourist [is] like the trader, the employer, the conqueror, the governor, the educator or the missionary… [the tourist is] the agent of contact and the cause of change” (37). The question then remains: who is benefitting from this change? Are Canada’s indigenous peoples? Are Canada’s northern dogs?

Chapter 4: Northern Dogs and Indigenous Knowledge

The first three chapters of this dissertation concerned colonial myth-making and the northern dog. There, I showed how, in the imperial interests of nordicity, nationalism and conquest, the dog was first vilified (distanced), then embraced (desired), as it moved through the colonial circuit of representation in the era of contact. This trajectory culminated in the northern dog as a symbol of Canada and as a tourism marketing product, as ultimately exemplified in the web texts produced by the Canadian Tourism Commission. Along the way, the dog underwent a series of processes associated with representation: its image was by turns exoticized, appropriated, sanitized and, ultimately, iconified and commodified. This northern dog icon, like its related image the inukshuk, was seen to be abstracted from its original, embodied, lived cultural context and put in the service of the dominant culture.

This next section delves into indigenous representations of the dog. It asks the question: what happens to the image of this animal, to its representation in stories across diverse media, when we press rewind on these various processes? What happens, in other words, when the *de-contextualized* dog is *re-contextualized*, or re-inserted into its original cultural milieu? What happens if we reverse the processes of abstraction and iconification identified in the colonial era, and explore Canada's northern dog within the framework of indigenous knowledge? Will this northern dog look any different? Will it mean differently?

To start, we need to consider what is meant by the term "indigenous knowledge". The objectives here include recognition that indigenous knowledge is different than western knowledge, and furthermore, that as a system or worldview, it is as sophisticated and legitimate as western knowledge systems. Paula Gunn Allen, writing on the need for a methodology for

reading indigenous literature, reminds us that the reason literatures across these cultures are different is because "the basic assumptions about the universe and, therefore, the basic reality experienced by tribal peoples and by Western peoples are not the same" (Sacred 42). This poses a challenge for scholars who, in the past, "have been unable or unwilling to accept this difference and to develop critical procedures to illuminate the materials without trivializing or otherwise invalidating them" (42-43). Indigenous knowledge and its expressions are not, she warns, "primitive" or "savage", "childlike" or "pagan." In fact, much such knowledge is the exclusive province of "educated, specialized persons who are privy to the philosophical, mystical, and literary wealth of the tribe" (Ibid.). Indigenous knowledge is not a naïve way of making sense of the world. It has not been rendered irrelevant by the advent of Western scientific thought. It is a viable alternative to the scientific paradigm, or ideally, it is an intelligent and productive complement to the concepts and methods of the western worldview. Perhaps most importantly, it is crucial to recognize that indigenous knowledge is a valued and valuable epistemology *in and of itself*. That is to say, it is not merely an *object* or body of superstitious and animistic aphorisms that can only be accurately studied and measured through the lens of contemporary Western scholarship. Indigenous knowledge is a *subject*, a rich resource of ways of knowing and being that can be studied, measured and applied on its own merits. This is certainly what I aim to do in my work. With this in mind, and with Gunn Allen's admonishments to guide me, I have identified four core characteristics of indigenous knowledge, which are key to my exploration of the northern dog within its original system of representation.

First, indigenous knowledge is of place. Taking a brief retreat back into Western theory, it is interesting to note here that Stuart Hall has defined representation in terms of two component sub-systems: the signs we use to express ourselves, and the "shared conceptual map"

that underlies these verbal or textual expressions (18). On one level, members of a culture have a system in which "all sorts of objects, people and events are correlated with a set of concepts or mental representations we carry around in our heads" (17). On another, we have a second system, language, which allows us to "correlate [these] concepts and ideas with certain words, spoken sounds, or visual images" (18). The difference between Western representation and indigenous representation is that these concepts, their attendant web of correlations, and the expression of them in signs, are all inseparable from place, from the land, and from the localized and lived experience of the culture group's members. Hall's map metaphor, then, is a particularly apt one as I begin the move into indigenous ways of knowing and representing. For while he may have been writing figuratively of the way in which culturally shared concepts are arranged and connected in the collective cultural mind, the "shared conceptual map" of indigenous cultures is infinitely more literal and ultimately more central to their worldview. The indigenous conceptual map is an *actual* map: tied to, rooted in and emerging from one's sense of place. Writes Gregory Cajete, a member of the Tewa of New Mexico:

> Indigenous people are of place, and the nature of place is embedded in their language. The physical, cognitive, and emotional orientation of a people is a kind of "map" they carry in their heads and transfer from generation to generation. (46)

Thus, while Hall's version of a map is a metaphorical and a cognitive one (that is, a map of concepts), Cajete's is physical, emotional and cognitive. It is everything. In fact, to Cajete's definition I would also add spiritual, as indigenous knowledge involves all four dimensions (Haig-Brown 13). Place, for an indigenous person, must be understood as no less than *the* "essential orientation" for knowing and being in the world (46). Put another way, for indigenous people, nature – which includes the physical and metaphysical realms, human as well as animal

entities – is "mindscape and landscape *conjoined*" (McNab 206, emphasis mine). Not combined. Not connected. Conjoined. The cognitive map and the literal land that it maps out are one: "the nature of place is *embedded* in [indigenous] language" (Cajete 46, emphasis mine).

Cajete further claims that indigenous knowledge can be viewed as similar to (perhaps preceding) the branch of Western philosophy known as phenomenology, in that both share a "central premise [that] roots the entire tree of knowledge in the soil of direct physical and perceptual experience of the earth" (45). This brings me to a second key feature of indigenous knowledge, and one that is closely related to the centrality of place described above: indigenous knowledge is an embodied, experiential or lived knowledge. Again, this is different from my familiar Western paradigms. The Cherokee/Navajo scholar Brian Yazzie Burkhart explains that Western knowledge is propositional, and draws the distinction this way:

> Propositional knowledge is knowledge in the form of "that something is so". It is the kind of knowledge that can be written down, that can be directly conveyed through statements or propositions.
>
> [...]
>
> Non-propositional knowledge is knowledge by direct awareness or acquaintance, and how-to-knowledge or knowledge of how to do something. (19)

Propositional knowledge is the knowledge of facts, information that is abstracted from the lived world and preserved elsewhere, namely in the written word. Individuals are distanced and detached from it. It is the sort of knowledge exemplified in the Cartesian axiom: I think, therefore I am. The human *subject* is removed from the world it considers; the world is waiting to be pondered, to be discovered, a discrete object that is simply *out there*, eternal and universal,

a world that can be reduced to a set of theoretical and empirical statements. This is the sort of knowledge attached to the white lab coated clinicians of the scientific method, or the bearded ascetic philosophers who prized "the act of displacing themselves from the world" (21).

Indigenous knowledge is different. Burkhart uses the example of the three sisters – corn, beans and squash – to illustrate what an "embodied and practical" way of knowing can look like (21). The how-to knowledge, which guides indigenous people to plant and harvest this trio of crops together as opposed to doing so at separate times in separate plots of earth, sustained the Seneca for centuries. Much later, the use of the scientific method would conclude, in objective and eternal proposition form, that the success of this practise could be credited to the attention paid to a proper balancing of the nitrogen cycle. For the Seneca, however, the knowledge was different. It was acquired in a different fashion; it was learned and shared in a different fashion. The knowledge of the three sisters

> was gained by experience. The Senecas lived with the earth and its capacity to grow food. They listened to and observed the earth in the same manner as one would listen to a song in order to learn it. [...] They did not attempt to formulate abstract truths about the earth's plant growing capacities and how best to meet the needs of the people and at the same time live in harmony with the earth. The Senecas did not formulate questions to test the earth, to see if it conformed to this pattern or that. (22)

Indigenous knowledge is not formula-based; it does not seek to reveal a conformity of experience to patterns; and it is not interested in truth that is abstracted from reality. According to Burkhart: "[Indigenous] knowledge can never be divorced from human action and experience"

(21). This tenet will become very significant as I consider the interaction of northern indigenous people with their dogs.

A third key characteristic of indigenous knowledge, one that is also inseparable from these tenets of knowledge-in-place and of knowledge-in-experience, is summarized by Burkhart this way: "[The] most important things to keep in mind are the simple things that are directly around us in our experience and the things to which we are most directly related" (16). Here Burkhart invokes the indigenous philosopher Coyote, the trickster figure who appears with different names in countless indigenous oral traditions. Many such narratives are didactic or moralistic in nature, and use the Coyote as a vehicle through which to demonstrate how not to behave in one's daily life. Coyote is held up as a fool, and his main foible is "dislocation" (again, take note of the spatial connotations of that word): "he forgets his place in the world; he does not remember how he is related" (15). Indigenous knowledge, explains Burkhart, emerges from knowing that "we must never forget the things around us, and how we are related to those things" (16). Burkhart terms this "the principle of relatedness" (Ibid.).

Most indigenous people know this as "We are all relatives" or "All my relations". Another adherent of Coyote philosophy, the Greek-Cherokee writer Thomas King, explains this pillar of indigenous knowledge in the introduction to his 2002 anthology of native stories titled, fittingly, *All My Relations*. King describes the phrase as both a "sentiment" and a "reminder" of the power and significance of family relations in the indigenous worldview, in both the immediate and infinitely extended sense of the words. It is a multi-purpose phrase, and can be invoked in narrative, sacred or oratorial situations. Above all else, and perhaps most significantly for a study of indigenous dogs, King notes these three powerful words signify the cultural belief that "the relationships that Native people see [as significant] go further [than human

relationships], the web of kinship extending to the animals, to the birds, to the fish, to the plants, to all the animate and inanimate forms that can be seen or imagined" (ix). For King, "'all my relations' is an encouragement for us to accept the responsibilities we have within this universal family by living our lives in a harmonious and moral manner" (ix).

Another scholar, the anthropologist Enrique Salmon, coins the term "kincentric ecology" to describe this aspect of indigenous knowledge (1327). "To indigenous people," Salmon says, "humans are at an equal standing with the rest of the world; they are kindred relations" (1331). This helps explain why, "for many [indigenous] cultures, their origins are a result of relationships to animals, plants, etc." (1331). Salmon's own culture group, the Raramuri of Mexico, believe that they are descended from corn. This points to a fourth aspect of indigenous knowledge, which is relevant to my work, and that is the centrality of story to indigenous cultures. Texts such as the origin stories of the Raramuri and the three sisters story of the Seneca are vital vessels of indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge lives in story, and the significance of this cannot be overstated. According to Donald L. Fixico (Shawnee, Sac & Fox, Muscogee Creek and Seminole):

> Story is the basis of American Indian oral tradition. Story is the vehicle for sharing traditional knowledge and passing it from one generation to the next. Its purposes include sharing information, providing lessons in morality, confirming identity, and telling experiences of people. Stories sometimes tell us about the future. (22-23)

Multi-purpose, intergenerational and experiential: the story is tightly interwoven through every aspect of indigenous life. For indigenous people, the story is not idle entertainment. It is not

fiction or fantasy. Story is, according to Fixico, "an entity of power" (22). Or, as Thomas King reminds us, "the truth about stories is that that's all we are" (2003, 2).

For this second part of my study, then, I want to look at the dog in and through indigenous knowledge, to consider what the animal means as I work to return its representation to the indigenous context. I want to do this within the framework of indigenous knowledge as I have outlined it above, and so my objectives are:

- To reconnect the northern dog to its original **place**
- To understand the power of **stories** as they relate to indigenous northern dogs
- To consider **the lived, embodied experience** of northern people and their dogs (through stories of the loss of this experience)
- To do so using the methodology of **"all my relations"**, which shapes and guides all the goals above

Yes, methodology. Vine Deloria Jr. (Lakota) maintained that "all my relations" is more than a concept, more than a prayer, proverb or other utterance. It is also a way of doing research. "There is a moral imperative here," he assures us, and "a sense of duty" but

> [t]here is also a methodology. "We are all relatives" when taken as a methodological tool for obtaining knowledge means that we observe the natural world by looking for relationships between various things in it. That is to say, everything in the natural world has relationships with every other thing and the total set of relationships makes up the natural world as we experience it. (34)

Deloria was writing about native science and the observation of nature here, but I continue to bear in mind that for indigenous people, "Nature is mindscape and landscape

conjoined" (McNab 206). Therefore, "none of the different branches of knowledge [identified] in Western thought... can really be separated from the others" (Burkhart 22). Literature, philosophy, science and religion are not discrete disciplines; they are merely different modes of "express[ing] our being in the world" (22). In this sense, Paula Gunn Allen can write about the same methodological approach in literary studies, and I can (and must) embrace the same approach in my work. To do otherwise, according to Gunn Allen, runs a tremendous risk. "The non-Indian tendency to separate things from one another – be they literary forms, species, or persons," she writes, "causes a great deal of unnecessary difficulty with the misinterpretation of American Indian Life and culture" (Sacred 50). To avoid such misinterpretation, I will necessarily approach the second section of my dissertation through Deloria's and Gunn Allen's preferred methodological lens. I will be looking for relationships, working to understand how these relationships integrate and are expressed within a culture, and finally, I will be aspiring to avoid the "distortion" that can occur when non-indigenous thinkers "attempt to separate essentially unified phenomena" (Ibid.).

In summary, the four pillars of indigenous knowledge that will frame this next section are: (1) place, (2) story, (3) lived knowledge and (4) all my relations. To illustrate, I'd like to include a brief reading of a second online tourism marketing text featuring the dog sledding product, and compare some of its features to those of the federal government's dog sledding web site. As outlined in the previous chapter, the web site of the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) promotes the national brand of an abstract and monolithic concept of "Canada". This was shown to serve a pragmatic purpose of marketing impartiality (not promoting one region of the country over another), but also a deeper ideological purpose (promoting a hegemonic and Eurocentric national identity). If a potential dog sledder were to focus her search in on the

provincial or territorial realm, to *localize* the search, would the message change? Would the image of the dog change? Consider the case of Nunavut Tourism.

Recall that the brand of Canada produced by the Canadian Tourism Commission is exemplified in the slogan: *Keep Exploring*. The overall image conveyed is one of a vast, wild, untouched and unpopulated frontier, which invites adventurous travellers who seek to experience a place where few other travellers dare to go. The brand invites identification between potential tourists and early (white) explorers of the country, both of whom ostensibly desire to "put [their] stake in the ground", that is, to make their original and individual mark on the landscape: *to own it* (CTC). This brand dovetails with the dominant mentality that views Canada as an unpopulated land waiting to be discovered, a troubling point-of-view when imposed on an indigenous population who see themselves as having lived on and with the self-same land for time immemorial.

The current tourism brand slogan for the modern territory of Nunavut communicates a very different message. It reads: *Our Land, Our Strength* (NT). The unique selling point of the national brand is the promise of a landscape where few people have made their mark. For the territorial brand, the lure is of a land that has sustained and strengthened the people who call it home. A quick comparison of sample text from both agencies, the CTC and Nunavut Tourism, serves to emphasize the contrast.

Nunavut according to the CTC...	**...and according to Nunavut Tourism.**
Untamed, unspoiled, undiscovered. After decades of isolation, Canada's North may finally be on the verge of a new golden age after the creation of Nunavut, Canada's newest and largest territory. (CTC)	Settled by indigenous people over four thousand years ago, Nunavut, which means 'our land' in Inuktitut, is the newest and largest federal territory in Canada. This enormous natural paradise is a place where ancient traditions, untouched landscapes and incredible wildlife exist together like nowhere else on Earth. (NT)

Table 1: Two Views of Modern Nunavut

Note how the federal entity reiterates the image of a remote frontier, and sees the birth of the territory as a historically recent event, one defined by resource development and progress (Nunavut was officially recognized as a Canadian territory in 1999). The localized entity, while acknowledging this milestone, focuses more on the message that the settlement of the land dates back several millennia. Note as well that, in the right-hand block of text above, Nunavut is characterized as an "enormous natural paradise... where ancient traditions, untouched landscapes and incredible wildlife **exist together** like nowhere else on Earth" (NT, emphasis mine). This is a claim that is clearly informed by the tenets of indigenous knowledge. The people, the land and, notably, the animals are one integrated whole. They are each a part of the web of relations,

sharing a rich and ancient connection. What might this mean for the dogs the centre of a tourism marketing pitch?

The anchor image of the CTC website was what I referred to as “The Driverless Dogs”. There was zero human presence in the image, neither tourist nor resident could be seen, and there was no identifiable local scenery. The animals were literally (in terms of the actual composition of the photograph) and figuratively (in terms of the imaginative work of the brand message) severed from their cultural context. The moment was offered up as timeless and placeless. The main image of the Nunavut website, however, shows dogs and humans together. We see the whole picture, as it were: sled, equipment, dogs, people and landscape. The humans in the image are clearly marked as Inuit, wearing traditional fur clothing. The figure to the right of the frame is pictured working with the harnesses and traces of the sled in a way that visually communicates knowledge-in-action. The secondary image on the web page amplifies this overall message. It depicts a team of sled dogs from the point of view of someone seated on the sled, not from some transcendent position above as was the case on the CTC site. We see the entire assemblage moving across the landscape together. The driver is clearly depicted in the left frame of the image, once again clad in appropriate Arctic gear crafted from animal fur. Neither of these images depict people in contemporary mass-marketed winter clothing.

The text of the Nunavut Tourism dog sledding website also connects the dogs to specific times, people and places. They were, the copy informs us, part of life in this land during:

- Paleo-Eskimo Culture: 2500 BC to 1500 BC
- Pre-Dorset Culture (‘Saqqaq’): 2500 BC to 500 BC
- Dorset Culture (‘Tuniit’ or ‘Sivullirmiut’): 500 BC to 1500 AD

- Thule Culture (Proto-Inuit): 1000 AD to 1600 AD
- Inuit Culture (Eskimo): 1600 AD to present-day (NT)

While this concept of history as progressive stages or dates is not a universally accepted mode of indigenous knowledge (many indigenous people see time as circular, not linear), the inclusion of this timeline does serve to demonstrate how dogs have been an integral part of life through successive generations of Inuit habitation in the North. The animals are described as historically "revered" and "held in high regard [by the Inuit]" (NT). They are also described as "residents" of Nunavut, a term that denotes equality between human and animal beings, and so speaks directly to the philosophy of "all my relations". Indeed, the entire page of marketing text can be seen as dedicated to the equal standing of the animal in Inuit society. The dog is the hero of this particular version of the narrative, not the explorer, not even the Inuk musher. Here, the animal is positioned squarely in the marketing spotlight. The dog is credited with myriad laudable contributions to human-animal co-survival, and is imbued with its own valuable characteristics and skills sets, its own highly prized gifts of indigenous knowledge. The respect for the animal within indigenous knowledge is quite evident, especially when you consider how the text resists the urge to romanticize or soften the animal's inherent nature. There is no invitation here to "find a fluffy husky." Instead, the web site delivers a list of serious safety caveats for the potential musher. This represents a marked distinction from the CTC web copy and its menu of invitations to enjoy ease, softness and comfort in the warm Arctic sunshine. Instead, the Nunavut tourist is advised to

> [d]ress very warmly, be prepared for potential inclement weather and do not try to pet the dogs as you would normal domestic household animals. They are powerful working

> animals, accustomed to the arctic wilderness and they can be aggressive. If you follow this advice, however, you will find dogsledding to be a lot of fun! Guaranteed. (NT)

These warnings are born of real, unsanitized, lived experience, of the reality of what happens, or can happen, when human and animal bodies co-exist in Canada's North. There is a wide cultural chasm indeed between "find a fluffy husky" and "please don't pet the dogs".

Finally, I want to highlight perhaps the most striking feature of the Nunavut website, and its most explicit point of contrast with the CTC text: the use of the indigenous language of the territory, Inuktitut, to promote the dog sledding product. It begins with the brand logo, where the slogan appears exclusively in Inuktitut syllabics above the graphic. No English or French version is included, and one must read through the main body of text on the introductory page of the web site in order to learn its translations: *Nunavut Sannginivut* or *Our Land, Our Strength*. Click to access the dog sledding web page, and the potential tourist is presented with an English-language text, which incorporates several Inuit terms:

- qulliq = seal oil lamp
- iggaak = snow goggles
- Nunavummiut = Inuit of Nunavut (we also see names for the cultural groups Saqqaq, Tuniit and Sivullirmiut)
- qimmiq/qimmiit = dog/dogs
- qamutiit = sled
- isuraqtujuq = lead dog (NT)

Why is this particular feature of the Nunavut Tourism dog sledding web site so significant to this section of my work? The use of indigenous language, especially random words interspersed

here and there, could be seen as evidence of less-than-earnest marketing motivations. In some instances, it might even be interpreted as cultural appropriation or exploitation, as it was in the NFB film titled *Qimmiq: Canada's Arctic Dog*: a few linguistic tokens tossed into the mix to make the product *seem* authentic. However, these words come to us directly from the land, from what we now refer to as Nunavut, and this explicit and purposeful connection to place, to the indigenous land of the Nunavummiut, signals that we are moving closer to the source, spatial and spiritual, of indigenous knowledge. The official *Translation Policy* document of Nunavut's Department of Culture and Heritage is unequivocal: "Inuit language is and will remain at the centre of education, work and all aspects of daily life in Nunavut" (Department of Culture 1). Or as Lenore Keeshig-Tobias of the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation tells us: "Language is the conveyor of culture. It carries the ideas by which a nation defines itself as a people. It gives voice to a nation's stories, its mythos" (71). To truly understand how dogs fit into the indigenous mythos, then, I need to follow the tracks of indigenous language back in time. Leaving aside for the moment contemporary tourism representations of the northern dog, I need to move closer to the centre of indigenous life. I need to listen to the stories.

Chapter 5: When Dogs Could Talk: The Truth about Stories about Indigenous Dogs

"The truth about stories," according to Thomas King, "is that that's all we are" (2003, 2). This claim about the narrative essence of human existence and identity lies at the core of King's installment of the Massey Lecture Series entitled *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative*. In it, he tackles long-standing misrepresentations that persist in the dominant culture about indigenous people. He uses history, literary studies, photographic studies, and yes, stories – *humorous, personal and poignant stories* – to break down petrified stereotypes and build up a fresh new understanding of living indigenous cultures. He does so from the inside out, as opposed to the other and more Western way around. He uses the rhythms and conventions of his own oral tradition (Cherokee) to voice his arguments, an appropriate approach when you consider that the material was in fact delivered orally over the course of one week. What King accomplishes here is to explicitly connect stories to truth (as opposed to dismissing them as 'mere' stories) as well as to native cultures, thus validating both the general power (he uses the terms *wonder* and *danger*) of narrative, and also its centrality to indigenous ways of knowing. It is a claim that becomes richer and more complex still when used as a methodological approach to understanding human-animal relations in indigenous knowledge systems.

Many Western scholars have likewise made the claim that we are what we narrate or, perhaps more accurately, that we are *because* we narrate. In a 2011 op-ed in *The New York Times*, for example, novelist Henning Mankell argued for a complete overhaul of the essential Western definition of humanity, saying "a truer nomination (name) for our species than *Homo sapiens* might be *Homo narrans*, the storytelling person" (SR4). Narrating, not knowing, is "what differentiates us from animals" (Ibid.). Joseph Gold concurs. In *The Story Species: Our Life-Literature Connection*, he champions written literature as having a biological basis and an

evolutionary function, calling story a "survival adaptation tool" and, ultimately, "the defining power of human beings" (xiii). Jonathan Gottschall further details the role of story in evolutionary terms, proposing the vast "anthologies of stories" that comprise the world's religions served to bind communities together and thus empower them in the face of enemies and other nefarious elements. "Story," according to Gottschall, "is perhaps the main cohering force in human life. [...] Story is the counterforce to social disorder, the tendency of things to fall apart. Story is the center without which the rest cannot hold" (138). Story as a unique function of the human brain, per Gold, and as the glue that keeps human culture from disintegrating into chaos, per Gottschall, is what makes us human. We are, in Gottschall's term, the storytelling animal.

I agree. Human beings tell stories, in the form of religion or science or film or fairytales, in order to make sense of the world around us. Stories in turn, on levels both personal and cultural, become who we are. However, the privileging of narrative as a capacity that sets us apart from and above the animals in a hierarchy of capacities does not jibe with indigenous ways of knowing. This privileging threatens to slingshot us backwards into the days of Descartes and his contention that animals were "self-moving machines", "natural automata" who could not feel pain, a mercifully debunked point of view that was nonetheless based, in large part, on the philosopher-mathematician's observation that animals lacked language, and thus, thought. Language, of course, comprises the very building blocks of story. But Descartes believed in 1649 that "it has never yet been observed that any brute animal reached the stage of using real speech. Such speech is the only certain sign of thought hidden in a body. [...] Consequently, it can be taken as a real specific difference between men and dumb animals" (61). In a Cartesian worldview, the scientist was at liberty to practise the craft of vivisection precisely because the creature on the slab was unable to tell the story of his torture. Two hundred years later, the

physiologist Claude Bernard would sever the vocal cords of dogs in advance of their vivisection, an act which paradoxically both denies and acknowledges the sentience of the animals (Evernden 16).

Dumb animals: the dismissive double meaning of an essential animal lack of both cognitive and linguistic capabilities marks a very different direction from the one Thomas King seeks to point us in. Mankell, Gold and Gottschall all seem in agreement with King that story is truth, and story defines us. But for Western writers (Mankell lives and works in Africa with African storytellers but is a Swede; Gold is a Brit living in Northern Ontario; Gottschall is American; all following their French forefather Descartes), language and its deployment in story is *the* singular characteristic that differentiates humans from non-human animals. The form of a story is a biological aptitude like the opposable thumbs we use to pick roots and berries, or send rapid-fire text messages on our phones. So too is the content: the narrative material we concoct with our human faculty of imagination to fill the story we so ably construct with our marvelous brains. Using sacred stories again as exemplars of our narrative product, Gold reminds us that so "much of our religious tradition has focused the greater part of its energy on persuading us to overcome our bestial, that is animal nature" (xxiv). And it is this contention that signals an unequivocal distinction between the western view of story and the indigenous view. Because far from holding up our narrative talents and products as bestowing us with primacy over animals, many indigenous people use story as a tie that binds us to our animal kin.

Consider the creation story, the core cultural narrative that details the origins of the planet and its people. It is, according to David Adams Leeming, "the most important story [we tell] because it serves as a model for everything we do, for the human act of creation in whatever form it takes – the creating of a family, the destroying of what we do not like, the building of a

house, the planting of a field, the making of a work of art" (xx). Or as Thomas King says: "Contained within creation stories are the relationships that help to define the nature of the universe and how cultures understand the world in which they exist" (2003, 10). What we tell is what we do: the very nature of our world and our place in it is constructed in story. Consider King's cross-cultural comparison of the power of the creation story: indigenous versus Judeo-Christian. He begins with the Earth-Diver story, a narrative common in many indigenous culture groups, in which a woman plummets to a primordial planet covered in water where she then joins forces with a team of animals, including a tiny but courageous otter, to create the world on the back of a turtle. She also gives birth to twins, who aid the multi-species troupe in the creation of the earth. King then recalls the biblical story of creation, both the Genesis story of a disembodied God creating matter from nothingness, and the well-worn tale of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In this myth, God alone creates the heavens and the earth out of the void. The pinnacle of his efforts is the creation of man, Adam, and as a gift to man, he creates a female human from man's rib. Her name was Eve, and she later gained renown for tempting the hapless Adam into eating from the Tree of Knowledge, thus invoking the wrath of a vengeful deity and dooming humanity to a life of pain and toil (2003, 10-25).

They are markedly different stories, of course, with different characters, settings, tones and plotlines. But what is most significant here is that these creation myths have set the patterns for living and relating for the entirety of a culture's history, up to its present day. According to King's model, an indigenous society becomes one in which women have power and status (the Earth-Diver is female); where animals are revered social partners, right down to the smallest and seemingly most insignificant creature; where nature is seen as the sustaining and supportive basis of our existence (note the presence of the turtle...); and where balance is a priority (... and of the

twins). In a Bible-based worldview, women are evil temptresses, animals are evil trouble-makers, nature, and the knowledge of it, is forbidden, and God runs the whole show in omniscient and oppressive fashion. In the former, the central theme is interrelation and co-operation; in the latter, it is hierarchy and domination. "So here are our choices," offers King. "[We can live in] a world in which creation is a solitary, individual act or a world in which creation is a shared activity; a world that begins in harmony and slides towards chaos or a world that begins in chaos and moves towards harmony; a world marked by competition or a world determined by co-operation" (2003, 24-25).

Paula Gunn Allen distills a similar comparison to a similar set of options in her reading of a Cheyenne creation story. In her tale, the All Spirit (named Maheo) creates a watery world out of the void, and the loon, while pleased with this set of affairs, asks Maheo to create dry land for the birds to rest on. Maheo agrees, but in turn, asks the birds and animals for their help in completing the task. The deity figure in this instance is seen as possessing "limited powers" (1986, 48). Not only is Maheo incapable of completing all imaginable tasks related to creation, and is humble in the face of such shortcomings, the All Spirit also displays a willingness to listen to other beings and to accommodate grand designs to their specific needs. Maheo is respectful and flexible, open to change, and open to the contributions of birds and animals. "For the American Indian," concludes Gunn Allen, this Cheyenne creation myth signifies "the ability of all creatures to share in the process of ongoing creation [that] makes all things sacred" (1986, 45-46). She further states:

> The notion that nature is somewhere over there while humanity is over here or that a great hierarchical ladder of being exists on which ground and trees occupy a very low

> rung, animals a slightly higher one, and man (never woman) – especially 'civilized' man – a very high one indeed is antithetical to tribal thought. (1986, 48)

Tribal thought, which emerges from indigenous knowledge into and through indigenous stories, is very different from Western thought when it comes to animals. In King's story, the otter is the hero and the saviour. In Gunn Allen's story, the loon is an equal to the All Spirit. Both have intelligence, skill, language, even humour. And in both cases, they have the ear of the deity, not in terms of the abstracted monologue of prayer, but in direct dialogue, in the making and realizing of plans. The Earth-Diver needs animal input and expertise to survive her celestial fall. Maheo listens carefully to the request of the loon, and validates its need for dry land upon which to build its nest. Animals are not out there, part of the vast expanse of creation simply waiting passively to be named and dominated. Nor are they serpentine villains leading wayward women astray. In the indigenous creation story, animals are co-custodians of knowledge, and co-creators of the world.

If we consider the creation story as setting the standard for all future creation to come – be it the creation of a relationship or the destruction of something we don't like, as Leeming invites us to do – this has profound implications for human-animal relations in indigenous cultures. In the Cherokee and Cheyenne creation stories provided by Thomas King and Paula Gunn Allen, many animals play key narrative roles, and the otter and the loon in particular get special billing. The resilient little otter is successful in diving deep into the primordial waters in order to secure a tiny fistful of muck required to craft the earth's landmasses. His surprising contribution marks him as a figure to be reckoned with and revered. In Cheyenne tradition, the enterprising loon petitions the All Spirit for dry land on which all birds can land and nest, and then joins the rest of the creatures in assisting the over-taxed creator in the completion of this

important project. Animals have equal standing in indigenous creation stories, and so have equal standing in indigenous worldviews. They are part of the web of kinship exemplified in the philosophy of "all my relations." Animal knowledge and skill are observed and emulated in science, religion, psychology, hunting and medicine. Animal identities are used to organize the social structure of clan (dodem) systems. Animals have souls, and are seen to share the same breath as humans. Indeed, in many indigenous cultures, they are referred to as "animal people", a designation that gives them an inherent status in the eyes of their human counterparts. Vine Deloria Jr. explains:

> It was said that each species had a particular knowledge of the universe and specific skills for living in it. Human beings had a little bit of knowledge and some basic skills, but we could not compare with any other animals as far as speed, strength, cunning and intelligence. Therefore it is incumbent on us to respect every other form of life, to learn from them as best we could the proper behavior in this world and the specific technical skills necessary to survive and prosper. Man was the youngest member of the web of life, and, therefore, had to have some humility in the face of the talents and experience of other species. (ix)

The respect for animal intelligence, and humility in the face of their unique knowledge and skills, are conveyed via the animal presences in these indigenous creation stories. As such stories comprise the blueprint for balanced and moral living in indigenous communities, one can extrapolate how animals would be respected, even revered, in lived indigenous contexts that model themselves on such narrative maps.

If your narrative map is the Judeo-Christian Bible, as it likely was for early White explorers, ethnographers, settlers, and of course, missionaries, your experience of animals might very well be fearful, disdainful, even violent. Sophie Menache and Paul Shepherd are two of the scholars who have traced the figure of the dog in biblical tradition, with similar and decidedly unflattering conclusions for canines and their human companions. Menache's survey of the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Talmud demonstrated how "[m]onotheistic doctrines, in particular, evince hostility toward canines, placing a strong emphasis on their negative aspects" (23). She catalogued 32 mentions of dogs in the Bible, all of them negative, many of them emphasizing the animal's supposed propensity for eating "carrion and carcasses" as well as its own bodily waste (29). The Book of Proverbs, for example, reminds readers that "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly" (Ibid.). Dogs were portrayed as exhibiting base appetites, distasteful and uncontrolled urges, and were subsequently associated with the "lowly elements of society" (Ibid.). The Book of Revelations (22:15) cautions Christians to keep close counsel with their like-minded peers: "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (23). Stories such as these informed the actions of the Church's founding fathers, who, according to Menache, followed biblical teachings to "their 'logical' conclusion: the total mastery of human beings over animals, since the former were said to have been created in God's image and therefore the beneficiaries of His wisdom" (31).

Biblical stories may have also shaped the conclusions of early Christian explorers of North America. Recall how Mathiassen mused on the northern dog's taste for human and canine feces; how Rasmussen reported on the ineptitude and barbarism of Inuit sled dog drivers; how Flaherty portrayed Nanook's dogs as snarling, mutinous outsiders who threatened the safety of

the human family huddled inside the igloo. For his part, Paul Shepherd claims that the story of Noah's ark, which on the surface appears to be quite an animal-friendly tale, is in fact "the prototype of all animal saving", suggesting that superior and civilized humans are divinely charged with the task of turning "beasts" into "good citizens" (230-231). The ark, Shepherd argues, was a "protected place on a chaotic earth", a de facto sanatorium into which deranged animals were lifted out of their debased and unruly existence (231). The ark was not a shared space of mutual co-existence and co-operative rescue from the rising floods. By contrast, Noah and his human cohort were ancient zoo-keepers: calming, containing and curating animal presences. Like the inmates of an asylum, biblical animals "masturbate obscenely, scream purposelessly, torment each other brutally, kill their babies, and throw their shit at spectators" (231). They must be tamed and displayed, as Shepherd argues Noah did. They must be converted, as the hermit-saints purported to do in their desert caves. They must exist "all quietly together in perfection", as in Isaiah's utopian vision in which "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb" and as "in the biblical Eden [where] every creature was provided for and none attacked the others" (228). Was this "defanged nature" what settlers hoped to discover or to carve out of the wild landmass of the New World? Were they seeking to establish a new Eden?

Perhaps. But at what cost? Shepherd recounts how the earliest Christians sought to extinguish pagan ritual and representation of animals as they burned their way across the temples of Europe in the fifth century. "Officially," he adds, "Christianity had opposed learning from animals from the fourth century on" (224). Menache's catalogue of biblical canines leads her to agree with James Serpell that, in Christian tradition, "the dog is rarely accepted and appreciated purely for what it is" (24). Another scholar, Stephen H. Webb, makes an impassioned plea for more compassionate and reciprocal human-animal relations in his work *On God and Dogs: a*

Christian Theology of Compassion for Animals, but even he has to conclude that biblical validation for such a view is not easily discerned. Following Menache and Shepherd, he laments Christianity's textual and historical antipathy towards animals, such as when Jesus counsels his followers "Do not give what is holy to the dogs" (25), or when Pope Pius IX "refused permission for the establishment of a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Rome on the grounds it would mistakenly suggest that humans have duties to animals" (33). In crafting his manifesto of human-animal relations, Webb reluctantly allows: "The best that one can say about the Christian tradition is that the pieces are there to reconstruct a biblical vision of animal care, but those pieces remain fragmented and even contradicted by other pieces" (35). Thus, while Webb optimistically interprets the creation story in Genesis as "proactively [portraying] a vegetarian world" and as an allegory for "a basic kinship of creatureliness under the shared providence of a merciful God", he must also acknowledge that "the Bible must be read with the aid of extrabiblical arguments and sources in order to find in it a [coherent] vision of animal concern" (28).

One need not dig so deep nor search so wide for positive representations of dogs in the indigenous oral tradition. If the Christian scribes disavowed dogs of knowledge, inherent value, and kinship with humans, some indigenous traditions embrace all of the above. In fact, in several indigenous creation stories, the dog is not only a positive presence, it is a preeminent one. The folklorist Maria Leach has detailed the role of dogs in origin stories spanning the world's cultures, including some indigenous cultures in the Americas. In 1961, she collected and commented on narratives of the Cree, Cheyenne, Hidatsa, Shawnee, Penobscot, Mik'maq, Waiwai, Chahto, Iroquois and Seneca, among others. The core pattern she notes, the one from which she derives her book's title, *God Had A Dog*, is this: in several creation stories of native

North and South America, the deity does not create the dog; the dog has been there alongside the creator all along. This "pre-creation dog" is seen to accompany "some seventy-odd deities" in their creative work around the globe, a motif that Leach surmises as indicative of the "unconscious, almost unthinking taking for granted" of the timeless alliance between dogs and humans (ix). In *A History of Dogs in the Early Americas*, Marion Schwartz also catalogues several canine-centric creation stories. In the Shawnee variant of the earth-diver motif, for example, the creator Our Grandmother, descends into the watery void, and lives on the back of the turtle with her grandson and her dog. This particular indigenous cosmology spans four periods of creation, including the initial period of creation, a period of flood and a period in which the grandson upsets the balance of creation, which must then restored. For the Shawnee, the present day is the fourth period, in which Our Grandmother, her grandson and dog no longer live on the plane of earthly existence, but in another realm where they watch over creation and occasionally punish humans who lose their way. It is a sacred Trinity that is markedly different, but certainly no less viable, than the Christian configuration of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Only this one contains the seeds for a social world in which matrilineage and human-animal relationships are privileged, not punished.

Schwartz's catalogue of origin stories includes tales recounting the creation of human beings, patterns for social relationships, land formation, agricultural techniques, the defeat of evil spirits and more. Other stories are devoted to explaining the origin of the human-dog partnership itself. For example, some Cree cultures tell a story of a dog named Narrowtail who won a race with Wolf for the privilege of living with humans in their camps. In a Penobscot story, the culture hero Deceiving Man surveys all the animals to determine how they might react if human beings were to appear among them. Most replied they would flee, attack or be indifferent; only

the dog offered to be a friend to people, and so was bestowed with great privileges denied to the rest of the creatures. In each of these stories, dogs loom large, helping, hauling and conversing with their non-animal fellows. Indeed, many such stories date back to a time when there was little or no distinction between humans and animals, and dogs could speak with their human counterparts. N. Scott Momaday writes that when Kiowa elders tell culturally important stories, they often use the opening formula "when dogs could talk...": an indigenous version of "once upon a time." Writing about the power of language and oral tradition in indigenous culture, Momaday further says

> It is no wonder that dogs should figure in the long story of man's presence on the planet. Their tenure is the same, or it is so closely alike as to be indistinguishable. There might have been a dog in the Garden of Eden, and if the serpent could talk, so could the dog. And it is no wonder that the blood memory of man should extend to a time when dogs could talk. (15)

Sociologist Lea Zuyderhoudt expands on this theme in her article "The Days When Dogs Spoke Blackfoot: Dogs in Blackfoot Storytelling" in which she demonstrates how the figure of the dog in that culture group's creation stories functioned as an agent of cultural order and cohesion. Like the dogs in Maria Leach's canine compendium, the Blackfoot dogs

> precede human beings and even day and night in the order of creation. Their role as beasts of burden and in bringing home the meat is mentioned in stories of creation and in stories of the dog days, the time when Blackfoot moved camp using the dog travois. Dogs are not only depicted as domestic animals. They are also mentioned as friends and active agents in re-establishing order in Blackfoot communities. (348)

One Blackfoot creation story involves the Sun, the Moon and their two male children: A'pistooki (translated as *god* in English) and Napi (translation: *Old Man*). God asks Sun for food, and is given deer meat; Old Man asks Moon for food, and is given berries. Afterwards, "God went over to his father, and told him to put something on the earth to carry the meat home. Then his father put the dog on the earth" (330). This is reflective of the centrality of travois technology in Blackfoot communities. The travois is a type of sledge constructed from two poles, harnessed to and hauled by a draught animal. Dog travois were used to move Blackfoot camps, to carry children, to access hunting grounds, and to transport the meat back home. In short, the dog was crucial to the sustenance and survival of the people. Notably, according to Zuyderhoudt, Blackfoot divide their history into Dog Days and Horse Days, according to the animal that was most commonly employed for vital tasks. Dog Days date further back in time, to an era before indigenous and non-indigenous outsiders introduced the horse to Blackfoot society. The story is also significant because the deliverance of the dog to the Blackfoot happens before Sun and Moon begin to fight and chase each other, thus "the dog is created before time was divided into night and day" (330). Later in the story, Old Man fashions man and woman out of clay. Zuyderhoudt's narrator tells us "Now there were four together: Old Man, the dog, the man and the woman" (330). Perhaps most significantly here, "the dog is created before the first man and woman ever lived" (330).

Zuyderhoudt argues that the timelessness of the communicative canine presence in Blackfoot society, as exemplified in these traditional accounts of life before human beings, before even the basic division of night and day, shows why "relations between Blackfoot and dogs are complex, dynamic and embedded in a wider network of relations between humans, animals and other non-human beings" (348). And why they continue to be. For while dogs and

humans would eventually lose the capacity for interspecies communication, contemporary oral tradition continues to make "explicit references to the close association between Blackfoot and dogs" (343). "Dogs do not only feature in general stories on Blackfoot lifeways and accounts of origin and creation," she notes. "They also appear in life histories and in accounts of specific events in the history of the Blackfoot people" (343). This ongoing evolution, adaptation and incorporation of core cultural values and narrative motifs into a *living* tradition of storytelling is significant. Dog stories – specifically talking dog stories – in indigenous cultures are not quaint artefacts of a primitive time in a nation's history; these are living, growing, relevant and vital vessels of indigenous thought and belief. The entire corpus of Blackfoot dog stories, from origin myths to personal memories, "are actively tapped into as repositories of knowledge and meaning" (347). The complexity and dynamism of, and active engagement with, indigenous oral tradition would seem to suggest that indigenous dogs occupy a different plane of existence in these societies than the talking dogs of Western literary or cinematic storytelling traditions. Stories such as those of the Walt Disney oeuvre, which animate conversational animals from all species, often draw sharp criticisms of anthropomorphism, and a denial of the animal's true nature. Disney dogs are "fantasized and idealized" and, perhaps more egregious still, are just furry spokes-creatures for decidedly human concerns: "Human needs make for dogs speech" (Garber 85, 88). Could we not make the same accusation against the talking dogs of indigenous tradition? That they are allegorical devices for representing something other than their own inherent value in an indigenous society?

Stories are cultural constructs. They are creations of the human imagination. But for indigenous people, stories are also living embodiments of indigenous knowledge, and are inextricably linked to the land. As Métis historian David T. McNab puts it, for indigenous

people, Nature is “mindscape and landscape conjoined” (206). You simply cannot separate the two. With that in mind, we can re-read dog stories from any culture through the indigenous methodological lens. Consider this alternative approach to the Western talking dog motif from literary scholar Erica Fudge:

> We might argue that the desire to comprehend and communicate with animals is infantile, but if we do not have these narratives of communication (and not all of those narratives are written down of course) then we will lose contact with a larger part of our world. (76).

Seen in this light, and with a telling tip of the hat to the oral tradition, Fudge ignites the possibility that stories that unfold in a time when or place where dogs could talk might be less “infantile” and more sophisticated and morally driven that some critics would allow.

Critical attitudes like those espoused by Fudge hint at a perspective embraced by indigenous thinkers from time immemorial. Thankfully, this moves us towards a deeper respect for both the animal and the story, and allows us to move on from the highly problematic yet deeply entrenched assumptions of Sigmund Freud’s “classic” *Totem and Taboo*. The subtitle of that work was “Resemblances Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics”. In it, Freud dismisses not only indigenous people and the mentally ill, but also children, and indeed, anyone who displays an ostensibly unhealthy affinity for the animal world. A child is drawn to animals and animal stories, apparently, because the animal exists at a familiar and arrested stage of development to which the child can relate. Children are attracted to animals because of a shared “avowal of bodily needs”, which one can interpret to mean that both act according to basic impulses and drives without shame or concern for adult etiquette. What’s more, adding insult to

psychoanalytic injury, the noted Austrian thinker ultimately opined that "[t]here is a great deal of resemblance between the relations of children and *of primitive men* towards animals" (qtd. in Fudge 70). This is certainly the paradigm within which cultural producers like Thomas Edison and Robert Flaherty were operating. But rather than dismissing animal stories, from any culture, as narrative trifles or playthings with little import or consequence for a mature mode of living and meaning-making, Fudge invites us to instead consider that they are legitimate sources of knowledge regarding this "larger part of our world", which might be otherwise ignored. Talking with and listening to animals are not activities anyone should aspire to outgrow. They are not manifestations of a juvenile phase of development. The act of taking animals seriously is an ethical and critical lens with which we can view the canons of both children's literary and indigenous oral literary traditions.

It is worth considering at this stage of my exploration that many of the indigenous dog stories I have collected for my study are in the form of picture books for children. This reality gives rise to many issues, including cultural appropriation, translation (both language to language, and oral to written), and the infantilization of indigenous knowledge discussed above. Fully two-thirds of the books in the young readers section of any mainstream Western bookstore, according to Lesnik Oberstein, "are in some form or another linked to the environment, and – specifically and most importantly – to animals" (qtd in Fudge 70). So the notion that market-driven publishing houses would seek to raid the indigenous canon for subject matter should come as no surprise. But what happens to these stories, as vessels of sophisticated and in many cases sacred modes of indigenous knowledge, when they are abstracted from their original lived contexts, and when the lovely, living roundness of their orality is shoved into the square holes of

the written word? And how do non-indigenous readers mitigate this danger of equating indigenous stories with the infantile stage of development, individual or cultural?

We do have to approach these texts critically. In "Proceed with Caution: Using Native American Folktales in the Classroom", Pueblo educator Debbie Reese lays the foundations for a methodology for reading this genre of "re-telling", acknowledging that

> Moving traditional stories from a Native tongue to English, from an oral performance to a printed text, and from a visual performance to an illustrated rendering is fraught with difficulty. It means turning a living, dynamic entity into something that is relatively static. (247)

The question then becomes: "What do our stories look like when they are retold outside of our communities, in picture book format and marketed as 'Native American folktales' for children?" (246). Reese reads Pueblo-inspired children's books with "cultural intuition", a term she borrows from feminist scholar Delores Delgado-Bernal, and which she defines as "that body of knowledge anyone acquires based upon their lived experiences in a specific place" (246). Her conclusions are not particularly optimistic, unfortunately, and the two case studies she presents in the article are ultimately not books she would recommend to educators. Further, it can be a challenge to properly and critically read such stories when you lack, as I do, the "substantive knowledge base" that she brings to bear on the Pueblo examples (246). Still, she does include a set of "Guidelines for Evaluating and Selecting Native American Literature for the Classroom" and many of these are helpful in "making informed choices" when it comes to indigenous dog stories that are being re-told in the picture-book format (254). Among the "desirable markers for authenticity" that Reese applies to her examples are that they must be "tribally specific" and not

generalize the characters to all culture groups; and also that the story content and illustrations accurately reflect the tradition, history and materiality of the tribe. She also requires that children's book re-tellers "specify the source for the story and details the changes the author made", information which educators can then use to properly evaluate books (254).

For example, in 2007 Pennywell Books in Newfoundland and Labrador published a promising children's book entitled *How Dog Became a Friend: An Old Arctic Tale Retold by Paul O'Neill*. The story is set in Labrador, "when the world was a much younger and even more magical place [and when] all creatures were able to understand each other" (3). It recounts the misadventures of two siblings who disobey their parents on a berry-picking expedition, and are punished by a malevolent spirit figure. They are rescued by a dog, an act that becomes the basis for the ongoing alliance between successive generations of their human and canine descendants. Applying Debbie Reese's checklist, however, reveals the text's shortcomings. The author O'Neill is not from Labrador, and thus does not have the "cultural intuition" that arises from a connection to the land. He might be characterized as having an affinity and respect for the indigenous cultures of his home province, and is undoubtedly well-meaning in his narrative imaginings of these cultures. In fact, his previous efforts included a book called *Legends of a Lost Tribe* (1976), which was presented as a compendium of Beothuk folktales. The trouble with that is, as O'Neill himself admitted, the Beothuk are widely considered to be "extinct". While fragments of their oral traditions may remain among the descendents of earlier Beothuk-Mi'kmaq relations, to date no living Beothuk storyteller has come forward to approve or refute O'Neill's "retellings". "The stories exist," he confirms, "only through the imagination of the author, who has carefully interwoven them with what is known of Beothuck life and beliefs" (O'Neill, *Legends* 10). He pulls a similar conjuring trick with *How Dog Became a Friend*. While

the book purports to be a retelling of an ancient Arctic story, it also claims to take place among Maritime Archaic Indians, a group who disappeared from Newfoundland and Labrador approximately 3200 BP, and who can provide no insight into the aspects of indigenous knowledge O'Neill purports to portray. The source of the dog story, which Reese says is a mandatory tool for reading texts critically, is vaguely referenced as coming from "Marianka Svetsova of St. Petersburg, Russia." Again, its provenance and authenticity are deeply questionable according to Reese's approach. Using my own cultural intuition as an Irish Newfoundlander to read the book, I can say that some of the seemingly significant cultural references O'Neill uses are not tribally specific. The malevolent figure is characterized as an "Old Hag"; the punishment she metes out to the sibling duo is to hang them from the branch of a "starrigan". The Old Hag is a supernatural story of Celtic origin, which is told to narrate the phenomenon of sleep paralysis (Hufford); a starrigan is "an old gnarled, twisted evergreen tree; a dead evergreen tree or stump; a dead tree left standing after a forest fire" (Story). Both terms are derived from Irish linguistic traditions of the settler population of Newfoundland and Labrador. Fortunately, a number of other indigenous-themed children's books do meet Reese's evaluative requirements, including appropriate use of indigenous language, and and allow us to get back on track in our pursuit of the pre-creation canine. Two such texts are *The Dog Who Walked with God* by Michael J. Rosen, and *The Mishomis Book: Voice of the Ojibway* by Edward Benton-Banai. Both are accessible, contemporary texts that show us the esteem with which the dog is held in certain indigenous worldviews.

Rosen's tribe-specific and clearly sourced re-telling is based on the Cahto (Kato) creation story. The author gives a concise yet detailed justification of his project in the "Author's Note" at the end of the book. Here, we learn that the story is geographically, culturally and temporally

situated. Rosen writes that it comes from the Kato, "a small group of Athapaskan peoples who inhabited the valleys of northern California"; that it was recorded in 1906 by anthropologist Pliny Earle Goddard (1869-1928); and the storyteller was an elder named Billy Ray, "who shared [with Goddard] a cluster of myths and tales in both his own language and in English" (Rosen). Anyone can access Goddard's collection: it is easily available online, and includes 37 texts in three categories. Each story is recorded phonetically in the original Kato, with a line-by-line English translation. Goddard then provided summaries of each tale, which he was careful to characterize as "an attempt... to present a general interpretation rather than a direct rendering" (68). Thus while Rosen's re-telling is several generations removed, de-contextualized and re-translated from Billy Ray's 1906 narration, there are three other variants available by which one can evaluate the text, and the author freely points his reader in their direction.

Rosen does many things right, in that he is upfront about the source for the tale, a source that can be clearly traced back to the original narrator, and he is explicit in his purpose in presenting it anew. But in doing so, he does let slip some significant Western biases, and any educator should be aware of these before using such a text in a classroom or library. In one instance in the Author's Note, he refers to his effort as a personal lament for a "lost tribe and a lost language". This 'lost tribe' trope has deep roots in the colonial circuit of representation (think *Last of the Mohicans*, among others). Paul O'Neill also sets himself up as some sort of savior-spokeperson for indigenous nations that no longer exist, having published tales from both Beothuk and Maritime Archaic traditions. Indeed, the preface to *Legends of a Lost Tribe* refers to the woman known as Shanadithit, purportedly the last of the Beothuk people: "She never had the opportunity to tell the legends of her lost tribe. If she had, she might have told tales like those which the author has created" (O'Neill 9). Claims such as these smack of Rosaldo's imperialist

nostalgia, the yearning for that which one has destroyed (69). Fortunately in Rosen's case, the trope does not find its way into the text itself. There is no present-day 'Last of the Kato' figure inserted into the narrative as a framing device, for example, to lament that the power of the tale has now evaporated into the mists of time (such as was the case in *Tuktu's Eskimo Dogs*). But also note that there is no contemporary presence in the tale at all, an absence that bolsters the misconception that the Kato are a lost tribe who only survive in cultural memory and children's literature. They are not, and do not: while their number has dwindled, some 250 members of this nation still live in Laytonville, CA.

Another bias that emerges in the Author's Note is the Western, sentimental view of an animal as pet, which the author reads into Kato culture. While dogs in native cultures are revered, we must take caution to acknowledge that this reverence might not necessarily be the same affection contemporary pet owners have for their animals. When Western thinkers say that animals are members of thefamily, and include them in family portraits, weddings and birthday parties, they mean something different than "all my relations". Rosen writes that his work "[preserves] the Kato's love for their dogs. They gave these animals special names, housed them indoors at night, and buried them just as they did their own people" (Afterword). Two assumptions are at work here: one that is that other indigenous groups do not grant their domesticated animals such privileges and therefore this is a unique (and perhaps progressive?) aspect of Kato culture; , and two, that these are privileges that should be granted. Rituals of naming, housing and burial are all notches on the measuring stick by which contemporary, urban, white pet-owners define animal welfare. It is perhaps a leap, or indeed an obviously biased error, to assume such criteria were relevant to the spirit of this particular story. He dedicates *The Dog Who Walked with God* to "those fellow dog people" for whom the world

would be “inconceivable without the company of a dog” (Ibid.). Each of these concepts – dog love, dog people, dog company – are historically and culturally contingent.

There are places in his text where Rosen is more culturally mindful. His enumeration of the many natural elements, features of landscape, and the many animal, bird and plant species the Great Traveler creates and names is faithful in spirit and content to the original Kato text. Rosen says this is part of his effort to preserve “the Kato’s reverence for the world’s nearly unaccountable richness, in which every species possesses both a name and a need to be called by it.” And while he condenses the original work in order to transform it into a children’s text, he does nonetheless manage to list over 125 aspects of the natural world in only 24 pages of text. While Billy Ray recounts many more, a tribute perhaps to his communicative competency as a storyteller, Rosen achieves a passable salute to the philosophy of all my relations. Rosen also preserves the use of the phrase “they say”, which appears in the original text. This sort of phrase is an example of what folklorist Richard Bauman refers to as an appeal to tradition: one that signals a long and respected provenance of the story, its oral lineage if you will. This is one of Bauman’s seven keys to performance, features that signal that a performance of verbal art is taking place (Bauman 21). That Rosen maintains it serves to preserve at least that aspect of a live storytelling context. He uses “they say” 30 times. It appears at least once on every page.

A major part of this intricate and detailed web of relations, and part of the narrative tradition attributed to untold generations of storytellers, is of course the dog. While Rosen introduces the dog earlier in his text than does Billy Ray, and with slightly more fanfare than the original teller, there are enough similarities between the two stories to support Rosen’s claim that “a dog was so much a part of [the Kato] world, they even believed their creator had such a companion as he undertook the difficult making of a world”. In Billy Ray’s narration, after an

exhaustive list of all the elements and species that did not exist in the watery pre-world, the hero Nagaitco appears and begins his work. The dog is mentioned as a matter-of-fact presence when Nagaitco digs a trough in the gravel to form a creek. In Rosen's book, the Great Traveler and the dog "step onto the Earth" and embark on the original creative journey together. In both stories, the Great Traveler/Nagaitco and his dog walk through the newly forming world together and, as they do so, the Traveler speaks to the dog as he affirms the goodness of what has been made. Once creation is complete, the Traveler and his dog retrace their steps together, and return to their starting place in the North.

One of the most significant episodes, and the one in which the two variants seem to most closely align, is the creation of the creek. Note the retention of certain key motifs in the retelling: the creation of the forests and their various species of trees; the placing of rocks along the water's edge to form the river banks; and the dragging or scraping of the Creator's foot to form the river's route. We also see the retention of phrase that signals the appeal to tradition: "they say". We can see that Rosen has compressed his version, and has streamlined some of the circularity and repetition that is characteristic of the oral tradition. Rosen's is a more linear telling. Still, we can identify several extremely important tenets of Kato knowledge specifically, and indigenous knowledge in general, which remain. One is the significance of water. Elsewhere, in an Ojibway variant of the creation story, water is described as the "lifeblood [of Mother Earth]. It flows through her, nourishes her, and purifies her" (Benton-Banai 2). Water has a profoundly spiritual significance in indigenous cultures, which is absent from the Western worldview. In Kato culture, water is here seen as the tie that binds different members of the kinship circle together. In the original narration of *The Dog Who Walked with God*, the Creator declares this water is for all creatures to share; likewise in the children's book, water is created

for the benefit of the panther, elk, ravens, grizzlies and squirrels. “All the creatures could drink,” Rosen tells us: this includes Nagaitco and his dog. And despite the difference in the timing of the dog’s appearance, its status as the Creator’s companion is the same. In Rosen’s re-telling, the Great Traveler offers the fresh water as a reward for the animal’s companionship and loyalty: “Here, drink the water,” he told his dog, the dog who, from the beginning, had walked beside the Great Traveler. Billy Ray is less sentimental, more matter-of-fact: “His dog he took along they say.” That the Kato storyteller tags a mention of the dog on so late in his narration might even connote that his usual audience (i.e. not the anthropologist Goddard) would have naturally assumed the canine presence to this point.

Bill Ray (1906)	**Michael J. Rosen (1998)**
He drank of the water and called it good. “I have arranged it that rocks shall be around the water,” he said. “Drink,” he told his dog. “Many animals will drink this good water.” He placed rocks and banks. He put along the way small white stones. He stood up white and black oaks. Sugar-pines and firs he planted in one place. “I will try the water,” he said. “Drink, my dog.” The water was good. He dragged along his foot, making creeks. He placed the rocks	Along the shore he planted fir trees and redwoods, chestnuts and tan oaks, which all grew large. Yellow pines he lined up by the water and stepped back to see that they were growing. One by one — white oaks, black oaks, sugar pines — he raised the forests of the world. Then scraping his foot across the land, the Great Traveller made a creek. “Here the water will be good,” he said, they say. “Not salty, like the ocean water.” And fresh water filled

along and turned to look at them. "Drink, my dog," he said. “I, too, will drink. Grizzlies, all kinds of animals, and human beings will drink the water which I have placed among the rocks.” Toward the south water he placed they say. Springs he kicked out they say. “Springs will be” he said they say. “This deer theirs is” he said they say, “deer-licks”. His dog he took along they say. “Water drink” he told him they say, his dog. He drank they say, himself too. “All will drink many different kinds birds will drink” he said, they say. Trees grew up along they say. Tan-oaks grow up he made along they say. Many different kinds grow up he made along the way. Firs, redwoods, firs, pines grow up he made along they say. Water he placed along they say. Creeks he dragged his foot they say. Water will flow land he placed on edge they say. (88)	his tracks so that the panther and the elk could drink and so the ravens and the gray squirrels — all the creatures could drink. “Here, drink the water,” he told his dog, the dog who, from the beginning had walked beside the Great Traveller. “I, too, will drink. And grizzlies will drink, and people will drink.” (17)

Table 2: Kato Creation Story: Two Tellings

That the creation stories of the Cree, Shawnee, Blackfoot, Kato and others have become fodder for folklorists and later, children's book publishers, does not diminish their original significance. The strands of indigenous knowledge therein preserved, especially those that concern the dog in indigenous cultures, at the very least continue to show a marked departure from comparable themes in Western creation stories. In the latter, dogs are almost uniformly absent; in the former, they are a significant presence. That we see a "pre-creation dog" across the many variants, from many culture groups, in many corners of the continent, would seem to speak to the pervasiveness of the "all my relations" worldview in pre-contact, non-Christian cultures. It also shows a particularly high place of regard for the figure of a canine co-traveller and co-creator within these societies. Another story, mentioned briefly above, brings many of these themes together. The Ojibway creation story as narrated by Edward Benton-Banai is also a children's book, but the level of spiritual and narrative research that the author has invested in it make it a particularly valuable and sophisticated text for all audiences. (Indeed, I was first introduced to it as a textbook for a graduate course in history.) Benton-Banai is a member of Ojibway-Anishinabe Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation in Wisconsin, and Grand Chief of the Three Fires Midewiwin Lodge. In the preface to his work, he cites nine elders (by both their English and Anishinabe names) whose words form the basis of the work, as well as "countless others that should be recognized: men, women, elders, scroll teachers, participants and believers of the Original Way, the Midewiwin" (iii). He also attributes the stories to his "many periods of fasting, meditation, consultation, dreaming, and listening to the quiet voice of the Creator who speaks not to the ear but to the soul" (Ibid.). In doing so, "he has attempted to leave the sacred teaching intact where their complete form has been proclaimed by ritual" (ii).

Benton-Banai narrates several important aspects of indigenous knowledge regarding the dog, its origins and related prophecies. In *The Mishomis Book*, Original Man is lowered onto the primordial surface by Gitchie Manitou, and is instructed to walk the Earth collecting knowledge of all creation, and to name its features. Along the way, a certain loneliness sets in:

> In his travels, Original Man began to notice that all the animals came in pairs and they reproduced. And yet, he was alone. He spoke to his Grandfather, the Creator and asked, "Why am I alone? Why are there no other ones like me?" Gitchie Manito answered, "I will send someone to walk, talk and play with you." He sent Ma'en'-gun (the wolf). (7)

As in the Kato story of Nagaitco and his dog, Original Man and Ma'en'gun are co-travellers in a pre-creation world. In the Kato story, kinship is symbolic, represented in the pan-species need for life-sustaining water; in the Ojibwe version, it is more literal: "Each of you are to be a brother to the other," Gitchie Manitou explains. And indeed, "in their closeness [the pair] realized they were brothers to all of creation" (8). A finer articulation of the "all my relations" worldview would be hard to find! The status of the dog within this kincentric cosmology is likewise unequivocally stated when the narrator tells us "From the wolf came the ah-ni-moosh-shug' (dogs) that are friends to our people today. They are brothers to us much like wolf was a brother to Original Man" (9). Benton-Banai's narrator goes on to detail rituals and taboos that are observed to commemorate this "special brotherhood" (9). The Kato tale, which ends when Nagaitco and his dog return to their starting place in the north, offers no explicit reference to the contemporary era. The Ojibway variant is explicit in its prophesising the continued parallels between human and animals lives. After their journey is complete, Original Man and Ma'en'gun are told they must now go their separate ways. But there is this divine caveat, issued by Gitchie Manitou:

> "What shall happen to one of you will also happen to the other. Each of you will be feared, respected and misunderstood by the people that will later join you on this Earth." (8)

The narrator, Mishomis, goes on to explain how this prophecy has come to pass.

> What the Grandfather said to them has come true. Both the Indian and the wolf have come to be alike and have experienced the same thing. Both of them mate for life. Both have had their land taken from them. Both have been hunted for their wee-nes'-si-see' (hair). And both have been pushed very close to destruction. (8)

In my next chapters, I will show how the prophecy came to pass for the descendants of Brother Wolf as well.

The Mishomis Book contains "sacred teachings" derived from "the spiritual history and heritage of the people from whom it came" (ii). The material presented within is as culturally, socially and spiritually invaluable to generations of Ojibway as the Bible has been to Christians, or the Qu'ran is to Muslims. "The truth about stories," as Thomas King claims, "is that that's all we are" (2003, 2). Accolytes of the New Testament tradition are Christians because of the Christian stories they tell, just as the Anishinabe are so because of stories likes the ones Benton-Banai has collected and transmitted in book form. As seen above, Thomas King has ably demonstrated what this might mean in a real, lived, culturally-specific context. He showed how a people whose collective memory was rooted in the Edenic creation story likely live according to an individualistic and anthropocentric paradigm. He further showed how indigenous/native/tribal peoples, by virtue of their Earth Diver story, might live instead according to the paradigm of cooperation and kinship. Specific variants of the indigenous creation story, such as that of the

Kato, further show how within this paradigm the companionship between humans and dogs is particularly and spiritually significant. And there's more. Later in Benton-Banai's text, a second narrator, Nokomis (Grandmother), details the origins of the Earth's many indigenous tribes, who spread out in the Four Sacred Directions following the union of Original Man (now named Anishinabe) and the Firekeeper's Daughter. The people who eventually would populate the North were said to have faced particularly intense challenges, of climate and of distance, and so employed honoured men called "runners" to communicate with other villages, and to harvest what they could from scattered patches of unfrozen land. Once, a group of runners returned with a litter of wolf pups with the purpose of storing and saving the meat for times of potential famine. But the animals had another idea.

> The pups... wanted to seek another way to become useful to the people. When they grew up, they started going out to meet the exhausted runners and lead them home. On one occasion, one of the strongest dogs spoke to the runners and instructed them in the making of a zhoosh-ku'-da-bahn (sled). This dog told them of how six dogs could be harnessed to a sled that would take a man much faster and farther over the snow. They could expand their communication with other villages and their food gathering expeditions. (27)

This passage sets the stage for many aspects of indigenous knowledge of dogs in the North. It explains the origins of sledge technology, which would become crucial to the survival of northern peoples. The dogs are valued for their navigational ability and their endurance. They have a skill set that is depicted as better than their human counterparts, and they are seen as having knowledge that humans lack altogether – the concept of a six dog harness. Notably, this configuration also has a sacred aspect: "The number seven, obtained by joining the six dogs to

the one man with the sled, was to become a very special number to the Earth's people as their spiritual ways developed" (27). The entire spiritual history of the Anishinabe people is based on a series of septenary tenets that includes the Seven Grandfathers, the Seven Teachings and the Seven Fires (or prophecies). That the dog, and its arrangement in harness, would be likewise enumerated is an unmistakable testament to its sacred status in indigenous societies.

The story of the dog in Edward Benton-Banai's *The Mishomis Book* culminates with the gift of sledge technology from the dogs to the people of the North, and with the following final interpretation:

> This linkage of man and dog was very important because it combined the intelligence of man with the intuition of dog. If a man was to get lost in the wilderness, his dogs could lead him back home. This joining of man and dog was also important because it continued the teaching of the close bond that once existed between Anishinabe and the wolf in their journeys around the Earth. (27)

This passage underscores the importance of the continuity of tradition, as the narrator expressly connects the dots between contemporary dogs and the pre-creation canine companion. We clearly see the role of the animal as partner in the creative enterprise of primordial life, and in the ongoing struggle for survival in contemporary life. Dogs are not sinners or outliers. They are allies. They are not marginal or inimical to the interests of indigenous society. They are a sacred and equal part of that society. But more than part, partner or ally, the dog in indigenous society is so enmeshed in the lives of the Northern people, so intricately and inexorably woven into the fabric of their life on the frozen land, that the animal is seen to exist in corporeal relation with the humans it supports, instructs and guides. The relationship is embodied, taking the best of the

animal body and the best of the human and intermingling them to create one powerful and successful unit. Laugrand and Oosten, in their later work on Inuit society, would term this linkage a "symbiosis": a physical coming together of human and canine in which both species exist in a mutually beneficial, inseparable and embodied relationship, each deriving necessary skill and sustenance from the other (90). Benton-Banai reminds us of the roots of this relationship: the coming together of Original Man and Brother Wolf. Notably, theirs was a symbiosis forged in longing. It was inspired by Man's melancholy awareness of the physically intimate pairing of all creatures in the natural world around him. Brother Wolf's arrival in the primordial world was a response to Man's request, not simply for a companion, but for a reproductive mate.

In the indigenous context, then, it is not accurate to say that one *has* a dog. It is not a linkage of animal husbandry or pet-keeping. This connection runs deeper, means more, and is both corporeal and spiritual in nature. It connects timeless animal pasts with the evolving animal present. The indigenous creation story crafted a divine blueprint for an enduring and symbiotic bond. In fact, in many other indigenous origin stories, gods and goddesses from all over the world didn't just *have* dogs. They married them.

Chapter 6: Symbiosis, Slaughter and Story: Inuit Elders Re-Member Qimuksiit[12]

The marriage of humans and animals and their ability to produce offspring are both major motifs in many indigenous oral traditions. We can see how Edward Benton-Banai's version of the Anishinabe creation story hints at this in *The Mishomis Book*. While his recounting of the coming together of Original Man and Brother Wolf does not include explicit conjugal or sexual references, the connotations are there. We have seen how the lone male wanderer surveys the natural world around him, and struck by a certain melancholy, petitions the Creator for a companion, and is gifted with the company of Wolf. There are several concepts of note in this passage (excerpted in the previous chapter). First, the desire expressed by Original Man is inspired by the mating and reproduction of animals in nature. This is the lack that will be liquidated by the arrival of his canine companion[13]. He yearns for the presence of a creature who is "like me", that is, he desires a relationship rooted in similarity, not difference. He seeks to live in kinship, not hierarchy. The mate Original Man seeks also will be able to "walk, talk and play" with him, that is to say, it will be one who can accompany him in his toil and his leisure, and notably one who will be able to converse with him. Finally, all of these requirements are fulfilled, not by a female human, as is the case in the Judaeo-Christian story of the Garden of Eden. Nor is it fulfilled by a being who is represented as being a diminutive or derivative of himself, as was the case when Eve was fashioned out of Adam's rib. Rather, Wolf arrives as an autonomous, dignified, companionable and equal partner. The relationship between Anishinabe and Maengun is egalitarian and purposeful. In her article on the beauty and spirit of the contemporary rez dog, Winona LaDuke also explores this thread of the Aninishanabe creation

[12] A version of this chapter appeared in the book *Indigenous Voices and Spirit Memory*, University of Manitoba Press, 2013.
[13] See Alan Dundes, The Morphology of North American Indian Folktales, 1964.

story. In “Ishkoniganiisimoog – The Rez Dogs”, LaDuke reminds us: “The stories are told that dogs always lived with humans” (95). She too cites the tale of the first human and his companion wolf, and details the many lessons the canid has taught her people: “[T]he humans were taught much about relationships, extended family systems, loyalty, and the keen powers of observation” (95). Wolf’s descendant, Dog, is often referred to in the language of LaDuke’s people as “Odayi”, which translates as “my heart” (Ibid.). In both her and Benton-Banai’s retellings, the alliance of human and canine is thus shown to have ancient, affective, embodied, and profoundly intimate roots. For Original Man, his presence in nature only makes sense when he is paired with his lupine brother. “Why I am alone?” he ponders. *You are not*, the Creator replies, sending his non-human partner earthward.

Elsewhere in the canon of indigenous oral literature, this intimate, physical pairing of human and dogs is represented more explicitly. Anthropologists, folklorists and narratologists have identified what they have termed “the dog-husband motif” in many creation stories from across the indigenous world, and while they differ in their interpretations, it is nonetheless an important narrative phenomenon to consider as we move into the Inuit cultural context. “The Dog-Husband story,” writes Bryan Cummins, “is common throughout the Subarctic and Arctic and is found to a lesser degree on the Plains, along the Northwest Coast, and on the Canadian Plateau” (2002, 343). In general terms, these stories centre on the mating of a human woman and a non-human animal, and as a result of their coupling, the world becomes populated with diverse races. Cummins focuses on the tale of the female deity Nuliajuk, which was narrated by an Inuk named Nakasuk in the 1930s, and recorded by the Inuk-Dane explorer Knud Rasmussen. The story is elsewhere known as the Sedna myth, and while the details change from culture to culture, many of the narrative elements remain the same across all the variants. In the

Nakasuk/Rasmussen variant, an angry father yells at his daughter that he wishes she would marry a dog. Subsequently, the young woman has sexual intercourse with a dog who appears to her in human form, and "in that way they became man and wife" (343). She becomes pregnant, and her father exiles her to an island where she gives birth to a litter of pups. Half of her offspring will go on to become "Indians"; the other half will become "Europeans". She sends them from the island in boats made of her leather shoes, but when she tries to board one of the vessels, the children turn on her and throw her overboard. As she clings to the side of the boat, they chop off her fingers. These become seals, bearded seals and walruses, and the woman sinks to the bottom of the sea, where she becomes the goddess of the sea mammals. It is she who controls the release of an important food source to future generations of Inuit. Her husband, the dog, continues to guard her underwater home (343-344).

A defiant female, a strict deity and punishment-by-banishment might all seem familiar and accessible motifs to Westerners (think: Garden of Eden), but countless colonial cultural producers have struggled to make sense of the Nuliajuk/Sedna stories. Acting as critical and chronological bookends, Signe Rink (1898) and Bryan Cummins (2011) agree that the ostensible culmination of the narrative – the creation of other races – must be a post-contact addition to a more ancient text. Rink, who grew up in Greenland and was familiar with local oral renditions of the Sedna story, is definitive that the tale "The Origin of the Qavdlunait and Irqigdlit (Europeans and Indians)" is not the "original form" and is, in fact, a "false version" (182). He laments: "how inharmonious seemed the commencement of the tale, stamped with barbarisms, [with] its entirely modern termination!" (Ibid.). Rink's prosaic flourish aside, the obvious conclusion is that Inuit storytellers could only have incorporated non-Inuit characters if they knew of their existence. This means any correlation between the figure of the dog and the figure of the Indian or

European might be difficult to discern. In Rink's estimation, the interspecies intercourse is an original motif, the generation of races a later add-on, and thus its authentic cultural meaning is lost in the disconnect. With no substantive evidence pointing to a rationale for the merging of the two narrative threads, Rink seeks to trace the corruption of the original texts to a series of random linguistic misunderstandings centred on the similarity between the Inuktitut words for "wolf" and "white man". In doing so, he elides all the marvelous richness and fluidity of such a pan-cultural and enduring tale.

Other readings of the Sedna story have more closely approximated what Paula Gunn Allen calls a "tribal reading" (2001, 2108). Rather than chasing down and persecuting "false versions", scholars need to acknowledge that "the oral tradition is a living body. It is in continuous flux, which enables it to accommodate itself to the real circumstances of a people's lives" (Ibid.). So while Rink dissects the Sedna story, reducing it to its tiniest linguistic components and awkwardly imposing a Western empiricist worldview onto it, other readings pay respect to other possibilities. In her approach to narrative analysis, Gunn Allen employs not surgical precision, but rather an openness to the richness of ritual. As did anthropologist H. Newell Wardle (1900): Working from texts collected by Franz Boaz, Wardle locates "another raison d'être" for the story, namely that it is a ceremony marking the passing of the seasons (569). Notably in this telling, the daughter defies her angry father to marry a seabird, not a dog-husband, but the other elements are similar. As the narrative cycles through the harshness of winter (personified by the tirades of the father) to the beauty and plenitude of summer (the youthfully defiant daughter), the vagaries of fierce autumn storms and the "radiant greeting of spring" when father and daughter meet again, the sacred seasonal rounds of the Inuit people are narratively ritualized (571). Dogs do play a key role towards the story's denouement. As in the

Rasmussen variant, they act as guardians of Sedna's sea cave. Wardle interprets them as representing "the sun's rays [that] gnaw off the edges of the glacial ice and the icebergs break away, in spring" (572). Significantly, Wardle further personifies Sedna herself as the summer sun, for when she is thrown overboard in a struggle with the seabird's kin, he says, "the sun dips below the horizon: the summer is going" (572). That Sedna is the sun and the dogs are the sun's rays hint at a symbiotic working relationship between humans and canines.

Janice R. Sheppard tackled several variants of the Dog-Husband story in her article, "The Dog Husband: Structural Identity and Emotional Specificity in Northern Athapaskan Oral Narrative." She identifies a "shared narrative structure" among four indigenous cultures, one that includes the following episodes: (a) an unmarried woman comes of age; (b) she becomes figuratively dead to the community (she is alone); (c) puppies become dead to dog community (their dog skins are burned); and (d) children come of age (but retain dog traits) (90). Again, we can see similarities and differences to the versions considered by Rink and Wardle. But overall, Sheppard says she is not interested in origin or morphology, but rather in determining how these stories are distinct to the culture from which they emerge. For her, the dog-husband motif, in each of its iterations, is linked to social relationships and community cohesion: "The relationships chosen are those which are metaphorically (and perhaps practically) the most meaningful relationships on a society. They are the relationships which are believed to be the cornerstones of survival for the entire group" (92). She interprets the Tahltan variant as emphasizing the importance of taboos against animal abuse and incest; the Tsetaut variant is a didactic tale concerning "the proper relationship to game animals" (93); and the Carrier story focuses on the relationship between youth and their elders. A standout variant is that of the Dogrib: here the intercourse between woman and dog is the genesis of the entire people, and is

seen in a uniquely positive light. Quoting Helm and Thomas, she notes that "because of the power inherited by these children from their dog-father, they become 'the finest hunters, the bravest fighters, and the best medicine men that ever lived'" (96). Thus while three of the cultures use the dog-husband motif to make sense of "shame and death", the Dogrib variant represents collective "pride and continuity" (Ibid.).

Laugrand and Oosten offer a more literal interpretation of the dog husband story, linking the mating of the woman and the animal to actual instances of human-canine intercourse in Inuit society. The practice, they initially claim, was "common" among the Netsilik; it carried "no shame"; and it was talked about "extensively" (93). They cite Rasmussen as having recorded numerous stories and contextual details. According to the Dane, there were "specific rules" surrounding human-canine coupling, including the stricture that one must respect the reproductive cycle of the animal, and that any such rendez-vous take place outdoors. Still, there are contradictions. Despite his claims of accepted practice, Rasmussen goes on to record a story in which tremendous shame is brought upon a woman who had sex with a dog and gave birth to hybrid offspring; she and her puppies were all stoned to death. Ultimately, Laugrand and Oosten conclude that most such accounts of bestiality are based on "hearsay" (93), and there seems to be little to support Rasmussen's suggestion that intercourse with dogs was a commonplace activity in traditional Inuit society. Still, as the author notes, it does highlight the importance of the figure of the dog in the wider "discourse on sexual relations" (93). The Inuit told stories about interspecies copulation as a way to make sense of the physical realities of bodies, reproduction, and sexual desire, its possibilities and its limits.

Whether the Sedna myth is seen through lenses morphological, discursive or socio-cultural, when it is being viewed from the *outside looking in*, troubles of translation necessarily

arise. The imposition of Eurocentric scholarly methodologies on the stories, their abstraction from lived contexts, their forced confinement in the written word, and their clinical dissection by academics twice-removed from the original storytelling performance (recall that these writers were working with texts collected by explorers) all signal that such interpretations should be approached with great caution. The Sedna/Nuliajuk stories may tell of the origins of European and Indian races, thanks to a twist of linguistic fate. They may be ceremonies of the seasonal cycle of traditional Inuit lifeways. They may be affective explorations of sexuality, or of social structure and its violations. They may be all of the above, or none of it. For my work, what is most significant about the Sedna stories is, quite simply, their animal presence. For whatever purpose they are performed, pulling together whatever narrative threads, the bottom line is that the reality of dogs in human society was significant enough to find its way into the key foundational texts of so many of the world's indigenous cultures. Moreover, this canine presence is repeatedly and uniformly couched in sexual and reproductive terms. The merging of dog and human bodies, whether a social reality or an imaginative possibility, is part of the narrative vocabulary of the Inuit. It is an image that storytellers could draw upon in order to deliver their art to an audience who would readily accept and understand it. This stands in stark contrast to Western narratives (such as those in the Bible, and earlier Christian tradition) where animals were separate, absent, or vilified. Sacred storytellers of the West may have preferred snakes and lambs to populate their stories, playing the allegorical roles of hissing villains or dutiful followers. Indigenous people seem to have preferred large game animals, sea mammals and birds, and dogs.

In the previous chapter, I considered Lea Zuyderhoudt's analysis of dog stories in Blackfoot culture. Her research also revealed a significant connection between traditional tales (such as origin stories, legends and myths) and contemporary life stories. She wrote:

> Dogs do not only feature in general stories about Blackfoot lifeways and accounts of origin and creation. They also appear in life histories and in accounts of specific events in the history of the Blackfoot people. These accounts vary greatly but all point to the importance of dogs in different aspects of Blackfoot ways of life and in personal and community history. (343)

Traditional stories (past, communal) and individual accounts (contemporary, personal) both comprise valued bodies of Blackfoot knowledge. They are, in fact, "*complementary* repositories of knowledge, values and meaning [that] *interlink and intertwine*" (346, emphases mine) to provide an essential, dual resource for Blackfoot people. These are not two separate narrative genres. They are interconnected and porous, bleeding one into the other, blurring the conventional, static, Western border between what Zuyderhoudt terms "history" and "cosmology" (Ibid.). For the Blackfoot, there can be no distinction between the factual and the fantastic. The primordial dog who interacted with Sun and Moon is as legitimate, as real and as meaningful a figure as the rez dog who defended the Blackfoot against highly trained RCMP dogs on the Blood Reserve in the 1990s (346). Both are truth. The Inuit likewise have their twofold narrative corpus, united under the banner term *Inuit Qaujimatajatuqangit* (IQ). IQ is traditional knowledge that "has been passed on to us by our ancestors, things that we have always known, things crucial to our survival" (Bennett & Rowley, Preface). The two narrative types through which IQ is expressed are *unikkaat,* "life stories [that] happen in a time that people can remember" and *unikaaqtuaq*, "traditional stories [that] are located in a kind of mythological

time, when the world was a bit different" (Martin 193). The Sedna myth is an *unikkaaqtuaq*, and scholars (myself included) have struggled to make sense of its meaning (see above). Out of context and on the page, an *unikkaaqtuaq* has been cut off from its intricate life support system, removed from its intertwined and interlinked narrative web. To truly understand, then, scholars need to also listen to the *unikkaat*, to the life stories of contemporary Inuit narrators. Fortunately, there is a growing repository of available *unikkaat* that centre on the dog in recent memory in Northern Canada. These are important stories: powerful, poignant, touching, and redolent with information on the significance of dogs in Inuit society, past and present. Unfortunately, they come to us, like so many great stories do, from a time and a place of profound trauma.

In the 1920s, there were 20,000 Canadian Inuit Dogs – *qimmiq* – in the North. By 1970, there were less than 200 (Montcombroux 11). Some chalk this dramatic decline up to (down to?) progress: primitive technologies rendered obsolete by the marvelous snow machine; or the movement of the Inuit to larger centres where the old ways of life were no longer necessary. Some point to the introduction of new canine diseases to which the *qimmiq* had little or no resistance. Others fault the introduction of new canine breeds, which forever altered the ancient indigenous bloodlines. The Inuit of the territory (now called) Nunavut, and of Nunavik (Northern Quebec) offer a different perspective:

> What happened to these dutiful dogs who stood at both poles, serving nearly all of the famous names in Arctic and Antarctic exploration? This powerfully built breed that was capable of pulling between 45-50 kilograms (per dog), over distances up to 70 miles per day; they served as hunting dogs as well, able to locate seal breathing holes, hold polar bears at bay and muskox for Inuit hunters. The Canadian government had them slaughtered. (Dohla n.p.)

The Inuit maintain that one of the main reasons for the reduction to near decimation of the *qimmiq* population was a mass slaughter of Inuit sled dogs by government and police officials in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. The Inuit elders claim that police and government officials stationed in (what is now called) Nunavut and Nunavik (Northern Quebec), acting on a direct order from the government, killed tens of thousands of their dogs. They feel that this systematic slaughter was carried out in an effort to force them off the land, to encourage them to settle in communities and to more easily assimilate them into the white way of life: to 'civilize' them. *Unikkaat* centering on personal reminiscences of the slaughter and its repercussions on individuals, families and Inuit society have circulated orally throughout Canada's North for decades. Efforts to have these stories told, recorded and *heard* by federal and provincial governments and their agencies have been underway in earnest since the late 1990s, as Inuit leaders have offered up their narratives of the contentious historical event.

In 1999, the Makivik Corporation, an entity created to administer the James Bay and Northern Quebec Land Claims Agreement, began travelling through its 15 communities in the North, collecting *unikkaat* about the sled dogs from the elders, and filing official complaints and petitions with government. In 2005, the stories finally began to get attention and action. In January 2005, the Corporation submitted an official brief to the federal and Quebec governments, entitled "The Slaughtering of Nunavik Qimmiit". The 27-page, 10,000-word submission was timed to coincide with the debut of an Inuit-produced 54-minute documentary on the slaughter, *Echo of the Last Howl*. *Echo* was screened on January 19 at the Katittavik Community Centre and Town Hall in Kuujuaq, Quebec for an audience of elders, regional organizations, government representatives and the media. Community leaders and elders were subsequently invited to speak before Ottawa's Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and

Northern Development in March 2005 during two special sessions devoted to exploring the potential of a public inquiry into the dog slaughter. The committee meetings were a milestone, but also a non-starter, as deadlines to launch the independent inquiry came and went. Instead, on April 25, 2005 the Minister then responsible for the RCMP Anne McLellan sent a formal request to then RCMP commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli to begin "a comprehensive review of the RCMP actions regarding sled dogs in the North between 1950 and 1970" (Final Report 3). In effect, the RCMP were asked to investigate themselves. They reviewed their own files, and interviewed their own people. They did not include any input from the Inuit. Not surprisingly, when their final report was released in 2006, the police force concluded that there had been no systematic slaughter of Inuit dogs in the North.

Frustrated with the RCMP findings, the Qikiqtani Inuit Corporation opted to mount their own inquiry, and the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) was struck in January 2008. The QTC travelled to 13 communities across the North seeking the testimony that was lacking in the RCMP review. Also in 2008, the Makivik Corporation spearheaded its own commission, independent of the work being carried out by the QTC. It was helmed by retired Supreme Court Justice Jean-Jacques Croteau, and also involved consultations with leaders and elders in their communities. In March 2010, Croteau submitted his final report to Makivik and the Quebec government. He verified the deaths of 400 dogs in Nunavik in the time period in question; he affirmed that some were shot, some poisoned, and still others were killed in makeshift gas chambers. In 2011 in response to the arms-length Nunavik commission, then premier Jean Charest issued an official apology to Quebec Inuit for the slaughter. He also ear-marked $3 million in compensation. The QTC's final report was released in 2010. Its broader mandate examined a host of social and economic ills that wracked Inuit culture in the decades in question,

including clumsy state interventions in Inuit education, health care, housing and employment. Its conclusion likewise recommended federal action and apology on the issues; both are still pending. In the meantime, a second documentary film, this one a production of Piksuk Media and the National Film Board of Canada, debuted in June 2010. It included video footage from the QTC hearings, as well as new interviews with elders and retired RCMP members. That documentary was entitled *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths*.

Previous to all of this activity, in 1993, a group of southern and northern researchers had begun collecting "regional versions of stories, practices, beliefs, and values" from elders across modern Nunavut. The aim was to produce a compendium of IQ from the insider perspective, to capture and record stories of the Inuit worldview as it existed before contact with European outsiders. The result was *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut* (McGill University Press, 2004). It is a remarkable volume, some 400 pages of first person accounts of the Inuit way of life, presented in both *unikkaat* and *unikkaaqtuaq* form. Topics cover the entire gamut of human existence: marriage, birth and child-rearing, hunting and gathering practices, navigation and science, culture and entertainment, philosophy and spirituality. *Uqalurait* celebrates the sophistication, richness and diversity of IQ as it emerges from various Inuit groups across the North. It defies conventional Western views of history, merging as Zuyderhoudt saw in Blackfoot tradition, fact and fiction into one holistic truth. "[If] you are accustomed to history being a steady climb from then to now, or from one 'then' to another," warn the editors, "you will notice an absence of comfortable hand- and footholds in this book, for its viewpoint lies outside the realm of dates and temporal absolutes" (xxvi). Instead of a Western-influenced chronology, then, *Uqalurait* opts for a culturally relevant structure: it has been organized to resemble a dog sled. The two main sections of the book are the sled runners; the five main

themes the editors have selected are the lashings that held the sled together. All the parts function seamlessly together. All are able to bounce and flex to accommodate the unpredictable terrain of life in the North. All work to move Inuit forward.

More than symbolic scaffolding for the volume, however, real-life dogs and sleds also loom large across the expanse of *Uqalurait* itself. The section entitled "Qimmiit (Dogs)" includes many lovely tributes to the "complex relationship [that] existed between dogs and their owners" (280). Many of these *unikkaat* signal an absolute departure from the versions told by early explorers and ethnographers. For example, recall the depiction of Inuit dogs as starving beasts bent on satiating their appetites at any cost. Then consider this story from Etuangat Aksaayuq:

> On one occasion I had left a whole caribou calf by the *iglu*. My lead dog was hungry because he had not eaten that much; they only ate pieces of caribou meat left over from the butchering at night. There were two dog teams that wanted to eat the calf, but my lead dog would not let them get at it. All night long he did not move. He protected it. (283)

This dog is a master of self-control and a paragon of loyalty, not an automaton fuelled by base instincts.

Recall, as well, the accusations leveled by Mathiassen and others that Inuit drivers were inept, cruel and distant masters of canine slaves, and that the dogs were akin to wild animals, running untended in unruly packs. Then consider how, according to the elder Aka Keeyotak, the Inuit in fact had very personal connections to each animal in their care:

> The dogs all had names. Even when there were lots of dogs, each of them had a name… In those times a person would choose a name he liked for each and every dog. For

> example, if it had white or black dots above the eyes (taqulik), then the dog would be called "Taqulik". (281)

The image painted by the colonists of a bumbling Inuk lashing the whip in mad desperation in a futile attempt to control his team is not supported by Inuit testimony. In fact, the system of harnesses and traces employed was an intricate and time-tested technology, one comprised of a skillful system of buckles, loops, toggles, brakes and safety devices. The positioning of the animals was also planned and purposeful, the arrangement devised according to each one's demonstrable skills:

> [The lead dog] had to be farthest –away from the sled and had the longest trace. This lead dog [isuraqtujuq] was smart and alert. Men would pick the dog they considered smart as a leader; it could be a female or a male. They picked the one they felt would be best suited to the task. The lead dogs were very smart. It seemed that the only thing they couldn't do was talk. – Aka Keeyotak (284)

Dogs were noted for their specialized knowledge and their unparalleled abilities in navigation, hunting and other tasks. In some instances, this reverence was couched in spiritual terms; in many stories, the animals were seen as vital to the very survival of the people:

> Some dogs were not as knowledgeable as others, but the good dog teams were able to track their way back almost as if they had a homing device in their heads. We used to know where we were headed in the dark and we also used them to look for others… I used to try and be just as efficient as the dogs. – Malaya Akulujok (284)

> Dogs have the power to get people out of bad situations; that what we always heard from the old storytellers years ago. Dogs have the power to save people from evil spirits. – Adam Qavviatoq (284)

> You really relied on the dogs… without them it was kind of hopeless. – Etuangat Aksaayuq (284)

One snippet of IQ recorded in *Uqalurait* seems particularly prescient. It comes from the elder Martha Nookiguak: "When the dogs start dying off," she said, "the Inuit would start to die next. That is often the case: the one would follow the other" (287). Is this a prophecy or a proverb? Is she bearing witness or imagining the future? It is not clear if Nookiguak is referring specifically to the dog slaughter here, but the power of her words resonates with this unavoidable association. In one sense, her aphorism has all the sagacity and power of ceremony, a harkening back to the tale of Maengun recounted by Benon-Banai: what happens to the one species will inevitably happen to the other. Her words also evoke the image of symbiosis as termed by Laugrand and Oosten, and as exemplified in countless indigenous origin stories, specifically those that include the physical coming together of woman and dog. The relationship between human and dogs was so intertwined, so intimate and embodied, that one member of the unit sustained the life of the other. This is not a simple matter of the Inuk who provides food for his dogs, and the canines who in their turn locate the game and deliver the meat back to camp. Martha Nookiguak's lament can also be viewed in light of the Kato tradition in which all creatures shared in the sacred gift of water (Rosen), or in the Raramuri tradition in which all creatures share the same breath (Salmon). Seen in this light, Nookiguak's brief declaration is a wonderful and wonderfully tragic articulation of the corporeal reality of the "all my relations"

worldview, and it is through this lens that I now want to consider the narratives of slaughter that would follow Bennett and Rowley's groundbreaking catalogue of the oral traditions of IQ.

Consider first the testimony of Joanasie Maniapik before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development in March 2005. This special committee was struck to address mounting allegations from Nunavut elders, and to respond to calls for an investigation. Recalling the day his dogs were killed, Maniapik includes some incredibly vivid vignettes, particularly the removal of the harnesses from his dead animals, and the memory of the shooter's rifle, post-mortem, laid innocently against a nearby rock. He remembers:

> I went down to see what was happening and I saw two police officers. There was an officer and an assistant, and all my dogs were dead. Their rifles were placed against the rock. I took one of them and I wanted to break one of their rifles. I don't know the reason why I didn't do that. I regret to this day that I didn't break their rifles. I was in so much pain. My life was destroyed. I tried taking their harnesses off. As I was trying to take them off, I was crying. (Canada)

The tenderness with which he tends to his dead dogs makes for an incredibly poignant image, as the narrator works through the memory of their killing at the hands of two police officers. Undoing the harnesses while dealing with his rage and confusion, it becomes clear that these animals are more than just tools of survival. The use of the term "pain" suggests a physical, not affective, condition, and indeed the physical connection of man-and-dog is the core theme here. For it is the harness that literally joins dog to man in this working relationship. Removing it is a recognition that the relationship has come to a tragic end. It is a severing of ties: reluctant, sad

and unforgettable. The touching moment with the animal, however, is in stark contrast to the moment of confrontation with the police officers. The image of the rifle also dominates this excerpt: a symbol of colonial power, and the impossibility of challenging it. If only he had the courage to destroy the weapon, could he have reversed the fate of his dogs? Of his people? There is so much more going on here than the simple loss of property. The harness represents traditional Inuit knowledge: connection and life. The rifle represents colonial intervention: defiance and death. These are both deeply meaningful metaphors deployed by a skilled storyteller, and they have much to tell us about the status of the *qimmiq* in Inuit society. The death of a dog may be, sequentially speaking, a simple event comprised of one or two narrative clauses: the officer kills the dog; the owner reacts. But these are not simple stories.

Consider next the testimony of another elder, Jamesie Mike, who recounts yet another dramatic tale of slaughter, this one from the documentary *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths*. He, too, uses the image of a gun. Here, it is an item of exchange, of bribery perhaps, an artifact of filthy colonial lucre. Mike also uses another remarkable image in his story that, like the harnesses above, speaks to the physical intimacy between Inuit and *qimmiq*. He recalls:

> The policeman was dragging [the body of my] my dog to the dump. It was down by the shoreline. I told him my dog had a puppy, but he didn't believe me. I squeezed milk out of its nipple, so he could see for himself. When he realized this, he got all flustered, and tried to give me his 30-30. I didn't want it. (*Qimmit*)

What emerges in this excerpt is a seemingly nonnegotiable chasm of cultural misunderstanding regarding the value of a dog. It deeply divides the police officer from the Inuk. To the police officer, the dog was refuse, a piece of technology that was no longer functioning, or no longer

worth having, and so to be tossed aside like so much garbage. The dog is seen as a strictly material possession, expendable and exchangeable, its value equal to that of a big game rifle. To Jamesie Mike, of course, this seems a strange and confusing insult: what use is a gun to hunt with, without dogs to take one to the seal holes, or to the caribou herd? Similar to the harness-rifle dichotomy in the previous story, the opposition created here is "dog as litter" versus "dog as life form." The Mountie sees an inanimate object, a substitute for one of the same or equal value; the Inuk sees a living being, and a mother, still producing milk even after the officer's bullet has stopped her heart. The misunderstanding is reminiscent of the (mis)estimation of explorer John Davis who, during his travels in the Cumberland Strait, opined that the dogs he encountered were more "to be wondered at for their strangenesse than for any other commoditie needful for our use" (Allen 448).

This second image in the Jamesie Mike narrative is equally distressful, to the point of being uncomfortable. Certainly, the gesture of the Inuk towards the still-lactating carcass of his animal "flusters" the officer and sparks the awkward offer of a suggested compensation. He is clearly embarrassed. Mike on the other hand is defiant. The message he seems to want to convey to his nemesis is that this dog is not a thing; it is a being with a valid reason to live. It has offspring to feed and care for, *just like we do, you and I.* It is a gesture that should be able to transmit its message across the divide of culture and language. The Inuk cannot use his words to express his shock and confusion to the Anglophone. He would be intimidated to do so at any rate. He must speak instead in the pan-cultural language of bodies and bodily functions. He must appeal to a different nature. Don't listen. Look. *Look at this, look at what I am trying to tell you.* Of course, the officer still misunderstands. He simplifies the relationship between Mike and his dogs to an impromptu cost-benefit analysis. But clearly, the relationship is more intimate and

embodied than that. The touch of the human hand on the nipple of the dog signals a closeness and physicality the officer cannot compute. That the act is one that hints at sexuality, reproduction and maternity further exacerbates the confusion and intensifies the moment.

Stories like those narrated by Joanasie Maniapik and Jamesie Mike have been dismissed by many state agents, academics and journalists. The RCMP perspective was typical. Commenting on Inuit reaction to the police report, which concluded no slaughter took place, principal reviewer Staff Sergeant Phil Campbell allowed that elders accurately remembered the deaths of their animals, but that they were "mistaken about the significance" (Windeyer). In addition to the tacitly condescending tone to this claim, there is also the suggestion of an intrinsic cultural divide when it comes to understanding the role of dogs within a culture. Further complicating matters is the Western privileging of written documentation over oral history. A January 2007 article in *Maclean's* magazine certainly added insult to injury when it termed the slaughter a "myth", and quoted two noted Canadian scholars as trivializing of the value of indigenous history. Jack Granatstein, professor emeritus of history at York University, said of stories of an Inuit dog slaughter, "Old men forget and remember selectively. Almost no one can remember dates or facts but they will always be able to tell you they hated so-and-so" (Taylor). The article's author explains that "[t]his makes oral history a better source for emotions than statistics" (Ibid.). University of British Columbia social work professor Frank Tester also devalued the oral testimony provided to the Aboriginal Affairs Standing Committee, saying: "There never was a grand conspiracy to kill dogs. I have heard the stories, but there is no other evidence" (Ibid.). Just stories, with no probative value: this claim underlies what Keavy Martin refers to as

> a peculiar amnesia that tends to afflict non-Native administrators and experts. [It is] the idea that there is a tradition of facts and reason, of documentation and empirical truths, while the knowledge of Indigenous peoples is allegedly fluid, intuitive, and ultimately unreliable. (184)

The "persistent biases" (also Martin's term) of this condition continue to stymie indigenous/non-indigenous relations to this day, as misunderstandings such as those experienced firsthand by Maniapik and Mike continue to proliferate (185). As controversy roiled around the flashpoint of the dog slaughter, with the Truth Commissions and film crews inviting further media and government scrutiny, many other pundits would seek to weigh in on the veracity of the claims. Many, like the *Maclean's* magazine article, dismissed them outright. But their tunnel-vision focus on measures of reliability and reason missed a larger, more significant point. When I present papers on the dog slaughter at academic conferences, I often preface my work by saying I am not interested in whether or not the slaughter actually happened. And I am not being disingenuous. I am not a police detective or an investigative journalist; it is simply not within the scope of my research to tackle that sort of empirical quest. Rather, I am interested in the stories themselves, their narrative essence and purpose, and what these stories have to say about the role of the dog in Inuit culture. The debates to date have operated under a Western mandate and methodology. There has been a near-total failure to approach these stories in a holistic way, to view them (or hear them) using an indigenous approach, one rooted in relatedness, connectedness. To separate the figure of the dog from its web of connections, to hone in on the singular event of one animal's death – to ask, is it true or is it false? – is to misread the stories. To approach an isolated component part with legal precision does not do the stories justice.

And so we must instead attempt to connect the narrative and cultural dots. To do so, consider the story of elder Alicee Joamie. Like Joanasie Maniapik, Ms. Joamie made the trip to Ottawa in March 2005 to give her testimony to the House Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. She was born in 1936 in Puvirnituq in Northern Quebec and moved to Pangnirtung with her family in 1942 in order to avail of more plentiful game in that area. In 1959, they were forced to relocate to Apex, where they experienced a lack of promised housing and services, health issues, and finally, the slaughter of their dogs in June 1961 outside the community store (QTC Background 37). What follows is a substantial excerpt from her testimony, which I include here in order to demonstrate the complexity of her narrative. She began:

> I am very proud to be here. Although this is a very difficult task, I have been waiting for this moment for a long time, and I am very happy to be here today.
>
> Because this was a very difficult experience, when I tell about the experience that we went through I start to get emotional. My husband and I went through a very difficult time.
>
> My husband at the time had to go down to Toronto for a TB treatment, and he didn't come back, so his grave is there. We went through a very difficult time when our dogs were slaughtered.
>
> Around 1958-59 we lived in Pangnirtung, and we had to move because the government was relocating people. We had to move to Iqaluit. There were many sick people with TB who had to be relocated. Because my in-laws had to move, and because my husband wanted to stay with our in-laws, we also had to relocate to Iqaluit by boat.

My in-laws needed help and we needed to provide them food. We were travelling in the fall, when the water was just freezing up. We had three children. We had no way of travelling by plane, so in order to help our in-laws, we travelled by boat in the fall.

We moved to Iqaluit in the fall. In the springtime, we usually go camping outside of the community. We had been out camping with other Iqaluit residents and had gone back to pick up supplies and bullets. We travelled in the nighttime because in the springtime, when we are travelling, we usually travel in the night. That was June 22, and I will not forget that day.

We had already bought our supplies and we were preparing to leave. One of our children, who was eight years old at the time, came running to us to tell us that our dogs were ready to go, and without anyone consulting with us, they were being shot and there were only three left.

When that happened, my husband and I went down. There were only a few left. There were an Inuk and a kablunap [white man] who had shot them. Our son was hitting his father's back, crying and telling him to stop them. When all the dogs were shot, everyone outside was crying.

I was pregnant at the time when all the dogs were shot. We had to clean up the carcasses and cover them up with sand, and I was in much pain and my stomach was hurting that night. I couldn't stop crying because they were our only source of transportation to go hunting. That night I started paying out blood, maybe because I was going through so much hardship. (Canada)

Joamie's narrative is remarkable for several reasons: the vividness of the details, the complexity of the plot, and her obvious competence as an eloquent and emotive communicator. She was able, inside the span of the 20 minutes or so allotted to her during the committee hearing, to weave a thematically rich tale brimming with pathos, and to bring together in one storytelling event the many complex issues surrounding the matter of the alleged dog slaughter. This story is a sophisticated individual showcase for the extensive collective memory work being carried out by hundreds of Inuit elders as they recalled the loss of the dogs. Joamie herself alludes to the fact that this is no simple telling. This moment for her is a "task" – memory work is, after all, work – and furthermore, it is an arduous, emotional and important task, a fact she strives to communicate in the syntactic repetition that prefaces her story: *a very difficult task, a very difficult experience, a very difficult time*. "Remembering," as Homi Bhabha tells us, "is never a quiet act of introspection or retrospection. It is a painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present" (90). Dis-membering and re-membering both can be excruciating experiences. As she pieces together the shards of a past that were ripped apart in the violence and confusion of the colonial era, Alicee Joamie achieves a remarkably adept suturing of seemingly disparate episodes from her family history. The effect is visceral – a narrative coursing with tears, blood and physical pain, birth and death – as she works her way through the remains of a life shattered. Her task is to make whole again – to use this narrative event to reunite her young, healthy family, to restart her lost way of life, and set back into motion the traditional seasonal round, and to return to her original place. Central to this project is the revival of her slaughtered *qimmit*.

At one level, Alicee Joamie's dog story is a story of *tuqslurausiit* – of family (Bennett and Rowley 15). Everywhere, concepts of kin and kinship are used to frame the core narrative

event of the death of the dogs. At the very start of her testimony, the elder provides her audience with a brief abstract that summarizes the main point of the story – the slaughter – and that immediately connects the death of her dogs to the death of her husband. She recalls, "My husband at the time had to go down to Toronto for a TB treatment, and he didn't come back, so his grave is there. We went through a very difficult time when our dogs were slaughtered" (Canada). This integration of the death of the dogs with the death of her husband is highly significant, as if the twin traumas were somehow fused together in the memory, and certainly now in the narration. Moreover, this fusion lacks a linearity, a cause and effect sequence. Did the dogs die because her husband died? Vice versa? Did they die before? After? It's not clear, and it doesn't need to be. Linear history is not a part of indigenous oral tradition. For many indigenous people, time and history are circular. The temporal collapse of the human and animal deaths is not a product of confusion, or false memory. It is an expression of something quite meaningful, a tacit statement on the social and familial status of dogs in Inuit society.

In their 2002 article "Canicide and Healing: The Position of the Dog in the Inuit Cultures of the Canadian Arctic", Fréderic Laugrand and Jarich Oosten claim that "the killing of the dogs was experienced as an attack on kinsmen, the Inuit population itself" (89). They cite the memory of another elder Josie P. Tullaugauk, who recounted, "All the men lost their dogs. I remember women beginning to cry as if they were losing their own kin" (80). In Alicee Joamie's memory, the losses of her husband and her dogs are equated and equally painful. The contemporary reader might sense something familiar in the conception of canine-as-kin, as many consider their own animals as adopted family members. However, it should be noted that, as members of the Inuit kinship network, dogs were not viewed paternalistically as furry babies in the manner of contemporary pet ownership. There, the animal-human divide is strictly maintained, and the

human occupies the dominant position over the animal. Laugrand and Oosten note that, in traditional Inuit society, dogs were by contrast considered the animal members of society, on an equal footing with the human members. In another study of the role of dogs in the Northwest Territories, anthropologist Kerrie Ann Shannon concluded that they were viewed as "non-human persons who have entered into and continue a long-standing culturally based relationship with humans" (109). They were respected for their "sentience, intelligence, and will" (101). Qimmiq were partners, not pets. As such, their loss affected much more than the individual families of which they were a part. It tore at the very fabric of Inuit society.

Traditional Inuit social organization was comprised of a complex network of relations, the most important of which was an elaborate, extended family and naming system. "First and foremost [to the Inuit] were ties of kinship," claim Bennett and Rowley. "These bound families together through blood and were reinforced through naming practices. Kinship carried obligations to share food and tools – in short, to sustain the family in any way necessary" (127). The *Uqalurait* excerpt cited above showed how the relationship between the Inuit and individual dogs was exemplified by the naming of the animals. Alicee Joamie's narrative comes from within this same network, which serves to explain why many different ties of kinship are used to weave this narrative together. The abstract summarizing "the very difficult time when our dogs were slaughtered" contains the key information regarding the death of her husband. The build-up to the killing concerns the matter of the in-laws, and the decision to stay with them and support them (which the Bennett and Rowley quote helps contextualize: the Inuit economy, underpinned by the reciprocity of extended family relations, was based on mutual support, not money). The orientation to the various plot points of the story is delivered in terms of the age and number of children they had at the time: this happened when we had three children; this happened when our

son was 8. In the coda, or epilogue, the narrator goes on to explain how this trauma has affected the lives of the next generation of her family, particularly the son who tried to stop the killings. As a grown man, he is described as "bitter"; she says "his life has not always been stable. You can tell that this was really epic in his life because he remembers that experience" (Canada). Also in the coda (not excerpted above), the narrator tags on another story of another dog being shot, this one belonging to her "blind father" who was living with the family at the time (Ibid.).

In sum, the story of the death of Alicee Joamie's dogs, in so many ways and as exemplified by this narrative framework, is also a story of kinship. In it, she reassembles the members of her extended family – husband, children, in laws, father, dogs – from whom she has been disconnected by death or by distance, and other repercussions of colonial era trauma. As Bennett and Rowley discovered through the collection of their oral history volume, kinship was the central organizing principle of Inuit society. It "bound families together" (127). In the remembering of the slaughter of her dogs, Alicee Joamie is working to put back into place the kinship ties that bind.

Joamie's dog story is also a story about ties to place. It is about the land. The rhythms of Inuit life, which were so intimately bound to the land, and to the seasons, are used to frame the core narrative event of the death of the dogs. Indeed, these rhythms are inherent in the telling itself. Physically, Ms. Joamie is in Ottawa during the narrative event. In her telling, she rewinds through places equally foreign and far-flung to places familiar and whole. In her story, she returns home. She begins her memory task in Toronto – a place which, to an Inuk in 1950s Iqaluit, may have seemed as distant as outer space – and equates the slaughter of the dogs with her husband having to go "down to Toronto" (Canada). The Qikiqtani Truth Commission, whose mandate included an investigation into many matters other than the dog slaughter, reports that

many dogs were indeed killed when their owners were away for treatment of tuberculosis. Simultaneous with the death of their dogs, the Inuit also began to suffer ill health; they suffered forced removals from their lands; and they endured perhaps the ultimate affront: their kin were buried away from home. Joamie laments: "his grave is there [in Toronto]" (Canada). York University professor and Métis historian David T. McNab, in his own autobiographical memory work, defined the powerful connection of indigenous people to the land, saying "Aboriginal people always return to their places" (302). The trauma of Ms. Joamie's "very difficult time" is the trauma of leaving place, of her husband having to go "down to Toronto" and never coming back. The image of his gravesite frozen in time, and in foreign soil, is a definitive one: static, unchangeable, final. One of the most traumatic aspects of this story is that the husband never could return to his place. One of the most powerful and satisfying aspects of her memory task is that the surviving spouse can: she can continue her rewind to the time before Toronto, to another stopping point along the painful journey of their severing from their original land. She goes back to Iqaluit, the community to which her family was relocated in 1959.

As Joamie takes her listeners through this series of spatial memory moves, we begin to see how the event of the dogs being shot is caught up in the telling of the broader colonial project of relocation: the forced removal of indigenous people from their lands. She recalls, "We had to move because the government was relocating people" (Canada). The Qikiqtani Truth Commission has identified five different types of "relocation events" that affected the Inuit from the 1950s to the 1980s. In some cases, "individuals [were] required to move south for extended periods for education or healthcare," such as was the case with Joamie's husband. In other cases, families reported "[being] coerced, largely by threats of losing access to healthcare or family allowances, to leave camps and live in settlements or to send their children to school in

settlements" (*QTC Background* 43). This may have been the case with the Joamie family. The narrator implies that they so respected or were so intimidated by government officials that they felt they could not oppose the decision to move them into settlements. Here, the repetition of the phrase that denotes being forced, of having no choice, is significant: "he *had to* go down to Toronto/we *had to* move to Iqaluit/we *had to* be relocated" (Canada, emphases mine). *We had to do what they told us to do*: around the canine core of the narrative coalesces themes of powerlessness, a loss of control, of agency. The QTC summarizes the psychological impact of relocation:

> [Inuit] felt deep cultural and personal losses resulting from severing family ties and ties to the land. They expressed anger that a substantial amount of Inuit culture and land-based knowledge was lost in exchange for unfulfilled promises. There were feelings of both regret and guilt that Inuit did not do more to either stop the moves or change the conditions under which they moved. (*QTC Background* 43)

In another version of the dog slaughter, recorded in the documentary *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths*, Peter Audaluk highlights a related point: "It was the dogs that taught us about the land. They knew the land so well that they would find the precise spot where we had stopped for tea the year before" (*Qimmit*). Dogs connected Inuit to land. They were the movers, of course, the main mode of transportation. But they were also the mediators, creating, as Audaluk suggests, a vital, knowledge-based link between the Inuit and their environment. Laugrand and Oosten concluded in their 2002 article that "there are no wild dogs in the Arctic. [Therefore] Inuit were the human members of society, dogs were the animal members of society" (91). As members of standing in Inuit society, dogs benefited from the reciprocity of the complex web of family. Even in times of famine, for example, many Inuit report that dogs were fed first. In

return, dogs were provided a life-sustaining link between people and land, between culture and nature. They interceded on behalf of the Inuit with nature, guiding people, delivering them safely home, facilitating the hunt. Dogs enabled Inuit to travel *on* the land, and to access the resources *of* the land. As they moved people and goods *across* the land, it was their tracks that inscribed its frozen surface. They traced the story of the Inuit into the land. Recall that Bennett and Rowley's compilation of the oral history of Nunavut was in fact structured like a dog sled: two sections of the book represented the two runners of the sled; its five themes represented the lashings that held the runners together. It was the dogs who enabled, who made possible, the movement of the Inuit on the land. *And movement was life*.

When the movement stopped, life stopped. Consider this recollection from Cuniliusie Emudluk, submitted as part of the Makivik brief:

> It seemed that my life went through a very sudden change when my hunting practices completely came to a halt and consequently I lived idly when I lost my dogs due to the killings. We seemed to have nothing to do anymore and began to just sit around. Our motivation to go hunting even diminished considerably. Our camping patterns were certainly changed, as we didn't have the means to travel. It seemed that we were stuck in the community. Camping out in the land became rare and we mostly went out when the spring season finally came around. Other than that we were mostly then living in the community with nothing much to do but sit around. (Makivik 19)

The transition from a moveable way of life to a sedentary one was a massive paradigm shift for the Inuit, and it was, literally, a sudden one, transpiring in the span of a few years. Its psychological impact was profound, and continues to haunt successive generations who have

known nothing but community living and "sitting around". This sense of paralysis, of a dynamic life rendered static and petrified, is palpable in Alicee Joamie's story as well. In the episodes where she recounts the seasonal way of life of her family, there is a sense of movement within the text. There is a momentum within the very telling. As she recounts the events prior to the death of the dogs, Joamie repeats the words travelling… moving… travelling… camping… travelling: "We travelled in the nighttime because in the springtime when we are travelling we usually travel in the night" (Canada). They moved according to the seasons: travelling in the fall, camping in the springtime, then moving once more. Always on the move: you can feel it in the syntax of the text. That is until the dogs are shot. Then this sense of syntactic movement is suddenly arrested. The travelling ceases, the camping ceases, the moving ceases. Even the life lived according to the seasons changes. To this point, she uses the temporal frames of fall or spring. We now arrive at a very specific month and day: "That was June 22, and I will not forget that day" (Ibid.). The rhythms of their life changed. The rhythm of the text changes, too.

Alicee Joamie's story capably demonstrate how inextricably the singular event of the dogs' deaths is tangled up with a multiplicity of events, such as the arrival of white men in the North, the tuberculosis epidemic, the death of the husband and his burial in Toronto, the hardships experienced by the in-laws, the forced relocation to Iqaluit, and the effects on successive generations. Read this way, we see that the storyteller does not – *cannot* – separate the dog slaughter from the several events that defined both the history of the extended Joamie family, and the broader colonial project that was threatening to destroy everything that was familiar to them. The figure of the northern dog is a crucial and legitimate guiding principle in such narrative memory work. The presence of the animal in these stories can be read as symbolic: the use of the dog trope allows the storyteller to represent all manner of profoundly

traumatic events in an accessible and emotional way. But the absence of the *qimmit*, its demise whether forced or otherwise, was also a real-world, embodied catalyst for the collapse of an ancient way of life. Alicee Joamie's story exemplifies both the figurative and the literal modes of this animal representation. Indeed, her craft is so competent, it can be difficult to tell where the symbolic ends and the real begins. This is not unlike the Blackfoot system wherein history and cosmology merge to form a cohesive body of knowledge. Perhaps in Inuit oral tradition, this distinction need not be made either. This blurring of rhetorical categories is best exemplified in one of the most startling mergers of past events in Alicee Joamie's story, namely the climactic image connecting the death of the dogs with the pregnancy of the narrator: "I was pregnant at the time when all the dogs were shot… That night I started paying out blood, maybe because I was going through so much hardship" (Canada).

Again, we see Joamie plot her core narrative according to specific family milestones: the death of her dogs occurred when she was pregnant. Again, and similar to the narrative of Jamesie Mike, we see a storyteller embed the core narrative in themes of maternity and the maternal body. For Mike, his memories are triggered by the image of the lone pregnant sled dog, and his gesture of squeezing her nipple to express her milk for the Mountie to see. The intimacy of that gesture, the embodied empathy between Inuk and *qimmiq*, lend that particular story its raw, emotional power. Alicee Joamie extends this embodied empathy, again within a maternal context, still further. This moves the story out of the realm of the merely symbolic into a startling real-world merger of animal and human bodies: *the dogs are shot; the owner bleeds*.

One can almost imagine some impatient and unctuous representative of the state inserted into this tableau, patronizing the elder into admitting, "Really, now, Ms. Joamie. You ask us to believe that the bullet, which pierced the flesh of a mere dog, resulted in a physical injury to your

own person?" It is a line of questioning that, yet again, would miss the larger point. The Eurocentric perspective comes custom-built with an insurmountable difficulty in comprehending the conflation of the spiritual with the real that defines the indigenous knowledge system. It also cannot fathom a world in which ostensibly discrete bodies, especially human and animal ones, merge in such intimate and seemingly mystical ways. Laugrand and Oosten, in their work on the Nunavut dog slaughter, ultimately came to acknowledge that the relationship between Inuit and their dogs is "a symbiosis" (90). And while this term often loses some of its significance due to overuse, I am reminded that it actually refers to a mutually beneficial *embodied* relationship between species. Inuk and qimmiq were connected in a corporeal sense, conjoined in movement and in survival, and in a way far different from the connection between contemporary pet owners and their animals. The body boundary between the human and the animal did not exist for many indigenous peoples. In some indigenous creation stories, animals and humans marry and reproduce. In some cosmologies, shape-shifters vacillate between human and animal forms. In some oral traditions, storytellers harken back to a time when dogs and men could talk. Indigenous knowledge systems are based on an "all my relations" philosophy, which extends "the web of [human] kinship […] to the animals, to the birds, to the fish, to the plants, to all the animate and inanimate forms that can be seen or imagined" (King 1990 *ix*). In a very real sense, humans and animals co-exist, not in a hierarchical relationship of dominance and submission, but rather as partners in a more complex web of reciprocal cross-species connections. This concept is crucial to understanding the dismemberment of this man-dog duality that arose from the slaughter of the Inuit dogs. What is being re-membered, then, is something far more vital than the life of a beloved animal. What is re-membered is the dog-human unit, the *qimuksiit*, or collective action of dogs and humans when they are pulling the sled *together*. Laugrand and

Oosten, in their conclusion, claim, "The dog and his owner constitute[d] a physical whole" (101), an entity so real, integral and permanent in the Inuit imagination that when the dogs are shot, it is the owner that bleeds.

One of the issues I identified in colonial accounts of northern dogs was that this process of de-contextualization, the abstraction of the animal from its lived, cultural context, led to all manner of misunderstandings, and subsequently, to misrepresentations of the animal and its human counterparts. The purpose of this second part of my quest is to re-contextualize the northern dog by re-inserting it into its original cultural milieu. This led me to indigenous stories of creation in which the dog was granted an equal and often sacred status, and then to consider the northern dog within the framework of IQ and its bifold system of oral storytelling. This system, comprised of *unikkaat* and *unikaaqtuaq*, is different from the Western mode of genre classification in that it merges history and cosmology into one holistic truth. Understanding the structure of IQ is crucial to understanding the role and status of dogs in Inuit culture. For example, imagine listening to the following account from Inuit elder Martha Tunnuq:

> If I am alone when my husband is out hunting and it is lunch time, and time to drink water… I would put the dog in the entrance of the tent. You would put the forelegs facing the inside. I would then start eating and drinking water. If there is no dog I cannot eat… If I sneaked food or water, I was told, when it's not time to eat or drink while I had a baby in my back, my baby's life or my life would be shortened. That is why we had to have a dog there if there were no other people involved. (Bennett and Rowley 288)

Out of context, this practice would seem to make no sense: the life of a baby jeopardized by not having a dog present while the mother is eating? It might too easily be dismissed as

primitive superstition. Read with Reese's "cultural intuition", however, we can see how this practise might be connected to the denouement of the Sedna/Nuliajuk myth, in which the entrance to the goddess' sea cave is guarded by her dog husband. Bennett and Rowley explain that among Tunnuq's culture group, there exists a social taboo against a new mother eating alone. She is only permitted to do so under the watchful eye of one of the family dogs. "In this way," they explain, "the woman mirrored the home of Nuliajuk and did not cause offence" (288). In this way, as well, we can see how one must be familiar with the *unikaaqtuaq* (the Sedna myth) in order to fully comprehend the *unikkaat* (the elder's personal experience narrative). The converse is true as well. In order to fully understand the *unikaat* of Inuit elders as they recounted the traumatic loss of the dogs, one must also have knowledge of the *unikaaqtuaq* of the Inuit culture group. This is but one of the many errors state agents made in both the killing of the animals, and in the subsequent dismissal of the memories of the elders.

Scholars vary in their interpretation of the myth of Sedna the sea goddess. It could be an ancient tale re-appropriated to explain the sudden appearance of white people. It could be a ceremony to mark the seasons. Perhaps Sedna is about social cohesion and its disintegration. Perhaps it is a mode of sexual discourse. In dismissing the more contemporary dog stories of the elders of Nunavut and Nunavik, investigators both scholarly and civilian, tended to devalue the stories based on their ostensible evidentiary lack: there was no written documentation; the dates didn't jibe; the testimony was too emotional. But I am not concerned with their veracity. I am intrigued that the narrators of these *unikkaat* weave some of the same themes identified in the Sedna myth into their own life histories. Consider the traditional origin story as a response to the arrival of other races in Inuit land. Dog slaughter stories, too, are rooted in the confusion and fear of this encroachment. In the 2005 Makivik brief, several of the stories are grouped together

under the headline “Iligasutuq”, which refers to the feeling of intimidation Inuit often felt in the face of the white men newly arrived in their land (Makivik 14). One elder describes the unnamed officer who killed his dog, saying: “Unfortunately I do not remember the name of the policeman [but] he had moustache, he was a big man and he came from Kuujjuaq” (Makivik 13). It is a subtle demonization of the Other: the evil-doer was tall when most Inuit were short of stature; mustachioed when most Inuit lacked facial hair; and hailing from Kuujjuaq, an early HBC trading post and, later, military settlement – a quintessential colonial community. It was not only the RCMP who are remembered in this manner; elders recount seeing dogs die at the hands of any number of white outsiders: teachers, missionaries, HBC employees, even a government engineer.

Narratives of *qimmiijaqtauniq* (dog slaughter) intertwine with the traditional stories in other ways. If Sedna was a ceremony to honour the seasonal round that defined Inuit life, the more recent stories addressed the cessation of its life-sustaining movement. The passing of the seasons, with its inevitable endings and beginnings, dictated their movements and encampments, carrying them inexorably from, for example, the moons when “caribou fetuses form” to the “season of caribou miscarriages” to “when caribou begin migrating north” to the moons when the caribou return (Bennett and Rowley 342-359). This immobilization of an ancient and unquestioned momentum based on the birth-life-death cycle of spring-summer-fall-winter left the Inuit absolutely bewildered. They described its effects in terms evoking a physical paralysis. Embodiment and physicality offer us another thematic link to follow. The Sedna myth was viewed by Laugrand and Oosten, who also extensively studied the dog slaughter, as a mode of representation in a wider discourse on sex and reproduction. Lines of interspecies corporeality blurred in the telling of tales centred on the mating of a woman and a dog. They blur as well in

the more recent accounts of an Inuk tenderly squeezing the milk from a dying animal, or a pregnant woman who suffers an intense physical response to the killing of one. Finally, as Sheppard indicated in her study of four variants of the dog-husband story, the Sedna tale seems to serve a didactic purpose regarding social cohesion in Inuit communities. In her reading, the anthropologist identifies relationships as being the primary guiding force of the narrative, be it to one's elders, to game animals, to one's kinship network, and, perhaps most literally, to one's dogs. Each of these relationships comprises a major narrative thread in contemporary accounts of *qimmiijaqtauniq*. By radiating out from the flashpoint of the dog's death, we can also begin to trace a far-reaching and more intricate tapestry of meaning woven around that core narrative event. Social cohesion became post-slaughter social disintegration. Both *unikkaat* and *unikaaqtuaq* are attempts to reinstate this social order.

What the Inuit of Nunavut and Nunavik remember is that their dogs were killed, and that their lives were forever altered. This is not a matter of "a simple conspiracy theory" in which white evil-doers executed the noble qimmiq. Stories such as the ones excerpted here, including the especially rich and poignant narrative of Alicee Joamie, transform the memory of individual elders into a collective and honest exercise in re-membering the past of a once whole and healthy community. Before the demise of the Inuit sled dog, before relocation and residential schools, tuberculosis and global warming, the Inuit of Nunavut and Nunavik lived within an integrated ecology consisting of humans, dogs and the land. In my work on the stories told about the Nunavut dog slaughter, I hope to build on Laugrand and Oosten's contention that the Inuit and their qimmiq constitute a physical whole by showing, as the Alicee Joamie story in particular shows, that there existed in these communities an indivisible whole consisting of three core elements: the Inuit (the people, their kinship network), their land (place) and their dogs (as the

vital, symbiotic mediator that linked those two together). In the Inuit imagination, no one element of this structure could be conceived of as separate from the other. This integrated ecology was once at the very heart of Inuit society. When one of these elements was attacked, such the *qimmit*, the entire whole was compromised, and the society – including the intimate connection to the land, including the very health of its people – was jeopardized. What is being pieced back together, then, in the stories of the Nunavut-Nunavik dog slaughter, are the individual components of this Inuit-Land-Qimmit triad. Storytellers coming to terms with their traumatic present breathe new narrative life into the Inuit dog in order to re-connect people and place, and to return in the collective imagination to a time when the Inuit in Canada were, as one elder recalled, "whole, with the snow and the dogs" (*Echo*).

Chapter 7: Dogs in Inuit Film and Video Art: Responding to the Legacy of Nanook

If you want to take a true measure of the zeitgeist, especially as it is embodied and transmitted in the visual media of the global culture at any given point in its history, your richest source of available data is clear: Super Bowl commercials.

In 2012, the promotional parade featured the usual post-modernist cinematic pastiche: retro throwbacks to *Ferris Bueller* (itself a landmark po-mo cinema moment), *Seinfeld* and *Star Wars*, and Clint Eastwood. Also, there were women in bikinis. Most significantly for a scholar of animal representation, however, were the dogs: an overweight dog on an exercise regimen (po-mo whiplash here, with a commercial-within-a-commercial treatment); a moon-walking French Bulldog in sneakers (homage to the late Michael Jackson); a scrappy rescue dog who excels at fetching Bud Lights (complete with feel-good call-to-action on real-life animal rescue); a shifty cat-killer who is not above bribing the human witness with Doritos. And there in the middle of it all – Bueller, bikinis and bulldogs – was Japanese automaker Suzuki's entry into the commercial cavalcade, entitled "Sled".

The product advertised in "Sled" is the 2012 all-wheel drive Suzuki Kizashi. The TV spot tells the story of an Inuk who, to the chagrin of his wife, trades in his dog sled for a brand new, bright red car, one that handles the frozen landscape as well as or better than his passé mode of transport. "Sled" featured indigenous actors from Alaska, and sled dogs from Canmore, Alberta, where the commercial was filmed on the beautiful Spray Lakes reservoir. The 28 second narrative runs thusly: our hero sets out at dawn in the traditional Inuit manner, his trusty dogs harnessed to the komatik (dog sled). Ethereal and evocative music underscores the white, wild, vast Northern landscape, then briefly builds to a crescendo intimating the journey ahead is

necessarily dangerous. The Inuk hugs his wife, and departs the safe warm glow of a preternaturally perfect igloo. Quick fade to black to signal the passage of time, then the narrative resumes with the man's triumphant return home. Only this time, driver and dogs are all happily joyriding in a brand new car, both species grooving and head-bobbing to the thumping strains of a song by the rapper 50-cent called "Movin' On Up" (Busam).

The ad is notable for several troubling reasons, all of which become still more problematic when considered in light of the sled dog slaughter and the imperialist project that laid the foundations for it. Suzuki's "Sled" is striking for its unabashed endorsement of the progress myth as it pertains to "primitive" peoples. It is, the client and producers say, desirable to move on up, and to replace the indigenous technology with the modern, a dubious claim once you know the Inuit perspective on the pain and tumult of the contact era. The ad is also striking for its unquestioning acceptance of the concept of a global village: a multi-ethnic community where even the most isolated outposts are united by commodities such as cars and rap music. It is significant for its depiction of the North: the Arctic as a mournful land to be conquered and modernized, and for its uncomfortable stereotyping of Inuit – the jolly Inuk enamoured with technology – and of women – the "nag" or "harpy" figures supposedly transcending cultural boundaries. Finally, it is remarkable for its too easy anthropomorphism: the dogs having human needs and consumer desires, not to mention human musical tastes and rhythm. All of this works because Suzuki's "Sled" is part of an expansive and interconnected network of cultural associations and values centering on and emanating from the enduring cinematic figure of the northern dog. This is why mainstream viewers "get it." We in the dominant culture have seen this Inuk before; we have seen these dogs before. This is why such commercials are rich

resources of cultural meaning, and such accurate pulse points for tapping into the spirit of our time.

In the first section of this dissertation, I looked at the work of early 20th century documentary filmmakers Thomas Edison and Robert J. Flaherty. Their work portrayed the Inuit as bumbling primitive clowns, naively besotted with new technologies and struggling to rein in the animals under their charge. Childlike and grinning, Edison's "esquimaux" and Flaherty's Nanook are essentially performers in an indigenous minstrel show, a spectacle staged for the entertainment of mainstream audiences. Somehow these representations served to displace the Inuit from their own landscape, casting them as ill at ease in their environment, and needing the benevolent hand of the state to guide them out of their arduous and unfulfilling existence. These characters are the direct ancestors of Suzuki's Super Bowl protagonist. The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) furthered this imperial agenda, turning the spotlight away from the Inuit and shining it on the ostensible non-indigenous saviours of the northern races. Once that transition was complete, the NFB was then at liberty to take the catalogue of images it had "discovered" in the north and put them to work furthering concepts of national identity, frontierism, tourism, and, ultimately, resource development. At the heart of this ideological movement of "nordicity" was the iconic northern dog.

Building on the processes of abstraction, sanitation and iconification at work in that colonial circuit of representation was another phenomenon not yet discussed but one no doubt familiar to contemporary film audiences: *disnification,* or the rendering of an animal figure through the cartoon stylings associated with the Walt Disney oeuvre (Baker 174). This process, one in which themes and images of all sorts but most especially those from the animal realm, sentimentalized and belittled the northern dog into near total cinematic submission. Gone was the

unruly beast and in its place appeared the cuddly sidekick and noble Hollywood hero. These became popular box office fare. "In the eyes of the [early] American movie going public", wrote Wendy Bush in her book *Ascent of Dog*, "Canada was perpetual winter, an endless blanket of white snow traversed only by dog team. [...] Grand vistas, sad brown canine eyes and dramatic chase scenes spoke volumes" both in the silent film era and beyond (103). These films included adaptations of Jack London's novels *White Fang* (in 1923 and 1936) and the *Call of the Wild* (in 1908, 1923, 1935, 1972) and a series of Hollywood hits featuring "the canine John Wayne", Strongheart (Bush 107). That *White Fang* was remade as recently as 1991 starring the actor Ethan Hawke speaks to the enduring appeal of these images and their association with wholesome, healthy and virile young white men. *White Fang'*s success in particular is predicated on the appeal of conquering wild nature, turning a fighting wolf hybrid into a trusty partner by the power of love: call it the 'husky with a heart of gold' motif, perhaps. This *taming-by-camera* of the northern dog continues to the present day in movies such as *Snowdogs* (2002) and *Eight Below* (2006). In the former, African American comedic actor Cuba Gooding Jr. starred as a Florida dentist who inherits a dog team and must travel northward to save them. The latter concerns the exploits of a handsome scientist (is there any other kind in Hollywood?) who risks death to save the dog team he was forced to abandon an Antarctic research station.

In recent years, indigenous artists and producers in Canada have started to shift the spotlight inward, and reclaim the figure of the northern dog from mainstream cultural gatekeepers, by telling their own stories through film and video art. One of these creative waves was inspired by the trauma of the dog slaughter. Two documentary films have been made, with Inuit producers at the helm, to document the elders' versions of *qimmiijaqtauniq*. Next, and perhaps the best known contribution to the growing oeuvre of Inuit film is the *Atanarjuat* trilogy

from Igloolik Isuma productions, and its creative driving force, Zacharias Kunuk. These films are *Atanarjuat* (The Fast Runner), *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* and *Before Tomorrow.* Since these films made a splash on the international cinema stage, Isuma has sadly been forced to declare bankruptcy, but their creative output stands as a major milestone in indigenous visual art. *Atanarjuat* in particular was the first feature film to be written, directed and acted entirely in Inuktitut, and won the prestigious Cannes film festival prize for best first feature film in 2002. Following in Isuma's tracks is another production company, Piksuk Media. Like the trailblazing producer of *Atanarjuat*, Piksuk is owned and operated mainly by Inuit, and recently scored a broadcast coup with the debut of its television series based on the Inuit dog sled race, *Nunavut Quest*.

Documenting *Qimmiijaqtauniq*

Echo of the Last Howl was produced in 2005 by Taqramiut Productions for the Makivik Corporation. Both are Inuit-led organizations operating in the North. The documentary was part of a wider effort on the part of the Inuit of Nunavik to create awareness of the dog slaughter, and to seek recognition, compensation and an apology from government. The overall project comprised collecting testimony from Inuit elders regarding the killing of their dog teams by RCMP and other colonial agents, and petitioning various levels of government for an independent investigation into the claims. *Echo* included filmed interviews with some of these elders interspersed with archival footage and photos, contemporary scenes with dogs carrying out traditional tasks, and dramatic recreations of the historical events described. The film consists of five sections: *Dogs*, *Slaughter*, *Why?*, *Snowmobiles*, and *Impact*. "Dogs" presents a series of reminiscences concerning the importance of *qimmit* to Inuit society and its survival. Like the information gathered in Bennett and Rowley's *Uqalurait*, these memories include tales

of the animals' navigation, hunting, guarding and lifesaving skills, as depicted in personal experience narratives. "Slaughter" includes the stories of how the dogs were killed by the RCMP and other state agents. These narratives are presented by individuals, but primarily refer to the collective memory of one particular event when a large number of dogs were rounded up and shot on the local frozen bay. The carcasses were then piled up and burned. The section "Why?" looks at RCMP and government claims that the killings were a necessary response to an outbreak of dog attacks in Inuit communities. "Snowmobiles" considers the arrival of machine transport in Nunavik. "Impact" recounts the continuing social issues that the Inuit claim were triggered by the loss of their dogs.

Echo of the Last Howl is an example of the decolonization of film and video. According to Kerstin Knopf, this movement in contemporary media

> chiefly involves raising Indigenous voices and creating self-controlled media in the process of asserting Indigenous identity, cultural values, and historical and contemporary experiences. As well as this, it involves contesting the grand Western narratives of Indigenous history, ethnography, and sociology. In this way, Indigenous filmmakers strive to work against assimilation through Western media discourse and against the appropriation of Indigenous discourse. (17)

Knopf sees indigenous filmmakers as being in constant conversation with colonial cultural producers, and with societal attitudes, which the work of the dominant culture both reflects and informs. This means that "subaltern films almost necessarily become reflexive, engaging in dialogue with the established body of belief and method and directly or indirectly discussing established cinema" (12). We can certainly see (and hear) this assertion of voice and

contestation of colonial voice in *Echo of the Last Howl*. Each section comprises a direct attempt at rebuttal of claims of state agents regarding dogs and the dog slaughter, and colonial claims to Inuit culture in general. This becomes most pointed once the claims of slaughter are laid out for the viewer. At this point, the filmmakers go directly on the attack, rebuking non-indigenous myths that northern dogs were vicious animals compromising community safety, and dismissing the idea that snowmobiles were a welcome technology that Inuit willingly switched to in lieu of their outmoded *qimmit*. Addressing the accusation of an aggressive nature in their dogs, one elder says, "I used to sleep between my dogs" (*Echo*). And regarding the joy that supposedly accompanied the snow machine revolution, another elder counters: "The speed and ease of the snowmobile was the downfall of the dog team and started the hatred for the dog. [...] It was our downfall" (*Echo*). Testimony after testimony accumulates to produce a defiant chorus and thus, a strong counter-narrative to colonial history. The stereotyping and demonization of the white man in *Echo* furthers this agenda, by depicting the RCMP and other agents in the broad strokes reminiscent of a Hollywood villain, with his suspect foreign accent (French, yet he speaks in English) and shadowy moustachioed face. Several of the elders speak of their intimidation of this strange interloper on their land. The Inuit thought these men were "super-beings" with dangerous powers. "They even *looked* brutal" recalls one man. This is a decolonizing role reversal of stock cinematic characters. The hero becomes the villain. Even the progress narrative is challenged, as the arrival of Europeans in the north is termed "the *invasion* of civilization" (*Echo*, emphasis mine). Of course, more is needed to further the decolonizing process. Role reversals and the inversion of oppressions, temporarily satisfying though they may be, merely reinforce the racial binary and perpetuate conflict.

One of the other key strategies of decolonizing, or subaltern, filmmaking that Knopf identifies is “the integration of traditional orality” into the cinematic artwork (68). Again, this is a direct response to the dominant culture, one that privileges print and the written word, and that sought to extinguish indigenous cultures by forbidding people their language and by appropriating their stories. One of the ways subaltern filmmakers reclaim the power of their oral culture in film and video, according to Knopf, is to use “a narrative formula in which characters or the plot present traditional oral accounts, myths and legends or elements thereof" (69). The collection of individual testimonies in *Echo* is united by an overall narration, which imagines an Inuk elder delivering a lesson to an Inuk youth so that she may remember the traditional ways and the true story of colonial aggression against the animals. It is a bit contrived, but the opening and closing formulae of *Echo of the Last Howl* nonetheless are intended as an iteration of traditional modes of storytelling, and its primary use as a vehicle for passing IQ from one generation to the next. The English voiceover of *Echo* begins the film by saying, “This is a story I waited a long time to tell you, Little Mary” and ends with “Promise me never to forget, and in *your* turn, to tell” (*Echo*). In between these bookends, the film proper connects a series of tellings from Inuit elders, most of them filmed seated in their living rooms with warm, cozy lighting and familiar, mundane surroundings, a deliberately domestic setting that draws the viewer into the sphere of kinship and respect for IQ. In Bennett and Rowley, one informant tells us, “The old saying is that an older person is always wiser than a younger one. Some of the older people say that the one who listens to his parents will live longer. If you listen to the older people and are told to do something, you will live longer and have a better life” (24). This context of oral communication is being recreated in the Inuit film.

Knopf also notes the use of "visual and sonic effects" in both the oral tradition and the contemporary subaltern film (68). This, she hypothesizes, shows a continuity between the two "communicative traditions" and evokes in the latter the performative context of the former. *Echo of the Last Howl* is a sonically rich creative work. We hear the sound of human feet crunching and squeaking on various textures of snow. We hear, in extended and unnarrated detail, the sound of an Inuk chopping and collecting ice. We hear gurgling water, a net being drawn out of a hole in the ice, and the flip-flop of a fish on the snow. We hear the swish of sled runners on the frozen bay. We hear the staccato commands of the sled driver to his animals (in Inuktitut of course), and we hear the voices of the elders linger after the English voiceover has completed its translations. Of course, we also hear a veritable soundtrack of the barks, howls, yelps and pants of the *qimmit*; and we hear the telling silences that follow the *pop-pop-pop* of the bullets leaving a gun. In one particularly effective moment in the section "Snowmobiles", the words of the elders as they recount the introduction of the new technology in the North are intercut at several points with the incessant sound of the snowmobile. The natural rhythm of their testimony is rudely interrupted by the unpleasant sound, which has the effect of an annoying insect buzzing by the ear, or of a larger, growling menace approaching in inevitable stages. This audio technique also evokes the orality of traditional Inuit throat singing, a style of musical performance that uses guttural chants and growls, not lyrics, in a friendly breathing game between two females. Throat singing, or *katajjaq*, is a sort of non-linguistic vocal competition, whose supposedly exotic sounds have found renewed currency in contemporary new age music circles.

Even the title of the film makes reference to the sonic nature of the oral tradition: ***Echo** of the Last Howl*. In producing this documentary, the team at Taqramiut Productions gives voice to

not only the Inuit storytellers, placing them in direct and decolonizing dialogue with all the colonial voices who have come before them. They also give voice to the dogs, creating a space to remember their once ubiquitous presence in Northern Quebec. The film's title transports us back to a time when the landscape was alive with the vocalizing of 20,000 *qimmit*, and harkens back perhaps to the time when dogs could talk. The silence that followed the volleys of RCMP bullets comes to characterize the shock, the confusion, the *nothingness* of this new and forced phase of Inuit life. When the howls ceased, the soundtrack of the North was filled with foreign and frightening sounds: one woman describes in *Echo* hearing the drunken fights that would regularly erupt in her house as a result of growing alcohol abuse. Throat singing and the sounds of nature are replaced by the strains of country music on the TV and the metallic tingle of such consumer goods as decorative wind chimes. Silence becomes a metaphor for the complete annihilation of a traditional way of life: "My whole culture has been devastated with the extermination of our dogs," claims one elder (*Echo*). Says another, "The very core of Inuit life was abolished by the slaughter (*Echo*).

Kerstin Knopf characterizes indigenous film as subaltern or decolonizing film, and sees it as acting in self-reflexive and contrary dialogue with Eurocentric attitudes and colonial cultural production. This characterization is made still more explicit in the title of a second documentary film produced by the Inuit on the dog slaughter: *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths*. Like *Echo*, *Qimmit* uses the framing device of a youth-elder interaction, only in this instance, the narrative is set in motion by a young student who is researching the tales of *qimmiijaqtauniq* and seeks out the testimony of her family members. Like *Echo*, *Qimmit* also presents the bulk of its documentation via individual testimony, and intersperses it with archival footage and dramatic recreations. Like *Echo*, the more recent film also casts the white man in the role of a shadowy

villain intent on senseless destruction: the title card of *Qimmit* is an image of two dogs framed by the legs of a towering figure, the business end of his rifle pointed at the animals. This bias aside, *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths* tries, where the previous documentary does not, to include both sides of the story. The film documents the work of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission as it travelled through the communities of modern Nunavut to collect the narratives of the elders. It also includes the colonial voice, providing interviews with retired RCMP members and other *qablunap* (white men) who were stationed in Canada's North during the timeframe in question. As the documentary opens, we hear QTC commissioner James Igloliorte speak to the necessity of entering into this decolonizing dialogue. He comforts an emotional elder by saying

> We have to give Canada some understanding and appreciation of what [you] went through, so adding your voice to the voices of many people in the Qikiqtani region and hearing people respectfully is how we get the truth out [and] how we tell this story. (*Qimmit*)

Overall, then, *Qimmit* has a more conciliatory tone that *Echo*. It also is more complex. It enters into the post-colonial dialogue with more openness to the multiplicity of voices involved in the events in question. We hear from elders and youth. We hear from Inuit and RCMP. We hear from the commissioner of the QTC, a university professor, former federal government officials, a former mayor of Iqaluit (who, it should be noted, defines allegations of a dog slaughter as "utter crap" (*Qimmit*). We also hear the testimony of several Inuit who were hired as official dog killers in the decades in question, their involvement complicating matters of blame and responsibility even further.

One of the Inuit who had been hired to assist in the culling of *qimmit* was Matto Michael, whose story provides one of the documentary's most dramatic episodes. It also offers some significant insights into Inuit ways of knowing, opening windows onto the nature of time, place, family, storytelling and corporeality in the indigenous worldview. The story is presented by four narrators, in various settings and in various timeframes. It begins with Michael's personal remembrance of how he was recruited by the RCMP. He first testifies as a "Witness" before the Truth Commission, bringing his audience back in time:

> When I was 13, my father and I were getting reading to go hunting. The policeman came over and asked, "You're going by Qijujjuaq out-camp?" Then he gave us a big bag of shells and a shotgun. He said, "Tell the camp boss that his dogs have to be killed. Houses are being built in Kimmirut and there's one for him." (*Qimmit*)

The film then brings us back to the present day, but not to the commission hearing room. We see a group of four Inuit elders travelling by motor boat to Qijujjuaq in 2010. As they pass through the frame, an abandoned and derelict komatik (sled) can be seen clinging to the rocky shore behind them. These are the various narrators, and they are returning to the site of the out-camp in order to revisit the day Matto Michael has remembered. A fifth person waits on shore: Akeego Killiktee. Her testimony begins as a voice-over to the boat's arrival, and continues as we see her address the QTC hearing. She says, "Matto and his father arrived when our men were out hunting. They said they had come to shoot the dogs" (*Qimmit*). Another QTC participant, Simata Onalik, agrees, saying, "I followed them around, and I saw dogs dying" (*Qimmit*). *Qimmit* continues this mode of moving back and forth in time, and of passing the narrative thread from person to person, as the story of Inuit participation in the slaughter unfolds. Present and past collide as Onalik recalls an eager young boy who found Michael's bag of shells too heavy to

carry, followed by a scene on the contemporary shore of Qijujjuaq as the adult Inuit test the weight of a similar pack of ammunition. Onalik recalls walking behind the armed squad as a curious young girl, followed by a scene of the adult Onalik walking behind the four elders who have just disembarked. A third visual and temporal thread is introduced here, as an actor portraying the young Matto Michael comes into view, and the slaughter itself is re-enacted. "This was the last dog to be shot," the narrator tells us. "I was very close with the shotgun. He was hidden under the rock." When the young Matto pulls the trigger, we see the elder Matto recoil from the action of the discharge.

The conflation of time and the use of multiple narrators do more than just present corroborative witness testimony of a given event. In fact, this section of the film is set up as an explicit counter-argument to Western legal discourse. Again, as Knopf tells us, subaltern film is always self-reflexively in dialogue with colonial voices. As such, the preamble to the story of Matto Michael as an Inuit dog killer is preceded by a discussion of the Dog Ordinance By-Law, which was in effect at this time. We *see* a series of archival photocopies of official government documents from this era; then we *hear* the testimony of the Inuit elders. It is both a clash of two truths, and a clash of two competing modes of communication: non-indigenous/written versus indigenous/oral. The oral tradition is communal, not top down. It is dynamic, not static. The involvement of several storytellers is performative and circular, sharing the story as opposed to telling the story. Storytelling, as we have seen, is as much about social cohesion as it is about giving account. Lines blur between participants, between genres, and between the narrative event (present) and the event narrated (past). The indigenous concept of time is not linear; as we saw in the Introduction to *Uqalurait*, the editors are careful to warn us against the absence of "temporal absolutes" (xxvii). *Qimmit* shows in a literal and visual way how an act performed in

1950 has a direct and powerful effect on life in 2010. This shows how the Inuit can believe the dog slaughter has continued to bring social ills on their people to this day. It also shows again what Knopf sees as a hallmark of subaltern cinema, the integration of traditional orality. Thus we see a

> structuring formula in which a non-linear digressive narrative shapes the form, and the film comes to resemble an oral account. In [this] case, the film form is characterized by circular structure repetitions, pauses, and/or a slow rhythm, all echoes or imitations of oral rhetoric. (68)

According to Kerstin Knopf, decolonizing film is a dialogue, a deliberately articulated response to colonial voices by privileging indigenous voices. We can see this at work in the non-fiction documentary genre represented by *Echo of the Last Howl* and *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths*. Crafted in direct response to claims that no dog slaughter occurred or that people were mistaken or confused about what happened, these two films create a space for indigenous oral tradition to be voiced and validated. *Echo* and *Qimmit* pit truth against truth: oral against written, community against hierarchy, emotion against reason. How do the dogs fare in all this? Do indigenous filmmakers represent dogs differently than their non-indigenous counterparts? The dogs of *Echo of the Last Howl* and *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths* are not Disney dogs. We do see their heroism and their vitality and their connection to the North via the stories of the elders. But there are differences, too. In *Echo*, for example, although there are glimpses of puppies and children, and although the narrative is directed at a fictionalized child named Little Mary, the dogs are not infantilized. There is no patronizing "cute factor" at work here. This signals that these animals are not pets in the Western sense. They are not creatures to be tamed. Consequently, the *Echo* dogs are not represented as unpredictably "savage": quite the opposite.

They are seen as highly skilled and fondly remembered. In fact, it is the white men who are villianized as “savages”, hunting animals with no warning or explanation, shooting them as they cower beneath a house, or as they lay helpless in their harnesses. Finally, and as opposed to Eurocentric depictions, the land of *Echo of the Last Howl* is not melancholy. It is the violent disconnect from the land that brings sadness. The howling of the dog is not melancholy in and of itself. It is the ghostly echo of the lost dogs that resonates.

As with the oral testimonies of the previous chapter, the films they inspired represent dogs as existing not just in reality, but in corporeality, with their human counterparts. The re-membering is seen to be a piecing back together of severed parts of a once holistic and symbiotic ecology, the dismembering having been felt as deeply and as painfully as any physical injury. In *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths*, one of the co-narrators of the Matto Michael story remembers the trip to the out-camp, the impact of the final bullet and the reaction of the final dog. It is a visceral tale. Ejesiak Padluq remembers:

> This was the last dog to be shot. I was very close [to] the shotgun. He was hidden under the rock. [...] It was hit right on the forehead, a big hole. The blood started gushing out towards us. I hid behind Matto, away from the blood. I'll never, ever forget this. [...] It was terrible. Matto was so bloody we couldn't believe it. (*Qimmit*)

It is an image that recalls the memory work of Alicee Joamie, and her assertion that when her dogs were killed, she began to bleed. Here, the blood courses from the animal body, but in an image fit for a Shakespearean drama, it stains the human perpetrator of an unimaginable atrocity. The blood is a symbol of Matto Michael’s guilt in his treason against his own kin (human and canine), and of Ejesiak Padluq’s confusion as he searches for someone to blame. More than

symbol, though, the blood of the dog is also a physical reality, an exchange of bodily fluid which, like the milk expressed from the dying dog's nipple, links the two beings together in an intercorporeal and intimate relationship.

But there is something else: something that rings a familiar tone in the mind of a viewer schooled in Western film convention. Have we viewed this scene before? Literary scholar Erica Fudge has done a reading of the Disney classic film, *Old Yeller*, in her 2002 book *Animal*. Like other critics, Fudge sees the 1957 movie as a "coming of age" story set against the backdrop of the Texas frontier, at a time when cowboys were claiming the land with post-Civil War optimism and ambition. The land now known as Nunavut was likewise a "frontier" to the outsiders who were streaming in during the 50s and 60s. As *Qimmit* describes, the traders, Mounties and missionaries already stationed there were welcoming confrères from all walks of life in the wake of the establishment of a northern military presence (the DEW Line). *Old Yeller* and the *Qimmit* episode also follow a similar story arc: young boy shoots treasured dog. Like young Matto Michael, Travis Coates is a boy on the verge of manhood, about to be propelled across the child-adult divide via a conflicted relationship with an authority figure on the one hand, and an animal on the other. For the Inuk, this is the Mountie who gave him his orders and ammunition, and the last dog on Qijujjuaq; for the Disney protagonist, it is his father and the family dog. Like Simata Onalik, Travis and his older brother Arliss are left behind while the father is away at work (the elder Onalik is hunting; the elder Coates away on a cattle drive), and must take on new and sometimes daunting responsibilities. Like the families who converge on Qijujjuaq that fateful day, the Coates clan has farm dogs, but it is one in particular, Old Yeller, who "becomes an integral part of the family set-up" (Fudge 83). That is, until his wild nature is awakened: Yeller is bitten by a wolf and contracts the dread disease, rabies. As the *qimmit* were marked for death by

reasons of disease and aggression, so too is the Coates' dog. Travis and Matto must do the unthinkable. Here is Fudge's reading of the historic celluloid moment in *Old Yeller*:

> Travis' shooting of the beloved dog is a kind of liminal moment between childhood and adulthood. Travis has passed the test he was set by his father, he has run the farm and protected the family, and his helper is no longer needed. (Fudge 84)

Matto Michael dispenses with his helper as well, and in a similar rite of passage enters a new phase of life. Travis appeases his father and becomes a man. Matto appeases the Mountie and becomes... what? A white man? A traitor? A new breed of Inuk? The blood stain on Matto Michael symbolizes the burden he bears to this day for his complicity in the state project of the destruction of the Inuit sled dogs. It marks a cultural baptism. The entire North is in a "liminal moment" between its traditional indigenous past and its modern colonized future. Matto Michael's bullet, like that of Travis Coates, seals the deal. Michael metonymically stands in for the ostensible maturation of his entire land and culture: the primitive child (with dogs) becomes an adult (with gun, with snowmobile, with house and pay cheque). Erica Fudge distills the didactic message of *Old Yeller* to this: we must admit, all of us, that "the childish attachment to the individual creature must be left behind... dogs, like all animals serve and then they die. That is what an adult has to come to terms with" (85). This is what young Travis learns, and is thus rewarded (with a new 'adult' horse gifted by the returning patriarch). Matto Michael, however, does not learn, is not rewarded. The blood stain that continues to haunt the entire Qijujjuaq party is evidence of that. His "coming of age" is a counter-narrative to the Western view of animals as disposable, interchangeable and replaceable trifles of youth. Seen through Inuit eyes, this land was not "settled". It was unsettled, thrust into decades of tumult and agony. Thus, while the

filmmakers have tapped (consciously or not) the story of Travis Coates to tell the story of Matto Michael, the parallel is far from perfect. This *qimmiq* is the anti-Disney dog.

The Dogs of Igloolik Isuma: Opening and Closing

Perhaps the best known indigenous media company in Canada is Igloolik Isuma Productions, a 75 percent Inuit-owned film and video production company that was based in Igloolik, Nunavut. According to CBC News Online, the business was put into receivership in 2011, unable to pay its creditors or even its own staff. Still, there was no discounting the mark Isuma had made on the international cinema scene: "Look at us," CBC quoted Isuma's founder, Zacharias Kunuk as saying in July 2011. "What we have [done], we went all over the world. We've stopped Cannes for five minutes when I spoke Inuktitut. We did all this" (*CBC News Online*). "All this" is indeed a wonderful and original set of achievements and cultural trails blazed. The Isuma team began making film and video in the 1980s, focusing initially on documentaries recounting traditional Inuit culture, but came to world renown in 1999 with the dramatic film *Atanarjuat* (*The Fast Runner*). That production was the first feature film ever to be written, directed and acted entirely in Inuktitut, and it won 19 international film awards including the Camera d'Or for Best First Feature at the Cannes Film Festival. *Atanarjuat* would also become the first installment in a trilogy that included *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* (chosen as the opening film of the Toronto International Film Festival in 2006) and *Before Tomorrow* (a 2007 joint project with an Inuit women's filmmaking collective). Isuma continues to host a web portal dedicated to showcasing Inuit-made and Inuit-centred media. Its mission remains

> to produce independent community-based media – films, TV and now Internet – to preserve and enhance Inuit culture and language; to create jobs and economic

> development in Igloolik and Nunavut; and to tell authentic Inuit stories to Inuit and non-Inuit audiences worldwide. (*Isuma TV*)

Many of these stories include images of the Inuit and their dogs.

Dogs are ubiquitous in the Isuma trilogy, particularly in the first two films. *Atanarjuat*, based on an Inuit legend (and thus a fine example of Knopf's decolonizing film strategy), is the story of jealousy, betrayal and murder that tears apart two Inuit families in Canada's ancient Arctic. The narrative follows them as they go about their traditional work life, and so includes a substantial amount of footage of movement via dog sled. The second film is about contact between the Inuit and white Danish explorers in the 1940s, and particularly about the conflict between Christianity and traditional shamanistic spirituality. This production is of particular note here, as it is based on the work of Knud Rasmussen, whose early ethnographies laid the foundation for much of the colonial representation of northern dogs. The final film tells the story of an Inuk boy and his grandmother left to fend for themselves when smallpox kills their entire extended family. It is thus a story of the importance of kinship. None of these seminal Inuit features are about dogs *per se*, not in the same way as the documentaries of *qimmiijaqtauniq* (or the NFB docs or subsequent Disney films). This was a little disappointing at first to a scholar bent on exploring the value and significance of dogs in Inuit culture. Throughout the Isuma oeuvre, dogs are just, well, *there*. In *Atanarjuat* and *Knud Rasmussen*, dogs do not seem to figure into the main narrative action as characters. They are not named. They are not assigned personalities. They are not used as canine metaphors as Flaherty used them in *Nanook*. Yet in the films of Zacharius Kunuk, dogs are constantly in the frame, resting in the background as the people carry on with camp life. When not at camp or inside their snow houses, the people are always travelling by dog sled. Ambient noise is constantly punctuated with barks and howls. The

snow and ice close to the encampments is not pristine Hollywood white; it is dotted with conspicuous piles of excrement and telltale patches of yellow. There is not an Old Yeller or a White Fang to be seen. The overall effect is very different from the products of the colonial circuit of representation. This is Inuit life. Dogs are not rendered exotic. They are rendered mundane, familiar.

This is not to say that Inuit filmmakers gloss over the significance of dogs in the traditional daily life of the people. It is rather to say that the presentation of such realities is more subtle, less spectacle. In anthropological circles, it is generally agreed that there are two ways researchers can study a culture: from an emic viewpoint, or from the etic. The terms were coined by social linguist Kenneth Lee Pike to study speech within a culture, and have since found currency in many disciplines. In essence, the distinction is based on one's positionality: the emic account is the insider account, while the etic belongs to the outsider, most often anthropologists or social scientists (Srivastava 45). Needless to say, the structuring of the same data from either stance is going to make meaning in different ways. The stories told by Flaherty are going to be different than those told by Kunuk. What seems foreign to the outsider seems familiar to someone on the inside. By way of analogy, consider this story: I once worked as a contract writer with the Nunatsiavut Government, the Inuit government in Labrador. As a Southern Newfoundlander, I was an outsider. And I once made the mistake of referring to their land, and the communities in which they lived, as "remote". One of the government ministers, an Inuk born and bred in Nunatsiavut, was quick to point out to me that to the Inuit, their land is not, in fact, remote. To them, my land – the South – was remote. It's a matter of perspective. It's also a matter of power.

Monika Siebert, writing on the ideological work of *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, defines the film as "autoethnography" – it involves the Inuit looking at themselves, their own culture, and their own concept of what constitutes an authentic past (537). This is an effect indirectly articulated by the film's coda, which shows the film's cast and crew "unmasked", in their modern clothing, with their modern film equipment. It is a move that also aligns with Knopf's claim to the self-reflexivity of subaltern film: look at us, we're making a movie! The narrative proper, by contrast, depicts a time when all of this was unimaginable; it is set in a purely pre-contact world. The tale of the malevolent spirit who destroys the kincentric structure of this Inuit community is told without acknowledgement of present-day white viewers and any difficulty they may have in terms of navigating the narrative. This effectively reverses the etic-emic dichotomy and casts any non-Inuit viewer in the perhaps unfamiliar role of minority outsider: "It accomplishes this goal by throwing non-Inuit and non-Inuktitut-speaking viewers into a world that does not offer them any recognizable parameters for orientation: there is no native informant here" (533). This plays out at one level on a "linguistic terrain", where the subaltern voice (in Inuktitut, with subtitles) is privileged over the dominant, but also in the visual realm, where the everyday is privileged over the fantastic. Kunuk's camera, according to Siebert, is guided by an

> attentive lingering over the details of everyday objects. Sealskin and polar bear skin clothing adorned with intricate embroidery; sleds and kayaks fashioned from caribou bone, skin, and ligament; and snow-block igloos were all reconstructed in the traditional manner. These objects, along with the film's attention to details large and small – from the landscapes of women's tattooed faces to the physiognomy of an eastern Arctic uninterrupted by any signs of alternate economies – help the feature succeed as a premodern Inuit epic. (534)

As do the images of the dogs: the very first image in *Atanarjuat*, and thus the one that sets the entire trilogy in motion, is one of dogs. The first elements of the Isuma soundscape are barks, yips and howls, the sound of a sled runner on ice and snow. Seen through the lens of Zacharias Kunuk, the ancient tale of the fast runner begins with a lone Inuk standing centre frame as his dogs mill about, untethered. There are three dogs at first, then others wander into and out of frame. The Inuk walks about. The scene seems unscripted, meandering, pointless even. What's more, the entire sequence lasts for close to an entire minute, an uncomfortable amount of time for a Western moviegoer, who needs action or at least dialogue to hold her attention and draw her into the story. Eventually, the ambient tableau is broken by the voiceover of a male Inuk, and the subtitle gives non-Inuit viewers the translation: "I can only sing this song to someone who understands it" (Kunuk). The action then cuts to an igloo interior, and the narrative proper begins as we learn of the entry of discord into the community by an evil shaman.

Siebert sees this opening formula as a signal to the non-Inuit viewer of her or his outsider status, meaning that, despite the reassuring presence of English translations, the etic viewer still will not be able to fully understand the cultural meanings about to be presented. Not everyone will understand the shaman's song. A narrative's commencement usually entails an *orientation*, but here instead is a *disorientation*. The subsequent cultural vertigo continues with "the disjointed editing of the opening sequences, [which] augments the impression of being at a loss in an unknown world, as the Southern viewer struggles to trace plots through the offered fragments" (533). Interestingly, both popular and scholarly review articles on *Atanarjuat* tend to gloss over the opening 50 seconds of the movie, seeing it perhaps as mere stock Arctic background for the opening titles. It's not. Siebert sees more, but she also elides the presence of the dogs, assuming perhaps that it is just filler. It is most definitely not. *Atanarjuat* is a subaltern

and self-reflexive emic project, one in which Inuit filmmakers "create and sustain a believable precontact Inuit world", one that is curious to outsiders and comforting to insiders (533). The success of this endeavour rests in part on the incorporation of the everyday into the filmic vision and "the integration of traditional orality" into form and content (Knopf 68). The opening of *Atanarjuat* achieves both. It transports the viewers to a time when the presence of dogs in the North was a given, their demise (certainly by willful slaughter) inconceivable. They were there, they were everywhere, and they were eternal. They were also believed to be partners in the circle of communication and understanding. Consider here how the introductory frames of *Atanarjuat* evoke that other introductory formula discussed by N. Scott Momaday: "When dogs could talk…". Kunuk's opening vignette marries dog imagery and Inuktitut voice: ""I can only sing this song to someone who understands it." Does this harken back to that mythical time when Inuit and *qimmit* understood each other?

The opening scene of *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* is intended as a marker for equilibrium. It sets the stage for a tale that takes place at a time when the Inuit were "whole, with the snow and the dogs" (*Echo*). As we saw with the elder testimonies regarding the slaughter of their *qimmit*, and how their memories were entangled with myriad other disruptions that were taking place at the time to their traditional way of life, when one part of life was disturbed, the entire tapestry began to unravel. One small addition or deletion toppled the entire holistic balance of the community. Similarly, the plot of the Isuma trilogy's first film concerns an uncharacteristic disharmony being introduced into an Inuit community, a disequilibrium that results from a violation of traditional communal order. The second film, *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, continues this theme:

> After completing "Atanarjuat The Fast Runner," set in the mythological past in a community whose balance of life had not changed for 4,000 years, Zacharias Kunuk and Norman Cohn chose to depict a series of events that took place in 1922, when Shamanism was replaced by Christianity – and the balance of life was changed forever. (*Isuma TV*)

In *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen,* Inuit tradition and White incursion clash against a backdrop of competing religious ideologies. Set in 1922, and based on the journals of the famed Danish explorer, this second installment of the *Atanarjuat* trilogy explores the profound and ongoing effects contact with Europeans has had on Inuit lifeways. As the film depicts Rasmussen's "Great Sled Journey" (which he recounted in his book *Across Arctic America*), *Journals* necessarily incorporates many images of the dogs involved. And again, according to Kunuk's mandate, there are many subtle ways in which the presence of the animals is made known: a child plays with a toy dog sled; the shaman Avva recounts his life story, which includes a violation of an Inuit taboo against a pregnant woman harnessing dogs; the appearance of a dead dog on the back of one Inuit sled, a passing glimpse at one of the victims of the arduous journey. There is another scene when Avva's group arrives at the camp of the Christianized Inuit family, whose ranks emerge, singing hymns, to greet the visitors. Each member of the camp shakes hands with two leaders of the visiting group: Avva and his lead dog. There is no commentary provided to explain the significance of this ritual. Again, the dogs are part of the action, not set apart from the action. Dogs are facts of Inuit life, not White myth.

Audience members at a screening of *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* may have inadvertently missed the key dog scene I want to focus on here, as it comes after the entire set of credits has rolled. Before these credits, and at the end of the narrative proper, the protagonist

Avva, who has resisted the encroachment of Christianity into his family with great conviction, renounces his shamanism and, in a heartbreaking scene, he dispatches his spirit helpers from his life. We see the spirits in human form, and as they turn and walk away from Avva, their tears and pain are very real. The message seems to be, tragically, that the conquerors have won. Shamanism is a thing of the past. But the oblivion does not last. After the credits, we get a bonus scene. And again, notably, in most popular and scholarly commentary on *Journals*, this scene is almost universally not mentioned. The exile of the shamanistic spirit is given the finale designation consistently across the literature. One of the few articles to take appropriate note of the real final scene of *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* was written by the Canada Research Chair in Aboriginal Studies at the University of the Fraser Valley, Dr. Hugh Brody for the Learning Materials section of the Isuma TV web site. Here is how Brody translates the scene:

> Then the orchestra, the theme of the 'M'Appari' aria from Flotow's Marta, and the voice of Caruso again, calling out the passion, the peculiarly overwhelming feeling, of a romantic song from European opera. This continues over the main credits (which are set alongside black and white photographs from the Report of the 5th Thule Expedition) and then, as Caruso sings, these credits yield to an image: a sledge, a dogteam, and two figures – Avva and Orulu? Moving left to right across the snow, in an ever wider shot, in a huge landscape, a cluster of dogs all the same pale colour and gleaming in a strange, surreal golden light. An epitome, an icon of Inuit culture, of Inuit terrain and Inuit civilization. Then as the dogteam moves and the shot follows, as Caruso reaches the end of his aria, we see a cluster of figures and snowhouses. The two figures have reached others; they move towards the approaching dogteam. Small, black movements against the expanse of snow. For me, this was a heartbreaking moment, carrying the heartbreak of

> the film. A moment in which the vastness of culture is embodied in a man who must choose to be with people, with the Christians, even if it means he must lose the culture, even if he must walk under the sound of Caruso towards, we imagine, the dour hymns and new myths of the Christians. (Brody)

Brody's reading of the final dog team scene is essentially a pessimistic one; he sees it as "carrying the heartbreak of the film". He sees it as a postscript to Avva's banishing of his spirit helpers, the defeated shaman accepting his inevitable fate and joining the ranks of the enemy. But look closer, and we can see that he also allows for a different interpretation of this highly ambiguous scene. It is this reading that aligns more closely to my own. In his article, after detailing the last march of the shaman to the powerful strains of the music of the outsiders, Brody goes on to say, "Perhaps I am reading too much into this last image, this scene within the credits. It could represent the survival of Inuit life." This is precisely the meaning of this epilogue, in my view, and the key to this reading is the image of the dog team. Brody does not "read too much into it." In fact, I think it is a very complex scene, saturated with possible meanings, and open to many interpretations – the farthest thing from a throwaway scene. I also think there is real potential to see that this coda carries hope, not heartbreak. It is not the punctuation mark to a linear progress narrative. It is the "to be continued". In this way, the post-credit dog team vignette hints that even in the sadness and inevitability of conquest, there is hope for the continuity of tradition. The narrative does not stop with Avva's "conversion".

As seen in the oral testimonies of the elders of Nunavut and Nunavik, the Inuit way of life was based on an integrated ecology that connected the humans to the land in an indivisible whole. The third element of this triad was the Inuit dog, or *qimmiq*. The dog was both mediator and mover; it literally connected culture to nature, the people to their land and to the means of

sustenance and survival. Inuit life was life in motion, following the seasons and their rhythms, tuning in to the responses seasonal flux engendered in the land and its animals. Inuit could not conceive of a world where one or the other of these elements did not exist. And when one element was threatened, the entire balance of Inuit life was in jeopardy. One of the greatest threats to this life-in-balance was the colonial project, and its deadly package of settlement, religion and cultural annihilation. Avva surrendered to the march of white progress, as exemplified in the power of the Caruso aria, but did not surrender every aspect of the Inuit soul. Something vital survives in Kunuk's coda. Indeed, Kunuk's seemingly superfluous add-ons, both here and in *Atanarjuat*, are actually quite rich with meaning. In the first film, Siebert shows how the juxtaposition of the pre-contact film with the modern-day outtakes performs important ideological work. The "sixty seconds of explosive self-reflexivity" that Kunuk attaches to *Atanarjuat* comprise a deliberate rhetorical strategy on the part of the filmmaker: the outtakes "show the Inuit representing their usable past within the context of contemporary multicultural Canada" (536). It shows that Inuit, like all other nations, have both a traditional and a contemporary aspect. This connotes survival and continuity: the artist can tell us a story of disequilibrium that happened in the past while at the same time assuring us that this is not the only story to be told. *Our life goes on.*

In *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, the coda serves a similar purpose, signalling that, while stories of surrender and loss are important to tell, they are not the only ones. *We keep moving, we keep surviving*. If the moviegoer assumed, as did many reviewers, that Avva's exile of his spirit helpers was the death knell of Inuit culture, Kunuk reminds us that this is not so. As they disappear from the landscape, and the credits roll, the audience feels the numbness and the emptiness. But then comes a spark of life, a sense of movement and the void is filled again.

Movement begins anew. Kunuk is also playing with narrative technique here. Western convention requires a linear and finite narrative, a story that takes us from A to B, that begins with 'Once Upon a Time' and ends with 'Happily Ever After'. Western audiences like to leave the movie theatre satiated, not puzzled. Kunuk draws upon orality yet again in his penchant for codas and epilogues, adding new and fluid layers to his core narratives. In fact, as Brody rightly notes in his article, even the coda of *The Journals of Knud Rassmussen* has a coda! At the end of the post-credits scene, there is still something else:

> a ghostly sound - a drum beat? A moaning, a whispering of spirits? So they are with us still, despite this story, despite the songs of the Christians and the great calling of Caruso. This sound may be just enough to fend off a final despair, for it makes the film linger in what might be a defiance of itself. (Brody)

In simplest terms, viewers can assume Kunuk did not want to end his story in the defeat of Avva, hence the additional visual and auditory elements. The final chapter is not the one documented with pen and paper in the explorer's journal (making Kunuk's choice for the film's title nicely ironic). It is not preserved in the staid and static written word of the explorers or the missionaries. Nor does the final operatic word go to Caruso. Inuit history should not begin nor will it end with white exploration. Rasmussen's great sled journey came to an end; in Western linear thinking, he got from his point A to his point B. But Inuit history does not start and end in such a manner. Inuit history is circular. Their sled journey continues. There is more to be told, there is life to be lived, as long as the dogs continue to run.

Dogs, Movement, Continuity and Piksuk

There are many reasons why Inuit cultural producers in Canada have embraced film and video art. Kunuk's mission statement articulates many of them explicitly: to produce independent community-based media to preserve culture, create jobs, develop technical skills, tell stories (*Isuma TV*). Knopf further concluded, and Siebert hinted at the fact, that film and video are modern technologies well suited to the changing needs of oral cultures. Knopf showed how orality is integrated into the form and content of subaltern film, using non-linear multivocal storytelling techniques and maximizing visual and sonic effects. Siebert explored how an ancient oral tale can be retold from within a reflexive contemporary framework without belittling either temporality. With *Echo of the Last Howl* and *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths*, we can see how documentary film in particular is an appropriate choice for preserving oral testimony and disseminating it to wider audiences. A better vehicle than the written word or mere audio for this task, the documentary is the medium that can most accurately capture the performance context of the narrative event. Of course, the presence of camera and crew also necessarily alters the storyteller's performance, and this must be acknowledged in any analysis, but the use of facial expression, gesture and other paralinguistic features are certainly captured in a more dynamic way. As well, filming acts of witness testimony, such as was the case in *Echo* and *Qimmit*, adds a legitimacy to the narratives for use at such times that they must measured against the bureaucratic files of state agencies. To the dissenters and disbelievers who dismiss the foggy and overwrought remembrances of "old men", film has a presence and permanence not as easily denied as folksy rumours from a far away land.

There is another reason why the Inuit have taken to these modern media: film and video are moving arts. They were invented to capture, study and project movement. The very first

filmic image is generally considered to be Eadweard Muybridge's *Sallie Gardner in a Gallop*. In this 1878 study of animal locomotion, Muybridge linked together several still photographs of a horse in motion and displayed them using his zoopraxiscope. The experiment showed that during its gait, there is indeed a moment when all four of a horse's hooves are off the ground at the same time. It was a minor scientific breakthrough, and a major cultural one, giving birth to the medium of the motion picture. Muybridge's moving image proved to be a great fit for representing Inuit lifeways, premised as they are in animal motion. Traditional Inuit life was not sedentary. The dog team is an active entity. To truly capture the essence of a dog team, or more to the point, life lived in intimate and perpetual tandem with a dog team, movement must be captured. Films such as *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* would not be accurate portrayals of real Inuit life if they concentrated solely on the drama that took place at stationary points of interest, such as inside the igloo or crouched at the seal hole. Recall how many of the elders who testified in various forums concerning the sled dog slaughter spoke of the emotional and practical stasis they found themselves in after the death of their dogs forced them to stay put in the settlements. A common metaphor used was paralysis. **Inuit life was a life in motion**. Film and video art are ideal tools for Inuit artists interested in documenting Inuit lifeways, both because of the performative nature of the oral culture, and also because of the motive lifestyle that characterized the past from which such stories are being remembered. What might this mean for the future of Inuit filmmaking, especially films featuring dogs?

Founded in 2005 in Clyde River, Nunavut, Piksuk Media, in cooperation with the National Film Board of Canada, created one of the dog slaughter documentaries discussed above, *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths*. Like Isuma, they have a mandate to "promote Inuit history and culture and to train Inuit in all aspects of media work" ("About Piksuk"). Unlike the now defunct

Isuma, Piksuk seems to have staked its film future more explicitly on the image of the dog. The company logo depicts an Inuk with his dog whip poised high, driving a team of qimmit against a backdrop of a midnight sun. The "video brochure" on the Piksuk corporate web site elaborates this connection. It is narrated by one third of Piksuk's management team, the Inuk Joelie Sanguya:

> Piksuk was the name of my dog, and now it's the name of my company. Having a dog team is a full-time job, but I also make time for my Piksuk partners. We make documentary films and other productions. Piksuk is based in Clyde River. People here are strong in their culture and language. All kinds of training and production is going on. Right now, we are editing a film about the killing of Inuit dogs 40 to 50 years ago. It's a film that takes us to every community in the Qikiqtani region, and will take more than three years to complete. Last year, we finished a film about a long-running Arctic mystery. All our work is aimed to strengthen Inuit traditions and training others to work in media. We are always scouting for new projects and have several things in the works. If you want to come along for the ride, come see us. ("About Piksuk")

The short corporate video includes shots of Sanguya's dogs, the Inuk feeding the dogs and their sled in motion. It is bookended with the sound effect of a dog's howl. Clearly, Piksuk is using the dog as icon and metaphor for its work, but instead of using the animal to evoke danger or melancholy, loss or grief, the Inuit perspective sees in it an apt figure for strength, partnership, tradition, training, naming, hard work, and perhaps most importantly, for *moving forward*.

One of Piksuk's biggest productions to date is the six-part documentary series *Nunavut Quest: Race Across Baffin,* which aired on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN)

in 2012. The Nunavut Quest is a sled dog race, a community-based revival of the tradition of *qimuksiit*, an arduous yet joyous travelling celebration that traverses 500 kilometres of beautiful Baffin Island terrain over the course of six days. It is "a thrilling test of stamina and skills through a spectacular Arctic landscape – a mix of adventure and cultural survival as Canada's Inuit renew their ancient bond with their dogs" ("About Piksuk"). The Quest was founded by five Inuit men from Arctic Bay to mark the creation of the territory of Nunavut. Only Inuit Sled Dogs are eligible; competitors are primarily Inuit; the winners have all been Inuit men and women. In 2010, the Piksuk team tagged along; Piksuk principal Joelie Sanguya is one of the race participants. Filming in such conditions can be a challenge: creating sufficient contrast out of backgrounds that are mostly ice and snow takes high-tech know how; keeping equipment from literally freezing up requires ingenuity. Filming a subject that is in near constant motion has its issues as well. The Piksuk crew is clearly up to the challenge, recording the dogs from a variety of distances and perspectives, usually travelling alongside the animals. There are magnificent panorama shots of the teams racing past Baffin's frozen mountains, as well as close-ups of the harnessed *qimmit* running in the traditional fan hitch formation. There are also many "from the sled" shots to present the musher's point of view. The footage Piksuk has captured for its inaugural TV series feels alive. It is a paean to movement and to vitality. It has a relentless rhythm that propels the narrative forward. Of course, it is in large part a conventional sports film, documenting the accomplishments of an elite group of endurance athletes. But Nunavut Quest is also something more. It is the sound of pants and grunts, snarls and howls, and of dozens of sets of paws on myriad textures of ice and snow. It is the sight of swooshing tails and lolling tongues. It is the sight of ice, snow, mountain and crevasse passing by the lens in breathless succession. It is blinding winds and snows. There is blood and bone and sinew, in the

wounds the dogs must endure, in the frozen seal carcass that is crudely chopped to feed them, and in the meal of country food the human participants share on the floor of the community hall before the race begins. There is a tangible physicality to the images. There is life.

Of course, it could be argued that there was life and movement, human and animal, pace and corporeality in films like Robert J. Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*. Have Inuit film and video makers achieved anything different here? Fatimah Tobing Rony, in her book *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema and Ethnographic Spectacle*, refers to the primary "mode of representation" in *Nanook of the North* and other ethnographic films as taxidermic. "Taxidermy," she explains, "seeks to make that which is dead look as if it is still living" (101). In literal terms, this process refers to manipulating the remains of a dead animal to preserve it and, perhaps most importantly, to make it look lifelike. Moreover, according to the experts Rony cites, the purpose of taxidermy is to make the specimen look even better in death than it did in life. The taxidermist is able to transform "a mere dried specimen, shrunk too much in this part, or too bloated in that; a mummy, a distortion, a hideous spectacle: into a work of art and artifice that makes the spectator exclaim, 'That animal is alive!'" (Waterton, qtd. in Rony 101). And not only alive, but alive in an excessive, pure and authentic version of itself, a version that does not reflect reality, but the utopian imagination of the taxidermist. In the filmic sense, the art and artifice of ethnographic cinema is thus predicated on the belief that the subject matter is dead or dying. Flaherty, according to Rony, was a taxidermic artist who wanted to revive or reanimate the Inuit in their environment because he believed they were a dying race. Flaherty, by his own admission, "did not want to show the Inuit as they were at the time of the making of the film, but as (he thought) they had been" (101). The impulse emerges from a sense of loss.

The current wave of cultural production by Inuit media artists that I have explored in this chapter would seem to be likewise rooted in loss: in general, the loss of traditional ways of life and specifically, the loss of the *qimmit*. The desire to revive the *qimmit*, to re-member the integrated ecology of which they were so vital a link, would seem to align with Rony's taxidermic impulse. It is also very tempting to consider that both modes of taxidermy, the literal and the figurative, concern the manipulation and presentation of animal bodies. Dogs seem a perfect candidate. Flaherty and Edison both included sled dogs in their ethnographic-taxidermic efforts. But this seems to suggest that subaltern film production houses such as the QTC and the Makivik Corporation, Igloolike Isuma and Piksuk, are merely reinscribing Eurocentric representations and ways of meaning making. If they are complicit in the taxidermic project are they complicit, unwittingly perhaps, in the colonial project? Knopf held out hope that the Inuit filmmakers were somehow acting in direct and self-reflexive dialogue with the legacy of *Nanook*, challenging it, subverting it, inserting the indigenous perspective that was so egregiously missing from these infamous films. She defined the process of subaltern movie-making as decolonizing the lens of power. Do contemporary Inuit artists see their own culture, and their own dogs, through the same lens as Flaherty? As Edison? Have they not come so far after all?

There are several reasons why indigenous representations of northern dogs in film differ from their non-indigenous predecessors. For one, taxidermy as an art seeks to freeze movement, to capture a moment in time and arrest it forever, for 'posterity'. Indigenous filmmaking about dogs, as exemplified in the work of Piksuk Media, seeks instead to celebrate movement, and to use the moving image to show that Inuit culture is alive, relevant and pushing relentlessly forward. Similarly, the taxidermic impulse in filmmaking, according to Rony (and following

Donna Haraway here) seeks to "transcend bodies", to create something that is not only artificial, but somehow "true" and "pure", free of base and earthly realities and instincts, literally free, for that matter, of guts, blood, fluids, excrement (102). This is the animal idealized. And so we can see how indigenous representations of the animal body, including dogs, did not seek to deny or disparage such corporeality. Subaltern images of the *qimmiq* are often deliberately drenched in imagery and terminology of blood and milk, sexuality and reproduction.

Taxidermic images further seek to transcend time. In the case of *Nanook*, according to Rony, Flaherty aimed to situate the action in a time "outside modern history" (103). She characterizes the setting as "a former epoch," "an earlier age" and "the distant past" (102). To achieve this, Flaherty presents the narrative of the great hunter as if it is occurring in an "ethnographic present", as if the filmmaker and the audience have some sort of magical "peephole" through which they can view a "timeless" primitive race (102). Inuit filmmakers do not do this. They are, in fact, deliberately and self-reflexively seeking strategies to avoid this representational trap. The producers of the slaughter documentaries include some re-creations of traditional life in their storytelling, but always and quickly revert to the present day and the living testimonies of the surviving elders. Most of the 'action' in these works unfolds in contemporary kitchens and living rooms, or in the community hall or the local school gym, wherever the Truth Commission could find appropriate space. These films focus on painful remembrances, not utopian nostalgias. Isuma's Zacharias Kunuk gives his viewers a peephole on the past in *Atanarjuat* and *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, but also looks for creative spins on the convention of the post-credit coda to bring his audience back to the present. This serves to remind us that the Inuit, while having a rich and timeless history on their land, are also a vital and viable modern culture. The team at Piksuk Media have tried as well to mediate this

relationship between Inuit pasts and Inuit presents, by choosing a project well-suited to contemporary mainstream television tastes (so-called reality TV), but using it as a vehicle to celebrate the continued relevance of IQ. So while it might be viewed as an Inuit version of *The Amazing Race*, its roots run much, much deeper. Indeed, Piksuk has developed a companion web site for its TV series, and while it includes items such a multi-media dog sledding computer game for armchair mushers, it also hosts an archive of elder testimonies on dog sledding entitled the "Knowledge Base". Inuit thus participate in the present, while remaining secure in their collective past.

Taken together, these strategies underline the main difference between the taxidermic impulse and the contrasting motivation of subaltern filmmaking. While both modes of representation are rooted in loss, colonial cultural producers are operating within the framework of imperialist nostalgia as defined by Rosaldo (107). That is to say, they seek to glorify that which they themselves have rendered dead or dying. They are celebrating loss. The assimilation or annihilation of indigenous people was inarguably the ultimate goal of the colonial project. Duncan Campbell Scott, who took over as head of Indian Affairs in 1913, believed "the happiest future for the Indian race is absorption into the general population... [T]his is the object of the policy of our government" (Ray 229). As aboriginal people were literally dying from genocides both physical (murder, but also tuberculosis, alcoholism, diabetes) and cultural (loss of language, knowledge, environmental degradation, appropriation of stories), the colonial circuit of representation was busy generating endless entertaining images and narratives of the dying race motif (the last of the Mohicans, the last of the Beothuk) and the "Noble Savage" motif. As indigenous dogs were being decimated, the "noble canine savage" was fast becoming a fixture in Hollywood, as well as on radio, in comic books, in juvenile adventure fiction and more. This was

Rony's "romantic preservationsism" (102). For indigenous filmmakers, by contrast, this "loss or lack of wholeness" was not desirable (101). Nor was it believed. The Inuit could not conceive of the possibility that they would forever live without their dogs. As Laugrand and Oosten claimed, the dog-human configuration was seen as "constituting a physical whole"; the Inuit called it "qimuksiit", or, the action of the animals and the musher working together to put the sled in motion (89). You could not separate one from the other. Thus, in *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, long after the animal spirits are sent into oblivion, the dog team continues to trace its presence across the landscape. Thus, even after RCMP bullets fell each member of an Inuk's dog team, he removes the harnesses in anticipation of the next team. Because surely, there will be a next one? And a next? In other words, in order for the taxidermic impulse to be triggered, you have to accept that the subject is dead, or will it to be so. The Inuit do not believe this of their dogs.

According to Rony, indigenous bodies in ethnographic films such as *Nanook of the North* are there to be "scopically possessed" (102). Taxidermy is for display; for visual ownership; its aim is to create or re-create objects *to be looked at*. In ethnographic filmmaking, as well as in the national heritage filmmaking of the NFB catalogue, indigenous figures are objects of the colonial gaze. We saw it in the pre-motion picture era, too, when the Inuit and their dogs were taken by coercion, trickery or force from their land and shown in "exhibitions, zoos and museums… treated as specimens and objects of curiosity" (Rony 105). There is a direct correlation between the taxidermic impulse and the colonial impulse. In indigenous filmmaking, however, it is rare for the *qimmiq* to be singled out from the narrative, to be explored scopically by the camera, to be individually celebrated or even to be named. There is a rare instance in *Nunavut Quest* where a female musher (non-Inuit) introduces the viewers to each member of her team by name. But

this is not the norm. Even in the heart wrenching individual elder testimony of the Inuit Truth Commissions, we never hear the names of individual dogs, and when their navigational or lifesaving exploits are recounted, it is almost always in a generalized, plural, communal way. In the Isuma trilogy, even when we glimpse such otherwise remarkable images as a dead dog carcass frozen on the back of a sled, or a lead dog "shaking hands" with the members of another camp, the camera never lingers; the filmmaker never offers an explanation, visual or otherwise. Dogs in indigenous films are *just there*. My contention is that there is a raw and remarkable power in the *just there*.

The colonial desire to *look at* animals arose, according to John Berger, at precisely the moment in Western history when animals were fading away from everyday, lived, embodied realities. Once (perhaps in a time when dogs could talk?) animals were "with man (sic) at the centre of his world" (252). Humans learned from our animals. Humans prayed to our animals. Humans made sense of the world around us with animal metaphors. Then, as industry overtook agriculture, and as urban living eclipsed rural, we lost touch with the creatures of the farm, the draught and the hunt. They were no longer subjects of a life; they were objects of science, of production and then, purely of our collective imagination. Berger terms this process "the reduction of the animal", which he sees as a cultural phenomenon, but also a physical one in that Western culture now sought to sanitize, sterilize and infantilize the beings with whom we once co-existed and co-evolved. Over time, Europeans came to encounter animals exclusively in menageries, zoos, rodeos, circuses, on film and television, and the shelves in the toy store – where they are placed under scrutiny of a one-way gaze. They were reduced to spectacle:

> Animals are [now] always the observed. They fact that they can observe us has lost all significance. They are the objects of our ever-extending knowledge. What we know about

them is an index of our power and thus an index of what separates us from them. The more we know, the further away they are. (257)

Looking, observing, or gaze, as Laura Mulvey has argued in her work on film, is ultimately about dominance and control. When you look at an object, you draw the sensory data into your own set of cultural codes, and it becomes what you desire it to be. For Mulvey, it is the male gaze that determines and defines female subjectivity in film (Riche). It is also, one might argue, the colonial gaze that defines the indigenous, the human gaze that defines the animal. It is for this reason Erica Fudge contends that contemporary American animal films such as *Babe*, which centres on the adventures of a talking pig (and which, in an interesting sidebar to discussions of the taxidermic impulse, uses animatronic technology to recreate a living pig) "represents the expansion of the empire of the human" (88). We must consider the possibility, Fudge says, that "[h]umans represent animals **only** in order to represent human power over animals" (152, emphasis mine). And herein lies the main reason why the taxidermy analogy fails for reading indigenous films about dogs. Actual taxidermy is perhaps most commonly used as a means for preserving a trophy of conquest over nature. They are hunting and fishing spoils, prizes to commemorate the destruction of nature. This impulse simply does not make sense within the indigenous worldview. Inuit culture was, of course, a hunting culture. But the taking of an animal life was seen not as sport or conquest or capitalism. Rather, it was being enacted within a spiritual and reciprocal relationship. It is no insignificant fact, then, to consider that *Nanook of the North* was funded by the French fur company, Révillon Frères. Indigenous filmmaking does not share in this spirit of dominion. In indigenous films, animals are not being conquered. They are not being exiled from the inner circle of modern society. They are being

welcomed back in to it. The *qimmit* of film and video are being drawn back into the web of all my relations.

Chapter 8: The Northern Dog in Contemporary Canadian Culture

The figure of the northern dog continues to cross my path in various and sometimes surprising ways. I am not speaking of a ghost dog, a spectre from a time long since past or a place long since abandoned. To be sure, some of these dogs are spirits and remembrances. Some are shadows of the slaughter, their last howl echoing across a troubled present-day landscape. Some are the heroes of historic expeditions, leading their human colleagues to the glorious heights of Arctic exploration. Some are the antagonists of action-packed campfire recitations, melodramatic tales from arctic trails that would make your blood run cold. Some are tokens of tourism. But the dogs that I now encounter on an increasingly regular basis are more than imagined icons of nationalist nostalgia, much more than playthings or protagonists of comic book fictions, much more even than heart wrenching eulogies for the victims of the cull. The northern dogs of contemporary Canada are very much real. They exist in complex, current, embodied encounters with children in northern communities, with outsiders staging interventions in these same communities; and indeed with indigenous people across the North whose futures remain inexorably entangled with their own. These northern dogs find their way, daily it seems, onto the pages of mainstream newspapers and magazines, online news sites, personal blogs, and countless animal welfare publications. They live, breathe, fight, forage, run, play, give birth and face death alongside their contemporary human counterparts across Canada's North. And like these human counterparts, the lives of contemporary northern dogs are in flux. Some would say, they are in crisis.

It is important, by way of a preface to this third and final section of my dissertation, to pause and once again consider the teachings chronicled in Edward Benton-Benai's *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway*. In it he recounts the details of a powerful inter-species

prophecy, a sacred framework through which we can review the life of the contemporary indigenous dog. In *Mishomis*, Benton-Benai tells us that Original Man, in his quest to walk the earth and gain knowledge of the whole of creation, petitioned the creator, Gitchie Manitou, for a partner. Gitchie Manitou sent Ma-en'-gun (Wolf) to walk alongside this first human and "visit all its places" (8). In so doing, man and Wolf become as close as brothers, and so learn to appreciate their kinship with all facets of the natural world. Once their task was completed, man and Wolf go their separate ways, and as they do, Gitchie Manitou leaves the duo with a grave warning: "What shall happen to one of you will also happen to the other. Each of you will be feared, respected and misunderstood by the people that will later join you on this Earth" (8). In other words, according to prophecy, Original Man and his Brother Wolf, despite their separation into the distinct realms of human and animal, will go on to live parallel lives. This teaching, says Benton-Banai, is important for two reasons. The first reason is that we now know this has indeed come to pass:

> Both the Indian and the wolf have come to be alike and have experienced the same thing. Both of them mate for life. Both have a Clan system and a tribe. Both have had their land taken away from them. Both have been hunted for their (hair). And both have been pushed very close to destruction. (8)

The second reason is that Original Wolf is the progenitor of "ah-ni-moosh-shug' (dogs) that are friends to our people today. They are brothers to us much like wolf was a brother to Original Man" (9). The question arises: Have indigenous dogs and indigenous people come to live parallel lives in the successive generations that have unfolded since their first ancestors walked the earth? Have men and dogs each come to be "feared, respected and misunderstood" like men and wolves? Certainly in the earlier encounters I examined, the awe and trepidation

engendered by the wolfish appearance of these uncanny canids (so familiar, yet so fierce) sparked the wild imaginings of many explorers, ethnographers and filmmakers. Newcomers had genuine respect for composure, poise and skill, but a concomitant horror at the raw and the ravenous. It was an ambivalence that crossed species lines and created a handy label for the representation of both human and canine bodies – *the "Noble Savage"* – the spirit of which could be levelled any entity one desired to conquer and subdue in this strange new world. The stereotype persists to this day, simplifying the complex reality of dog and human lives, oppressing the potential of both. Fear, disrespect and misunderstanding are the building blocks of the colonial project.

Have these parallel beings both been dispossessed of their original lands and pushed to the verge of destruction? The story of the Nunavut and Nunavik dog slaughter is but one instance of this particular arm of the colonial project, as *qimmiq* were removed from the integrated ecology that connected people, dogs and land. The genocide of indigenous peoples worldwide seems eerily mirrored in the reduction of northern dog populations from 20,000 to mere hundreds, decimated by diseases to which they had little resistance, by state-sanctioned population control policy, and in many cases, by outright violence. Dogs have been prevented from roaming their territorial lands at liberty, and have been exiled to small tracts of marginal land, chained to posts. Indigenous people have likewise been forced to acquiesce to a sedentary lifestyle and have been segregated in forced settlements and reserves. As a result, both human and dog have also suffered health problems from the lack of country food in their diet, forced instead, where they can afford to, to adapt to the dubious nutritional value of commercially processed foods. Northern dogs and humans are analogs in virtually every aspect of their existence, past, present and future. So aligned, so twinned have their fates become that the canine

and the human are virtually interchangeable in the wider discourse of indigenous/non-indigenous relations in Canada. They are discursive proxies, cultural synonyms. And today, the analogy continues as northern dogs suffer from the unfortunate effects of their chronic unemployment, their disconnect from traditional culture, their disenfranchisement. They are the targets of speciesism, racism and neocolonial 'do-gooder' attitudes (Kitson). Today, northern dogs are being removed from their communities and "adopted" into southern homes where, it is contended, they will receive better care than they would if left in northern communities. One need only meditate on the impacts of the residential school system or the '60s Scoop to comprehend the fearful symmetry of that coincidence.

The parallels run onward to the present day, and this means that the lives of northern dogs, their reality as well as their representation, cannot be ignored. Consider this recent controversy. In February 2012 Quebec's French language newspaper *La Presse* ran a series of articles about the Inuit of Nunavik (Northern Quebec). The series was entitled <<La tragédie inuite>> ("The Inuit Tragedy") and comprised six print articles, three videos and a photo essay. Montreal-based writer Pascale Breton and photographer Hugo-Sébastien Aubert travelled to the Inuit community of Puvirnituq to investigate and report on several local stories: a recent spate of homicides, the high school dropout rate,and the lives of foster families who are caring for Inuit children. They also chronicled the lives of homeless Inuit living in Montreal. The entire journalistic package, when launched, was met with a wave of indigenous anger, as organizations such as the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., and individuals including Inuit lawyer Joseph Flowers and artist Thomassie Mangiok, accused the newspaper of racism. This backlash was featured prominently in the online Inuit newspaper *Nunatsiauq*, which translated the original French-language stories for a wider audience and published its own

articles reacting to the series. The passionate and sharply worded criticisms were primarily levelled at the series' creators for a perceived over-representation of the negative sides of life in the north. Critics felt Breton and Aubert portrayed the Inuit as uneducated, lazy and ignorant, failed parents and citizens who uniformly unable to break free from cycles of unemployment, addiction and crime. Critics also took issue with the fact that the series was written by non-indigenous outsiders who spent a total of one week in the north before drawing such conclusions. Flowers' response was especially vehement and venomous. He compared the tone of the <<La tragédie inuite>> to anonymous racist leaflets that appeared in the Quebec town of Villeray in 2010 in response to a planned hospice building for Inuit travelling to the area to access medical care. Those leaflets warned of an inevitable increase in crime, prostitution, drug trafficking, litter, vandalism, violence, "smells that make you want to vomit" and public urination (Flowers).

Some of the most damning criticism was reserved for the photo-illustration *La Presse* created as a banner for the controversial series. This image was composed of two photographs: on the left is a picture of a sled dog, set against a flat expanse of ice and snow; on the right is a picture of an Inuk in an urban setting, a city building in the background. The word "nord" (north) appears to accompany the dog image; and "sud" (south) is visually linked to the human image. The images are spliced together in such a way that the animal and human figures merge, so that we read the visual as depicting one creature: a sled dog with the head of an Inuk, male human. Further, it should be noted, the dog is tethered but leaping towards the camera, its front paws are off the ground. The Inuk's mouth is open, his teeth visible. He too is moving forward, and appears to be yelling. The connotation is that he is drunk or under the influence of drugs. He also appears to be walking with aid of a crutch, and so is physically compromised. Overall, the dog-man creature is designed to appear menacing and dangerous.

Steven Baker, author of *Picturing the Beast: Animals, Identity and Representation*, would qualify this sort of visual manipulation as *therianthropism*, the creation of an image "combining the form of a beast with that of a man" (108). This differs from theriomorphism, "in which someone or something [is] presented as having the form of a beast'" (108). Both are conventional strategies of animal representation in human cultures, but the distinction here is an important one. Baker explains:

> Where animal imagery is used to make statements about human identity, metonymic representations of selfhood will typically take theriomorphic form, whereas metaphoric representations of otherness will typically take therianthrophic form. In other words, we tend to represent ourselves as wholly animal, but our others as only half-animal. (108)

The Other in the dominant cultural imagination is represented as "half-animal". Why does this pattern emerge? When we represent ourselves, we use the whole animal as a symbol, perhaps, or an icon. We infuse the entirety of our humanity into the entirety of the animal; we overtake it, appropriate it, conquer it. We identify the best of what that animal has to offer (according to human measures, of course) and we co-opt it. "[T]he symbol," explains Baker, "[becomes] effectively invisible – it is drained of its animality" (109). It is also drawn (literally, and figuratively) from a catalogue of associations that would be instantly familiar and recognizable to members of the culture within which it is produced. There is no need for additional visual tips or tricks to explain the connotations and connections. The Bald Eagle *is* America. The Bulldog *is* Britain. The sled dog *is* colonial Canada. By contrast, when we represent the Other, we tend to construct an image that is part animal, part human. The dissonance of the therianthropic form "invites... viewers to consider and appreciate the points of comparison." These images are attention-grabbers. They are "meant to be noticed" rather than to elicit "complacent silence" as

theriomorphic images do. A photographic illustration such as the one in *La Presse*, like a caricature, "serves to characterize that which is threatening, despised or other" (111). The suggestion here is that the indigenous human in the *La Presse* image lacks "purity" or "wholeness"; his humanity is "polluted" by his animality. Such figures are characterized by a "troubling in-between-ness" that places them "on a lower rung of the evolutionary ladder" (111). The overall goal of therianthropism, claims Baker, is to represent the Other as subhuman.

It is a common strategy of representation inside the colonial project, a process Neel Ahuja termed *animalization*: "the organized subjection of racialized groups through animal figures. Animalization involves contextual comparisons between animals... and the bodies or behaviours of racialized subjects" (557). The merging of the human and animal bodies in the illustration in *La Presse* is a typical example of this mode, an all-too-familiar part of what Frantz Fanon called "the colonial vocabulary" (qtd. in Ahuja 557). One only need to conjure up the slave era's equation of African-American people with primates, or the Third Reich's conviction that Jews were vermin (or less than vermin), to see this vocabulary in action as the rhetorical building blocks of something far more widespread and sinister. Note: in what Hal Herzog calls a "bizarre moral inversion", Hitler sought to exterminate his ostensible vermin, but was actually quite the animal rights activist, even going so far as to support legislation that banned serving lobster in restaurants. Likewise, according to the Mishomis teachings, dogs and wolves were also to be held in the highest regard at the same time they were feared and, ultimately, annihilated. "But, unlike their dogs and cats," Herzog explains, "Jews were not covered under German humane slaughter legislation. No, they were sent to concentration camps, where their treatment was not covered by the Third Reich's animal welfare laws. For the Nazis, Jews blurred the

boundaries between man and animal. They were a polluted class, freaks, neither fully human nor completely animal" (59).

Baker, Ahuja and Herzog all ably articulate the use of animal imagery as propaganda to denigrate entire groups of people, such as rival nations or ethnic groups within a nation. Such depictions are rooted in prejudice against one's fellow *humans*, and peddle in the imagery of contamination or pollution to achieve the ultimate discursive goal of dehumanization, of denying the Other their humanity. The integrity of the human being, its wholeness and its holiness, is defiled by an animal taint that confirms their status as evolutionary infants, incomplete beings not yet worthy of the status of full personhood. This is a well-worn tactic of oppression in indigenous/non-indigenous relations, as well, as native people are typically considered closer to nature than culture, uncivilized, savage, animistic, or primitive. They are incapable of managing their own affairs, and must be placed in the custodianship of the more able-minded races. They cannot control their appetites, be they sexual, aggressive or, in the contemporary context, related to substance abuse and addiction. To this day, Indian people are pictured in buckskin and feathers; Inuit are depicted as eaters of raw meat, a throwback to now contested definitions of the maligned term 'eskimo'. To this day, indigenous people in Canada only make the news when they fit the WD4 rule of representation; they are either warriors, dancers, drummers, drunkards or they are dead, victims of their own stubborn failure to get with the state-sanctioned program of progress (McCue).

What Baker et al. do not consider in much depth is the real-world impact of a therianthropic representation on the other side of the creative coin: its animal half. Baker's book is premised on an interest is in how "animal representations may indirectly reveal something about how a culture regards and thus treats living animals" (xvii). And the Mishomis prophecy

does tell us that both wolf (dog) and man would both come to be feared, respected and misunderstood. What fear and misunderstanding of the northern dog underpins the photo illustration that anchored << La tragédie inuite >> in 2012? As much as the human target of such metaphorical constructions are being shown as "less than human", the animal, it must be considered, is being depicted as "less than animal". Does it not stand to reason that the northern dog is a 'neither-nor' in this case as well? And how does this influence the real lives of such animals? I propose a few possible readings of this image as it relates to the animal half of the therianthropism, none of them particularly positive. In the *La Presse* image there is the connotation that the northern dog, like its human counterpart, is an uncertain, unstable entity by virtue of a resistance to proper categorization. As the indigenous human is tainted by an animal nature, so too then the indigenous dog must be tainted by some aspect of humanity. This seems paradoxical at first. Surely an animal infused with humanity, a natural entity conquered by culture, would be the ideal animal in the eyes of the dominant culture? Perhaps. But the overall effect of the image for both man and dog is unsettling, not satisfying. The discursive power of the image is its suggestion that the northern dog is as much of a failure of Canadian society as the drunken Inuk hobbling through the streets of Montreal. The dog is not sufficiently dog. It is straining against its chain as it leaps across the species divide, and morphs into the most despicable of human citizens: the drunken, belligerent, disabled indigenous male. In essence what is happening here is a discursive double-dipping: what's good (or bad) for the human stereotype is good (or bad) for the animal target as well. It is guilt by association, and it cuts both ways.

One of the other significant elements of the image from *La Presse* is the superimposition of the words "nord" and "sud" over the therianthropism. Nord (north) is visually associated with

the dog image, but it bleeds slightly into the human half; sud (south) belongs to the human aspect of the illustration but it bleeds into the animal. The textual aspect of this particular representation is not something Baker considers in his theory of human/animal imagery, but it is very relevant to the interpretation of the photo-illustration and indeed very relevant to the overall discussion of the northern dog in the contemporary Canadian cultural context. Spatial order – the belief that entities have a proper place – is a cornerstone of the colonial project. In the indigenous worldview north and south are two of the sacred directions depicted in the medicine wheel; all four directions work in balance with each other. By contrast, in the Western worldview north and south are often set up in binary opposition to each other, and are at odds. South is the seat of civilization and progress; north is wild and remote. South in the contemporary Canadian cultural and political realms is further perceived in a proprietary relationship with the north. (Arctic sovereignty in this regard is a bit of a misnomer. It is not about letting the North stand on its own merits; it is the south about wresting control of the north from other nations.) Sled dogs belong in the wild north of the dominant imagination. Pets belong in the more advanced south. The south seeks to develop the resource-rich potential of the true North, while at the same time maintain the frontier fantasy of an untouched and perhaps slightly dangerous landscape. South is warm; north is cold. South is rational and cultured; north is instinctual and natural. South yearns for the romance of the north, yet simultaneously fears the taint of its animalistic essence. Where do the human and animal belong? What is the proper place of each? There are multiple tensions at work here. Viewed in its totality, the dog-man of <<La tragédie inuite>> is a transgressor of proper boundaries. As the animal of the north leaps across the figurative divide it is transformed into (or revealed as) its alter-ego: the indigenous human. And so the image calls into serious question the proper place of indigenous people and animals in contemporary Canada. Again here it is worth

recalling the Villeroy dispute to which Joseph Flowers alluded: the prospect of Inuit coming into this southern community gave rise to an intense case of ethnocentric NIMBYism.

Still, the Inuit of the north choose to come south: to work, to school, to seek help for addiction, for medical procedures or myriad other individual reasons. In other cases, the Inuit of the north are brought south. In exploring these particular parallels between the dog and the human in the contemporary Canadian context, this involuntary migration (exile) must be traced. Moving forward, then, my survey will necessarily turn to discourses of rescue, redemption, benevolence, family, and adoption as it concerns this north-south trajectory. For as the prophecy suggests, human history runs side by side with that of the canine, and both have followed, by will or by force, this troubled path. Consider this: in the same year as controversy swirled around the dog-man image in Quebec's *La Presse*, another text, this one produced in Ottawa, generated a wave of similar responses. In 2012, the Children's Aid Society (CAS) in Canada's capital city circulated a poster whose purpose was to find "a strong Inuit family" to adopt an Inuk baby boy ("Children's"). Posters such as these are a common communications tool used by the CAS, and efforts to recognize the significance of race, ethnicity or indigeneity when placing children in adoptive families have certainly been gaining traction in recent years. In the case of First Nations children, the imperative is a sensitive and powerful one when considered in light of Canada's recent history in this regard. Contemporary adoption policies bear the added burden of righting the historical wrong of the so-called "60s Scoop" when First Nations and Métis children were "scooped" from their homes and adopted primarily into white families outside their communities. Over 11,000 children were relocated in this manner between 1960 and 1980; 70 percent of those went to non-native homes (Beaucage). The trauma of this trans-racial adoption phenomenon is still being felt today.

Well-meaning though it may be, the CAS poster drew immediate and fervent criticism for its graphic design and wording. The poster's border was comprised of clip art images of traditional Inuit items, including a harpoon, an Inukshuk, a parka, a quddliq (traditional oil lamp) and snow goggles carved from animal bone. The text read, in part:

> This baby boy is just months old. He loves being cuddled and is a happy little boy. When born, he needed some help to learn to eat well, but is stronger every day. He is a beautiful, calm and loving baby. ("Children's")

Critics of the poster cited several issues. The use of stereotypical Inuit images brought charges of cultural appropriation, and of positioning contemporary Inuit as quaint, old-fashioned folk. The use of posters/flyers, in general, were deemed inappropriate and offensive, the CAS being seen as using marketing tools to "sell" human children, in particular of turning orphaned indigenous children into marketable commodities. But perhaps the most passionate voices were those who spoke out about the poster's text. These critics, among them Okalik Eegeesiak of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, felt that the wording of the poster sounded like the CAS was advertising a puppy who was up for adoption: a happy little boy who loves to be cuddled and who is getting stronger every day.

The discourse of family and adoption is an accepted mode of communication in most animal welfare circles, especially as regards the status of companion animals in the West. Groups such as local humane societies and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals all advertise animals from their facilities who are available for acquisition, and the language of this acquisition invariably uses the word "adoption" as well as terminology such as "forever family" and "pet parents". The concept of a "fur baby" has gained popularity in recent years, and

a recent survey of pet owners in Canada showed that 80% consider their animals as family members (Clarke). This includes such practices as including pets in family portraits, celebrating their birthdays, and interring them in specially designed "pet cemeteries". In fact, the original mandate of Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the British organization that was to become the template for subsequent North American versions, was the protection, care and advocacy of both animals *and* children. So the discursive lines have long been blurred, more so in recent years as more and more people opt to add animals to their family structure instead of human children. Indeed, the very concept of a dog can be seen to emerge from an orientation towards all things small, child-like, in need of care. Yi-Fu Tuan writes that the literal meaning of "pet" is small (from the French petit), and an instinctual attraction to young animals gave rise to the process of breeding canines to retain their juvenile traits, such as floppy ears, big eyes and a foreshortened snout (100). The infantilization of pet animals takes on another layer of connotation, however, when issues of race and indigeneity enter into the mix, conjuring up the contact-era characterization of the Inuit as both "cuddly like a teddy bear [yet] wild like a savage beast" (Rony 104). Again, it is a case of the discursive double-dip. Northern children are offered up like puppy dogs; northern puppy dogs are represented as stereotyped indigenous humans. Take note of the parallels between the CAS leaflet and this posting from the web site of a dog rescue organization in Toronto. The animal being "advertised" here was taken from a First Nations community in northern Ontario and is being offered for "adoption" in Bracebridge, Ontario; he has been named Boswell:

> Boswell is from Attawapiskat and his mom was taken there to be a breeder. When she had her litter it turned out not to be with one of the other two labs that were with her but with some unknown male who obviously lurked about. The dolts who wanted to breed

her spent so much time arguing over who would take care of the pups once they were born that one pup actually froze to death during the argument. The men became so frustrated they gave all three adult labs and the six pups to our rescue worker up there.

Molly, the mom, took very good care of her remaining puppies and she was with them until they were weaned and ready to part from her. Boswell remembers his mother well and he was very close to her. She would tell him stories at night about heroes and warriors who fought for good over evil and who always won the battles. Boswell rather fancies himself as a bit of a warrior and he will stand up for fairness, kindness and cuddles any time of the day or night.

He really is a soft and tender boy but we allow him to think he could slay a dragon if ever he were faced with one. He will always be kind, caring and loving though for that is who he truly is. (Moosonee)

A cursory analysis of this online text reveals several parallels with the dominant discourse of indigenous humans in Canada. The central figure of the CAS poster was “a happy little boy”; the central figure above is “a soft and tender boy”. Both have suffered due to the unfortunate circumstances of their birth; both have been removed from their birth families; both are characterized as enjoying “cuddles”. The animal rescue narrative is lengthier and more elaborate, and the intimations of life on reserve are reminiscent of those of countless indigenous stereotypes. Puppy and child have both been impacted by the realities of greedy men; single mother family life; sexual promiscuity and violence; and miscegenation. This last one in particular is of note as the mixing of north and south is a key motif in Boswell’s story. His mother was taken north to breed (an allusion to prostitution?) and now the child is being taken

south by rescue. Attawapiskat First Nation is characterized as “up there”, a distant and remote place far removed from civilization, a place out of sight but not out of the dark imaginings of the mainstream mind. The locals involved are characterized as “dolts”, presumably due to their ignorance of proper animal care techniques and their exploitative breeding practices. As for Boswell, in spite of it all, he is still a “warrior” at heart, having retained the best of his culture through the storytelling tradition of his mother. His “savage” and sexual origins having been overcome, and he is now able to offer the noble aspect of his culture through the adoption process. North comes south, albeit in a sanitized and idealized form. Furthermore, north acknowledges the assistance of south in its efforts to improve the lives of indigenous animal Others. The group’s slogan is “There is nothing more grateful than a rescued dog”.

There are dozens of northern dog rescue and education organizations currently operating in Canada. Their goals include the delivery of veterinary services to remote First Nations communities, particularly sterilization programs, prevention of dog shoot days, education of local people in proper animal care, establishment of local animal control bylaws, and the removal of stray animals for adoption in southern locales. The above project is one such undertaking. I was personally involved in another called Spay North, which was headquartered in Sudbury, Ontario. Further east, there is Les Chiots Nordiques in Quebec and the Chinook Project, which is based at the Veterinary School at the University of PEI. Alberta has the Dogs With No Names project. In British Columbia, the Animal Advocates Society does work in, among other places, the Capilano Reserve. The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) has identified northern dogs as one of their core activity areas, organizing a Canadian conference in 2007 that “brought together First Nations peoples, animal welfare organizations, veterinarians, the Assembly of First Nations and the Chiefs of Ontario to discuss dogs on First Nations land”

(Kitson). This part of the WSPA mandate is promoted on the Society's web site as part of their efforts in developing nations worldwide, and the conference marked a bit of a Canadian milestone: "For the first time, these stakeholders came together to consider the problem on a national level" (Kitson).

Perhaps therein lays the most significant contemporary parallel of them all, the *Mishomis* prophecy manifest at its clearest and most urgent. Canada is now struggling to find solutions to the Northern dog "problem" just as decades ago the official assimilation program of the federal government set out to solve "the Indian problem". Indigenous dogs, like indigenous people, are struggling to find their place in a changing North, and in the midst of tenuous, fragile relations with the State in general. Their traditional way of life is in jeopardy. Their health is suffering. They are unemployed and disenfranchised. Their lives are in danger, their future is uncertain, their portrayal in the dominant culture a troubling mix of racialized discourse and rescue rhetoric. And by "they" I mean both dogs and humans. They have become interchangeable in this ideological framework. One is used to denigrate the other; one is being used to position the other as in need of outside intervention, in need of *control*. There are analogies and intersections everywhere. Northern sled dogs are conflated with troubled Inuit men. Inuit babies are offered up as cuddly pets. The animal and the human merge, metamorphose and make meaning in a complicated web woven from both the represented and the real. Indeed, as Baker claims, "the 'real' and the representational can no longer be regarded as conveniently distinct realms" (xvii). This is why the final section of my dissertation focuses on contemporary media representations of Northern dogs in Canada, with an eye to understanding their very real, very relevant lives and the ways in which these lives impact, and are impacted by, indigenous people in Canada's North. When a national newspaper claims that feral dogs are roaming the north mauling innocent

children, this has implications for the dogs and the humans in the community. When animal welfare experts publicize their efforts to define and solve a “northern dog problem”, this too has serious implications.

The northern dog’s past is the stuff of legend and lore. The northern dog’s present is a case study in moral panic. And as the *Mishomis* prophecy claimed, the lives of indigenous people and dogs have continued to run in parallel. What then does their twinned future hold? Can the feared, the respected, and the misunderstood find a way to resist the dominant discourse and redefine their place in a changing world, on their own terms? Can indigenous people create their own space in post-colonial Canada? Can the subaltern northern dog speak?

Chapter 9: "Blood in the Snow": Media and the Moral Panic of Northern Dog Attacks

Up to this point in my dissertation, I have followed the figure of Canada's northern dog through the twists and turns of two different circuits of representation: the colonial and the indigenous. The familiar image of the dog in the dominant culture – a husky breed pulling a heavy sled across a frozen landscape; a wolfish enigma; navigator, hunter and hero – was appropriated from indigenous cultures, underwent a series of processes including sanitization and iconicization, and was ultimately repurposed to serve a colonial nationalist agenda. One of the most significant chapters in this complex canine history was the slaughter, or alleged slaughter, of tens of thousands of Inuit sled dogs by government and police agents in Nunavut and Nunavik in the 50s, 60s and 70s. This violence essentially ended the real-life reign of the *qimmiq* in Canada's indigenous north by ripping apart the lived, embodied, integrated ecology of which the animal was so vital a part. Its cathartic narration by elders in the present day marked the culmination of centuries' worth of dog stories, told and retold in various oral and written modes including journals and travel logs, films and videos, print and web marketing materials, testimony, myth, and more. Two separate Inuit-led truth commissions have heard these stories. They both concluded the slaughters took place as narrated. As a result, official apologies have been delivered, profound personal and cultural traumas have been acknowledged, and compensation has been promised. But the story of Canada's northern dog does not end there.

The ghosts of these dogs continue to haunt the contemporary dominant imagination, and representations continue to proliferate across diverse media. There they are, emblazoned on the jerseys of dozens of sports teams from coast to coast to coast. (My 9-year old nephew plays hockey for the Huskies; maybe yours does too?) They are on the shelves of the Toronto pet store where I can buy husky-branded dog treats for my two lap dogs. I see them on Christmas cards

and in graphic novels, in coffee commercials and on coffee-table books. Here, a northern dog puppy peers out from a discarded coupon for a nationally franchised petrol station. There, a perky pup invites young readers to tag along on his misadventures from the cover of a popular storybook. Northern dogs, as noted earlier, are regularly trotted out during the Arctic trips undertaken annually by Prime Minister Steven Harper. On my own less political annual trips home to Newfoundland, when it would be nice to turn off or at least tone down my researcher mode, the northern dog raises its handsome head again and again. In December 2012, my in flight magazine featured a cover story titled "Mush ado" touting dog sled vacations in Mont Tremblant (Lesczc). In December 2013, another issue of the same magazine included an illustrated anatomy of the Canadian Eskimo Dog: "The dog that's ahead of the pack" (Featured).

At the same time, of course, real dogs continue to live in Canada's indigenous north (east and west, on rez and in non-reserve communities). They may be very different from the working dogs of the past. New breeds have mixed their bloodlines with ancient breeds such as the *qimmiq*, and today, you are just as likely to encounter a north-dwelling Rottweiler, Chihuahua or some husky-hound mutt as you are any of the original types. The southern sentimental view of animals has seeped into the northern worldview, and many people now keep animals as indoor pets, prized more for companionship and aesthetic appeal than strength or skill. Still, this is a time of transition and tumult for northern dogs. The traditional ways continue to give way to the new. In response and like so many of their human counterparts, northern dogs are struggling to adapt to their changing world. The descendants of the original working dogs are now suffering from the effects of their mass unemployment. Not many northern people use traditional modes of transport now to hunt, and, out of work, the next generation of northern dogs are idle, hungry, getting into trouble. A new, quasi-feral kind of dog is emerging, and its identity crisis – *not*

exactly domestic, not quite wild – is proving to be problematic in northern communities. Tragically (ironically perhaps) where once the issue was the deliberate decimation of dog populations in Canada's north, now the issue is one of overpopulation. On the ground, there are too many dogs, too few owners or custodians, and little to no veterinary services. The shifting cultural definitions of the status of animals in human cultures are making it difficult for human and non-human animals to figure out their place in the new north. Animals are suffering, struggling and dying. People, especially the vulnerable children depicted in mainstream news stories, are dying too.

Of course, this is precisely why we need to continue the conversation about represented northern dogs in Canadian culture. This is why the seemingly innocuous image of a sled dog on the cover of a travel magazine, or the ones being called into civil service by the Prime Minister's communications team, are significant cultural phenomena. This is why their representation matters. In *Picturing the Beast: Animals, Identity and Representation*, Steve Baker argues that the real and the representational "can no longer be regarded as conveniently distinct realms" (xvii). His work is guided by a "stubborn insistence" that the everyday animal image is neither banal nor neutral, despite its ubiquitous "symbolic availability" and ability to absorb any meaning whatsoever. When Baker looks at animal representation, he is in fact undertaking a serious three-pronged project; my work aligns with his. First, he wants to "question and demythologize the idea of animal imagery as a 'natural' resource for saying-things-about humans" (xxxvi). Secondly, he seeks to understand "the relation of these kinds of cultural relations to the circumstances of actual living animals in that same culture" (xxxvi). Finally, he wants to rethink and reconfigure how we imagine animals in order to plot "the most effective way forward" for both sets of identities caught up in this representational dance – animals and

humans (xxxvi). This tripartite project, then, ultimately seeks to connect the dots from the hockey jerseys and front page photos, from the tourism brochures and dog food brands, to the actual, lived, embodied lives of northern dogs, and the northern peoples whose own pasts and futures are inextricably harnessed to the animals who co-populate their land.

True North, Strong and... Feral?

As Baker writes, "the persistence and ubiquity of such animal representations and vocabularies (and their ability to absorb just about any meaning) is hardly a matter for surprise" (xxi). These are the dogs who have been appropriated, sanitized and iconicized through centuries of machinations of the circuit of colonial representation. Husky. Wolf dog. Sled dog. Northern dog. No matter the nomenclature, his enigmatic spirit and athletic body comprise an animal presence seemingly ready-built to stand in for nationalist pride, nostalgia, sporting prowess, the yearning for wild spaces and countless other themes. Impervious to climate, thriving in wind and snow, clever, muscular, loyal to the end, he is an endurance athlete, a pioneer, a hunter and a hero. But there is also a dark side to the omnipresent represented northern dog. Consider these print media headlines:

- Toddler attacked by sled dogs in Igloolik, Nunavut (CBC News, June 18, 2013)
- Child killed in dog attack on northern Alberta reserve (CBC News, Nov. 17, 2006)
- Wild dogs plague area where boy mauled to death (Edmonton Journal, Nov. 18, 2006)
- 2 Iqaluit residents attacked by sled dogs (CBC News, Jan. 16, 2013)
- Reserve kids more likely to be killed by dogs, expert says (CanWest News Service, Feb. 8. 2010)
- Dog attacks on reserves 'beyond a public-health crisis' (Edmonton Journal, Feb. 7, 2010)

- Girl dies after dog attack on Mosquito reserve (The Battlefords New Optimist, Aug. 23, 2011)
- Dogs attack man on northern Alberta reserve (Metro, 15 June 2012)
- Native reserves plagued by wild dogs as volunteers struggle for solution (National Post, Feb. 2, 2013)
- Husky attack on N.W.T. boy called 'horrific' (CBC News North, Feb. 16, 2011)

Not all of these stories are from Inuit communities in Canada's northeast, where the slaughter took place. Not all happened on reserve. Not all of the dogs involved were sled dogs or huskies. But taken together, they paint a vivid, perhaps troubling, discursive portrait of dog-human relations in Canada's northern indigenous communities. In complex and significant ways, the image constructed here is a throwback to the earliest days of contact between indigenous people, their dogs, and the first explorers, ethnographers and missionaries: that this is a perilous land full of dangerous canines.

According to historians Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson, newspapers are "the fabric upon which Canadian culture has been embroidered" (16). National and local print media both reflect the beliefs and values of the dominant culture, and, perhaps more significantly, have "the power to tell [the dominant culture] *what to think*," a power that becomes all the more egregious when considering how newspapers insist upon depicting indigenous people in Canada (16). This is the central premise of their 2011 book *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*. From the sale of Rupert's Land in 1869 to the Saskatchewan and Alberta centennials in 2005, such depictions have varied little and improved hardly at all in the mainstream news media in Canada. Anderson and Cronlund's survey of 140 years' worth of news stories and columns in some 120 English-language broadsheets and tabloids, featuring

analysis of signifiers both "visual" and "prosaic", demonstrates how deeply entrenched racist stereotypes of indigenous people – as "savages", drunks, warriors, and squaws – have served to strengthen the colonial project over time. The same ideology that underpinned the violence of the treaty and residential schools eras continues to underpin stories such as the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada and the fight for hunting and fishing rights. To this day, the colonial imagination, or what the authors call *Canadiana*, is nourished by "three colonial essentialisms", namely the assumed "depravity, innate inferiority and… stubborn resistance to progress" of indigenous people, a rhetorical "rule of three" that has been totalized and normalized into a collective "common sense" since the nominal founding of the nation in the 1800s (6,7). And while a negligible shift in this Eurocentric attitude can be detected in contemporary times, it is marked merely by the move from a biological view of indigenous people as depraved, inferior and backwards to a behavioural view of the same: Indians *act* in depraved, inferior and backwards ways. What Anderson and Cronlund do not consider in their very thorough examination, however, is another recent turn in the media world, which sees indigenous dogs represented in similar ways. Like their human counterparts in newsprint, dogs living in and near indigenous communities are portrayed as lewd, vicious, debased and dirty. They are the quintessential canine Others, "savagely" resisting what the dominant culture demands: its inevitable evolution into the cultured, contained and conquered domestic pet.

A 2008 analysis in the *Canadian Veterinary Journal* (*CVJ*) appears to confirm the phenomenon suggested in the newspaper headlines above: that Canada's north is a chaotic and lawless place where the locals do not have sufficient control over their canine charges and where innocent children are suffering and dying. The author acknowledges that the data she presents – collected via the *Canadian Newsstand* databases using the key words "fatal dog attack", "fatal

dog bite" and "dog mauling" – has its limits. "Newspaper reports," she notes, "although not suitable for surveillance or reporting the rate of occurrence of dog-attack fatalities, contain information on factors facilitating fatal attacks" (Raghavan 577). More to the point, these are the factors on which editors rely in deciding what stories to publish. And the story is grim: the represented north is a land overrun by killer dogs. Canada is the True North, strong and feral. Sifting through newspaper articles from 1990 to 2007, the *CVJ* report found a preponderance of coverage of sled dogs, this even during the peak of pitbull mania in Canada (Ontario's breed-specific ban, for instance, was enacted in 2005). Indeed, of the 28 dog attacks included in the study, only one pitbull-related fatality was identified. Labrador huskies, Siberian huskies and the catch-all breed nomination "sled dog" were implicated in seven reported deaths (32 dogs involved in total). Over 85% of the victims were children under the age of 12, and the reported "fatalities... were disproportionately high in rural/remote Canada, including on reserves, although only 22% of Canada's population lives in rural area and an estimated 1.35% on reserves" (Raghavan 578). Two years later, a 2010 newspaper article attributed a similar, if equally unscientific, conclusion to a concerned veterinarian from Northern Ontario:

> As there are no official statistics on dog attacks in Canada, [veterinarian Dr. Richard] Herbert put together his own data by compiling attacks reported in the media. His findings show native communities suffer bite wounds or mauling deaths from dogs at rates more than 100 times more than the rest of Canada. (Fletcher)

The statistic must be taken with a critical grain of salt, of course. But the rhetorical effect is clear. Situating dog-related injuries and deaths at a seemingly random and generic, yet solid and complete, 100 percent gives the doctor's hypothesis closure; the figure connotes absolute certainty. The number is an unofficial and highly mediated estimate, but it is round and extreme

and effective in generating the shock and repulsion intended. The hyperbole begets the desired horror.

Another example: a particularly ominous report appeared on February 17, 2012 in the online newspaper produced by the college where I teach, Humber College's *The Daily Planet*. The headline read: *Sled-dog breeds dominate in fatal canine attacks*. This article began with an account of the death of a child in Alberta, who was killed by a family pet. The family happened to own a sled dog equipment company, and the dog was a Siberian Husky. Unlike the two previous sources, this one does cite statistical rates from a reputable source, the National Canine Research Council (NCCR). The NCCR reports that from 1964-2010 in Canada, "20 out of 47 documented canine related fatalities are from sled dog breeds" (Hunwicks and Tailor). The empirical tone of the story quickly gives way to a more salacious tone, however, as the authors turn to a quote from an expert on Siberian huskies who explains that the breed in question manifests a "high prey drive," and "an instinct to kill." The online article concludes with an info-graphic titled *The Top 10 Most Dangerous Dogs in the World*. The first three are "Pit Bull Terrier", "Rottweiler" and "Wolf Hybrid". The number seven most dangerous dog is the generic "Husky". It is worth noting that three of these ostensible four breed designations are vague and problematic. None are listed with the Canadian Kennel Club breed registry. Such breeds simply do not exist (indeed, as many experts point out, all breeds are human constructs). Still, the goal here is not one of scientific precision. The goal is to evoke the sinister element that lurks in the everyday, the possibility that the familiar (dog) might actually be monstrous. The use of the term "wolf-dog hybrid" is particularly effective in this regard. It suggests a tainting of the domestic with the wild, a creature that is not quite nature or culture, and thus unsavoury and unsafe.

The *Daily Planet* article includes a link to the original *Globe and Mail* report on the Alberta child's death. The headline of this second article reads: *Infant bitten to death by family's pet husky* (Walton). This news story is significant for its similarities to and also some key differences from the usual media discourse exemplified by the ten headlines listed above. Notably, the event reported here did not take place in an indigenous community, and the interaction between the animal and the suburban child is described as a "bite": he was *bitten to death, bitten so seriously that the injury led to death.* The verb *bite* seems to suggest less violence than the more common terms: attack (which is used later in the article) and maul. Bite suggests a cleaner, quicker, more benign event. The death of the child is not depicted as a direct result of the dog's actions. He died of his injuries, not from the attack. This is not a purely pedantic distinction, as it shifts the blame subtly away from the animal, denying the dog its agency. The death is presented as an unfortunate after-effect of a chain of events, a chain instigated by an otherwise well-trained, well-behaved working dog. The dog in this incident was not idle, loose, roaming or feral. It was part of a quartet comprised not of *former* sled dogs, or the descendants thereof. It was part of the gainfully employed canine staff of the family's tourism adventure company, and lived and played in the suburbs. And it was just one dog: an outlier perhaps? A rogue? An aberration? This was not a pack of like-minded and lascivious canine conspirators. The overall effect here is one of assurance. This transpired in a context of safety and comfort – note that the headline connects three key terms of domesticity and innocence: infant, family and pet – albeit a safety and comfort that has been tragically upset. The first paragraph outlines in more detail the nature of the unusual disequilibrium:

> Neighbours once charmed by the sight of huskies pulling a sled around their Calgary-area suburb were horrified to learn that one of these well-trained pets bit the family's newborn son so seriously he died of his injuries. (Walton)

The inclusion of the term "newborn" in the lede certainly heightens the drama. The baby was two days old at the time of the incident; the dog was nine. This is absolute innocence and purity being confronted with absolute violence and bloodlust and, for the parents this surely must have been the root of the trauma they would come to call "our worst nightmare" (Massinon). In other media interviews, the couple would talk of their belief that the dog was in fact trying to comfort the crying baby, and was picking the child up as it would pick up its own puppy. They hypothesized that there was no malice involved, that the baby's fragile skin and skull simply could not bear the weight of even the most gentle and benevolent canine jaw. In these subsequent interviews, they also frame the tragic sequence of events in spatial terms. The dog was in its kennel, the infant in his crib, everyone/thing was in its proper place. Then their private world became disordered. Two domestic safety zones give way to two unimaginable violations of domestic space. The dog escapes its kennel; the dog insinuates itself into the crib.

For the readers of the *Globe* article, the shock value likewise stems from a spatial transgression, this one involving public space. The sanctity of the suburbs (its "charm") is turned to horror by the incursion into it of a figure who is defying its domesticity. The tamed and trained sled dog, at home on the genteel streets of a family town, suddenly forgets its place, defies and defiles its space, and transforms from the familiar to the monstrous. The boundary between culture (human, controlled) and nature (animal, chaotic) is punctured by an unexpected bite mark, and as a result, civilized space momentarily reverts to a wild state. Luckily, it was just a bite. Singular. Clean. Repairable. The tension will ease in time in this quiet neighbourhood. But

it is a tension that will intensify and play out more fully in the news stories focusing expressly on indigenous northern communities, where for mainstream media sources and readers, the lines between civilized culture and perilous nature are already a bit too tenuous for southern comfort.

In the ten headlines catalogued above, the word "attack" (as opposed to bite) is most frequently used to describe the event in question, although the terms "kill" and "maul" also appear. One headline uses the generic term "area" to situate the action. When specific areas are named, we see a series of signifiers for nordicity and indigeneity: "Iglulik", "Iqaluit" and "N.W.T." (this last story comes from Inuvik). But the most common reference to place in such stories is the word "reserve", and it is the repeated association of the terms "reserve" and "attack" that serves to solidify the idea that the indigenous north is a place of lawlessness, disorder and violence. It is a spatial Othering. The concept of a reserve, like the concept of ghetto, is already rife with connotations of difference. A reserve is, by definition, a piece of land that has been "set apart" or "set aside" by treaty or legislation for the "use and benefit" of an indigenous community ("Reserves"). Historically, reserves were tools of forced settlement and assimilation, created to confine indigenous people and force them to adapt to non-indigenous ways of living, such as agriculture and private property. The allotments were often small, remote, lacking resources, and wracked with problems such as poor soil, inaccessibility to hunting and fishing, and dangers such as regular flooding. A reserve is not the same as a people's traditional lands. Reserves are colonial constructs. Reserve people struggled to adapt to this imposition of boundaries and rules; they were often forced to do so without consent or consultation. The reserve system disrupted traditional kinship networks, and in fact displaced people from their traditional lands. Today, reserves are stricken with environmental and social ills, including unemployment, addiction, suicide, abuse, toxic water and land, and third world housing

conditions, including lack of insulation, running water, and indoor plumbing. Some indigenous writers have highlighted how reserve lands were technically undesirable or unvalued lands that remained after the resource-rich spoils of conquest were divided up among Europeans. They are literal leftovers, remnants (LaDuke 95). Other writers have described reserves as prisons, remote, confining, punitive (King 2012, 78). Both metaphors are apt. Indigenous people living on reserve continue to endure the physical, spiritual, mental and social ravages of forced enclosure and segregation. They struggle to survive on territorial scraps where once the plenitude of the land sustained them. Reserve dogs, like dogs living on non-reserve indigenous lands, face the same challenges.

Frontier Fantasy and Failure

While there are no reserves in modern Nunavut and the Far North, the myth of the reserve endures in the colonial imagination, and the term has evolved into cultural shorthand for all things northern, indigenous, exotic and fearful. Rez dogs and dogs in non-reserve northern communities each suffer under the discursive weight of such associations. Literally and figuratively, the myth of a reserve is of a place apart. The reserve system separates out dedicated tracts of land, and the people and animals who inhabit them, from the dominant nation. They are outposts, places of exile, subaltern spaces, and as such, they continue to evoke a certain mystery and curiosity in the collective imagination of the dominant culture. The represented reserve is an exotic place with little-understood laws (such as taxation, governance and policing) and strange customs (such as hunting practices and religious rituals), and that, I would suggest, is the way the dominant culture likes it. The fantasy can be very satisfying, both in assuaging colonial guilt (out of sight, out of mind), and in maintaining state power (indigenous people are literally being put in their place). Deborah Doxtator wrote about the persistence of imagined Indian stereotypes in

her resource guide for the 1992 exhibit *Fluffs and Feathers: An Exhibit on the Symbols of Indianness.* This stereotype includes a key spatial component. The dominant culture connects Indians, all Indians, with the reserve:

> To the average person, Indians, real Indians, in their purest form of 'Indianness', live in a world of long ago where there are no highrises, no snowmobiles, no colour television. They live in the woods or in mysterious unknown places called 'Indian Reserves'. (10)

Despite the fact that most indigenous people live off reserve (74 % and growing according to StatsCan), the *idea* of the remote, rural, regressive reserve endures in the cultural nostalgia of Canada. This in part serves to perpetuate the myth of the Indian as exotic, as one who lives in nature, outside of Western progressive history. These are dangerous places, on the wrong side of the tracks. In some instances, communities in Canada remain literally divided into a town side and a "rez" side (Northwest River and Sheshatshit; Hay River and Katlodeeche First Nation). Locals from town don't venture into the reserve, especially at night. The land has become a social map of binary opposition: non-indigenous/indigenous, urban/rural, developed/undeveloped, civilized/wild. News reports of interaction between dogs and humans on reserve seem to rely on this distinction in order to heighten in the drama of the "dog attack" narratives they are presenting. These are tales from the wild side.

Reserves and other northern communities are also perceived spaces of failure, offered up by the dominant culture as sociological evidence of the refusal or inability of indigenous people to partake in the triumph of urbanized, industrial progress. Thomas King writes of the "pervasive myth in North America [that] supposed that Native people and Native culture are trapped in a state of stasis... Native were unable to move forward along the linear continuum of civilization"

(2012, 79). It's a pervasive myth, and a powerful one, the metaphor of entrapment evoking the spatial confines of the reserved, the remote and the rural. These spaces were intended to expedite modernization and assimilation, to welcome the "savage" into the mainstream economy. Yet they seem, from some Eurocentric points of view, to remain underdeveloped, underfunded, static, and even regressive. Reserve Indians cannot manage their own affairs; they cannot care for their own people. These are *potentially* civilized spaces, *potentially* healthy spaces, but the potential has not been fully realized. They have been gifted, so runs the myth, with the accoutrements of modernity – roads, bungalows, schools and shops, adequate infrastructure and Wi-Fi internet access – but the people seem incapable of utilizing these and fully participating in the national community. This liminal status, vacillating uncomfortably between the modern world and the primitive, plays out in the dog attack stories as well. The middle space emerges as one of unpredictability and fear.

Recall how the Airdrie, AB attack pitted the charm of the suburb against the horror of an animal reverting to a feral state. Likewise, the reserve dog attacks often play the sanctity of private, domestic space against the wild spaces beyond it. In several instances, in the timeline of the event presented, the writer or interviewee will emphasize that the attack took place "only half a block from home" or "just 200 metres from [the child's] home" ("2 Iqaluit", "Toddler attacked"). Another victim was "approaching a residence" when the dogs attacked him in the driveway ("Dogs attack"). Another article discusses the response of the high school principal when she "see[s] a pack of dogs near our school" (Makin). In the reserve context, the safety and security of the civilized world (school and home, a space deceptively carved up into city blocks) exists in perhaps too dangerous and flimsy a proximity to the domain of wild nature. Inside is

daily threatened by Outside. Within the Stat constructed boundaries of the reserves detailed in mainstream news media, it is a fine line.

In *Making Native Space*, Cole Harris described the reserve system in British Columbia as "the primal line". His thesis readily applies to the rest of Canada as well:

> Discontinuous as it was, the line separating the Indian reserves from the rest became, in a sense, the primal line on the land ... the one that facilitated or constrained all others. This line is, in its way, the province's internal boundary between the desert and the sown, though in this case the extent of the desert (the land beyond reach and use) was a vastly one-sided colonial construction. (xviii)

By Harris' reckoning, the boundaries created by colonists to distance themselves from the indigenous Other represent the first line drawn in the sand, as it were, in indigenous/non-indigenous relations. This was the first line created in the dividing up and defining of the New World of Canada. It is the first line of civilization, the demarcation point between the reserve and "the rest", or in Harris' more metaphorical turn, between "the desert and the sown". In the newspaper reports listed above, the issue is this: the desert of untouched, untilled wilderness and the developed land of the reserve allotment exist precariously within the same contemporary communities. The literal thresholds of the bungalow or the schoolhouse stand in for the threshold between nature and culture. On reserve, the child is safe in the house or classroom, unsafe mere metres beyond where the feral pack presides. The wild is too close to comfort. Harris' primal line takes on its inevitable double meaning here. It is the first line, but also a notch on the evolutionary timeline. To step over it is to step backwards to a time and place of pure animal instinct, a place where nature is, as Tennyson wrote, red in tooth and claw.

Some other key themes emerge from the ongoing media coverage of violent dog-human interactions in indigenous communities. The terms “plague”, “crisis” and “chronic” indicate that the events are not isolated incidents, but rather indicative of a widespread and ongoing problem (this despite lack of statistical evidence, or relatively low numbers where stats exist). The words “plague” and “chronic”, in particular, frame the problem as a public health issue, a rhetorical turn reminiscent of the one identified by Harriet Ritvo in her analysis of the rabies scares of Victorian England. In *The Animal Estate*, Ritvo argues that while rabies outbreaks in the 1800s were not uncommon, they were nonetheless isolated occurrences and hardly a matter of any substantial impact on community health or the national economy. Many such scares were more imagined than actual, with people claiming exposure to the disease even when they had no contact with an infected animal. Still, rabies “provoked a public response unparalleled in scale and intensity,” occupying a seemingly disproportionate amount of Victorian newsprint, as well as parliamentary attention (167). The “combination of horror and compulsive fascination” engendered in the populace was itself reminiscent of earlier public reactions to human epidemics such as cholera or the bubonic plague (168). Like those events, the rabies scares seemed rooted more in “the realm of rhetoric” than any medical reality. It was a “metaphorical disease” with a wide range of possible associations, chief among which were the typical Victorian concerns of “disorder, dirt and sin” (172). Dogs were seen as unclean, humans as pure, and the exchange of rabies between them an event of “contamination”. Victorian dogs were believed to feed off human carcasses in the Indian colonies and at home on their own excrement, notably two accusations that have been levelled at northern dogs since the earliest days of contact. (The comparison to India’s pariah dogs appears again in a key text of the indigenous animal welfare movement, to be discussed later.)

A northern dog "plague" or "public health crisis" likewise seems to suggest pollution or defilement, the connotation being that an otherwise healthy and whole population has been infected with some unchecked and virulent entity. It suggests contagion, and the spread of something both fearful and fatal. This metaphorical contagion emerges from a literal co-mingling of human and animal bodies. The word "mauled" is often used to describe the northern dog attacks: it means "to wound by scratching or tearing" and so has the sense of a human body being opened up, the sacrosanct boundary of skin being violated by the claws of an animal ("Maul"). It evokes the frisson and revulsion of a Western cultural taboo. To many readers, "mauling" will evoke an even more aggressive attack, and indeed, one of the articles indicates that the body of the victim was "torn apart" (Makin). The corporeal integrity of the human has been disturbed and debased. In some of the accounts it is the most human of features, the face, that is highlighted: "The attack was so vicious that the boy's facial features were destroyed" ("Child killed"). In another case, the dog "basically launched at his face (and) bit him on the face" ("Dogs attack"). It is one thing to suffer the singular puncture of a bite wound, or to lose a digit or limb. But to destroy the very essence of one's individual humanity – the face – seems to represent another level of violation altogether. To attack the face is an act of intimacy as well as terror. It is brazen and dominant. There is something vampiric in these descriptions, the teeth of the beast making contact with the uppermost body of the human. Rabies has often been credited with helping to fuel the spread of various vampire legends, a perfect storm of human fears, animal transgressions and phenomena that seemed frighteningly inexplicable in the absence of a scientific paradigm (epidemiology, forensic pathology). Recall that in Stoker's *Dracula*, the vampire was a shape shifter who often took the form of a wild canid, the wolf. Werewolves, those uncanny hybrids of man and canid, have likewise played the villain in countless European

tales of metamorphosis. In Ritvo's history of Victorian rabies scares, she describes one account in which a rabid bridegroom "murdered his bride by literally tearing out her entrails with his nails and teeth" (173). The human essence is destroyed; an animal essence is exposed. The man becomes an animal; the man reveals the animal in all of us. Animality is contagious, and this is the source of our fear.

Claire Molloy tackled a later dog problem in her article "Dangerous Dogs and the Construction of Discourses of Risk." Similar to Ritvo's exploration of Victorian rabies panic, Molloy examines the constellation of factors that led to the pit bull panic the United Kingdom in the 1990s. She shows how the dangerous dog phenomenon is historically and locally situated, and mediated through cultural modes of production such as parliamentary debate and the mainstream news media, a perfect example of Ulrich Beck's risk society. Risk, according to Beck, is an inevitable product of reflexive modernity, the late 20th century struggle to come to terms with the effects of modernization. Risk for Beck was about troubled boundary maintenance, particularly the incursion of culture into nature, which has resulted in such modern ills as ozone depletion, pollution and food shortages. These failures give rise to anxieties, which in turn give rise to a cry for renewed equilibrium: "Risk is deployed in the service of establishing or stabilizing a culture in response to behaviours that threaten to undermine certain boundaries or norms" (110). In Molloy's case study, the threat is one of race and class: pit bull panic had its genesis in fears about immigration and Americanization, the pollution of national identity, as well as fears about the untoward proclivities of lower urban classes. In Ritvo's case study, the discursive construction of rabies could be seen in connection with similar fears: "the pet dogs of the poor [were] living emblems of the depravity of their owners" (177). For Molloy, there was "a relationship between aggressive dogs and violent humans", the risk situated in the downtown,

with its inevitable associations with unemployment, drugs and crime (119). For Ritvo, the issue reached an apex with the representation of "neglected mongrels" who were "often turned out-of-doors" by uneducated, uncivilized, marginalized humans. "Once [these dogs were] liberated, she wrote, "they dispersed their taint throughout the metropolitan streets" (179).

In the contemporary North American context, it is the taint of northern dogs that is staining the idealized north of the dominant cultural imagination. In a time where indigenous/non-indigenous relations are once again front page news (with the 2008 residential school apology, with the 2012 Idle No More movement, with the appeal to Arctic Sovereignty becoming a hallmark of the current federal government administration), the political and cultural stakes are at the highest they have been in decades. As these two cultures, the dominant and the marginalized, clash anew, the tension is being played out in many rhetorical arenas. Chief among these is a northern dog panic as presented in the mainstream media. The association is clear. As rabies was a dirty problem of the Victorian underclass, and as pitbull aggression was an unseemly product of American influence and macho crime culture, the feral dog crisis is a problem of the mysterious realm of the indigenous community and, ultimately, of indigenous people. The risk, per Beck's definition, is a by-product of reflexive modernity, the colonial project, which in retrospect has failed to fully secure the culture-nature divide. The resultant unease gives rise to fear, to panic and to the continued characterization of indigenous spaces as polluted, disordered, underdeveloped or rebellious. This is a call for these spaces to be further reigned in, confined and policed, and drawn into the modern world.

Elder, Wolch and Emel have shown how human-animal relations can be rhetorically deployed against marginalized groups in the contemporary United States. In "Race, Place and the

Bounds of Humanity", the trio explored discursive representations of the animal practices of immigrant groups, such as religious sacrifice and subsistence hunting, and conclude that

> Conflicts over animal practices, rooted in deep-seated cultural beliefs and social norms, fuel efforts to racialize and devalue certain groups. Animal practices have become tools of a cultural imperialism designed to delegitimize citizenship (185).

In other words, the representations of how Others interact with or use animal bodies can spark horror, disgust and fear, and this can be used to deny them their membership in mainstream society. Human-dog interactions are part of the study. In one case, a Laotian shaman kills a dog to appease the evil spirit plaguing his wife with diabetes; in another, two Cambodian refugees kill and eat a puppy. The authors also consider a *Los Angeles Times* article detailing the arrest of four men for illegally poaching deer within a national park. The men had placed the deer in their truck while it was wounded but still alive, a practice they claimed allowed the meat to remain fresh. In the accompanying photograph and caption, the men were clearly marked as "other", highlighting their Latino features and branding them as "gunmen" as opposed to hunters; they were depicted as acting inhumanely (187). The authors also consider a church in Florida where the congregants practice a religion known as Santeria, "a fusion of traditional African religious elements... with parts of Roman Catholicism mixed in" (191). It is also a religion that practices animal sacrifice. Media and scholarly accounts characterized the church's formulary as "voodoo", "ritualistic" and "cultish" (191). The irony of these and other stories is not lost on the article's authors: "Media descriptions like this present Santeria sacrifice as uncivilized, while practices such as battery caging chickens, crating veal, and factory farming hogs go largely unmentioned by the press" (191). Similarly, it is worth noting that non-Western views and uses of dogs, while portrayed as acts of strange cruelty, only work to shock or unsettle when

measured against the supposedly neutral or benevolent acts of pet-keeping. But as Yi Fu Tuan has argued, the flip side of domestication is dominance, that of affection is cruelty. Breeding and pet-keeping strategies are not simple acts of "self-sacrificing devotion to a weaker and dependent being" (145). To domesticate a dog, "to bring it into one's house or domain", is an exercise of power:

> Power over another being is demonstrably firm and perversely delicious when it is exercised for no particular purpose and when submission to it goes against the victim's own strong desires and nature. (Tuan 148)

Seen in this light, allowing dogs to roam, reproduce and kill at will might be more humane than any so-called act of affection such as leashing, sterilizing or training.

Still, the media representations of aggressive northern dogs persist, as does the implicit blame against indigenous people as failed pet owners, and against the reserve or northern community as places of unchecked aggression and violence. As with the examples put forth by Elder at al., the dogs of Canada's north are discursively defined as agents of risk by means both spatial and corporeal. Place, according to the authors, allows the dominant culture to define the borders of humanity: "Places can be imbued with negative characteristics because they harbour feared or disliked animals" (197). In their several case studies of immigrant groups and hunting or sacrifice, they note how "typically immigrants move into the territories of more powerful host communities"; these groups are often relegated to immigrant ghettoes, the "ethnoburbs", and these spaces come to be associated with dirt, disease and bodily waste and base instincts (198). The reverse has happened in Canada. The newcomers have put our hosts in their place vis-à-vis the reserve system, and these ethno-allotments have come to carry the rhetorical weight of

negative connotations. Likewise, the animal stories of Elder et al. are played out at the site of animal-human intercorporeal interactions. These are stories of bodily reality, bodily intimacy, bodily familiarity, of flesh, blood, bone and guts. The parkland deer hunters shoot their prey in the throat and allow it to bleed out slowly in the trunk of their car. The Santeria church grabs local attention for "whole piles of animals, stinking and with flies" (189). The puppy story presented a violation of one of the ultimate Western taboos: the family ingested the flesh of an animal conventionally kept as a pet. And in my own study, the reserve dogs, with their teeth, jaws and claws, tear into human flesh, and desecrate the cultural sanctity of the human face. In all instances, it is clear why Elder et al. conclude:

> Animal bodies have become one site of political struggle over the construction of cultural difference, and help to maintain white, American supremacy. By scrutinizing and interpreting subaltern animal practices, dominant groups establish that immigrant others are uncivilized, irrational, or beastly, and uphold their own actions as civilized, rational and humane. (194)

Put another way, and according to Claire Molloy, we can see how such media representations "amalgamate disease, fouling and aggression into a discernible discourse of risk, and these associations constructed the canine body as a site of abjection" (116).

Dog Shoot Days: Primitive Justice and the Need for Civilized Intervention

The Northern Dog Problem is a discursive construct comparable to the rabies scare of Victorian England and the pitbull scare of 1990s England. They are all examples of risk society, a late modern phenomenon emerging from localized fears of the dissolution of appropriate boundaries between nature and culture, and of the disruption of normative social order and

national identity. The discourse is mediated: it is created and disseminated primarily via mainstream news reports, often in the absence of any tangible, empirical evidence. It operates strictly in "the realm of the rhetorical" (Molloy 116). The discourse finds its focal point in the canine body as a site of abjection, a horror that comes from the interaction of human and animal bodies, particularly as it concerns the exposure of the human body to the realities of its own materiality. Human flesh becomes meat for the animal, as opposed to the other way around, an ontological reversal of fortune (and power) that disturbs an ostensibly natural order of things. In some extreme cases, the literal face of humanity is being torn apart by the fangs of a feral dog. Individual identity is destroyed to reveal blood, bone, cartilage and teeth. In this way, the human is fully infected with its own potential animality. The inner reality is exposed as pure animal, which it is feared, always lurks beneath the civilized and flimsy veneer of humanity and civilized behaviour.

This violent bleeding of boundaries between human and animal is echoed, and indeed intensified, by the spatial backdrop of the mythical reserve, itself a liminal site of mystery, fear and uncertainty in the dominant imagination. In significant ways, the image of the reserve is familiar. It signifies a rural community like so many others across Canada. Here, a row of houses, there a school. Here, a corner store, there a backyard hockey rink. Yet it is at the same time foreign, a space where time seems to stand still in the stasis of arrested social and economic development, and where comforting norms of the dominant culture seem not to apply. To outsiders, the very concept of daily time seems warped on the reserve. Many reporters and researchers have been flummoxed by the concept of "Indian Time", which some non-indigenous people use in a derogatory sense, as scheduled meetings start late and deadlines fade away from view. The humourist Drew Hayden Taylor explained it this way: "[Indian Time is] an enigmatic

idea based on a uniquely cultural relationship with time. Simply put, things happen when they happen. There are not 24 hours in a day. Time is unlimited, impossible to cut up into chunks" (McCue). Of course, Western thinkers prefer their world cut up into chunks, everything divided up into neat, rigid categories, preferably in binary opposition: nature/culture, animal/human, humane/inhumane.

There are also good dog owners and bad. As both Ritvo and Molloy argue, the risk of dangerous dogs and their diseases inevitably becomes linked to the social and moral status of those who would claim ownership, custodianship or stewardship of the animals. Molloy outlined the "relationship between aggressive dogs and violent humans", showing how in media reports, the pitbull became an emblem of the drugs and crime culture dominated by socially marginalized males who were visibly marked with signifiers such as tattoos, earrings and their tendency to assign macho names to their animals (120). In other instances, the American Pitbull came to be conflated with an Americanization of British culture, particularly the gun culture of the US and its feared incursion into more respectable UK society. In either regard, the pitbull attack problem was blamed on the lack of community responsibility of certain social and economic classes. Similarly, the rabies scares could be handily blamed on lower classes: their lack of attention to their pets, their refusal to properly care for them, were the root causes of animal aggression and contagion. "The figurative link between the dog and the owner meant that such judgments in effect identified suspicious or troublesome kinds of people," writes Molloy (176). In Canada, feral northern dogs come to be associated with their indigenous human neighbours. Furthermore, in the context of the contemporary northern community, such judgments are even more forcefully levelled against those who organize and participate in dog culls, also known as dog shoot days.

Many dogs in northern communities are not “owned”. Many are not “indoor dogs”. They are not pets, and are not associated with a particular human or family. They may be feral or quasi-feral; they may also be “village dogs”, and while left to roam for the most part, are looked out for and fed by the community. The issue of ownership will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, but for now, it is worth considering the difficulty in assigning blame to a bad human owner when there is none to be found. The community itself must shoulder the blame, and in many media reports, this blame coalesces around the phenomenon of the dog cull. The dog cull, dog shoot day or kill day is a locally organized and delivered program of animal control. When dog populations become too large, and especially when dog packs are seen to threaten or attack, residents will seek to reduce the number of animals by rounding up and shooting any that are not tied on, that is, any dog who is not visibly marked as being owned (by tether, leash or collar). From one perspective, the dog cull is a necessary intervention in a community where veterinary care is unaffordable if not completely inaccessible. Animals cannot be spayed, neutered or medically euthanized. There is no dog catcher or pound. Dog shoots thus become a last resort and a rural reality. Seen from another perspective, these events are evidence of the lack of social and moral responsibility of communal ownership of dogs. The cull is framed by the mainstream media and by southern pundits as inhumane, even barbaric. Consider this explanation, from a web site titled *Reserve Dog Liberation*:

> “Dog shooting days” are a common occurrence on many Canadian First Nation Reserves.
>
> It is a blood sport, because shooting dogs obviously does not control their populations, or shooting them would not have to be repeated year after year. First Nations people on some Reserves who shoot the dogs receive a bounty – money – for each dog tail brought in – thus, it becomes a game. One possible alternative to shooting could be

> that Bands use the money paid to the 'shooters' to educate the children and spay, neuter and vaccinate these dogs.
>
> Many First Nations choose to spend their money elsewhere, rather than spay, neuter, vaccinate or educate their people about basic dog care. Yet, they continue to acquire dogs. Dogs and puppies freeze to death, or starve – the ones who are not shot first. (Reserve Dog)

This example is among the least subtle. The cull as "blood sport" is in sharp contrast to the First Nations philosophy of "all my relations" especially as it concerns the dog. It is also a very thinly veiled bit of racist rhetoric that qualifies reserve people as "primitive" and "savage". They are portrayed as simpletons who would rather play games than investigate any serious practical interventions. The notion that there is joy in wanton killing is insulting, and recalls the earliest screeds against indigenous people that colonists were delivering during the initial period of contact. The suggestion that the shooters will trade a dog tail for money is abhorrent, and likely influenced by much earlier mythologies about 'scalping' enemy combatants. It also suggests that those who would participate in the cull are not able to distinguish between animals that are culturally sanctioned for killing (farm animals) and those that are not (pet animals): the offering of the canine tail for trade is evidence of this misunderstanding. The description of the cull further depicts First Nations people as greedy, insolent and unethical, welfare-dependent rubes who will do anything for a few dollars. There is also the suggestion, fairly common among mainstream commentary, that the leaders of the reserves in question are unable to manage their finances properly. Here, the author accuses First Nations communities of "spending their money elsewhere" rather than on veterinary care for their dogs.

Other media take a more measured approach to the phenomenon of dog culls, but the overall judgment persists. In the article headlined “Reserve kids more likely to be killed by dogs, expert”, the writer also references the controversial practice, but is careful to frame it as a rare occurrence and a last resort (Fletcher). It is not seen as a melee of blood-thirst and bribery, but rather a planned and controlled project of the local band council. The lack of on-reserve veterinary services is a result, not of fiscal mismanagement, but simple logistics of delivery into remote areas. The veterinarian Dr. Herbert is quoted as saying that most indigenous people “hate dog shoot days.” “It's so against their cultural beliefs,” he says, “but what alternative do you have?” Herbert goes on to outline his suggested alternative: a federally funded initiative whereby he will train local “animal health officers” to surgically or chemically spay and neuter dogs. He has so far been unsuccessful in launching this pilot project (Fletcher).

This contrast between dog shoot days and other methods of animal control (sterilization or euthanasia) is not ideologically neutral. As well-meaning as the veterinarian may be (and he certainly seems guided by the desire to empower locals based on their self-expressed cultural values and community goals) the inclusion of the cull and its attendant issues serves to proliferate the myth of the wild side of northern life. Setting it up in contrast to the modern veterinary medical model serves to reinforce dated mythologies about life inside the confines of these communities. Shooting wild animals is frontier justice, frontier medicine. It is a relic of the past, with some unfortunate vestiges lingering in these northern outposts, and it must be stopped. Again, it is worthwhile to invoke Elder’s postcolonial (and ironic) reading of such claims. The moral value judgment levelled against subsistence hunting and religious sacrifice seems misplaced when we call to mind the dubious animal practices of the factory farm for example. Still, the binary opposition of ‘humane’ and ‘inhumane’ continues to frame much animal welfare

discourse. Killing animals is something humans do in many cultures. But as Elder points out: "the acceptable killing of animals has become industrialized, professionalized and removed from the course of everyday life" (196). This leaves room for the social construction of what is considered "unacceptable animal killing", a space where Elder says "lay people... have no legitimacy as animal killers" (196). With lay people removed from this privileged circle, the call must be sounded for experts, with expert solutions to local problems. Indeed, as we can see in the headlines above, another character is frequently introduced into the northern dog narrative: the outsider "expert" or "volunteer" who is seen to be assessing the situation as a plague or crisis and working to deliver civilized solutions. This would include such individuals as Thunder Bay veterinarian Dr. Richard Herbert.

Northern Dog Discourse: A Final Case Study

Dr. Herbert, in his call for on-site veterinary assistants' training, was responding in part to an incident that received a great deal of media attention in 2010: the death of a nine-year old Saskatchewan boy. The story in the *Globe and Mail* on January 31, 2010 includes many of the themes and tropes I have highlighted in the overall discursive construction of the northern dog problem, and so I will conclude this section with a closer look at this particular article. The headline read "Fatal mauling of boy, 9, highlights wild-dog menace". The copy began:

> The death of a nine-year-old boy torn apart by dogs on a north Saskatchewan native reserve Saturday has highlighted a growing danger – wild dog packs that roam many northern communities.
>
> The child was found dead in the snow near the home of a cousin he was going to visit at Canoe Lake First Nation, a 1,700-member reserve.

> "It was shocking to me to see him lying there in the snow," said [his] aunt. "I couldn't sleep. I just can't close my eyes. They must have jumped him." (Makin)

To begin, the focus is corporeal: this is a story about bodies. The author details the body of the victim, the materiality of it, and what happens to this corporeality when it comes in contact with the body of the dog. The use of the word "maul" in the headline is, as indicated, a typical verb choice within this discursive package. It suggests an engagement more intense than a mere bite or even an attack. It suggests that an indignity has been committed to the human body. There is violence, but also violation. The verb is used two other times in the article when describing events involving other children, a repetition that serves to communicate this nature of attack is typical. The writer also claims in the lead paragraph that the boy was "torn apart". Notably, this description is not elaborated upon, and the reader does not learn the precise nature of the child's injury. This leaves the nature of "torn apart" to the individual imagination; the reader is free to conjure up a horror that is likely more dramatic that the actuality. In a later recounting of another attack, the author notes a child required "60 stitches to close the wounds." Again, the attack is framed in terms of a drastic and traumatic transgression of the human body boundary; the skin of the human is breached by the teeth of the animal. In this instance, the severity is denoted with some precision – the number 60 – but the precise nature and location of the wound is not disclosed. Further, it is worth noting that this opening up of the human body was eventually closed; the child was made whole and wholly human again. That is to say, of all the attacks catalogued in the article, this is the only instance where the victim survived. The article continues by recounting the aftermath of the attack:

> By late Sunday, band members had hunted down and killed four dogs with [the boy's] blood on their fur.

> "All of a sudden yesterday, they started killing the dogs – but they were told last week after another kid was attacked," [his aunt] said. "They just jumped to it after my nephew was dead. It's not right. They should have done it before. Other kids have been bitten, too. They will even attack grown-up persons. Now, it's too late for my nephew."
>
> [She] said that more than 200 half-starved dogs roam the reserve in packs searching for food. (Makin)

Like the previous articles, this *Globe* story characterizes the specific attack as part of a larger problem or crisis. But there is a more sinister tone to this report, a sense of looming darkness connoted in terms such as "menace" and "growing danger", and in the aunt's description of her experience as a waking "nightmare". Then there are the additional details from the aunt's narration: that the child was found "dead in the snow"; the band members identified the guilty dogs by his "blood on their fur". This is the stuff of Hollywood horror films, cinematic touches that titillate and toy with the reader's iniquitous imagination. Such superfluous flourishes are by no means required to report the story, but can be very effective in heightening its drama. In a related characterization, the dogs are described as being "half-starved" and, in the headline, as being "wild-dogs". These nominations achieve two key rhetorical effects. One, they convey the dangerous liminality of the animal: they are neither fully wild nor fully tame. They are not fully cared for nor outright neglected. They are not quite pets, but not quite wolves either. These dogs are *half*-starved, suggesting they are accessing a food source somewhere; and they are wild-dogs, according to the headline. Note the hyphenated syntax here. Wild is not an adjective; it is part of the name, and by extension, part of the nature of this hybrid beast. Further, the half-starved designation suggests that a motivation for these attacks, which in other accounts are described as unprovoked. In this case, the suggestion is that the animals are operating on pure

appetite, and that they are, in fact, on the hunt. The children of the community are now prey. More to the point, they are meat. A dangerous reversal of nature-culture is being played out here, elaborated in the melodramatic descriptions of bloodshed. Humans are supposed to satiate their hunger with animal flesh, not the other way around.

The main narrator in the *Globe* article on the Saskatchewan death is the boy's aunt. As with the earlier *Globe* account of the Airdrie, Alberta attack, this story is presented as the tale of one family's "nightmare". In that suburban tale of charm-turned-to-horror, the newborn was the unfortunate victim of a caring dog in a domestic setting. The headline connected three key but powerful words – infant/pet/family – to set up its familiar and familial context. But that was a genteel Calgary suburb. This is the Canoe Lake First Nation. In the first example, the villain is a known entity. It was a pet and a working member of the sled dog business. It was also identified by its official breed designation: the Siberian husky. In the second, it was an amorphous, shadowy "pack" of unknown assailants, of unknown pedigree. Still, the family is the framework that amplifies the effect. The aunt tells the story. The nephew dies a painful and violent death. He was "near the home of a cousin he was going to visit" when he was attacked. And, perhaps most tragic of all, the boy

> was extremely close to his elder brother […] who had a significant learning disability and relied on [the deceased boy] to help him communicate and understand the world around him. (Makin)

This is, of course, a devastating addition to an already tragic turn-of-events. Loss is loss, and I do not mean to underplay what these families have endured with the death of the boy. But again, the representational strategies as they align with the overall discourse of northern dog

attacks here outlined must not be read passively. This is a villainization, perhaps even a demonization, of the animal. The aggregate of the human family –close, compassionate, cooperative – is set up in opposition to the marauding dog pack. This is a mainstream interpretation of an on-reserve event, heavily mediated by the national press, and while presented with indigenous voices, lacks the framework of local knowledge to give it a more balanced perspective. The addendum of the story concerning the surviving cousin and his reliance on the deceased represents an ironic repudiation of the history of the northern dog who, in his day, was *also* valued as one who helped people understand the world around them. And then there is this: The boy "was like a guide to [his disabled cousin]." This has the unsettling dual effect of evoking at once the ultimate civilized canine – the guide dog – and the traditionally valued lead dog of the team. Human and animal identities are in complete confusion and disarray. All known taxonomies fail.

The question then remains: Where to place blame? The dogs are seen to have forgotten their place, but as with the stories analyzed by Elder, Wolch and Emel, the central message here concerns the failings of the marginalized communities to partake in humane and civilized animal practices. The parallel between "savage" canines and "savage" humans here achieves near-perfect symmetry, exemplified in the description of the dog cull. Outsiders such as bloggers, veterinarians and animal welfare volunteers have pointed to the cull as evidence of a total failure of indigenous people to control their dog populations in a humane fashion. On one end of the spectrum of accusation, the cull is seen as pure blood sport, in which barbaric locals derive joy and monetary gain from shooting feral dogs. On the other, the cull is seen as an unfortunate last resort of a well-meaning but frustrated community. In the Saskatchewan case, the cull is portrayed by the boy's aunt as a knee-jerk and futile reaction to her family's tragedy and her

community's refusal to implement modern, Western modes of animal practice. Specifically, she references by-laws that would force people to tether their animals, as well as health policies that would see the province provide them with veterinary resources. She claims that Canoe Lake First Nation is a community deeply divided, between those who would allow their dogs to run wild, and those who wish to align with the civilized pet-keeping world. The aunt and the vice-principal of the school offer themselves as spokespeople for the latter faction.

As a final note, consider these two curious parallels in the aunt's narration of the death of her nephew. First, she describes the dog attack on her nephew this way: "They must have *jumped* him" (Makin). Then, as she recounts the delayed efforts of local band members to cull the dangerous animals, she complains: "All of a sudden yesterday, they started killing dogs... They just *jumped* to it after my nephew was dead" (Makin). The lexical repetition here serves to conflate the actions of the dog pack with those of the human group who instigated the retribution kill. In the animal context, the narrator uses to word "jump" to suggest this was a surprise attack, and was unprovoked by any actions of her nephew. The child is an innocent. The animals are thuggish and aggressive. They overpower him. There is an overall connotation that an animal attack is not borne of any rational agency on the part of the dogs. They are impulsive, instinctual. In assigning similar motivation and effect to the local men who comprise the cull squad, the aunt creates an image of human impulsivity and aggression as well. They "just jumped to it": the cull was not planned or organized; it was irrational, chaotic and, ultimately, ineffective. The humans counteracted the animal attack with a similar tactic, and failed. They failed because they were acting like animals instead of civilized and superior human beings. Dogs jump their prey. Men should know better.

In their consideration of postcolonial animal practices, Elder, Wolch and Emel identify a process they call "animal-related racialization" (194). This is, they argue, how "dominant groups establish that immigrant others are uncivilized, irrational, or beastly, or [how they] uphold their own actions as civilized, rational and humane" (194). This process, I argue, can be applied to indigenous Others as well as immigrants, and, as Elder asserts, one of the key ways it is accomplished is through "imputed similarities" (194). These similarities can be positive (think brave as a lion, fast as a cheetah) but are often used to denigrate culture groups (such as African Americans in Elder's study) by suggesting "seemingly uncontrolled passions, and perceived irrationality" (195). In this way, the Other comes to be seen as "primitive and closer to animals" (195). This process can certainly been seen as work in the connection between animals who "jump" to attack and indigenous men who "jump" to kill the offending animals. In another example, the aunt divulges still further details of her reaction to the dog cull staged to deal with her nephew's death. The article reads:

> [The aunt] said that her cousin was hired by the Canoe Lake band council several weeks ago to kill some of the dogs. Within days, she said, he was arrested for garroting one of them, and is now serving a ten-month jail sentence for animal cruelty. (Makin)

The word choice here is peculiar. To garrote means to kill by strangulation with a wire or cord ("Garrote"). The word is Spanish in origin, and refers to the method of capital punishment used in that country in the 1600-1800s. It seems to be an antiquated and obtuse term. Its conventional association with the Spanish Inquisition, perhaps, denotes an additional level of cruelty; perhaps it is the news writer's way of euphemistically depicting what is, in essence, a death by choking. In either case, the connotation is that this was an act of torture, a death that was prolonged, hands on and perhaps agonizing for the animal. Again, this is an example of what

Elder et al. see as a delegitimizing of the lay person as animal killer. This was not the clinical, professional act of a licensed veterinarian or veterinary assistant. This was canicide. What's more, the root cause of the Northern Dog Problem most frequently cited by observers and experts is the refusal of indigenous people to tether their dogs. This means the refusal to have them wear collars and leashes, or to be tied on. "Nobody is tying up them up or feeding their own animals. They don't bother taking care of them. They let go loose and wild," complains the aunt (Makin). In an interesting rhetorical twist, then, the animal involved in this episode is collared so completely that it leads to death.

"Animal cruelty" is a complicated term. More to the point, it is a term that I hope to complicate by exploring it through a cross-cultural comparative approach. By colonial convention, it refers to cruelty that is inflicted upon a non-human animal by a human one. By cruelty, this can mean actions of commission as well as omission: this runs the gamut from neglecting to provide proper shelter, food and water to an animal (even if the animal is being raised as future food in a farm setting), to physical abuse and willfully causing the death of an animal. In Canada, this sort of action has legal definitions and legal repercussions. Animal cruelty legislation is on the books at the provincial and federal levels. In the latter case, it is codified in the Criminal Code of Canada. In the Canoe Lake First Nation incident, the narrator's cousin was charged with "animal cruelty" and sentenced to 10 months in jail. His charge and sentence referred not to his use of a gun to cull stray dogs, but to his garroting of one of those dogs. Is one crueler than the other? Why? There are acts that the dominant culture deem acceptable, and acts that are not. As Elder et al. underline, there is a privileging at work here. Industrial killing of animals is sanctioned in Western culture, but individual killings including some forms of hunting, animal sacrifice, and practices such as on-reserve dog culls, are frowned

upon, even taboo. What is cruel? Who decides? The human or the animal? And if the answer is the human, what human or collective of humans? Is tethering an animal cruel, as it goes against the nature of the creature to roam free? Is sterilizing an animal cruel if it denies the creature ipseity over its own body? Is shooting or strangling an animal cruel if it is in response to an equally horrendous attack, or as a defense to such an attack, or a pre-emptive approach to such attacks? According to the Ontario division of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ("Animal Cruelty"), animal cruelty can be recognized in dozens of manifestations: animals who are not provided with "adequate shelter," "the failure to seek veterinary care when an animal is in need of medical attention," and "slaughter by untrained individuals" (Ibid.). In the cases detailed in the media reports discussed in this chapter, each of these variables is in play. What is adequate shelter for an animal who traditionally has lived and worked outdoors, rarely if ever housed in the same domestic space as humans? An animal bred for millennia to survive and thrive in northern climates? Is a lack of veterinary care a "failure" if there is none available? And what of the "slaughter" of animals by individuals outside the professional sphere of clinical medicine? Why are their attempts to end the lives of animals illegitimate? Illegal? And why is this heavily loaded term "slaughter" used? How does it differ from, for instance, population management?

It all comes down to the assignment of blame: who gets the blame and who is in the position to dole it out. In "What is Doing the Killing: Animal Attacks, Man-Eaters, and Shifting Boundaries and Flows of Human-Animal Relations", Chris Wilbert traces a genealogy of the Western world's fascination with animal attacks, from colonial heroics in saving Indian locals from "man-eating" tigers to more current mainstream appetites for animal-themed reality TV shows and horror films, and digs deeper into this concept of blame. His conclusion: it rarely falls

upon the animals. Exploring television programming that represents animal attack stories such as 1998's *When Good Pets Go Bad*, Wilbert concludes that

> it is people who are blamed for the behaviour of rampaging animals by not training and managing them properly. *When Good Pets Go Bad 2* ends with this grave statement: "Remember, there is no such thing as a bad animal. It is the thoughtless acts of humans that make good pets go bad." (41)

Shows like this are most often "presenter-led" and the presenters tend to make such "authoritative statements" as the one above (40). In the case of mainstream American cable television, these authorities come with dubious credentials. In another program titled *When Animals Attack 4*, the presenter is an actor whose expertise derives from the fact that he had a role in one installment of the *Jaws* movie franchise. In my study, the authorities who present stories of dog attacks likewise have varying degrees of credibility. On one end of the spectrum is the media who choose to feature the articles. Of course, as Wilbert points out in his own study, "the media of advanced postindustrial countries tend toward cultural specificity in which the subjects of animal attacks follow a wider developed world bias against the poor of the developing world" (37). On the other end of the authority spectrum are spokespeople from within the indigenous cultures, such as the aunt of the Canoe Lake dog attack victim. The most cited authority figure in these cases, however, is the veterinarian or animal welfare volunteer from outside the community, and it is to their role in the narrative that I will next focus my attention. As Wilbert asserts, "What can become important here [in a discussion of the media attention to animal attacks] is more of a questioning of why animals attack people and of whom it is that can speaks as translators of these occurrences" (37). The media has offered their

translations. Next, I consider the outsider-expert perspective. Who can speak for the dogs of northern Canada? Who should?

Chapter 10: **Beautiful Cases: Love, War and the Discourse of the Northern Dog Movement**

In February 2006, I travelled to Kashechewan, a First Nation community in Northern Ontario and a place many Canadians only ever see on their nightly newscast. I find these mainstream news stories to be almost uniformly negative, casting Kashechewan in a particularly pathetic light. Many members of the dominant culture in Canada will have seen television footage or read newspaper accounts of the flooding in "Kash". Spring thaws and failing infrastructure sometimes lead to evacuations of the community, the residents flown to safety in the larger centres of Thunder Bay, Timmins, Kapuskasing and Greenstone. Like many First Nation communities, Kash's social ills likewise become front line fodder from time to time. A 2007 article in the *Toronto Star* chronicled some 21 attempted suicides that year, including a nine-year old child (La Rose). In 2005, Kash captured the nation's attention for an outbreak of e-coli in the water supply. The images of toddlers covered in scabies and impetigo sores from the bacteria and subsequent over-chlorination of the water earned Kash the title "a national shame" (Geddes). Anderson and Robertson, in their history of indigenous representation in Canadian newspapers, remind readers that members of the Western dominant culture often live in "second-hand worlds" when it comes to encounters with people of different religious or racial backgrounds (13). The mediated world of Kashechewan, for many, thus becomes the only world, a place rife with "poor decision making" and "maladaptive cultural characteristics" that keep the community and its people stymied in "an unprogressive and non-evolving past" (7). I had the opportunity, however briefly, to experience Kashechewan's first-hand world. To my recollection, it was a place much like any other rural community in Canada. It had its joys and its challenges, moments of pride and moments of heartbreak. Kids played hockey on backyard rinks and zoomed on makeshift sleds down an icy hill. Moms toted their toddlers in to see the nurse or

dentist, and everyone complained about the prices in the grocery store. It was unremarkable in many regards. It was also a place where I met many northern dogs.

I was not in Kashechewan to "do research" on the community. At the time, I had no real project in mind. I was just rounding out my Master's year with a particularly interesting travel experience. The real purpose of my time had been to explore the inner workings of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA). At the time, I was completing my Master's degree in Interdisciplinary Humanities at Laurentian University in Sudbury. The programme had a unique component: Every student was required in their second semester to complete a 14-week practicum placement in a community organization. Some students chose placements in the elementary schools they attended. Some of the mature students opted to do the fieldwork in their place of employment. I asked the Sudbury OSPCA if they would take me on, and they graciously agreed. The practicum worked like this: I exchanged several volunteer hours per week for the opportunity to "read" the organization like a "text". I walked dogs. I cleaned pens. I helped staff transport animals to nearby veterinary clinics. In return, I was allowed to complete an analysis of their office arrangement, the configuration of their staff and clientele, and the content and style of their promotional material. I was busying myself with this task when the OSPCA asked me if I might like to accompany a team to Kashechewan as part of the sophomore roll-out of their travelling animal hospital. They thought it might make an interesting sidebar to my ongoing MA work. The clinic they organized was called Spay North, and of course, I jumped at the chance.

The aim of Spay North is to deliver veterinary services into northern Ontario communities that ordinarily do not have such access. It is a mobile and temporary clinic. The team flies into a community, sets up an operating room and reception area in any available space,

and performs a blitz of medical and educational activities that lasts only a handful of days. Then they leave. In 2005, in partnership with the Kashechewan Band Council, the Sudbury OSPCA brought together a team of experts and volunteers to round up and sterilize as many Kash dogs as they possibly could in a few short days on the ground. They spayed and neutered. They vaccinated and de-wormed. They brought along a veterinarian, his assistant, and a dog catcher. They brought an educator to hold presentations on animal care and the prevention of dog bites (except the school was closed due to a fire, so no such presentations were actually given.) They brought along a nervous MA student, whose main contribution was washing and sterilizing surgical tools, and asking lots of questions. The Spay North members created files on each dog that came through the clinic and provided each with a dog tag and collar. Ultimately, the project is geared towards encouraging the local government to enact animal control by-laws and train local animal welfare officers.

The team that spring included animal welfare professionals from the Lincoln County Humane Society in St. Catharines, Ontario. Their local newspaper, *Niagara This Week*, ran a brief news report on our visit, inviting people in that community to adopt some of the Kash dogs. The story read, in part:

> As a result of a trip by the Lincoln County Humane Society to the northern community of Kashechewan, 11 stray dogs have been rescued [and] are in need of new homes.
>
> Last week, the Society took part in the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal's "Spay North" mission. During the trip, there were 104 owned dogs that were spayed and neutered.

> At the same time, there were 29 stray animals that were rescued and taken to communities in southern Ontario for adoption. Along with the animals brought here, there were three dogs and six cats taken to Sudbury and nine dogs taken to Newmarket.
>
> Last October, the mainly Aboriginal community of 1,560 endured an E. coli crisis after the potentially deadly bacteria was found in the water supply, forcing the temporary evacuation of many residents.
>
> Kashechewan is about 1,400 kms north of St. Catharines on the western shore of James Bay. It is only accessible by air or the ice highway. ("Humane society's Spay North")

There are several important rhetorical effects in this short excerpt that recounts the project I was personally involved in. Note, for one, the characterization of Kashechewan as a distant and remote place when measured against the location of St. Catharines in the south. Kash is "only accessible by air or the ice highway"; it is "about 1,400 kms north" of the readers' location. The communities of southern Ontario – St. Catharines, Sudbury, Newmarket – are, by contrast, places of comfort and refuge, where animals can find "new homes" and be "adopted". This certainly serves to further entrench the imaginary North-South divide, and construct the myth of the North as a place of mystery and, perhaps, danger. There is, further, the inclusion in this text of the story of Kash's 2004 e-coli crisis. It is attached to the report without explanation of its relevance to the Spay North project and seems to be offered up as a reminder to readers that, yes, the story references *that* Kashechewan, the one with the dirty water and sick children. Finally, there is this notable distinction: "owned dogs" that were made available to the veterinary team and "stray dogs" that were removed from the community and transported down south. Such terms are not neutral, are in fact quite ideologically loaded, and their ease of use in the

Kashechewan media coverage points to some core issues of the contemporary Northern Dog Movement, which must be addressed moving forward.

Note that the use of the descriptor "stray," for instance, carries with it a negative connotation, and one that only stands when propped up by the implicit suggestion that such dogs are not in their proper place. They have *strayed from* the private human domain (the household, the back garden) and are wandering in the public domain (the streets). They are not rightly attached to a single owner; they are not under human control. Another commonly used term in this regard is "homeless" as in "help address the plight of homeless dogs". But consider this: the idea of a stray or homeless animal only works, only has meaning, when its opposite is firmly entrenched as the norm, a norm prescribed by the dominant culture. In western urban white culture, this norm is understood to means animals are properly homed, tethered, contained and controlled. However in many rural communities, First Nations reserves among them, such an *a priori* state of animal being does not necessarily exist. The dogs of field and farm, of country and of the reserve are sometimes wholly unlike their brethren in more southern, urban locations. Many are not pets in the sentimental sense. They are not attached to any one owner, and do not live inside the home. Most are reproductively intact; by reasons of culture or inconvenience, the male dogs are rarely neutered, the females rarely spayed. To do so may be inconvenient simply because the nearest veterinarian is hundreds of miles away; sterilizing animals is simply not a cultural norm. Such dogs are often left to procreate according to their nature. They are often left to forage for food, and fight for pack dominance. These are the quintessential rez dogs. Like their human analogs, they do not conform to the dominant cultural norm. They are the subordinates, the subalterns and as such they can be the object of scorn, derision and disrespect. Writes Winona LaDuke:

> There are many jokes and stories told today about our "rez dogs," the various versions of canine that have come to live on the reservations of Native America. Reservation (ishkonjigan in the Ojibwe language) comes from the same root word as "leftover," that is to say that we both reserved these lands with the foresight that future generations would need them, and also that these lands were likely to be "leftovers" from the demands of American expansion. Let us say simply that the rez dog is of similar history – these are the dogs that are the most resilient. (95)

More on the resilience of the rez dog later (and the "similar history" shared by dogs and humans, as seen in Mishomis parallel prophecy), but for now, I want to highlight the regard in which the animal is held within this particular indigenous worldview. These are the most resilient: "Our rez dogs can elude officers of the law, the wheels of a fleeing vehicle, eat oatmeal and grease for more than a few days. And face down animals of many sizes, smells, and levels of quilled armour" (95). It would seem that one culture's stray is another culture's superhero.

The discourse of "rescue" is likewise problematic. Rescue is defined as "the act of saving from danger or distress" ("Rescue"). What are the Kash dogs being rescued from? And who is doing the saving? Another definition opens up still more questions: to rescue is "to free or deliver from confinement, violence, danger, or evil" ("Rescue"). The notion of the liberation of reserve dogs or the deliverance from confinement seems particularly paradoxical here, as the root issue according to those at work on the northern dog problem is that the animals have too much liberty and should be more properly confined. At any rate, the discourse is prevalent across colonial Canada, and often goes unquestioned. But the use of the term "rescue" in such contexts speaks to a specific and socially constructed relationship, that of the rescuer and the one being rescued, and this relationship necessarily involves a power asymmetry. The act of rescue is

precisely that – an act – and is thus an active rather than passive enterprise. These animals are not asking to be rescued; the humans are deciding, defining and carrying out the rescue. They are targeting a specific group of creatures based on a specific and ideological set of criteria. The animal rescue movement itself is a fairly recent construction, dating back to only the 1980s. At that time, breed-specific rescue groups were branching off from the more inclusive animal welfare organizations and humane societies, causing somewhat of a rift in animal welfare circles, as some felt the focus on only certain types of dogs was "elitist". Nonetheless, the mission of canine rescue remains an acceptable and desirable practice. The relationship between animal rescuer and rescued animal remains the ideal one:

> Despite the greatly altered and – we would argue – improved nature of human-canine relationships generally, the rise of canine rescue organizations attests to the fact that not all dogs are being taken to spas for aromatherapy or treated to gifts from boutiques. Many dogs find themselves unwanted, uncared for, and abandoned by their human guardians. For these dogs, a different landscape awaits as they are "set loose" to roam as strays; picked up or relinquished to Animal Control/local shelters; or relinquished to a canine rescue organization. (Markovits and Queen 328)

Many dogs in rural communities like Kashechewan do not go to spas or boutiques, and in the dominant Western worldview someone must be blamed for this oversight. Dogs in need of rescue are unwanted and uncared for, which assumes that they should be wanted (but by whom and in what manner? What does it mean to want an animal?) and cared for (according to what standard?). They should be relinquished to a better custodian, handed over to someone who can provide the appropriate level of care. The belief that there is such a universal and essential level

is what validates the entire concept of canine rescue. It gives the rescuer a tacit and unquestioned mandate for his or her mission.

Liberation and deliverance from evil: these are not accidental word choices. They are parts of a deliberate discursive package, one emerging from a dominant culture decisively rooted in the Christian tradition. Plights and plagues cry out for saviours and rescuers. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the rescue in question here targets animals struggling to survive in the wake of a flood. In the absence of an ark, what latter day Noah will save these creatures? Many are clamouring to assume the divine mantle. Indeed, as Paul Shepard points out in his book *The Others: How Animals Made Us Human*, "the ark is the prototype of all animal saving, a shorthand for the right attitude toward nature" (231). It is one of three biblical foundations for the proper Christian attitude towards animals, the other two being the Garden of Eden and the cave of the Coptic monks. Each one is also a spatial metaphor, an emblem for the proper placement of all things. In the story of the ark, we are presented with a symbol of "recalcitrant nature, unruly and out of season" (the flood) and then, an equally powerful symbol for the rescue of the unclean from its demented grip. The ark is "a protected place in a chaotic earth" (231). The garden, the cave and the "cosmic vessel" of the ark are all ostensibly signifiers for sanctuary, and thus held up as exemplars of altruistic Christian attitudes towards nature. But as Shepard argues, "compassion, responsibility and stewardship are all predicated on the superiority of the caretaker over that which is controlled" (234). Like the contemporary zookeeper or the manager of a wildlife conservation area, the animal rescuer who targets the unruly and unclean dog continues to operate within this Judeo-Christian "culture of dominion" (231). The rescuer defines the need and identifies the needy. The rescuer "partitions [the] space" into its proper and improper sectors, and in doing so "abstracts [the animal] from habitat" (232). The rescuer

decides who is allowed on board, and who is left to drown in the primal waters. The rescuer operates with the scripturally sanctioned self-assurance that he alone knows what is best. He alone is an envoy of the divine. Consider this poem, author unknown, posted on the web site for the group Reserve Dog Liberation:

Rescue Angels

Tail tucked between your legs,
Confusion in your eyes, I know it's hard to understand
That someone heard your cries.
When loneliness is all you know
And pain is all you feel
And no one can be trusted,
And hunger's all too real....
That's the time the Lord sees you
And lets you know He's there
That's when He sends His messengers
The hearts that love and care.
Yes, rescuers are angels
You cannot see their wings,
They keep them neatly folded
As they do their caring things.
The medicine to make you well
Good food to make you strong,
And finally to help you learn

That hugs are never wrong.

The perfect place then must be found

The home where you can live

Secure and safe and happy

With joy to get and give.

When you reach your Forever Home,

Your place to now feel whole,

The Angels smile, and off they go

To save another soul. (Author Unknown)

The rescuer as angel: a melodramatic and sentimental trope, but one that clarifies that the cause is underwritten by the biblical creator himself. It therefore cannot be questioned. God – the Christian God – sees the plight of indigenous dogs and sends angels to lead them away from burden and strife and onward to the promised land. The animals' physical pain and hunger is eliminated, and they are delivered to their "forever home". This is a common term in animal welfare circles, used to identify the place an adopted animal goes once the agency or organization finds an acceptable permanent living situation for the dog or cat. It carries with it connotations of a paradise, an eternal reward for the hell endured in the chaos and neglect that marked their previous earthly existence. It represents salvation – the prospect and promise of returning to some original state of wholeness. What's more, this salvation is spatial: "The perfect place then must be found… your place to now feel whole."

Once an animal is rescued and placed, the angel-rescuer does not rest: "off they go to save another soul". There is a sense of purpose, of mission. The term "mission" is frequently paired with the term "rescue" in animal welfare discourse. For example, the *Niagara This Week*

story was published under the headline "Humane society's Spay North mission a success." Notably for Canada's indigenous people, the concept of a "mission" carries with it centuries of negative and violent connotations. It was, after all, religious missions who moved into indigenous territories in the era of contact, Christian missionaries who administered the residential schools and meted out the worst of its abuses. Missions can be religious, political or trade-related, but they always have an explicit sense of purpose – to convert, to communicate, to conquer and thus to improve – and likewise a sense of privilege, the notion that the missionary always knows better. Rescue missions, in this sense, are not noble, neutral or even necessary. They are ideological, rooted in relative cultural value systems. They are predicated on a belief in the superiority of one's own agenda, be it based on religion or race, on gender or in this case, species. Seen in a postcolonial light, I am again reminded of Gayatri Spivak's sentence, "White men are saving brown women from brown men" (2204). In this case, Spivak was theorizing the efforts of colonial male powers in liberating Indian women from what they deemed to be oppressive cultural practices. They position themselves as protectors, saviours. Is the same missionary motivation discernible in contemporary Northern dog rescues? Is this a case of white humans who are saving northern dogs from indigenous humans?

Military Discourse: Working Inside the Combat Zone

Spay North had its beginnings in 2002, when it was launched as a pilot project in the Cree community of Moose Factory. At that time, a local resident had expressed concern about the welfare of dogs on the island, and so wrote to the local band council Chief asking for help. That letter made its way to several humane societies and ultimately to the Sudbury OSPCA, where Spay North was born (*Animals' Voice* 16). The version of Spay North that I worked with in Kashechewan was created partly due to the success of this Moose Factory project, and also

partly in response to the flood and subsequent evacuation of Kash in 2005. A pair of stories that appeared in the summer 2006 issue of the OSPCA magazine, *Animals' Voice*, recounted the impacts of both the flood and the vet clinic on the dogs of Kashechewan.

When the flood waters rose in 2005, the majority of Kashechewan residents were evacuated, but the animals were left behind. The OSPCA, with support and funding from the federal government, sent a team in to evacuate the dogs, as well as "nine cats, two budgies, three fish and one turtle" (18). During this trip, the OSPCA team became aware of the living conditions of Kash's canine residents, "most of which roam free in the community," and also met a local teacher who had stayed behind to care for them (Ibid.). The magazine story chronicled how

> [o]n April 25, the Ontario SPCA deployed staff to the Kashechewan First Nations community to rescue over 100 animals left behind after rising floodwaters forced the emergency evacuation of the community's residents. The dangerous floodwaters placed the animals at risk of starvation, disease and injury. (18)

The story of this "deployment" appeared in a section of the magazine titled "To the rescue" under the headline "Evacuating the animal victims of the Kashechewan flood". It included a tribute to the "incredible amount of effort and dedication [that] went into the rescue", and showed several photographs of OSPCA staff gingerly approaching dogs in the community, loading them into crates and then lifting the crates into the cargo hold of an airplane. The article further lauds those who "staffed the control centre" in support of those who worked to "gather" dogs, and also those who aided in the transport of animals to the "airfield" (18). Finally, there is a profile of one of the "rescued" animals, a dog named "Kashew" who "suffered

a leg injury when he was just a few months old" (18). Kashew was later adopted by an OSPCA employee. His lame leg was subsequently amputated and he is characterized in the article as a "canine survivor" (Ibid.). The story has all the makings – and rhetorical markings – of a modern humanitarian mission. Perhaps more to the point, it is a militaristic one: an elite team is deployed; victims are rescued; there is an airfield and a control centre. There is even a local survivor who has been disfigured by the metaphorical landmines of life in the danger zone. But questions arise about the efforts of such projects. Is it rescue, or is it outside interference? Is it intervention, or invasion?

My time in Kashechewan was the indirect result of 2005's flood evacuation, which left the community's dogs in what several locals and outsiders alike viewed as an untenable state: overpopulated, aggressive, dangerous. But now as I write this chapter, footage of yet another Kash flood crisis are flashing across my TV and computer screens, and I am struck anew by the connections to my own experience. Today, the (human) residents are (again) being airlifted from their community aboard three Royal Canadian Air Force Hercules aircraft. The sight of those massive army green behemoths, so often used for the movement of troops and cargo into the world's combat zones, was particularly striking as they crowded the tiny airstrip. The residents are pictured queuing up to board the Hercules through its great gaping maw of a cargo door. They are then pictured crammed into the hulking cargo bays, hemmed in by orange cargo netting. The Canadian Rangers patrol group, a subset of the Armed Forces reserves stationed across Canada's North, sent personnel to assist. Pictured as well are the camouflaged officers who were on site to help direct the operation, which was called Operation LENTUS, part of the Canadian Forces Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR). The militaristic tone

of this tableau strikes significant parallels with my own experience in Kashechewan almost a decade ago (Kashechewan Flood)**.**

Much of the media coverage of the Spay North trip, as well as the promotional material produced by the OSPCA itself, framed the program in the imagery of rescue, often using military discourse. In one press release, the dog situation in Kash is referred to as a "plight" (Riche). Another release about the "emergency evacuation" of animals during the spring flood reads, "the Ontario SPCA is *initiating phase one*" of the Spay North program, and again, that the team has been "*deployed*" (Riche). In the same issue of *Animals' Voice* that included the flood story, an article on my trip to Kashechewan was printed in the section titled "Working in the Front Line" (16). Considering such discursive choices, it is easy to imagine how the program could be seen as something akin to invasive, perhaps even imperialistic.

The movement is aware of the potential dangers of such a paradigm. In *Northern Dogs: A Summary of the 2007 Conference*, the World Society for the Protection of Animals reported on the various workshops held during that inaugural event. The first was titled "Caring Across Boundaries" and acknowledges that among the challenges facing dog rescue and education in northern communities was the perception of "do-gooder attitudes [and] neo-colonial influence" (Kitson). It is also worth noting that this particular workshop, which focused on "successful partnerships" and was facilitated not by a representative of the animal welfare community, but one from First Nations Child and Family Caring Services (FNCFCS). The image at the bottom of this page of the WSPA report was an indigenous woman standing in what appears to be a First Nations reserve. The buildings are pressboard, faded colours, propped up on cinder blocks. There are rusted oil cans to the left of frame, a small pile of trash to the right. The woman is wearing a traditional coat with a large pouch on the back. She is carrying her baby in the pouch, and on her

front, she is wearing a handmade sling in which she carries a beagle pup. The image is not captioned, so we do not know the location or ethnicity of the woman. While I would surmise the garment is an amauti, worn by Inuit women, she is left unqualified to stand in for all indigenous women and all indigenous communities in need of rescue in Canada. Likewise, the conflation of child and animal in animal welfare discourse, as evidenced by both the image and the positioning of FNCFCS as the authority on all caring, recalls the CAS leaflet discussed in the previous chapter. The only identifying aspect of the image in this case is the photo credit, which belongs to an organization called the Canadian Animal Assistance Team (CAAT), a title that reads very much like it belongs to a specialized task force of any of the world's militaries.

Since 2006, the numbers of groups like Spay North have proliferated, and the merging of military, religious and family discourses has continued apace in this contemporary Northern Dog Movement in Canada. The 2007 WSPA conference acknowledged some 50 attending organizations, including band councils, government agencies and veterinary schools. Not many of the rescue groups were specifically mandated with serving First Nations communities, but a handful were, including Cat Lake Friends of Animush, the above mentioned CAAT, and the Chinook Project. Today there are dozens of such groups, working at all levels of Canadian society. There are grassroots teams such as Hull's Haven in Manitoba and Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF) in Alberta. There are those affiliated with veterinary schools such as the Chinook Project in PEI and Sahtu Veterinary Clinics at University of Calgary in Alberta. There are international projects affiliated with large organizations such as the World Society for the Protection of Animals and the International Fund for Animal Welfare. There is also a group modeled on the esteemed Médecins sans Frontiers/Doctors without Borders called Veterinarians without Borders, which does work in countries in Africa, South America and Asia, as well as on

First Nations reserves in Canada. Many Humane Societies and SPCAs in Canada also do First Nations outreach, including the Sudbury SPCA that I worked with, the Cochrane Humane Society and the Calgary Humane Society, both in Alberta.

All's Fair in the Discourse of the Northern Dog Movement

One group that is representative of the growing northern dog movement in Canada is *Les Chiots Nordiques* (Northern Puppies), a nonprofit animal welfare organization that operates in some of the same communities in Nunavik (Northern Quebec) that would have been directly involved in the sled dog slaughter some 50 years earlier. They are also active in Naskapi communities. *Chiots* has developed partnerships and sponsorship opportunities with such recognized entities as the Toronto Humane Society, Humane Society International, and the national distributor of veterinary medical supplies, CDMV. The group's activities have been profiled in the mainstream press, via such outlets at La Presse, CBC-Radio Canada and the Toronto Star. I first read about them in the latter publication, under an August 2001 headline that read: "A labour of love for threatened northern dogs" (Chung). While the discursive emphasis is still on the salvation of animals from a presumed threat (an earlier *La Presse* headline touted that dozens of puppies had been saved from misery), the military rhetoric here softens into a more familiar and familial tone. *Chiots* is still on a mission, but now this mission is one of love, not war.

The *Toronto Star* story detailed the efforts of the group's founders, a young, professional couple from Montreal. The driving force and female half of the duo is an occupational therapist who had been taking contract work in northern Quebec towns and had experienced firsthand the overpopulation of dogs and lack of veterinary services, as well as the perceived inhumanity of

the dog cull as means of getting the animals under control. The story describes her as "une femme… qui en a eu assez" – a woman who had had enough of it (Audet). The ultimate goal of the enterprise is to fund sterilization programs on the ground, but at the time of the article's publication, the couple was acting primarily as brokers for the adoption of dogs from Pagnirtung (Inuit) and Kawawachikamach (Naskapi) by families in southern Quebec. Note again the importance of proper spatial ordering as it concerns the North-South divide. Another article claimed the *Chiots* mission was to bring dogs to the "metropole" (metropolis) of Montreal where they would be able to avail of "les meilleures conditions a la Sud" (better conditions in the south) (Audet). *The Star* article begins with the story of one dog, Hamish, and the first steps of his journey from a patio in Kawawachikamach to the arrivals lounge at a Montreal airport:

> In Hamish's case, it was the middle of a brutally unforgiving winter when he was found shivering under the patio of the local radio station.
>
> Just a few weeks old, mostly fur – but mercifully still rotund with baby fat – Hamish had somehow strayed from his mother and the rest of the litter only to find himself alone.
>
> In the windswept isolation of northern Quebec, half-wild strays like him are a dime a dozen, with no one to care for them. They might find a pack to roam in. They might die of cold or starvation – or at the barrel of a long-gun-toting hired dog killer. (Chung)

While there are some severe and harsh images in this brief narrative, overall we are beginning to see the turn towards a softer, sentimental and sympathetic turn. The introduction to this article deliberately plays up what we might term 'the cute factor'. It is designed to elicit a

particular reader response, an emotional one. In journalism circles, these sorts of articles are known as “human interest stories”, a term that explicitly denotes that these items are of interest to humans, and centre on human desires, characters and concerns. Secondly, and perhaps somewhat implicitly, they are seen to be somehow of lesser value than serious or “real” news. Elsewhere, they might be termed “fluff” or “soft news”. They do not have substance or import; they cater to emotion, not reason. They are seen as appealing more to female readers/viewers than to males. Others have concluded that these are the types of stories traditionally assigned to female reporters (Everbach 22). Significantly, many *human* interest pieces centre on stories of *non-human* animals: think the dog who cares for a baby deer, or the cat who travels across a continent to find his way back home.

The gender divide is evident in the headline of the *Star* article: this story is about a “labour of love”. The idiom serves to communicate the familiar distinction between real labour, one that produces capital and pays a salary, and emotion-based labour, which rarely rewards with either money or prestige. The first is traditionally the male domain, the second, female. Real labour takes place in public life; love-propelled labour is reserved for the private sphere. Additionally, there is the double meaning of the word labour, which in one context refers to that which occurs in the workplace and on the other that which takes place in a birthing room. This tacit connotation of a maternal theme is significant in an analysis of an adoption/family discourse: the dog as a “furry baby” to be adopted into a loving family in the typical Western patriarchal mold. The photograph accompanying the article reiterates this message: a young couple, male and female, father and mother, both white, pose with a newly adopted husky pup in their arms. The male dominates the configuration of the pose. He is the tallest point of the triangle, at its summit, and his arm encloses the entire family, keeping it together in one cohesive

unit. The female face and the animal face are positioned lower than the male's, but on the same level with each other. She is leaning into her male partner: relying on him, grateful to him, submitting to him. The animal is leaning in the opposite direction, slightly away from the humans. He or she appears to be looking at the camera, posing for the photograph in the same manner as his human counterparts, with one exception, perhaps one that is easily glossed over when the interests at stake here are primarily human ones. The people in this news photo are smiling at the union with their newest family member. (In the earlier *La Presse* article, the dogs were characterized as "s'apprêtent à connaître quelque chose de nouveau: une famille"—learning to know something new: a family (Audet)). But in the *Star* photo, the dog's ears are pinned back, usually a sign of stress or anxiety.

Male/female, human/non-human: the binary opposites furiously criss-cross the back story of this seemingly simple newspaper article. Another one appears with the preamble to the core of the narrative: the dichotomy of north/south. South gets the first word: Hamish. This indigenous animal, this descendant of an ancient northern way of life, has a new identity now, that of a southern white male of Scottish descent, "Hamish" being a Gaelic variant of James, a name with European and Biblical roots. It means "he who supplants." Is this contemporary southern husky supplanting the storied northern dog of yore? In many ways, yes. "Traditionally," the article reads, "sled dogs were used for transport and hunting expeditions in the North. [...] But today fewer people hunt, especially with sled dogs, and a major mode of transport is the snowmobile" (Chung). The snowmobile supplants the sled dog; the southern husky pet supplants the northern working dog. Notably, perhaps even ironically, the subjects of the photograph described above – man, woman, dog – were posed in front of what appear to be archival photographs of airplanes. The arrival of this modern mode of transport came in the early days of WWII, when military

aircraft began landing in Canada's North with materials and personnel to construct and staff the remote military installations. The airplane changed the face of the North forever. It is a subtle, perhaps unintentional tip of the hat to a militaristic or missionary discourse. In another report on *Les Chiots Nordiques*, this one on the web site of partner agency Humane Society International, the group announced plans for a jointly-organized "mass sterilization" of more than 250 dogs in one northern community. The campaign manager is quoted as saying, "We are pleased to be working with Chiots Nordiques again and help them pursue their mission" (HSI). The web site also features an invitation to potential volunteers who are interested in becoming a "Street Dog Defender" (HSI), a *de facto* recruitment drive for foot soldiers to travel north to a canine combat zone.

Hamish, the Homeless and the Beautiful Case

The Humane Society International web site uses a particular term when representing the free ranging dog population of the indigenous lands of North America: "street dogs". It is an interesting discursive choice. I am reminded of the controversial image from *La Presse*'s investigative series <<La tragédie inuite>>, and its therianthropic depiction of a sled dog metamorphosing into a belligerent homeless Inuk as it lurches towards a more urban setting. "Street dog" has the same cadence and resonance as "street kid" or "street person", and carries with it a raft of negative connotations all propelled by the belief that this is a being-out-of-place. Street people are seen as homeless people (although some may have their own homes or apartments, or live in facilities) and therefore as living incorrectly in the public domains of park bench, subway grate or street corner. They are often imagined as unemployed, lazy, dangerous, mentally ill, unkempt and uncared for, dirty, poor and drunk. They are on the margins of acceptable society and behaviour, largely invisible to the busy, employed, healthy people who

bustle past them on a daily basis. Oftentimes, they are ignored. When street people are made visible in the circuit of representation, they undergo a process of metaphorical sanitization in order to make them palatable to the reading or viewing public. We see this process at work in news reports, movies and TV shows, and public service announcements for social agencies. In *Just a Dog: Understanding Animal Cruelty and Ourselves*, sociologist Arnold Arluke quotes a 2002 *New York Times* article that coined the term "prettifying reality" to describe how documentary filmmakers focus on attractive, young and "hard-working" street people in order to make their narrative more appealing and to help raise funds and support for social programs (149). He identifies a similar distortion at work in the media and development departments of humane societies where animal welfare marketers and PR professionals likewise "clean up" the material when presenting images and stories of "street dogs". Arluke has coined the term "the Beautiful Cases" to describe the selection process and the result (149).

A Beautiful Case is a story of violence, cruelty and ugliness that has been deemed acceptable for public consumption. Arluke uses the term to refer to an animal cruelty story that demonstrates a certain set of criteria, and serves a certain set of functions that make it appropriate and valued for use in media and education efforts of an animal welfare organization. The investigation of animal neglect and cruelty is a big part of the mandate of Humane Societies and SPCAs throughout Canada. Inspectors with the OSPCA, for example have the authority under provincial legislation to enter private property to investigate cruelty complaints, and to remove animals from such situations. Inflicting cruelty on an animal is an offense under the Criminal Code of Canada, and the SPCA can pursue criminal charges at the federal court level ("Animal Cruelty Laws"). Education and fundraising are important activities in this regard, as the SPCA seeks to model appropriate vs. inappropriate animal care; to encourage people to

report animal cruelty and neglect if they suspect it is happening; and to generate revenue to pay related staff salaries and to care for surrenders or removals while they are being re-homed. Direct mail campaigns and other appeals are often used to promote the efforts of these groups, and the stories chosen to anchor these efforts are not chosen by accident. The same can be said for private and grassroots teams like *Chiots*. As is the case with homeless people, these groups must "prettify reality" in creating their public face. Arluke identifies five elements that make an ideal Beautiful Case: acceptable suffering; appealing animals; distraught owners; shadowy abusers; and happy endings. The Beautiful Case also serves five key functions: reaffirming values; validating identities; strengthening morale; providing heroes; and creating enemies. Hamish, the featured dog in the Toronto Star article about *Les Chiots Nordiques*, is one such Beautiful Case.

The *Toronto Star* story recounting the tale of Hamish and *Les Chiots Nordiques* use "properly depicted cruelty" to promote the agenda of the group (149). This means the story, the descriptions and the photograph used, are intended to arouse a safe and circumscribed pathos. They are intended to disturb the emotions without being too disturbing. Arluke called this "going light" (150); others refer to cute cruelty or even sexy cruelty. Beautiful Cases cannot be too grotesque or gory; they cannot be too extreme or too sad. Arluke cites one case, referred to as "the-cat-in-the-dryer" case, that was not used by a media affairs department because of the extreme "butchery" to which the animal had been subjected. While it was a powerful narrative with many of the hallmarks of a good marketing case, it was "too gory" to qualify as a Beautiful Case (147). The cruelty that was inflicted upon Hamish was inflicted not by a human "butcher", but rather by circumstance. His injuries were caused by cold weather and the separation from his mother. The cat in Arluke's example was violently attacked by his abuser, who then left him in a dryer for children to find. Both the cat and Hamish are out of their proper places, but the latter

appears to have found his own way to a makeshift refuge. He was shivering, cowering underneath a patio deck, but otherwise he is in reasonable physical shape. There are no horrific physical injuries; no severed limbs or oozing sores. These things most certainly do happen to northern dogs. In Kash, I remember one dog who had a pale pink scar along the entire length of his spine, likely a severe burn from hiding under the hot tailpipe of a truck. Another dog was frozen solid one particularly cold February night, its carcass found by one of our team members. Hamish of *Les Chiots Nordiques* makes a far better mascot. His situation elicits empathy, but he is still what Arluke calls an appealing animal. He is a small dog; he is young, but not too young; and he has an appealing name. He is described as "Just a few weeks old, mostly fur – but mercifully still rotund with baby fat," a postcard-perfect animal (Chung). In addition, the name of the organization itself is part of the appeal. "Chiots" means puppies, and is a diminutive of "chiens" or dogs. The name invites readers to imagine animals that are small, cute and innocent, this despite the fact that the group actually rescues and re-homes animals of all ages. Notably, the photograph that accompanies this news story is not Hamish, but an unnamed dog that has also been rescued by *Les Chiots Nordiques*. Readers may assume this dog is the one discussed in the copy, and that may have been intended. Significantly, the dog in the picture likewise fulfills Arluke's final criterion for an appealing animal Beautiful Case: expression. You want to see "sweet and sensitive" and not "expressions… that could be construed as suffering" (154).

The story of *Les Chiots Nordiques* and Hamish is most effective as a Beautiful Case in how it establishes and sustains a dramatic tale of good versus evil. According to Arluke, this is perhaps the single most important function of such stories, as it serves to shore up a sense of community and purpose among the animal welfare workers involved. It constructs all the key elements of the Us versus Them narrative. Hamish is the face and flashpoint of a prolonged

campaign of rescue involving dogs on indigenous land in Canada. In his story, animal rescue workers and their supporters find the common ground needed to validate their work in indigenous communities and to push forward in their publicity and fundraising efforts. Beautiful Cases involve a cast of conventional characters. In addition to the appealing animal struggling against acceptable suffering, there is usually a distraught owner and a shadowy abuser. At first glance, Hamish's case would appear to lack both. There is no one villain who can be pursued by law enforcement; there is no owner. In fact, the lack of obvious ownership is one of the discursive cornerstones of the Northern Dog Problem. But consider this: in this success story provided by *Les Chiots Nordiques*, the owner and abuser are, in fact, one and the same: le Nord, or the North. Canada's indigenous north, its climate and its culture, is neglecting these animals and causing them grievous harm. The abuser is "the windswept isolation of northern Quebec"; the abuse entails "the elements, a lack of food, and cull campaigns when there get to be too many of them" (Chung). Dogs like Hamish must be rescued from the very land that claims them as its own. As in my earlier twist on Spivak's postcolonial sentence, white humans are saving indigenous dogs from indigenous humans. South is rescuing North.

Drill a little deeper into the Beautiful Case of Hamish, and we can also discern examples of the processes that Arluke refers to as "creating enemies" and "providing heroes" (172). The North as abuser motif underpins the narrative overall, but the specific tale is strengthened by the creation of conventional villains who are easier to visualize and vilify. As Arluke states, "Having an enemy elicits and focuses outrage" (172). In this case, it is the men who participate in dog shoot days who are offered up as targets of moral indignation. They personify and make real the "shadowy" evil that characterizes the land itself. Dogs like Hamish are threatened not only by the elements and by the lack of sustenance provided them; they might also die, according to the *Star*

author, “at the barrel of a long-gun-toting hired dog killer” (Chung). This portrayal is almost cartoonish in its evocation of the stock character from an old time Hollywood Western. One imagines a black cowboy hat and a handlebar moustache. But the simplified stereotype of a movie villain serves the ultimate purpose here, which is to create a foil for the creation of a suitable hero. The author explains:

> When [the dogs] run in packs, they can become aggressive, so from time to time Inuit band councils[14] hire “dog killers” – hunters who simply shoot any dog they see running about, says group founder […].
>
> “I have an unconditional love for animals; it’s part of my personality,” [she] says. “So to observe what was happening and do nothing, I wasn’t capable of that. I had to find a way.” (Chung)

The killers, while sanctioned by the local government, are depicted as the very epitome of lawlessness. In the midst of the canine chaos, they “simply shoot,” randomly, recklessly and irresponsibly. By contrast, there is the outsider-observer, the founder of *Les Chiots Nordiques* who finds her mission in this unseemly tableau of frontier justice: “[I could not] do nothing… I had to find a way” (Chung). She is the hero of the Beautiful Case as defined by Arnold Arluke. She alone exemplifies “personal sacrifice and commitment” by showing a “special interest in seized animals… [and] taking an active interest in their welfare and outcome” (175). Such heroes are “ambassadors” and in an interesting turn of phrase in terms of military discourse previously discussed are, according to Arluke, the ones who “become moral badges of caring for the staff members of [all] humane societies” (177). As one man who adopted his animals from the

[14] There are some errors in the original text of the *Toronto Star* story. Inuit communities do not have band councils. The community where Hamish was found, Kawawachikamach, is a Naskapi community.

rescuers of *Les Chiots Nordiques* said: "They're doing exactly the right thing" (Chung). This exactitude and perfection includes identifying precisely the right owner for each dog taken south. For Hamish, that owner is a "26-year-old… who lives on a farm in southwestern Quebec [and] is completing a graduate degree in literature and is fond of duck hunting" (Chung). This is Hamish's Happy Ending, another key ingredient for a Beautiful Case. Noteworthy in terms of the overall Northern Dog Movement discourse, the story ends happily in "southwestern Quebec" on a farm. Thus a proper spatial ordering is achieved. A farm is cultivated and cultured space, not wild and natural. As well, the new owner/hero is young and educated, and in a curious turn, he is a duck hunter. This detail makes sense when read in the context of the overall Star article. The men who participate in dog shoots days are also described as hunters. But they are "hunters who simply shoot any dog they see running about" (Chung). The new owner's hunting is, by contrast, more sportsmanlike, more socially acceptable. It is also more southern. Perhaps the most telling turn of phrase in this tale of Hamish the Beautiful Case is that when he arrived in his new home he eventually "warmed" to his new life on the farm. This would suggest that the cold (literally in terms of the elements; figuratively because of the benign neglect of the stray dogs) of the North has been left behind, and that Hamish is becoming adapted to his new life in the warmth of the south. His happy ending includes a new compass point and a fairer climate.

Heroes and happy endings are expected and entertaining parts of Western narrative. They are comic book concerns. They are movie motifs. But when they are placed in the service of identity politics, as Arluke begins to argue is the case in animal welfare marketing and communications, their ideological power is activated and must be considered more closely. Beautiful Cases are community builders. Animal welfare workers can be isolated and disconnected in their day-to-day endeavours, and an instance of ideal abuse, properly captured

and communicated, can unite their members and solidify their cause. They do this, in part, by creating an Us versus Them opposition, a constructed conflict between those who treat animals properly (indeed, in the extreme; those who go above and beyond) and those who do not (again, in the extreme; those who would neglect animals or do them harm). We villianize Them to validate Us. Arluke writes:

> Beautiful Cases… bolster identities by creating enemies – those who are deplored because they mistreat animals. Enemies are useful for communities for building identities and creating boundaries, telling people who or what they are not like. Enemies form an inverse reference group that allows people to say, "I am this type of person because I do not belong to that group." The essence of a community's identity can be found by discovering its deep or core imagery – things it holds sacred, things it most fears, things it sees as most evil and unforgiveable. Beautiful cases bring home this imagery and the identification of both the enemy and "me". (173)

Beautiful Cases can build identities and create boundaries. When it comes to animal welfare, you're either with us or you're against us. There is no middle ground. You belong or you don't. It is a terrific tool of social cohesion, and likewise a wicked weapon of exclusionary politics. Noble perhaps when deployed in the service of vulnerable non-human animals, but when overlaid with the complicated fabric of colonial-indigenous relations in contemporary Canada, the Othering inherent in the Beautiful Cases of animal abuse becomes more insidious, the rhetoric revealed as something more sinister. A discourse of Othering runs wide and deep through the Northern Dog Movement. It certainly did during my time in Kashechewan, in which a series of spatial segregations fuelled by local discontent, literally divided Outsider from Insider, South from North, and Companion Animal Care from Northern Dog Chaos. This

Othering, complete with Beautiful Cases to champion the Norm-Makers, occurs in ways both more subtle and more overt in similar projects on every coast of the country.

Dogs with No Names: A More Southerly Case Study

Meanwhile, in the storied foothills of Alberta, another animal problem is being constructed, another set of conflicting solutions being proffered. The grasslands north of Calgary support a wild horse population comprised mainly of the descendants of turn-of-the-century domestic draught animals who were turned free as their services became obsolete to the logging and mining industries. Without any natural predators to keep their numbers in check, these unemployed herds quickly turned feral and prolific, over-grazing the wide open expanses near Sundre and Rocky Mountain House, and threatening the property of local ranchers and farmers. Some responded with shotguns and snares. The provincial government responded with legislation: the Horse Capture Regulation under the Stray Animals Act (ESRD). Animal welfare groups say government efforts amount to an inhumane cull and money grab, selling capture licenses to unscrupulous trappers who almost always sell the animals to the slaughterhouses for meat. Such activists are calling for more innovative ways to control Alberta's increasing equine numbers. One such group even has a celebrity spokesperson, pop singer Jann Arden, who has taken part in privately-organized "re-counts" aimed at discrediting the official government statistics used to justify the Capture program every year. She has called the cull "the height of disgusting" (Schneider). The animal welfare group Arden works for is proposing an alternative method of controlling the wild horse population by pioneering the use of temporary contraceptive implants. The group is recommending the same approach for dogs on Alberta's First Nations reserves.

The *Dogs with No Names* project (DWNN), in partnership with the *Animal Rescue Foundation* (ARF), has certainly caught the ear of the Alberta government and many local indigenous governments across Canada with its alternative to horse and dog round-ups and culls. As far as the canine proposal is concerned, they continue to pilot the program on reserves, and to raise funds for its continued implementation. In 2013, DWNN published a book on their experiences with rez dogs, *Dogs with No Names: In Pursuit of Courage, Hope and Purpose*. All proceeds from the sale of the volume go towards the ongoing initiatives. I ordered a copy of the book in late 2013. It arrived with a hand signed postcard from the lead veterinarian tucked inside the cover. It read: "On behalf of all dogs with no names, wherever they may be. Thank you." A second promotional postcard included the project website and Facebook page, as well as an excerpted paragraph from the book and a tag line to remind me: "100% of the profits from this book will be donated to reduce the suffering of these dogs caught between two worlds."

"Caught between two worlds": the postcard teaser hints at a core theme of DWNN's book specifically and indigenous animal control issues in general, namely proper spatial ordering. What worlds are at play here? New world and old perhaps? Modern and primitive? Indigenous and colonial? And which world or space is the one to which these suffering dogs should go in order to healed, to be whole? Notably DWNN's flagship veterinary clinic is "adjacent to" the Tsuu T'ina First Nation, and it was because of this geographic proximity that the lead vet learned about rez dogs: "I have come into contact with many of them in my surgery suite," she writes, "where their broken legs needed mending and porcupine quills needed to be removed from their faces" (Samson-French 3). "Contact" is a particularly loaded word in the postcolonial context. That the book establishes an early and definitive contrast between the professional, legitimate, controlled space of the clinic, and the wild, lawless, dangerous "reserve lands of North America"

is likewise significant. Throughout the book, the text and imagery paint a picture of First Nations reserves that is as troubling as any of the dog attacks stories considered in the previous chapter. Reserves are desolate and dirty spaces strewn with old car wrecks and dumpsters. There are no fences; there seems to be very few people. Mostly, these spaces appear to be overtaken by feral and semi-feral dogs who take up an illegitimate residency in the decaying spaces of human occupation. They glower from beneath crumbling decks, discarded appliances and rusty undercarriages. They might be spotted in "a crude A-frame shelter pieced together from scraps of plywood" (180) or "hiding from the rain on the front seat of an abandoned old Cutlass" (184). They forage for food in decrepit trash bins. They find water in overturned buckets. It reads like a post-apocalyptic wasteland, which the wrong species has set out to reclaim from the ravages of nature.

References to a specific reserve are few and far between in the book. The text refers to the spaces these rez dogs inhabit as "the reserve lands of North America" (Samson-French 3). Elsewhere, the copy situates the narrative as taking place "out here" or "on the reserve side of the border" (3, 10, 110). The monolithic representation of indigenous people is an issue in many respects, as it elides the distinct identities, cultures and political and social needs of the people it purports to represent. The erasure of differences is an insult to the real histories and experiences of Canada's indigenous people. It is also a throwback to the earliest and most egregious efforts of the state project when the original inhabitants of North America were represented mistakenly as "Indians" or disparagingly as "savages". In Canada, the population of original and founding peoples is subdivided into First Nations, Inuit and Métis. There are 617 First Nations in Canada, representing some 50 distinct culture groups. Over 1 million people identify as aboriginal, and more than half of those do not live on reserve. In Alberta, where DWNN is located, there are 45

separate First Nations ("Aboriginal Peoples"). The book mentions Tsuu T'ina, Siksiksa and Eden Valley (which is Nakoda or Stoney) and the group also does work in the Newfoundland and Labrador, where they have delivered the program to the northern Innu Nation of Natuashish. Still, the reader of this fundraising book might well be left with the impression that the descriptions and difficulties all "reserve lands of North America". A more finely-tuned cultural sensibility might benefit the Northern Dog Movement as it moves forward.

One of the rare instances where the book discusses a specific space reads:

> Bordering the Calgary city limits on the southwest corner is the Tsuu T'ina First Nations reserve. Vagabond dogs wander freely back and forth across the invisible line that separates the city from reserve land. On the rez side, however, there are no official bylaw officers and no animal shelters. There, a stray dog will roam until mortal perils take its soul to another horizon, or until a kind resident decides to feed him and provide him shelter. (Samson-French 153)

There are echoes of R. Cole Harris' primal line here, that first, physical but also metaphysical border that divides non-indigenous and indigenous landscape and mindscape in Canada. And again while the book speaks to a specific First Nation in this one instance, there is still the sense that this division must apply to any space in the country that comprises a city side and a rez side. The rez dogs transgress the boundary by "wandering freely" into the urban zone where, it is implied, they would be safe and healthy as opposed to the lawless, shelterless indigenous zone. They are "vagabond dogs", another umbrella term to designate the monolithic mass of troubled dogs at the heart of the DWNN project. Elsewhere in the text, we find the terms outcasts, singletons, stowaways, misfits, opportunists, untouchables and nomads. Some

individual rez dogs earn nicknames such as Downtown Dog or The Trouble Maker. They are, as the title of the project proclaims, the *Dogs with No Names*. But once they cross that invisible line, a transition occurs. When they enter and stay in the land where by-laws and shelters are a reality, they also receive their names. Naming is a process of the urban side's culture, and it is a powerful one not only of identification and ownership, but of salvation. The shift is made explicit in the section titled "A Second Chance" where the introductory blurb reads, "It is true that once given a name, a dog will faithfully travel countless miles in its life to respond to the command 'come'" (121). Thus begins a series of profiles of dogs *with* names, starting with the rather bureaucratically tagged XBP 499 (the tattoo it receives at the vet clinic) and working its way through a catalogue of Beautiful Cases including Leo, Nelson, Radar, Red Dog, Steady Eddie and Destiny. With their names comes a wealth of "city side" benefits including stability, shelter, food, freedom from violence, medical care and, ultimately, a new home.

Sin and Salvation, Naming and Transformation

The importance of the name in the ideology of the Northern Dog Movement can be considered through a variety of themes, the core trio of which includes religion, power and Othering. The salvation offered by animal rescuers will often dip into stock Christian imagery and associated Western cultural references to underscore its validity, a discursive strategy that must be analyzed and challenged especially in light of the historical violence committed by churches and missionaries against indigenous people in Canada.

The power to name non-human animals is, according to Western Christian tradition, God-given. As such it has been naturalized in the Western world, whose moral fabric even in our modern and secular age takes its primary institutional and legal cues from Christianity. In the

book of Genesis, as the last and climactic acts of the six-day creation period, God creates Adam and has him name all the creatures of the Earth. After the naming, the Bible tells us that all descendants of Adam will now have dominion over the creatures he has named. "Dominion" comes from the Latin *dominus*, meaning lord or master, and significantly shares the same etymology as "domestication". As a blueprint for all subsequent human-animal relations in the Western world, this has grave implications. Naming, according to Sune Borkfelt, is "the very first and most basic act of language" but it is also "a powerful tool of control" (117). He argues that it "is symbolic of the unequal power relations inherent to our relationship with other species" (118). It represents the West's continued dominion over both species and individual animals, and over those both wild and domesticated. Generically Borkfelt shows how the names given by European explorers to New World species often showed anthropocentric and Eurocentric biases, including how indigenous names were often "Latinized" in a form of blatant "cultural imperialism" (120). For individual domesticated animals such as dogs or horses, naming is similarly an act of power. While naming a dog can be seen as evidence of the closeness of the human-dog relationship, and while it represents "an expression of fondness", it still connotes an anthropocentric and controlling set of relations (120). We might call animals human names, Borkfelt reminds us, but we rarely if ever reverse the process and call our children by animal names. Further, when we name an animal such as a dog or a horse, we have a specific instrumental purpose in mind: "If an animal knows its name, then it is easier to train and command for the human trainer" (121). Naming a pet or companion animal might seem to those in the Western world as a natural, even necessary, part of the individual animal-human relationship. It seems a requirement for communicating *with* an animal, but it is also how we communicate *about* animals. Animals obviously do not name themselves. Naming comes from

human will (as well as human ideas and uses) and human will in the West is derived from the divine will. Thus "while naming can be said to be a necessity for language and communication," says Borkfelt, "the very act of naming actually makes animals into objects, which we choose how to perceive, represent and categorize through the names we apply to them" (123).

In the Northern Dog Movement as in the DWNN project, the animals are perceived, represented and categorized in contrasting ways. Before naming, they are the rez dogs, homogenous packs of unknowns. Afterwards, the new, improved, rescued version of that same dog is known by the individual and unique name given to it by its rescuer. Before, they are perceived, represented and categorized as nameless, and thus homeless, neglected, pitiful and dangerous. After, they are perceived, represented and categorized as named, and thus homed, cared for, successful and domesticated. According to Arnold Arluke, the act of naming is a required step in the process of creating a Beautiful Case as the right name – Lucky, Happy – can communicate an entire narrative in one word. For DWNN, the act of naming is likewise symbolic of the closure of the happy ending, a simple signifier that carries with it all the narrative weight of the animal's sordid past, its heroic rescue and rosy future. In *Dogs with No Names*, the rez dog's past is characterized as one of sin and taboo: "If you are a dog with no name," reads the text, "[life] is all about food and sex, life and death" (Samson-French 151). The rez dog's future, its salvation, is realized when the "mortal perils" of the reserve inexorably "take its soul to another horizon, or until a kind resident decides to feed him and provide him shelter" (153). In this way, the dog passes through a journey of sin – and the sins of the rez dog are legion, including sexual promiscuity, violence, incest, cannibalism and even abortion to deal with "poor family planning" (45) – and into the new horizon of redemption, which is marked by the bestowal of an individual, often Christian name (Leo or Eddy). A symbolic baptism or

christening perhaps? Animals have souls, and souls can be saved. In a related trope, the rescuer of the rez dog is explicitly characterized as a Good Samaritan: the "kind resident [who] decides to feed him and provide him shelter" (153). About one dog who ended up with a snout full of porcupines quills, the text claims, "All he needs is a Good Samaritan to cross his path" (210). Of a pregnant dog, the reader is asked: "If you passed this vagabond female on the reserve, would you think it best to let her be, and let nature take its course?" (42). And let there be any doubt about the moral imperative of the Northern Dog Movement: "Doing nothing for those who can't defend themselves is not tolerance but apathy. Tolerance is a virtue, apathy a sin" (40).

Throughout *Dogs With No Names* appear inspirational quotes from historical figures, literary greats, philosophers and figures from pop culture to punctuate the text. Winston Churchill, Simone de Beauvoir, the conservationist Roger Caras and TV weatherman Al Roker are a few of those cited. Some of these quotes have to do with animals; some are merely motivational. In fact, the overall tone of the book is one of a New Age self-help book presenting life lessons learned from the DWNN team's experience with the rez dogs. The reader encounters terms like "self-actualization" and "living in the moment". Indeed, the section titled "Living in the Moment" begins with a quote from the philosopher George Santayana "There is no cure for birth or death, save to enjoy the interval" (Samson-French 97). A pull quote on the next page reads "For this young dog, life was a gift – a mystery to be lived, but not solved, one breath at a time" (99). Of the 20-plus quotes incorporated into the book, only one is attributed to an indigenous person, the actor and activist Chief Dan George (1889-1991). In a section titled "The Fearful Beast," there is a photograph of a young black dog walking towards the camera and away from what appears to be the wreck of a dump truck. He lopes across a patch of dead grass strewn with garbage and old toys, as the quote reads:

> "If you talk to the animals, they will talk to you and you will know each other. If you do not talk to them, you will not know them, and what you do not know you will fear. What one fears, one destroys." – Chief Dan George (Samson-French 76)

References to indigenous knowledge are few and far between in this book (and in the texts produced by the Northern Dog Movement in general), and this quote is a particularly apt one. But it is rare, and easily glossed over in some 300 pages of loosely connected vignettes, animal profiles and sentimental-motivational discourse. What's more, and perhaps most significantly in terms of the issue of dogs in Canadian culture, the spirit of the George quote – its message, emerging from the all my relations worldview – is largely ignored by the movement. Listening to stories, hearing the voices of the Others, is not a skill an ethnocentric population has honed over the centuries. Non-indigenous people do not, as the quote teaches them to do, talk to animals. They talk about animals, name them and dominate them, exist in hierarchy not kinship with them. The dominant culture perpetuates this hierarchy because of the fear of difference. And fear begets destruction. Of course, the Mishomis prophecy tells us that this relationship will apply in equal measure to both the animooshug (dogs) and the world's first peoples. We are seeing this prophecy made manifest in the Northern Dog Movement discourse overall, and it is frustrating to see this quote, with all its power and potential, wedged into the DWNN text like a token of native spirituality. Ironic, that Chief Dan George exhorts us to listen to the Other, but many in this movement fail to listen to people like Chief Dan George.

A second quote, this one attributed to Mother Teresa, is less awkward because it works with the overall Western Christian discourse that serves to unite the many disparate stories and images that comprise *Dogs with No Names*. It also connects with another theme, which runs throughout the work, namely a discursive Othering premised on a contrast to the culture of India.

It serves as a foundation for a certain racist rhetoric, which underpins the few and far between mentions of indigenous knowledge in the work. As suggested, it is my contention that many if not all of these strategies can be seen in the Northern Dog Movement overall. Here is the quote as it appears in *Dogs with No Names* in a section titled "A Life Worth Living":

> "I know God will not give me anything I can't handle. I just wish that he didn't trust me so much." – Mother Teresa (Samson-French 103)

Mother Teresa (1910-1997) was a well-known but often controversial Roman Catholic nun who worked with 'the poorest of the poor' in Calcutta, India for decades. She was a Nobel Peace Prize winner; she was beatified by her church in 2003; and she has come to be considered by many to be an icon of sacrifice and service. She was also a missionary in country with a long and troubled imperialist history, and many of her harshest critics have accused Mother Teresa and her followers of promulgating this ongoing conquest through her own brand of spiritual colonialism. Still, *Dogs with No Names* embraces her, as do many involved in all manner of altruistic undertakings, as a paragon of virtue in a world of sin. She is the ultimate Good Samaritan, and a role model for projects aimed at helping the marginalized and maligned. Elsewhere in *Dogs with No Names*, the term "The Untouchables" is used to refer to the dogs the team has encountered on First Nations reserves (43, 65). The term also refers to the lowest social class in India's traditional caste system, and the very group of people to whom Mother Teresa primarily ministered. These are the 160 million people of India, who by dint of their birth, are considered impure and less than human. They live in poverty and are subject to violence at the hands of the upper castes. The DWNN text draws an explicit comparison between rez dogs and the Untouchables in a section about hunger and food scarcity on the reserve:

> Like most street dogs, rez dogs have their own caste system, which revolves almost exclusively around food and access to it. Sex ranks a close second. Their caste structure is simple and imposed by force; an underdog remains an underdog until starvation, dehydration or bite wounds take the last breath from his body. (Samson-French 58)

The connection of First Nations dogs with the caste-structured society of India has three key discursive effects in *Dogs with No Names*. One, it perpetuates the concept of First Nations people as The Others in Canadian society by suggesting that their communities have similar living conditions, and thus similar and lower levels of civilization, to the developing Third World. It exoticizes First Nations, making them seem distant, dark and foreign, as well as poor, troubled, and regressive. In several places in the book, the term "street dogs" refers to the reservation canines, an explicit reference to the dogs that are indigenous to the Indian subcontinent, and that are also free-ranging scavengers, for the most part not owned or homed. These animals are commonly known as the pariah dog, a term that also refers to the humans of the lowest caste. Linking the rez dog to this Eastern breed creates an air of taint, impurity and spatial disorder in the Western world. It also creates a strong sense that there is a problem that needs to be solved. These are Canada's social outcasts, and these "reserve lands of North America" are, according to this view, dark places of waste, disease, decay, violence and sexual abandon. Of course, this is a peculiar discursive twist considering that the original people of North America, because of bias or navigational error or both, were bestowed the blanket term "Indians" by Columbus. Nonetheless, this uncritical equation between the streets of India and those of the reserve threads throughout the text of the book invites the reader to map images of gutter living, filth and teeming masses directly onto the geography of the rez. This territory lies within view of the sterile and orderly clinic of the suburban veterinary hospital , but it is a world

apart. Cross that invisible line – the primal line – and you find yourself in a primal space, where survival is the essence of existence. In setting up this imaginary exotic borderland, DWNN is able to separate the rez from the West, in which it literally exists, and project it onto the East, to which it now figuratively belongs. This furthers the belief that within the contemporary Canadian context, there is an Us versus Them, primarily because there is a Here versus There.

The Rhetoric of Race and the Rez Dog

The section of *Dogs with No Names* that incorporates the Mother Teresa quote is titled "A Life Worth Living" and it tells the story of a nameless female rez dog who is in very poor health. The theme of survival is strong here, and the description of her physical state evokes the imagery of televised Third World fundraising campaigns. This has the makings of a Beautiful Case, but it stops short, running into a wall of race and cultural difference. The story begins:

> Longevity is a rarity among reserve dogs, but here we have a true survivor. It's hard to imagine how a dog could live so long in these harsh conditions, but residents pegged this dog at sixteen years old. She has an enlarged belly typical of dogs heavily infected with worms, her elbows are abducted indicating chronic painful arthritic joints, and her hair coat is sparse. Patches of her skin are leathery black, likely from mite infestation, and she constantly scratches at the flanks of her rear legs. Her sad eyes stare vacantly with the vitreous appearance characteristic of cataracts, and she appears very emaciated. (Samson-French)

This animal is clearly one of The Untouchables. She is infected and infested. Her skin conditions make her repulsive to that all-important human touch. She fails to connect and communicate with humans due to her slow movement and empty gaze. Her one familiar aspect is

her instinct for survival. The accompanying photographs depict a wasted creature, skeletal and bow-legged against a backdrop of unkempt grass. A close-image shows her rib cage visible through mottled fur. Her teats hang low from her belly, a suggestion of a long life of sexual promiscuity and what is elsewhere referred to as "failing at family planning" (45). She is old, promiscuous and diseased. She is a canine leper. And due to her advanced age and poor health, the veterinary team is now facing a predicament in how best to handle the fate of this particular rez dog. This is the manifest difference between Us and Them, between the professional knowledge of the veterinary clinic and the indigenous knowledge of the First Nations community. Should she be euthanized immediately or allowed to die naturally?

> Of course, a person with medical knowledge might answer this question very differently than a Native Elder who has lived alongside this dog for years. Because we tend to view the world not as *it* is, but as *we* are, our interpretation of the world is shaped by our experiences, beliefs, and culture, not just by how our senses perceive reality. In effect, our view of the world reflects a self-centred perspective. (104)

This is a promising allusion to the concept of cultural relativism, and would seem to open up a space in which the outsider team of professionals and the local members of the First Nations community might come together in a mutually respectful dialogue to determine the fate of this particular dog. Cultural relativism is "the position that the values and standards of cultures differ and deserve respect. Extreme relativism argues that cultures should be judged solely by their own standards" (Kottak). It is an antidote to the issues of ethnocentrism, the belief that one's own culture is the measuring stick by which all others must be analyzed and assessed. The concept (not the term, which came later) can be traced to the work of 20th century anthropologist Franz Boas (1858-1942) who worked with the Inuit of Baffin Island and the Kwakiult of

Canada's North West Coast. In working with the Tsuu T'ina, DWNN in this instance encourages "the local Native elder and a medical professional" to work together to share perspectives and potential solutions, each listening to the other's stories, each trying to determine the best way forward (Samson-French 104). Respect, reciprocity, dialogue and education are all part of the stated goals of the Northern Dog Movement. The report from WSPA's 2007 *Northern Dogs Conference* outlines some specific aims for "overcoming boundaries" and avoiding "failed relationships" when delivering animal care and control programs in First Nations communities. WSPA has adapted the approach used by First Nations Child and Family Caring Society in using "interactive workshops" involving members of both the community and the veterinary team (Kitson). The report advises member organizations to focus on cultivating:

- A clear understanding of each others' way of knowing
- Open communication and honesty
- Community-driven-and-based partnerships with clear responsibilities
- Respect for First Nations cultures and languages
- A clear understanding of each others' philosophy and goals (Kitson)

In fact, the *Dog with No Names* project team ultimately steps away from the file of the sick and aged canine. They follow the advice of the elder and decide not to interfere with the life of the aging, likely dying, rez dog: "In this case, the wish of the Native elder was to leave the dog to live out her fate, and that wish was respected" (Samson-French 105). They do not impose their cultural preference for what Elder et al. called "the acceptable killing of animals", in this case, euthanasia (196). This is the killing meted out by "a butcher or a slaughterhouse worker… [or] a veterinarian" not "lay" person (196). To the list of unacceptable modes, we might now add natural causes. The elder advocates allowing the 16-year old animal to die from age and illness,

perhaps in the bush or in a den she herself has fashioned, and not on the stainless steel table of a clinic room. And while the team only does so reluctantly, they do allow for indigenous knowledge to shape the outcome. But they do not withhold judgment.

The text continues: "If one witnesses suffering, but intentionally interprets it as non-suffering so as not to take responsibility for it, one goes against one's own comprehension of reality. […] Such incongruence is a small step on the road to insanity" (Samson-French 104). As such, DWNN simultaneously acknowledges the role of the elder in the First Nations culture and dispenses with his or her approach as so irresponsible as to defy rational (sane) judgment. This section ends with the team reluctantly providing the dog with some medicine and food: "All that remained [after the stalemate with the elder] was to make [the dog] as comfortable as possible" (105). Another reference to the "life worth living" trope appears earlier on in the text, in the introduction to the overall project vision: "Without adequate food, water, and shelter available to them, most rez dogs do not have a life worth living, at least not by any human standard" (15). This suggests a more essentialist worldview than the later attempt at cultural respect and dialogue would allow. If there is a standard that does not measure up with one's own moral paradigm, the assumption is that is must be an inhuman or inhumane one. The anonymous animal of the latter section is ailing, elderly, and only considered to be a valuable life by the veterinary team not by the people of the community. Once the decision is made as to her fate, she remains nameless. She represents a significant case, but she is by no means a Beautiful Case.

Dogs with No Names includes a substantial catalogue of appropriately named and narrated Beautiful Cases. There is Leo, who in a mirroring of Hamish from *Les Chiots Nordiques*, is described as a "little bundle of fur, about three weeks old" (Samson-French 125). Nelson is "a shadow of the majestic dog he used to be" when the team found him, a muzzle full

of porcupine quills and an eye that required immediate surgery: “Would anyone care enough to take him in, give him a loving home?” (129). Radar needed his front leg amputated but got along fine on the remaining tripod. Red Dog was full of worms. Carly. Pity. Destiny. All eventually achieve their happy endings off the reserve in the homes of new owners. Even the dogs who have only nicknames or labels seem to be inevitable Beautiful Cases. XBP 499’s “journey to a better life is well underway” (124). Dog #64 according to his field identification card now has “a chance at life” (202). Dishwasher Dog (note the contrast with Arluke’s inadequate Cat in the Dryer case), Downtown Dog, the Trouble Maker and Mr. Congeniality are either successfully implanted with the contraceptive device, are in the promising limbo of a foster home, or at least will be checked on soon by DWNN. And then there is Steady Eddie, the quintessential Beautiful Case: “a real rez dog success story” (142). Steady Eddie was “about two years old when he was found wandering the road just outside the reserve boundary,” a detail that seems to suggest a yearning in the animal himself to cross the Primal Line and enter into its proper space (143). Echoing the Biblical discourse discussed earlier, Eddie’s story includes the presence of “a Good Samaritan [who] picked him up and brought him to our veterinary hospital” (143). As one of Arluke’s Appealing Animals, he looks serene and healthy in his photograph, a light snow dusting his broad head and graying muzzle, visually embodying the steadiness and calm of his name. His story is further premised on what Arluke termed Acceptable Suffering: Steady Eddie was “physically unhurt” but appeared thin from hunger and fearful of humans. The text implies that he was “previously owned [and] abandoned”, which fulfills Arluke’s requirement for a Shadowy Abuser (145). Once across the invisible line, Steady Eddie’s lack of outstanding qualities failed to attract the attention of potential adopters until the dogcatcher took Eddie into his own home, which satisfies the criterion of the ideal hero in Arluke’s paradigm, an animal welfare worker

who goes beyond the duties of his job to guarantee the life of the transformed rez dog. Steady Eddie's story ends with the dog re-homed on a "property" described as being ringed by a "forested territory" that Eddie can explore and enjoy before returning to the domestic sphere. He also spends time at the vet clinic "greeting everyone – animal or human – that comes through the doors" (144).

The Beautiful Case is used by the animal welfare community to create a shared identity, and to foster solidarity among its members. It does this by constructing an enemy, and in the case of the Northern Dog Movement, this entails villianizing the indigenous Other. The crime (or to borrow a trope from the Western Christian discourse that bolsters their efforts, the sin) of the enemy is frequently one of complacency. In chronicling the story of Steady Eddie, *Dogs with No Names* warns readers that "we should remain wary of the pitfalls of complacency, a state of self-satisfaction that keeps us blinded to the troubles and woes around us" (Samson-French 144). This is the sin of the Native Elder who "leave[s] the dog to live out her fate" and it is the sin, it seems, of the homogenous First Nations culture in general. A section entitled "An Accident of Birth" gives the most detailed contemplation of the animal in First Nations culture in the book, outlining interpretations of their "belief system", their spirituality, the sacred status of animals in traditional tribal societies, the history of the people and the dogs. The dangers of the monolith arise again here: all indigenous peoples have nine animal spirits (a too specific tenet for 617 different nations) and all indigenous peoples were transformed in the shift from "dog days" of transportation and sentinel to "horse days". The text references buffalo (which not all people hunted) and reserves (which not all original peoples live on). While DWNN does allow that within the communities they deal with there are individual differences, the group still defines an overall cultural tendency towards complacency in that "Some think we should allow the dogs to

live out their lives, however they might unfold. Some believe we are showing disrespect to the nature of dogs when we spay or neuter" (25). As the traditional ways of life have "disintegrated", "surplus dogs have been left to fend for themselves – sometimes rewarded with a helping hand, at other times with a cruel blow" (253).

Left to fend for themselves, or left to die: variations on this theme appear throughout the texts produced by and about the Northern Dog Movement as well. Complacency, ignorance, neglect and cruelty are all suggested as being somehow endemic to First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures. The latest advertisement for a dog awaiting adoption via a Toronto, Ontario group begins:

> Piper is the scared pup in the top picture above. She lived in Attawapiskat for the first six months of her life and no one knows where she was born, where she came from or why she even existed. She certainly didn't matter to anyone. (Moosonee)

The website Reserve Dog Liberation, a particularly militant arm of the movement, criticizes a First Nations view that celebrates the tenacity of the rez dog, railing:

> Before you read it, ask yourself if you see any true compassion for these starving, freezing dogs? The poem acknowledges that these dogs are 'seen on the side of the road' (looking for food) and another car load of Indians gets their smile for the day'??? What on earth is there to smile about? ("Reserve Dog")

To the Northern Dog Movement, this complacency (or laziness, or defeat, or willful blindness) is their *de facto* foe. The divide expands: Us versus Them, Here versus There, Do something versus Do nothing. It is a view that extends well beyond the animal welfare community. It is a long-held stereotype of indigenous cultures maintained by the dominant culture:

> A pervasive myth in North America supposes that native people and Native culture are trapped in a state of stasis. Those who subscribe to it like to imagine that, like Vladimir and Estragon in Samuel Beckett's play Waiting for Godot, Natives were unable to move forward along the linear continuum of civilization, that we were waiting for someone to come along and lead us in the right direction. To free us from ourselves. (King 2012, 78)

As the Montreal co-founder of *Les Chiots Nordiques* recalled of her experiences working in the Inuit communities of Northern Quebec, "To observe what was happening and do nothing, I wasn't capable of that. I had to find a way" (Chung). They join the battle with their discourse of war, or labour in the name of love. They name. They spay or neuter. They rescue. They save. They do what the people of indigenous communities do not or cannot. They do not wait. They take action.

Chapter 11: Kill the Indian in the Dog?: Narrative Sovereignty and the Rise of the Rez Dog

Later in the book *Dogs with No Names: In Pursuit of Courage, Hope and Purpose*, there is a section headlined "His Territory." The black and white photograph that begins this section depicts a large black dog standing in a grassy field full of flowering clover. His furry coat is patchy along his sides, and while this could be a result of 'blowing his coat' for the spring weather, the effect is the appearance of a creature a little unkempt, a little rough around the edges. He looks experienced, world-weary and wise. His dark fur is salted with bits of white or grey, which further gives him the appearance of age and sagacity. He seems to be a mutt, perhaps a husky-mastiff cross. His tail and ears are those of a husky breed; his massive square head and jaws come from another strain of his lineage. He is strong and imposing; he has a presence. His tail might have been lopped off at the tip, as it looks shorter than a normal husky tail, again evidence of his lived experience in the wild. Tail and ears are erect; he is alert, watchful. He is on guard, and as the section title suggests, he is guarding his territory. He is a sentinel, a protector, a canine elder. The text begins:

> This black male was hunkered down under an old abandoned truck for shelter and safety, oblivious to the inscription on the license plate above his head: "Indian and Proud of It!" Yet the words accurately define who he is, at least in the eyes of most people who happen by his crude shelter. There is no doubt that he belongs to a category, though not of his own making. (Samson-French 275)

Stuart Hall defines representation as "the production of meaning through language", with language being defined in "a very broad and inclusive way [as] any sound, word, image or object which functions as a sign, and is organized with other signs into a system" (19). The words and

images I have examined in the previous chapters work together to produce a certain constellation of meanings, or what French critic Roland Barthes called myths. Barthes was concerned not with the study of representation in sterile, academic isolation, but within culture. He wanted to read representations as texts, to examine them "in terms of what they were trying to 'say', what message about the culture they communicate" (Hall 23). In undertaking his project of de-mythologizing advertisements, magazine covers, soap products and wrestling matches, Barthes was attempting to reveal the "ideological abuse" hidden within "the decorative display" of even our most mundane cultural texts (Barthes xix). Barthes and others were part of the constructionist approach to representation, the theory that "meaning is constructed in and through language" and not merely reflective of the world as it is (Hall 23). The category of "Indian", referenced in the excerpt above, is an example of this representational process. *Indian* is a constructed category. It is neither natural nor neutral. Writes Daniel Francis:

> The Indian began as a White man's mistake, and became a White man's fantasy. Through the prism of White hopes, fears and prejudices, indigenous Americans would be seen to have lost contact with reality and to have become 'Indians'; that is, anything non-Natives wanted them to be." (1992, v)

Moreover, as DWNN acknowledges, "dogs are unmistakably our creations, the products of our needs, whims and desires" (Samson-French 277). Dogs are cultural products. The category "dog" does not exist in nature prior to or separate from the sign human members of a culture have agreed upon as signifying "dog". Likewise, the idea of "Indian", its meaning within the dominant culture of Canada, is the ongoing result of over 500 years' worth of fear, prejudice and fantasy; there is no naturally occurring entity "Indian". What becomes increasingly clear in this constructionist approach to representation is the ideology at work in the foundation and

proliferation of these concepts. Through the processes of representation, it is humans that create dogs, that make dogs mean something. It is white humans that create Indian or Native or "Savage", and make these terms mean whatever they want them to mean. The agenda of those that make meaning can be delineated (de-mythologized, per Barthes) in texts such as the one above.

For Barthes, such representation worked at two levels: denotation and connotation. Denotation refers to "the simple, basic, descriptive level, where consensus is wide and most people would agree with the meaning" (Hall 38). In the case above, the meaning might be something like "stray dog cowering under a car." Then there is the second level, connotation, which connects the text to "the wider semantic fields of our culture" (38). Stuart Hall says of connotation, "Here we are beginning to interpret the completed signs in terms of the wider realms of the social ideology – the general beliefs, conceptual frameworks and value systems of society" (39). The dog pictured and described above, read in connection with the nationalist pride slogan on the license plate, belongs to the category of "Indian" or as Barthes might say, Indianness. This is, according to the text, an accurate definition of who he is. It is how he is identified by those non-human animals who "happen by his crude shelter." But it is a stereotyped Western version of "Indian." He lives in squalor, yet he is resilient – seeking out the shelter of a car wreck – and he is stoic – as imagined in the photograph that accompanies the text. This nameless dog is "placid", "vigilant" and "hardy", which connote his air of nobility. Other highlights include his "wolf ancestry," his base and instinctual existence of breeding and feeding, and "basic urge" to roam, all markers for his "savagery". This connects the image to the wider myth of the "Noble Savage" that permeates Eurocentric culture in North America.

Then there is this: the black dog's categorization as an "Indian" is "*not of his own making*". He is a victim of this label. It has been thrust upon him. Should he feel shame instead of pride? Are readers to pity him for his identity? The animal has been born into this "slow and short" life "through no fault of [his] own" (Samson-French 277). Thus, while this dog is able to "move and expand energy" according to his "genetic wiring", and while he has the liberty to "comply with his basic urges", and while he is "proud" of his identity and his place in the world, he is of course wrong. He is deluded. The anonymous quote that accompanies this narrative reads, "To man, freedom is another word for nothing left to lose; to a dog, it is a synonym for despair" (276). But the animal is "completely unaware" that he is in despair. (An existential puzzle if ever there was one: If you don't know you are in despair, are you nonetheless in despair?) He lacks the capacity to reflect on his "lot in life" and he does not understand that there is another place "worlds away" where dogs are actually considered "precious and pampered" (276). This particular dog "has no concept of what's fair and what's not, in his life or anyone else's" (276). He needs tutelage. He needs a mentor, a pastor. He needs someone to advise him in the better, more correct ways of the world. Finally, and seemingly in contradiction to the earlier support for cultural respect, there is the claim that all humans share "an innate sense of decency and compassion," one that "transcend[s] any geographical border, religious belief, cultural tradition or personal opinion" (279). This dog lacks that inherent morality. Simply put: There is a right way to be a dog (ours) and a wrong way (theirs). The Indian dog, proud though he may be, must be shown the error of his Indian ways.

Foucault, Discourse and How a "Good Dog" is Made

This excerpt from one promotional and fundraising book is not an isolated text. It is part of what another constructionist thinker, Michel Foucault, termed a "discursive formation", a

complex and historical set of texts, practices and events that "refer to the same object, share the same style… and support a strategy… a common institutional, administrative or political drift and pattern" (Cousins and Hussain qtd. in Hall 44). Like Barthes, who has informed much of the earlier readings of cultural texts in this dissertation, Foucault was concerned with everyday relationships of power, and how they work to construct knowledge or truth. According to this theory, ideas of "Indianness" or "Dogness" and now "Northness" and "Northern Dogness" are not objective facts; they are culturally and historically contingent concepts that arise in specific times and actual places as a result of the complex and capillary movement of discursive formations. Foucault traced the "archaeology" of such truths as the prisoner, the madman and the homosexual and showed how these different ways of knowing – these regimes of truth – are "always inextricably enmeshed in relations of power because it was always being applied to the regulation of social conduct in practice" (Hall 33). His theory also had a spatial component, examining how the enclosure and surveillance of human bodies in certain confinements, such as the panoptical prison and asylum, are deployed in order to control and reform a population into new, docile subjects. Foucault did not explicitly address the issue of human-animal power relations in his work, but many scholars have since considered how his theories can be seen to apply to wildlife conservation (Rinfert), domesticated pets (Palmer), and factory farming (Cole). Foucauldian management techniques are at work throughout the Northern Dog Movement as well.

Two primary goals of the *Dogs with No Names* project and the Northern Dog Movement are: (1) to reduce the otherwise unchecked canine population in First Nations communities; and (2) to remove dogs from their indigenous spaces and re-create them as house pets. In her work on species management in wildlife conservation areas, Sara Rinfert has shown how the US wildlife

conservation project has similar aims, and how these aims are examples of what Foucault considered biopower: the "numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations" (Foucault 140). In Rinfert's study, government managers use "sophisticated technologies" to survey and control wild animal populations and to create animal bodies that are "simultaneously docile and useful" (572). She offers the examples of remote sensing devices used to track grizzly bear populations; shock collars to redirect wolf populations; ultra-light aircraft to guide whooping cranes; and GPS tags to record the movement of California condors. In these and other ways, wild animal bodies are monitored and modified, their populations managed, and their wild aspect re-constructed to produce a "wildness" that is more amenable to humans and more economically beneficial to them. This involves spatial ordering: the corralling of animals away from campsites, parks, farms and ranches and into conservation areas where tourists can still enjoy them. Projects like *Spay North*, *Les Chiots Nordiques* and *Dogs with No Names* likewise all use various technologies to monitor and discipline feral or quasi-feral canine bodies. When I was in Kashechewan in 2006, we created files on each animal we saw in our clinic. We provided each with a collar and numbered dog tag to further track them. We surgically altered their bodies through spaying or neutering to slow population growth and render the animals less aggressive and less prone to disease. We also aborted several litters in utero. The DWNN project has a slightly different approach to population control, advocating "the use of contraceptive implants to prevent unwanted dogs from being born in the first place" (Samson-French 16). This involves a quick and painless injection under the skin of the female dog, a process that will render her infertile for about 18 months. As of the book's publication, the team has implanted 100 dogs, preventing the birth of an estimated 100,000 puppies (17). Elsewhere in the book, the lead veterinarian recounts tattooing an animal's

ear to identify and track him. Identification cards are used in the field to identify and monitor the dog's movements. Foucault uses the term "surveillance" to define how such procedures work in human populations in prisons, asylums and medical institutions to produce prisoners, madmen and patients. The Northern Dog Movement intervenes in canine populations to produce docile, useful "good dogs".

Technologies such as identification tattoos, surgical sterilization and contraceptive implants are *done to* the body of animal during this construction of the category of "dog". This is what "dog" is: a physical entity bred, shaped, marked, altered and disciplined within the broader discursive formation of "dogness". Such "meticulous rituals" (Hall 50) work in concert with countless others to create a certain "truth" – an unexamined, unquestioned, everyday and seemingly natural state of dogness to which most in the dominant Western culture are accustomed at this point in history. It is this current and Western category of dog to which DWNN and others direct their appeals. This is what a dog should be; this is what the Northern dogs are tragically unaware of; and this is the ideal state to which we should all agree these animals should be guided by our benevolent hand. Beyond the rituals highlighted by the Northern Dog Movement in their particular and focused efforts, we might also consider general cultural practices such as the collaring and leashing of dogs in public spaces, the enclosure of dogs in dog parks, the rise and diversification of veterinary medicine, and training regimens that regulate virtually all canine activities including walking (always on leash), sleeping (in the human's bed or not?), barking (shock collars, spray bottles), breeding, feeding, and the highly contested acts of peeing and pooping. The latter is the source of tension and even outright aggression within urban spaces such as the streets and parks of Toronto. The entirety of this discursive formation works in what Foucault calls "capillary movement" to produce not only a

certain knowledge of "what is dog", but perhaps more to the point, a certain knowledge of what is a "good dog". All transpires on and through the animal body.

It is not just a certain truth/knowledge of animality that is formed here. It is also a concept of humanity, of goodness, of morality. It is this sense of humanity that the Northern Dog Movement asserts is essential and universal: it "transcend[s] any geographical border, religious belief, cultural tradition or personal opinion" (Samson-French 275). Viewed through a Foucauldian lens, we can begin to show why this is not the case. What is canine and what is human (and humane) are historically and culturally contingent, existing at specific points in time and in specific cultural contexts. Further, the process is not unilateral and repressive. It is not simply humans creating dogs. Human and dog co-create. Human and animal bodies interact in real, lived, corporeal daily experiences. That is to say, the docile animal body and the humane human body emerge in the interaction of touch. The very concept of a "pet" hinges on the physical interaction of human and animal bodies. As noted earlier, Yi-Fu Tuan explains, "the literal meaning of [pet] is 'small'", as in the French word *petit*. An animal body is transformed into a pet body by a reduction in body size. Tuan argues that, in the development of the pet animal, "Manageability or control was the real aim. The smaller size helped" (101). It helps the human to pick up an animal, to caress it and also to restrain it when needed. Over time, the word pet also came to signify the verb 'to touch', an act which further transforms both animal and human bodies into something new and different. Touch was not necessarily a part of historic human relations with hunting or draught animals. Touch is a major part of the core imagery of the *Dogs with No Name* project.

As a result, "[a]mong feral and semi-feral dogs, one commonality is apparent. None will readily accept the touch of a human hand" (Samson-French 91). DWNN recommends a

procedure entailing “three types of rewards” and “a specific progression of moves” in order to overcome this issue. The second stage of her process looks like this:

> Once the [feral] dog has allowed a human hand to softly caress the side of its neck and chest, we follow up with a slow full-body embrace, gently sliding an arm around the animal’s neck and leaving it draped there; for the dog, this becomes a trance-like moment. For what may be the first time in its life, the dog is physically connected to another being, unencumbered by the usual dominant forces of their world, aggression and reproduction. (92)

The passage above describes an encounter that is physical, intimate, sensual (perhaps at times, even sexual) and loving. It is a private moment – soft, slow, emotional, beautiful – between an individual dog and an individual human. Yet at the same time it is a description of a precise and scientific procedure, which is to be applied to hundreds of members of an entire canine population. This is a clinical protocol. It is an introductory step in an entire suite of actions applied to the canine body: “If held lovingly and firmly, a dog receiving a contraceptive implant, a microchip, and a vaccine will remain content in its captor’s arms, without flinching or trying to escape” (92). The description, while a rather lovely narrative of soft caresses and gentle embraces, is also a step-by-step medical procedure that a veterinarian or veterinary volunteer follows in order to transform a feral dog into a pet dog. In fact, it is the very act of “petting” itemized and medicalized. There are two subjects being produced here: a gentle dog and also a humane person. The ultimate goal of the procedure is to ensure an encounter that is “uneventful on both sides: a ‘no bite’ and ‘no struggle’ experience” (91). A dog that doesn’t bite is a good dog; he knows his place. A human that overcomes resistance without violence or aggression is a good human; she knows her place, too. Still, while two figures are constructed in this

intercorporeal event, there is a powerful asymmetry. This procedure is also a religious ritual, a literal laying of the hands by an authority figure with an elite knowledge and skill set: the veterinary professional as priestess. The animal is the supplicant who enters into "a trance-like state" of solace or even religious ecstasy in the course of the sacrament. While there may be a mutual exchange of affection in the encounter – it is "a delicate dance" – there can be no doubt as to who is submitting to whom. There is a captor and a captive. The captive might yearn to escape, but the "firm hand" of the human works to prevent it. The reader is encouraged to see this as an effort to build mutual trust. Two beings are connected here. It is an experience of "bonding" (92). But while she claims that the dog is now "unencumbered by the usual dominant forces of the world", what has in fact occurred is the substitute of one form of dominance with another. The transformation described is a vignette of the act of domestication; the wild dog morphs into the tame. But as Yi-Fu Tuan reminds us: "Domestication means domination: the two words have the same root sense of mastery over another being – of bringing it into one's house or domain" (99). That the act of controlling and submitting is veiled in a procedure that seems mutually pleasurable – the act of affection – belies the "microphysics of power" at work here. Yi-Fu-Tuan again:

> Affection mitigates domination, making it softer and more acceptable, but affection itself is possible only in relationships of inequality. It is the warm and superior feeling one has towards things that one can care for and patronize. The word care also exudes humaneness that we tend to forget its almost inevitable tainting by patronage and condescension in our imperfect world. (5)

Animal bodies are rendered docile through the various apparatuses of Western animal welfare and veterinary medicine. Feral and quasi-feral dogs in indigenous communities, once

defiant and resistant to human touch and technologies, come under the control (or under the spell) of expert human hands, and are transformed from their wild, unruly, sexual and aggressive state into one of calm, contentment and appreciation. In becoming dog, they internalize these conditions and so "[w]hen the captor's arms gently release their hold and the captive is free to run away, many a dog makes no move at all, preferring to remain in the comforting nest of a warm human lap" (Samson-French 92). In this way the original subject, a proud Indian Dog, becomes a new subject, the docile lap dog. The docile version seems to have internalized the ideology of its captivity, and now desires and approves of the benevolent hand of its master. Stuart Hall clarifies this aspect of knowledge construction, saying that for Foucault

> the 'subject' is produced within discourse… It must submit to its rules and conventions, to its dispositions of power/knowledge. The subject can become the bearer of the kind of knowledge which discourse produces. It can become the object through which power is relayed. (Hall 41).

"Superior feelings" and "condescension" are significant aspects of the production of "the pet dog" outlined here. The owners of these miraculously transformative laps – the corporeal apparatus that is deployed to render the animal into a docile and grateful subject – feel good about the work they do. They claim that the dogs they rescue and the dogs they sterilize or even euthanize are better off for their efforts, that they are delivering the right way of caring for animals into these communities. They are demonstrating to the First Nations, Inuit and Métis people what true animal care looks like, a brand of care that ostensibly transcends location, history and culture. DWNN speaks for the dogs with their promotional postcard inscribed with the note: "One behalf of all dogs with no name, wherever they may be. Thank you."

Foucault's studies of the subjugation and subjectification of prisoners, the mentally ill, homosexuals and medical patients have since been used to understand other populations, be they human or animal. Biopower, and its associated measures and methods of surveillance, enclosure, regimentation and regulation, would seem to be at work in myriad social and historical contexts, with many groups deemed to be unruly or unclean. The process described above, wherein a population of difficult dogs is bureaucratically managed by a group of experts in order to encourage them to submit and become "good dogs", and wherein those experts approach their project with an assured air of moral duty and paternal benevolence, rings achingly familiar in the context of indigenous/non-indigenous relations in Canada. That the dogs await their salvation, and are acquiescent and grateful for the guiding hand of the veterinarian, likewise should raise discursive red flags. I have shown in the previous chapter how the rhetoric of the Northern Dog Movement is racialized, even racist, and how the individual projects are often couched in terms of militaristic or missionary zeal as the various groups talk and write about their interventions in indigenous communities. The sad and dangerous fact is that much of this same discourse was used in the era of residential schools to validate similar actions. In 2013, Kevin James Ward (Mikisew Cree) from British Columbia, explored "the roots of Canada's incarceration of native children" through a Foucauldian lens in order to understand why the government created the now infamous and insidious institutional network. He showed how the rise of the residential school is comparable to the birth of the prison traced by Foucault, in that 18th century reforms moved Europe away from punitive and corporeal modes of punishment to the panoptical and correctional model. In *Discipline & Punish*, Foucault argued that in late 18th-century Europe, punishment "was inscribed violently on the body by means of instruments of torture and execution" but was later transformed, through the presence of Bentham's prison observation

tower, into a system where inmates were enclosed and under the constant gaze of officials. This proved to be a more effective means of population control: these new prisons would "strike the soul rather than the body" (Ward). "In other words," Ward suggests, Foucault showed how the new confine and observe model could "create in the inmate a self-conscious, self-correcting, and self-regulating mind and therefore body" (Ward). The prison became not a gulag to torture bodies, but "a machine to alter minds" (Ward). While coercive and physical technologies were absolutely a part of the regimen of residential schools, the overall goal was similar to that of the reformed, panoptical prison. The oft-quoted policy goal of the system, often misattributed to Duncan Campbell Scott, was not to kill Indians through a physical genocide. It was to "kill the Indian in the child," to leave bodies intact, but civilize the "savage" spirit within. It is also interesting to note that Foucault's "model institution" in the prison reform movement in Europe, the Dutch facility Rasphius, displayed a "maxim" over its front gate that read, "Wild beasts must be tamed by men" (Ward).

Taking its discursive cues from the residential school model, the Northern Dog Movement seeks, in essence, to "kill the Indian in the dog". The figure depicted in the black dog vignette in *Dogs with No Names* belongs to a category not of its own making – Indian – a category it is not self-aware enough to regard with contempt and disgust. The license plate that decorates his shelter reads "Indian and Proud of It!" This pride, this inner resource, must be extinguished. The Indian dog must be guided by the benevolent hand of the rescuer away from its territory (and family: puppies are routinely removed from their mothers) and delivered into the pampered pet world of southern White society. The movement does not seek to kill the dogs, as did those earlier attempts during the first half of the 20th century in Nunavut and Nunavik. Now the movement and its proponents seek to remove these animals from their traditional

spaces, to observe and monitor their activities, and to manipulate their animal natures with surgeries and other techniques of control. These dogs can no longer be allowed to live a free-ranging lifestyle; they must settle into good family homes. They can no longer be allowed to live according to their instincts and impulses. Like residential school children, northern dogs must be brought, with or without the permissions of their home communities, into "the circle of civilized conditions" (Ward). They must be assimilated.

Moving forward, the Northern Dog Movement needs nothing short of a radical discursive makeover. I do not doubt that some dogs are suffering in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. Nor do I doubt that some people are suffering from fear, injury, even death in these places. In the week leading up to National Aboriginal Day 2014, two personal encounters underscored this need for attention and also for changes in how the dominant culture talks about dogs and people in northern communities. At an Arts and Crafts Fair near my home, I met a woman from a northern Ontario community who helmed a small table full of homemade jewelry and figurines. We chatted about her handiwork, and then I asked her about dogs in her community. There was no hesitation: dogs are everywhere in the streets of her town, she said, and she is afraid of them. The situation is so dire that when she moves around her neighbourhood, she will often spend money on a taxi rather than walk and risk an aggressive encounter. There is an itinerant veterinarian that flies in and out from time to time, she said, but the problem persists. The dog population is out of control, and in her view, no one in her community cares about them. She was talking about her own people. They do not bring the dogs indoors, or feed them, nor do they spay or neuter them, a disregard that exacerbates the risks she faces. Tragically, a family member had been killed by dogs several years before. What happened to those dogs, I asked? Nothing, was the reply. The police do not care when dogs attack

indigenous people, she said. Action is only taken when a White person, or an indigenous member of the police force, is harmed. Growing up, she said, dogs were used for hunting and hauling. Her father always had dogs for these purposes. But nobody hunts with dogs anymore. The dogs have nothing to do. They run wild. They attack. They starve and freeze to death. According to this unofficial spokesperson, communities like hers face real dangers and they need real solutions. This I do not dispute.

Two days after I met the woman at the Aboriginal Day arts celebration, I attended a fundraiser for a rescue group currently active in Northern Ontario. The annual event was held in a space about as far removed from any such northern places as you could imagine, in a repurposed artists' cooperative and gallery in a trendy Toronto neighbourhood. A folk-rock band played while guests drank local wine and craft beer and nibbled on prosciutto-wrapped asparagus and brie cheese on crostini. In an adjacent room, a silent auction and merchandise table displayed gift baskets from nearby doggie spas, fashion hats and scarves stamped with the group's logo, work by local (Toronto) artists, homemade pet treats, a session of dog communication and canine reiki therapy. I later joked with a friend of mine that they should re-brand the organization "Huskies for Hipsters." Coincidentally (or not) a box of homemade dog treats I purchased that night had a label that read: "Better than licking a hipster!" Most attendees had "adopted" dogs from Northern Ontario. The room where we all gathered was decorated in a predominantly white theme: crisp white linens on high bar tables, white candles flickering in tall white metal candle holders, giant white paper lanterns hung from the ceiling. The room represented the pure and hope-filled heaven of a southern Forever Home.

A poster presentation lined the wall outside the event space, and featured a series of dogs that had been rescued by the group, with brief snippets of text to represent their stories. These

were the project's Beautiful Cases, and in keeping with Arluke's outlined criteria, the abusers in this instance were very much in the shadows. That is to say, they are not identified other than by the occasional use of the generic "the locals". They lurk behind the staged display of the main narrative, unseen and, unlike the dogs, unnamed. Nonetheless the understanding in reading these posters was that the humans who are inflicting such horrific acts against the dog are indigenous people. The lack of individual identities (names are never given, pronouns are always plural) leads the reader to assume that neglect and abuse are not isolated to certain marginal and monstrous individuals among the First Nations populations. These crimes belong to the entire community, to the indigenous Others. The poster series was titled "The Dog Hall of Fame" and included seven posters. They read:

[1]

Blended Litters

17 arrive at once.

Puppies are born under houses, in the bush or amongst debris.

Most mother dogs are killed and their pups are left to fend for themselves against the elements which can be minus 50 degrees in Winter.

[2]

Bernadette

Dogs are not taken indoors for the most part so they are free to wander and roam.

There are no veterinary services in these isolated areas so no spaying or neutering leads to over-population.

[3]

Olive

All dogs are at risk of being rounded up and shot at will. This is considered to be a method of population control and at times a ransom of $80 a tail is offered. Many locals would rather kill the dogs than see them taken out of the community.

[4]

Little Boy Lost

It is not just the dog shoot that threatens these animals. They face neglect, abandonment, carelessness and cruelty.

Even children find sport in harming a dog.

[5]

Jig

Dogs can be chased by trucks and snowmobiles and once hit they are left to die at the side of the road.

They are stoned, pulled behind bikes and beaten with sticks.

[6]

Mission

and Her Pups.

[7]

Little Man

They live in dismal conditions without care or consideration yet they remain hopeful.

Read together as a discursive package, the message these posters deliver is clear and troubling. While the First Nations dogs are at risk because of weather and lack of veterinary resources, the greatest threat they face is from the people of the community themselves. These are the people who refuse to take the dogs indoors. These are the people who prefer shooting dogs to allowing them to be rescued, who hunt the animals for the promise of a bounty on their tails (note the connotation of mutilation here, beyond the connoted cruelty of the kill). Beyond that, it is everything associated with these "locals" that seems to be a danger: their houses and decks, their vehicles, their rudimentary weapons of sticks and stones, and perhaps most damning of all, their children, who according to the posters hunt dogs for sport. Not only are indigenous people bad dog owners, they are bad drivers and bad parents too! One would think they are beyond redemption, and perhaps they are according to this regime of truth. Fortunately, the dogs can still be redeemed. Indeed, they are waiting for the redemption only the Northern Dog Movement can bring. That one of the animal success stories has been given the name "Mission" underscores the religious tone of the Northern Dog endeavour. She has been saved and is a good mother, in stark contradistinction to the bad mother of the first poster, whose promiscuity has led to multiple litters and who has disappeared and likely been killed. These are some of the same accusations leveled against indigenous women in Canada: they are bad mothers and daughters, their risky lifestyles are what put them in harm's way. Again, they are beyond salvation. But the dogs have hope. *The dogs wait.* They will be delivered from their struggles and pains. Small wonder that this fundraising event had somewhat the air of a religious revival. Small wonder, as

well, that the event was branded “For Dogs Sake”, a play on the Western idiom “For God’s Sake”.

Stolen Stories: Taking Control of the Narrative

Here, then, is the core issue moving forward. Non-indigenous people are attempting to take control, in some places and by various means, of the narrative of the Northern Dog. The mainstream media and the animal welfare community are the ones telling the story, and it is a story that has come to legitimate their continued intervention into First Nations, Inuit and Métis lands and lives. Southern white pet owners and Western animal welfare advocates enjoy the story of the northern dog – its iconic status as a survivor; its hardscrabble existence; its resiliency. They particularly like the husky breeds and crossbreeds – the aesthetic of that wolf-like appearance, its nobility and mystery. They are as fashionable as the war bonnets on supermodels and rock stars. In the Ontario project discussed above, adherents continue to refer to each of the 1,200 animals they have rescued as “Northern Dogs” whether they are pure husky or German shepherd mix or some scraggly version of the many toy breeds, terriers and Shih Tzus and dachshunds, and despite the fact that they now live in the South. Non-natives thrill to the idea of taming a thing of the wild, of assisting their rescue dog to adjust to life on the leash, on the sofa, on the café patio. They also very much like their version of life in a First Nations community – violent, ignorant, perilous.

Indigenous knowledge is lived and localized. It is connected to and emerges from the land. It is transmitted in story. When these stories are severed from the land in which they originated and circulated, they cease to make sense for indigenous people. Stories that emerge from distant locales and are projected back onto the land simply do not fit. We see a similar

trajectory throughout the dominant culture of Canada. Some native stories have been silenced; many have been sanitized for mainstream consumption; and still more have been outright stolen away from the land that gifted them to the people. Lenore Keeshig-Tobias is a member the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation, a poet and storyteller, and a passionate proponent of the power and importance of Native stories. She was also a cofounder in the 1980s of the Committee to Re-Establish the Trickster (CRET), whose aim was to promote indigenous art and literature, and address the ongoing problem of native cultural appropriation. According to Keeshig-Tobias, cultural appropriation is "taking, from a culture that is not one's own, intellectual property, cultural expressions and artifacts, history and ways of knowledge" (qtd. in Tsosie 300). It includes both tangible aspects of a culture, like Inukshuks, dream catchers and war bonnets, and intangible aspects, such as stories.

Can stories be stolen? And if so, are the repercussions really that serious? Keeshig-Tobias:

> Stories, you see, are not just entertainment. **Stories are power.** They reflect the deepest, the most intimate perceptions, relationships and attitudes of a people. Stories show how a people, a culture, thinks. Such wonderful offerings are seldom reproduced by outsiders. (Keeshig-Tobias 71)

Taking away indigenous stories means nothing short of sapping the power of a culture to know itself, to survive and to thrive. In the case of the Northern Dog Movement, as is the case with so many interventions in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, the stories must be returned to the land. This narrative battle is as potentially arduous, violent and impassioned as any of the struggles indigenous people are currently embroiled in across North America, be they the battle

for resources, for rights or self-government, for running water or adequate housing. But stories are life. Some may scoff that the appropriation of a name or image for the logo of a football team is a minor offense. Some may contend that the creation and sale of a feathered headdress is done so in tribute. But these are serious violations, according to Keeshig-Tobias, and they must be repatriated with all the narrative force a culture can muster. "If you want these stories, ***fight for them***." she says "I dare you" (73). Some important storytellers have already responded to her urgent call.

The Anishinabe writer and activist Winona LaDuke shares several dog stories in her contribution to the book *The Nature of Dogs*. Her essay is titled "Ishkoniganiisimoog – The Rez Dogs". Instantly we are confronted with a simple but effective method of cultural re-appropriation and resistance: she uses the Anishinabe word for Rez Dog. The message here is significant. Language is a vital part of indigenous culture, the very essence of voice and the vehicle for knowledge transmission from generation to generation. N. Scott Momaday said, "Language is an element, like the air, in which we live our daily lives" and it has been stolen as violently and tragically as any of the other aspects of indigenous life (Momaday). In her essay (discussed earlier), Lenore Keeshig-Tobias recounts the residential school student who was punished for speaking their own language by having a needle driven through their tongue: a graphic and powerful testament to language loss in the colonial era. Many indigenous languages today are in jeopardy as the remaining Elders who speak them are dying. That LaDuke flags her story immediately with the proper terminology is one act of linguistic revival, and of reconnecting people to the stories of their dogs. Elsewhere in her piece, she uses the word dodem, which means clan (the dominant culture is more familiar with the Anglicized version, totem) and explains two Anishinabe words for dog – Anishmimoshug and Odayi, the latter

“related to the word ode (my heart), in reference to the close relationship of the Anishinabeg to the Dogs” (96). She offers readers the terms for animals (awesiinyag), Great North Woods (Anishinabeg Akiing), Lake Superior (Gichi Gummi), puppy (bashkwadaash) and domesticated animal (awakaan). The limited but vital glossary LaDuke weaves into her essay speaks to the special status of dogs into Anishinabe communities, and also to the significance of place in that culture. Either of these would be diluted or utterly lost in the translation into English. For example, the English word “dog” does not carry the same emotional heft as “heart,” nor does it share the root “Anish” with the parallel term for people, Anishinabe. The English words for Lake Superior do not reference the spirit of that body of water as Gichi Gummi does. The words for Great North Woods do not connect the people to the land as solidly as does Anishinabeg Akiing. The subtle connections and distinctions between dog, wolf, puppy, animal and domesticated animal are all lost when the words are taken away. Similarly, in the efforts of the Inuit of Nunavik and Nunavut to repatriate their connection to the dogs and the land, it was imperative to revive the appropriate terms in Inuktitut, such as *qimmiq* and *qimmit* for dog and dog, *qimmiijaqtauniq* for the killing of dogs, and perhaps most potently, *qimuksiit*, the word for dog and human working together as one, and for which there is no good English equivalent (Laugrand and Oosten 89).

In resisting linguistic imperialism via these small gestures, LaDuke reminds her readers of the integrated ecology that connects people, dogs and land. Rez dogs, she writes, are like the land. Indeed, they are of the land. The word for reserve – ishkonjigan – is derived from the Anishinabe word for “leftover”. The word for the dogs that live on these reserves is *Ishkonigan*iisimoog. Outsiders see First Nations, Inuit and Métis lands as wild, lawless, chaotic, undeveloped, backward, primitive and dangerous. Insiders, like LaDuke, use words like

resilience, tenacity and fortitude. To the outsider, the rez and its dogs each have a negative connotation of being a less-valued scrap of land or life that has been left over from colonization. To the insider, like LaDuke, the word is more hopeful. These are the lands and the canine lives that have been set aside "with the foresight that future generations would need them" (95). Canadians are seeing this need manifest itself in many ways right now, as First Nations, Inuit and Métis people across the country seek a return to their traditional lands, through treaties, self-government, and also therapeutic reconnection to the land to help combat addiction, mental health issues and family and parenting issues. Indigenous Canadians are leading a resurgence in traditional modes of hunting and fishing and the defense of land from unchecked resource development. The dogs have been preserved for the newer generations, too. Should indigenous people seek to reconnect to them in similar ways? To repatriate their care to the communities to which they belong? Look to dogs for guidance? Ask the dogs to help revive traditional practices? Seek canine knowledge? For these dogs certainly do have their own history and their own knowledge. In past generations, notes LaDuke, the canines taught their human companions "much about relationships, extended family systems, loyalty, and the keen powers of observation" (95). Anishinabe modes of childrearing and parenting have their roots in "the teachings of the Wolf" (95). How can all Canadians avail of these wisdoms moving forward?

We can do so through story. Many of the projects and organizations associated with the growing Northern Dog Movement either ignore, erase or denigrate the stories of the indigenous communities in which they work. The mainstream media concentrates on stories of animal attacks, which while important to narrate, certainly do not paint a complete picture. The Northern Dog Movement is essentially complicit with this discursive formation. Writers like Winona LaDuke model a different approach. She incorporates several different types of narrative into her

essay on Ishkoniganiisiimoog in *The Nature of Dogs.* Each of these has a role to play in the Northern Dog Movement if we hope to bring indigenous people into the conversation. She recounts three traditional stories that demonstrate "that the dogs always lived with humans" (95). The first is a synopsis of the story of the travels of Original Man and Wolf, the same one narrated by Edward Benton-Banai in his *Mishomis Book.* She also provides a text credited to the anthropologist Truman Michelson and adapted by Alex DeCoteau. "Wenjiiwaad Animoshag/The Origin of Dogs" is the story of two Anishinabeg and their encounter with a benevolent giant and an evil cannibal. The giant's puppy, who has the ability to shake himself into a massive size, kills the villain and then accompanies the two men to safety. She concludes: "Then the Anishinabeg and the dog became friends, and all of those dogs come from that original puppy, who also became known as the Animosh (Dog)" (96). Finally, she re-tells the story of the Council of Animals, a historic meeting in which the dog split from its wild kin and allied itself with the humans. This explains the special connection between the domesticated dog and its human companions as well as the more troubled relationship between domesticated and wild animals that persists to this day (97).

LaDuke shares stories from her present day community as well, including the story of the John Beargrease Marathon, a 400-mile sled dog race that honours the legacy of an Anishinabe mail carrier from the late 1800s. She also recounts efforts on the White Earth Reservation in reviving and revering rez dogs, including local sled dog races and a "Rez Dog Competition… where families paraded their best contestants [who are] judged for wiliness, fortitude, tenacity and unusual breeding," a far cry from "the din and pomp of the Westminster Dog Show" and certainly a far cry from a dogless fundraiser and fête in a converted art gallery on Toronto's Queen West (97). Similar efforts to "[restore] the status of the dog in our community" in Canada

would be challenging (97). The simple and stark financial realities of life for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people are major barriers. The prospect of organizing and mounting an epic sled dog race seems impossible for many, although Nunavut Quest provides one template. Individuals might want to maintain a small dog team for hunting and hauling, but that maintenance likewise has an associated and sadly prohibitive cost. Even pet owners in such communities struggle with how to feed and house one small animal when they struggle with feeding and housing their own children. Still, let us look to the resilience of the rez dog for some optimism moving forward, suggests LaDuke. Efforts to eradicate them have continued to fail. Possibilities for revival and reclamation continue to reveal themselves.

In 2010, as discussed in chapter six, the Honourable Jean-Jacques Croteau released his final report on the Nunavik Dog Slaughter. Many of the Inuit communities impacted by the killing of sled dogs during the 50s, 60s and 70s are today grappling with the issue of stray, feral and aggressive dogs. In June 2014, for example, a 4-year old Inuk child was killed by dogs in the small village of Puvirinituq, and the attack was covered by most mainstream national media including the CBC, National Post and the Huffington Post. It was unclear whether the dogs involved were feral animals or members of a neighbour's sled dog team, but the press coverage again depicted the issue as pandemic in northern communities, citing other stories of dog attacks and referring again to the problem of stray dogs in Canada's North. It is an absolutely heartbreaking story. But it is not the only one that needs to be told.

In his report Justice Croteau detailed the ravages of relocation, residential schools, and the arrival of the Christian mission in Puvirnituq in the 1950s. He reported on the subsequent disease, disorder and death that struck both human and non-human animals in the decades subsequent. He also speaks to 45-year old Lisa Koperqualuk, who narrated the story of her

grandfather and the destruction of his dogs, and highlighted the importance of dogs to the very fabric of Inuit family and society.

> Based on the traditions and customs she knew of her childhood, she believed dogs were companions. They transported families to their camps, carried things. They hunted with the elders. To become independent, to take a wife, to feed his family, a man necessarily had to have a dog team. (45)

How do we bridge this seemingly insurmountable narrative chasm between a family ripped apart by dog violence and a family built upon the foundation of a good dog team? Based on the recommendations made in the Croteau report, the Quebec government in 2012 announced $3 million in compensation for the people of Nunavik in recognition of their slaughtered dogs. The money has been earmarked for several projects, among them to

- Promote the teaching and use of Inuktitut and syllabics in Nunavik;
- Promote the sale and distribution of Inuit art and sculpture;
- Organize sled dog races (Ivakkak) in Nunavik. (138)

The money will also be used to erect memorial plaques to the slaughtered dogs in each of the 14 communities affected. Put another way, in order to heal these communities must tell the stories of their dogs, how they lived and died with them, and how they envision their future together. This may include sled dog races that trace indigenous routes and re-member the integrated ecology of land-people-dogs; they are vehicles, literally and figuratively, for story. This may also include language revival, art and sculpture and community historic plaques; all are sites of re-membering, sites of story. “Re-membering,” according to Homi Bhabha, “is never a quiet act of introspection or retrospection. It is a painful re-membering, a putting together of the

dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present" (90). No one would suggest that indigenous dogs and indigenous people have an easy path ahead. But reviving, reclaiming and reconnecting via narrative is a promising place to start. And if there might be any doubt, consider this: the Croteau report – its unprecedented acknowledgement of the sled dog slaughter and the resulting apology and compensation – happened because the elders of Nunavik used their voices. They started telling their stories.

The Window and the Door: Narrative Perspectives

Beautiful Cases are the stories of the Western animal welfare movement, transmitting the "core imagery" that defines that community and fosters feelings of belonging, purpose and validation among its members. In the case of the Northern Dog Movement, these stories are told from the perspective of the outsider-expert looking in, the veterinary medical professionals and urban "dog lovers" who look from afar and see, in the remote distance, the "noble canine savage". They see this figure as struggling, suffering and savaging the human bodies it encounters as it roams the streets of indigenous communities. They see opportunities for salvation in the rescue and rehabilitation of these animal souls. They appropriate the nobility, sanitize and tame the "savagery," and iconize the animal for their own ideological purposes. This project is but one phase of a long legacy of canine and narrative colonialism in Canada. When the dogs of the indigenous northeast entered the colonial circuit of representation in the journals of early European explorers, they were objects of fear and loathing, wolfish and monstrous, eaters of excrement. Eventually, as the cinematic lens of the colonial gaze was trained on them, the original dogs became Hollywood heroes and emblems of Canadian nationalist pride, their wild aspect polished and idealized into canine caricature. Emptied of their animality, the dogs became tourism commodities, mascots and props. Today, they are vessels into which the animal

welfare community can pour all their ambivalence, discomfort and, ultimately, sense of superiority surrounding both animal and indigenous bodies. These sorts of stories have been told through what Donald Fixico calls the "window" perspective (24). Fixico (Shawnee, Sac & Fox, Muscogee Creek and Seminole) is the Distinguished Foundation Professor of History at Arizona State University, and an expert in oral history and indigenous knowledge. Like Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, he warns us of the danger inherent in the stories that have been told *about* indigenous people, not *by* them. These are stories that are told according to the Western linear view of history, one that sees past states, events and figures as primitive or underdeveloped versions of present-day entities. The progress myth that lies at the very heart of the colonial project has failed indigenous people time and time again.

Indigenous dog stories are told from a different perspective but serve similar functions as the Beautiful Cases. Fixico: "Stories actually bond the community together. The stories, as they are told, weave a fabric of continuity, holding the community together. They give a sense of place, time, people, feeling and identity" (29). However, instead of a window looking out upon and surveying a foreign landscape, indigenous story is "a metaphorical key for opening a door to the other side of understanding a community and how its people think, conceptualize in their logic, and draw conclusions based on their prior knowledge" (34). The Northern Dog Movement must start asking for and listening to these stories; they must prioritize what Fixico terms a "cultural reorientation" via story (34). They can continue to gaze out through the window and bluster around their own space making all manner of misinterpretations and mistakes. Or they can open the door, and share their stories with each other. Indigenous dog stories are not relics from a primitive past. "Time does not imprison a story," Fixico claims (22). According to the indigenous view of history, "All three parts of linear time – past, present, and future – are a part

of the American Indian circular understanding of a time continuum" (27). Stories of the sled dog slaughter according to this paradigm are not the emotional ramblings of old men. Stories of a time when dogs could talk are not the stuff of Disney fairytales. Stories are power. In their telling, "the past becomes the present… and they are lessons for the future" (25). In this way stories, according to Fixico, "perpetuate life" (24).

In her contribution to *The Nature of Dogs*, Winona LaDuke also shares personal narratives alongside the cultural narratives of the Original Puppy and the Council of Animals. She writes about her family's own dogs past and present, each one a rez dog with a unique and proud individual history. One, she says, was "imported from a Canadian Indian reservation" and LaDuke boasts of its storied pedigree: "Mother was a sled dog, daddy was a rez dog" (95). Another dog was named Wahompi (Soup) in honour of "a Lakota ceremonial practice of dining on puppies" (95). This minor aside, which she gives without elaboration or explanation, is an inside joke. As Elder et al. outlined in their article on animal practices, the eating of dog meat is taboo in Western cultures, and has been used to marginalize and racialize the immigrant Other in the dominant American culture (149). Similarly, Western readers would likely be shocked or disgusted by LaDuke's "dining on puppies" comment. But the White Dog Ceremony is a familiar ritual to several indigenous peoples. In Ojibwe tradition, it was a medicinal ritual of the Midewiwin (Angel). In the Iroquois tradition, it was a sacred event held to celebrate the changing of the seasons and to petition The Creator for continued plenitude in the harvest. The cooking and eating of a puppy with pure white fur was central to both rites, and the cheeky borrowing of this concept to name a contemporary pet is not only evidence of the role of storytelling in cultural identity, cohesion and continuity, but is also a fine tribute to the indigenous sense of humour. "Such humour breaks tension and brings people together," says

Donald Fixico, "Converse to the stoic stereotype, Indians laugh a lot. They are masters at teasing and superb joke tellers" (25). The writer and humourist Drew Hayden Taylor, who identifies as Ojibwe and Caucasian, examined this mastery in a 2000 documentary titled "Redskins, Tricksters and Puppy Stew," available online via the National Film Board.

LaDuke's contemporary and fellow Anishinabe writer Louise Erdrich offered an extended take on the same joke in her novel *The Antelope Wife*. One of her narrators (and this is an important distinction: not a character, but a narrator) is a rez dog named Almost Soup, who managed to elude his destiny as a religious sacrifice and enjoy instead a comfortable life as a companion animal. Almost Soup offers up canine history and survival advice to his human and animal kin, all with great wisdom and humour. His monologues are tributes to the value of canine knowledge in her community and also to the parallel lives both human and non-human creatures have led since the days of Original Man and Wolf. In this key passage, Almost Soup offers another small wink-of-the-eye moment about the tradition of eating dog meat. He also reflects upon the past of his canine ancestors, and advises on the importance of the canine-human relationship into the future:

> My friends and relatives, we have walked down the prayer road clearing the way for humans since before time started. We have gone ahead of them to present their good points to the gatekeeper at that soft pasture where they eat all day and gamble the night away. Don't forget, though, in heaven we still get to keep the bones they toss. We have kept our humans company in the darkest hours. Saved them from starvation – you know how. We have talked to their gods on their behalf and thrown ourselves in front of their wheels to save them from idiotic journeys, to the bootlegger's, say. We're glad to do these things. As an old race, we know our purpose. Original Dog walked alongside

> Nanabozhoo, their tricky creator. The dog is bound to the human. Raised alongside the human. With the human. Still, half the time we know better than the human. (182)

Both Erdrich and LaDuke provide keys to open a door onto the indigenous view of dogs. Dogs have knowledge that humans need for their future survival. Their lives have been bound together for all time, and we must continue to respect their wisdom and skill as we travel our parallel paths. We cannot forget them. We cannot forget our relations. LaDuke says that her current troop of resident rez dogs – Komodo, Biiboon and Maria – are an important part of her family life. But they are different too, and their joys and skills are a source of tremendous family pride. They chase small game animals, they howl at the spirits, they guard her home. They are not pampered and pedigreed props like the animals of the domestic domain, those "indoor" dogs. They are connected to the land, to the outside, which is where they also serve to connect indigenous people to their future: "Outside, the proud Anishinabeg rez dogs await their human friends to continue that path laid out millennia ago" (97).

The Rez Dog Rises Again

Outsider stories about dogs in indigenous cultures in Canada connect dog and place in a way that is intended to denigrate and devalue both terms. Whether it is mainstream news media coverage of dog attacks or the discourse of the animal welfare movement, and whether it is the northern dog or the rez dog or the more generalized street dog, the discursive effect is the same. The space identified in each term – rez, north and street – is tainted by the associated animal presence. And the animal is tainted by its association with the indigenous, remote, lawless and backward place. The ultimate goal of the dominant discourse is to separate the two components of the term: to remove the dog from the rez; to move it from north to south; to rescue it from a

life on the street and place it in a "forever home." You can take the dog off the rez, runs this line of Eurocentric thinking, and in doing so, you *can* take the rez out of the dog. This is desirable and necessary. It is the right thing to do. My contention is that the decolonization of such animal discourse should move in the exact opposite direction, and instead seek to re-connect indigenous dogs to their places. Winona LaDuke and Louise Erdrich do this for the rez dog, bringing the animal narratively back to the reservation and transforming the term "rez dog" into a badge of indigenous pride instead of a mark of dishonor. The Inuit storytellers of Nunavut and Nunavik in their courageous re-membering of the narratives of sled dog slaughter undertook a similar endeavour. In their stories, they succeed in breathing new life into the qimmiq, and in piecing back together the integrated ecology of land-people-dogs, which has been vital to the survival of these communities for all time. Both sets of story give us a model for other indigenous communities to emulate as they work to address the issues facing dogs in their lives.

Much of this crucial decolonizing work to date has centered on the figure of the rez dog in Native American and First Nations cultures. Erdrich and LaDuke are two examples of this; another is Mark L. Mindt. Mindt is a member of the Spirit Lake Nation in Arizona, an illustrator and creator of an educational comic book featuring the adventures of an indigenous superhero named KODA the Warrior. He uses the comics in his work as an elementary school teacher in the local tribal college. In 2005, he gave KODA a sidekick named Benny the Rez Dog. In their travels, they join forces to combat social ills facing Native Americans including negativity, racism, addiction and domestic abuse ("Companion"). Benny is a shape shifter and when needed can morph into the shape of his alter ego, Coyote. In illustrating this alliance, Mindt is able to revive the traditional stories of Original Man and the canine partner with whom he walked the earth, as well as the trickster tradition exemplified in the figure of Coyote, and bring these into

concert with the very contemporary storytelling medium of the comic book. These characters are strong, proud, admirable and resilient. They are the ultimate heroes, moral and pure, yet Benny maintains his wild aspect, which can be put to good use as the need presents itself. Canine nature and know-how are prized.

In 2009, *Art on the Avenue*, a series of installation pieces showcasing local student artists in Winnipeg, appeared on Portage Avenue. One of the works was titled Rez Dawg, and was created by Jackie Traverse. Traverse is an Anishinabe artist from Lake St. Martin First Nation and a graduate of the Fine Arts Program at University of Manitoba. Her artist's note indicates that the sculpture

> refers to the mixed-breed stray dogs on the First Nations reservations where even the dogs that do belong to people only go home to eat and sleep. I associate Rez Dawg with the underdog. My Rez Dawg appears happy here as though he's saying, 'If I can make it here… anyone can'. (Traverse)

Traverse uses her artwork to achieve several effects. At once, she honours the figure of the dog and its independent nature. She does not disparage the animal for not being owned, nor for the roaming behavior that is so upsetting to the dominant culture. She uses humour in the visual representation of the canine body: Traverse's Rez Dawg is a big, goofy, cartoonish character, a Rottweiler mix perhaps, with the words Rez emblazoned on its oversized collar. The collar also depicts a landscape of blue sky and evergreen trees, a reference to his original rural home. His tongue lolls to the side of his grinning mouth; his eyes are different sizes. He is neither a noble nor a handsome creature. He is not a purebred show dog by any means. He is also somewhere he should not be, in the middle of a city square, plopped down into a well manicured

patch of purple flowers. The use of the term "Dawg" aligns the figure with black urban culture, which simultaneously marks him as marginalized and "cool". Traverse is playing here, with concepts of the modern and the traditional, the rural and the urban, the animal and the human, the Indian and the White. Rez Dawg is a subversion of the Happy Indian motif; and a subversion of the rescued dog as well. Yes, he is in the city, collared and seated like a good dog. But his impish smile suggests he will not sit still for long. Rez Dawg is not complacent. Like his human counterparts on the rez, he is an underdog. But he is empowered. Like LaDuke and Erdrich's rez dogs, Rez Dawg is tenacious, resilient and adaptable: he can make it, here or there or anywhere.

"I Dare You": A Call to Narrative Sovereignty

Comic books and street art are stories, important ones, woven from the threads of both tradition and contemporary realities, eternally connected to the places from which they emerge. They are power; they are life. The model I am proposing is available to any indigenous community that seeks to use story to find better solutions for human-animal relations in the postcolonial era. Communities who choose to engage with the Northern Dog Movement must take back their dog stories, not give them away or allow them to be appropriated and co-opted for the validation of White western ideologies. This is not to say that they should refuse the efforts and expertise of the animal welfare movement or the veterinary profession. It is to say that the outsider entities must be invited into a dialogue with the communities they serve, not project their own voice on the event so heavily and so thoroughly that they smother the millennia worth of stories that came before. It is a matter of simple respect on the part of the movement. Narratively speaking, don't bulldoze; don't bully. To the leaders of these proliferating movements, a message: acknowledge the land upon which you move and work. Stop. Listen to its stories. Consider the footsteps and animal tracks that have been inscribed upon it since the

days of Original Man and Wolf. It is a matter of survival to the indigenous people and dogs as they follow the prayer path forward.

This might seem like much ado about dogs. How can this possibly be a priority when indigenous people in Canada face such pressing matters as tainted water, poverty, violence, spring flooding, substance abuse, unemployment, suicide, substandard housing, lack of medical care, lack of education funding, lack of hope? Comic books about rez dogs might seem frivolous, but in a survey of a wider trend in Native American comic books and other media, C. Richard King argued the texts could be seen as evidence of Lyons' rhetorical sovereignty (92). Scott Richard Lyons, writing on the decolonization of composition studies in post-secondary institutions, coined the term rhetorical sovereignty to express "what American Indians want from writing" (447). I am arguing for the same thing from all modes of storytelling, in all media. Sovereignty, according to Lyons, refers to "the right of a people to manage its own affairs, in its own place, in its own ways" (450). This is what I propose First Nations, Inuit and Métis people might consider pursuing in terms of their dogs as they become involved with the Northern Dog Movement. Expanding on Lyons' approach, I suggest a more expansive embrace of story: call it narrative sovereignty. Like its rhetorical version, narrative sovereignty can be seen as "the inherent right and ability of peoples to determine their own communicative needs and desires… to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse" (449). It is a mode of "resistance to assimilation" and it represents "nothing less than our attempt to survive and flourish as a people" (449). Stories really are that important. Are dogs? Absolutely. The dog-man unit is the basic building block of many indigenous societies. As seen in *The Mishomis Book*, for the Anishinabe it is the Original Relationship, and the one that provides the blueprint for all acts of creation and relation to come. As seen in the two truth commissions investigating

the dog slaughter, the qimmiq was the lynchpin that held together the vital kinship ecology of land-people-dogs. When it was removed by force, when those stories were silenced, the entire existence of Inuit communities in Nunavik and Nunavut was thrown into jeopardy.

The group Anishinabek Confederacy to Invoke Our Nationhood (ACTION) is "a union of sovereign Anishinabe individuals, communities and allies of other nations who are restoring our Anishinabek institutions in assertion of our sovereignty on our collective territories" (Kons). Based in Ontario, ACTION stages Unity Camps to promote land rights issues. They organize workshops for indigenous youth and develop alternative education programs. Like LaDuke, Erdrich, Mindt, Traverse and others, ACTION has honed in on the figure of the rez dog as the flashpoint of resistance, even of revolution. One ACTION member, who identifies himself as Kai Kai Kons of the Loon Clan, writes on the group's blog: "I believe if we restore a broken relationship we have with our brother the Dog Nation, then all else will follow through to help us get back up again" (Kons). Many indigenous peoples seek to take back their lands and language. Many are fighting to reclaim their culture, and reinvigorate their pride. It is a difficult path they have to venture down. Wouldn't the journey best be taken with the primal partner who has shown us the way so many times before? The Northern Dog Problem isn't just one problem among many for Canada's indigenous people. It is the original problem, the one that holds the key to unlocking many of the other barriers that stand in our way. Kons again:

> They say you can tell the shape of a community by the condition that its dogs are in and in most of our Anishinabek communities our dogs are overpopulated running wild in packs, starving and uncared for. In recent years a few dogs have even killed loved ones in some of our communities. If we are serious about "decolonizing" and moving forward within our communities we need to realize that some of our "stories" or "aatisookaan" are

> much more than mere legends. [We need to recognize] our sacred connection we have with our stories including the sacred relationship with the Dog and Wolf Nation. If we wish to talk about asserting ourselves to who we really are and moving away from the Indian Act then the first step should be restoring the relationship we have with our Dogs. (Kons)

That first step might look something like this.

His Territory

Lying in wait in a fortress he carved from beneath a sturdy old truck, the black dog raises his massive head to the license plate above. His eyes are alert and knowing: "Indian and Proud of It!" He nods. These words define who he is. They define all his relations. His shelter is crude, but it is warm and safe. It gives him a vantage point of the entire territory. He keeps watch. When his cousins come by to visit, they tell each other stories. Anishinabe and Ishkoniganiisimoog both. They belong to the same category, you know. They have walked the same roads for all time.

They talk of the past. Men with cameras and notebooks. Men with guns. The year they took the children away. They year the disease took so many more. They remember the first snowmobile, the last sled dog. Anishinabe and Ishkoniganiisimoog both. The first airplane and TV. The year the tourists came, in their ridiculous coats that did nothing to fend off the cold.

They talk of the challenges to come. Puppies and children suffering. Every cousin as hungry as the other. Everyone unsure and afraid.

But there is hope.

He crawls out from his den, and to the clover field where he stretches his old limbs, shakes his salt-and-pepper fur. He grows bigger. He looks out across the land. He feels it, solid and pulsing, beneath his massive paws. We are waiting for you, he tells the people. When you are ready, we are ready. Ready to take up the prayer path anew. "Together, Indian and Proud Of It!" He sets out for his daily rounds.

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Conclusion: Always Start with a Story: Notes from the Dog Days of a Newfoundland Summer

It is late June 2014, and I am sweating through a record-breaking and highly atypical heat wave that has stalled along the North Atlantic coast of Canada. I am in Newfoundland & Labrador – *home* – a place I return to at least twice a year, to visit my mother, to recharge my creative batteries, to read and write, to see and smell the ocean. This year, the unprecedented temperatures and humidity have slowed everyone, human and animal, to a sticky, panting, lethargic crawl. It seems the unlikeliest of settings for any further encounters with northern dogs, real or represented. And yet, there they are. A local news media outlet here in St. John's is reporting on a story about northern dogs, indigenous communities and human interventions. This is the headline:

Chinook Project Providing Veterinary Care in Sheshatshiu and Rigolet ("Chinook")

The story chronicles yet another iteration of the proliferating Northern Dog Movement covered in the previous section. And the Northern Dog Movement in general represents the nadir of a centuries-long process of discursive conquest and appropriation of the figure of the northern dog, as I have traced it over the course of the three sections of my dissertation. But this specific example, coming as it does near-perfectly timed with the finale of my writing on the topic, and also the occasion of my annual trip back east, hits particularly close to home.

The Chinook Project is a Northern Dog Project administered by the Atlantic Veterinary College at the University of PEI. Each summer they travel to different places in Canada's north to deliver veterinary care. They usually bring veterinarians, students and a coordinator, and they set up a mobile clinic where they spay, neuter, de-worm and vaccinate local dogs. They work in

concert with provincial and local governments. Their mission clearly states that the team "*goes only where it is invited* and performs only the veterinary procedures that are *requested* by dog owners and communities" (chinookproject.ca, emphases mine). Education is a focus for both the community and the team members. The veterinary experts run an "open" clinic and invite anyone to come and observe their activities. They try to make their operation blend in with the community while they are there. They take on local student volunteers; they talk to children about animal welfare, and to adults about the basics of veterinary medicine. Team members will go door-to-door informing people about their goals, and encouraging them to spay or neuter their animals. They will also attend cultural events where they share in communal meals, learn local music and dance traditions, and yes, take dog sled trips out on the land. One of the other aims of the Chinook Project is to incorporate the power of narrative. Team members are encouraged to write stories and reflect on their experiences in journals and online blogs.

In the summer of 2014, Chinook travelled to Sheshatshiu, an Innu community in Labrador, and Rigolet, an Inuit community. I am connected to both places. Sheshatshiu is the "rez side" of the settler community of North West River. It is a troubled Innu community of 1,300, and often finds its way into provincial and national headlines for issues such as solvent abuse and violent assaults ("Sheshatsiu"). Many of the Innu there have the English surname Rich. My genealogical research tells me there is no relation between these people and my family, but I am not entirely convinced. Across the water, North West River is a historic English trading post; my ancestors lived and trapped there.

Rigolet is part of Nunatsiavut, the self-governed Inuit territory that lies within Labrador. Rigolet has a population of approximately 300, and is only accessible by sea or air. In the winter, you can get there by snowmobile or dog sled. Known as Kikiaq in the indigenous dialect, the

community was founded as a French-Canadian trading post in 1788, and its more familiar name derives from the French word for channel (rigoulette). It was a busy centre of trade and commerce for centuries. In 1836 the Hudson's Bay Company set up shop there, and it became one of the Company's most important hubs. The fishers and trappers that supplied the Post came from places like Double Mer, Pottles Bay and a small "winter place" about 25 km northeast of Rigolet called Rocky Cove. An 1873 map created by the Moravian mission shows two families living in Rocky Cove: the Olivers and the Riches. My grandfather Henry John Rich was born there in 1908 ("Rigolet").

Here is one thing I know about my grandfather: when he was a young boy, his mother died (likely from the Spanish Flu epidemic that devastated Labrador) and he was taken away from his trapper father and family, and sent to an orphanage in St. Anthony, Newfoundland. He eventually settled far away from Labrador, in central Newfoundland with his wife Ethel, and they had a very small family of four children including my father. The family was very dysfunctional. When the Rich children became young adults they each left home in their turn and rarely kept in touch. My grandfather eventually came to live with my parents, brother and me when his wife died in the 1980s; I was 12 years old. He was a very sad, perhaps clinically depressed man who didn't talk much and never talked about his past. In the few photos I have managed to locate of him as a young man, he had cut or scratched his face from the image as though he wanted to erase the past and his own identity. I have learned within the past year that the orphanage he was taken to as a boy was, in fact, a residential school – the St. Anthony Orphanage and Boarding School – and survivors are currently involved in a class action lawsuit regarding sexual and physical abuse they endured there (Nonato). This level of trauma would certainly explain my grandfather's difficult relationship with the past.

Here is another thing I know about my grandfather: before residential school, and even during his time in the orphanage, he had sled dogs. I have always sensed that the trauma he endured as a boy, being removed from his home and family and sent away to a residential school, was somehow intertwined with these dogs and their loss. It was one of the few aspects of his past he would talk about, and one of the few that were acknowledged in our family. My Dad talked with tears in his eyes about a beloved sled dog that he wished was actually his pet. Others talked about my grandfather driving a dog team for the legendary Sir Wilfred Grenfell, whose mission ran the orphanage and schools where so many Labrador children were placed. We always had a subscription to *Them Days* magazine in our house, a still thriving quarterly that collects and preserves stories of early life in Labrador. Sometimes it featured trappers' tales, sometimes by people with the same last name as me, and their exploits on the frozen land and rivers mesmerized me. One Christmas, when my elderly grandfather lived with us, we gave him a soapstone carving of a dog team. It sat on top of our TV for years, and now I am struck by the contrast between the two media, one a tribute to his severed past, standing atop another with its flickering images of mainstream televised culture. He never really seemed to focus on either. The TV was always on, the carving always there, motionless. My grandfather always sat in the same spot on our living room sofa and stared out the window instead.

That dog team carving now sits on a shelf in my Toronto apartment, tucked in behind my own flat screen television. Sometimes I watch documentaries on dogs on my TV; sometimes I watch the news, scanning for reports of dog attacks or for advertisements for northern sled dog getaways. The carving is also directly in my line of vision as I sit at my desk and write, a touchstone and a talisman, a reminder of the issues and questions that compelled this project in the first place. Would my family story be different if my grandfather had been able to stay in

Labrador, connected to the land and the dogs, instead of living out his days stuck between the difficult memories and the well-intentioned tchotchkes of our southern home? Would the story of Canada had been different if northern dogs (and people) could have resisted the involuntary transformations wrought upon them by the colonial circuit of representation?

I have always been drawn to the idea of northern dogs. As a kid in elementary school, I would read *Them Days* magazine and write poems and draw pictures about northern scenes of indigenous people and their dogs. As a young woman, I went to work at an advertising agency. My first major assignment was to write a promotional video script for a sled dog race in Labrador. As a mature student returning to school to complete my Master's degree, I found myself studying in Northern Ontario and volunteering with dogs in Kashechewan First Nation. My life has always unfolded in parallel with northern dogs. Now, as I write through the strange and sweltering dog days of a Newfoundland summer, I am struck by the coincidence of a news story detailing the arrival of a veterinary team in the two northern communities that mean the most to me. Once again, I feel my attention and my heart being drawn northward, to Sheshatshiu and Rigolet and to the northern dogs who live there, side by side and living out their parallel lives with the Innu of Nitassinan and the Inuit of Nunatsiavut. The Chinook Project is having their story told in the mainstream media, on their web site and member blogs, and in the halls of academe where their results will doubtlessly be presented in the years to come. Will their presence in northern communities make a difference for dogs and people? Will their efforts help in the healing and re-membering of the integrated ecology of humans, dogs and land? Or will their interventions continue the colonial project of ripping this vital triad of kinship apart as has been the case in decades past?

I think of my grandfather being taken away from the north and placed in a residential school away from family, from tradition, away from the land. Eventually, he would be sent to college in the United States, in attempt to turn him into a tradesman instead of a trapper, to orient him towards "civilization" as opposed to tradition. I think of the trauma this severance caused, and how it continues to affect my own life and family. I think of the attitudes, however well-meaning, of the mission that swooped into the tiny community of Rocky Cove and removed those children from their families. How they washed their bodies, cut their hair, pulled their rotten teeth and dressed them in second-hand clothes donated by wealthy Americans. How they taught them their letters and numbers. Taught them to drink from china tea cups. It is an all too familiar story from this country's past.

In our present day, we know this was wrong. We know we cannot do this any longer to northern and aboriginal children. But what about the dogs? Is it acceptable to treat them this way?

Dogs have long figured into the history of indigenous/non-indigenous relations in this country. In the first three chapters of my dissertation I considered some of the first reports of New World animals that were dispatched to the Old World by explorers and ethnographers such as Knud Rasmussen, Glover Allen, Martin Frobisher and John Davis. They were struck by the dogs' wild aspect, their size and speed, their wolfish appearance and "savage" propensities. The animals were depicted as unreliable and unrefined. The indigenous people associated with them were portrayed as inept custodians and brutally unforgiving masters. Still, colonial fascination with the dogs continued into the era of ethnographic film, as pioneers such as Thomas Edison and Robert J. Flaherty played the "savagery" of northern dogs against their more appealing traits – such as the power and skill of the adult animals, and the cuteness of the pups – to further

entrench the stereotype of the "noble canine savage" in the collective imagination. Finally, as colonial cultural producers perfected their preferred narrative, the northern dog was completely de-contextualized and sanitized, polished beyond recognition into a stereotyped and anthropomorphized icon of nationalist pride. The films of the National Film Board and the texts of national tourism marketing campaigns showed the culmination of these representational practices, as the animal was now completely drained of both its animality and indigeneity, and reconfigured as a commodity custom-made to benefit and bolster the dominant culture.

Section two of this dissertation was an attempt to re-contextualize these iconic creatures by re-connecting them to their original places and to the people with whom they have worked, played, navigated, hunted and survived for millennia. This ongoing effort, one which I argue must continue into the future, involves re-inserting the northern dog into the framework of indigenous knowledge, a process that can be achieved in part by simply agreeing to listen to indigenous stories. Many such stories were considered in this section, notably origin stories from across various indigenous cultures, which explained the timeless partnership between humans and dogs, and also more recent efforts to reclaim the figure of the dog in indigenous-led media and cinema projects. At the heart of this section (indeed, its inspiration) was the concerted effort of the Inuit of modern day Nunavut and Northern Quebec to take back the stories of their *qimmiq*, and re-member the integrated dog-human-land ecology that long defined and cohered their society. These efforts centred on a relatively unknown chapter in Canadian history, the alleged slaughter of thousands of sled dogs across Canada's north in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. While I tried to sidestep any conclusion on whether or not the slaughter actually took place (the debate rages on in academic and other circles), I did conclude that the act of narration, as exemplified in the elder testimony presented at two Truth Commissions, signaled a crucial way

forward in addressing many aspects of relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians.

The power of story is the central theme of my final chapters as well, as I consider how best to address issues of neo-colonialism in the contemporary Northern Dog Movement, such as the Chinook Project in Labrador. Here, I identify a recent media revival in the portrayal of northern dogs as "savage" trouble-makers, and of indigenous people as backward barbarians. I also call attention to the troublesome idea that the only positive force in indigenous Canada is the civilizing force of outsider intervention from the dominant culture. These ongoing discursive trends support a dangerously divisive and racialized idea of Canada, and while the fate of dogs may seem inconsequential in the grand scheme of northern life today, I argue that the dogs are as vital to indigenous futures as they were to indigenous pasts. In fact, it is precisely because dogs have been so central to native culture for so long, that finding a better way to approach the Northern Dog Problem will help to create healthy indigenous communities overall. The canine piece of the puzzle is no small piece.

My grandfather was a residential school survivor. His life and the lives of successive generations of Riches have been shaped by efforts of colonial agents – in our case, by the Christian mission in Labrador and northern Newfoundland – to assimilate northern people into the southern way of life, to convert and educate them, to remove them from their land, their stories and their traditional ways of knowing. While much has been written already about this era in Canadian history, what has not been addressed is the place of northern dogs in it. For me, this means discovering the truth about my own family, and how the life of one man severed from the integrated ecology of humans-dogs-land continues to reverberate long after his death. More broadly speaking, this entails shining a spotlight on the possibility that the next wave of outsider

intervention across Canada's indigenous north is being played out in the contested realm of animal welfare – who knows best for the dogs, who sets the standards, who tells the story. Filmmaker Robert J. Flaherty thought he knew best when he turned his ostensibly objective lens on the Inuit people and dogs of the Canadian Arctic, turning them into Hollywood caricatures. The NFB thought they knew best when they created the figure of Tuktu and offered him up as an authentic vehicle for the transmission of indigenous dog stories. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police thought they knew exactly what was best for native people and dogs, when they shot the diseased and free-ranging members of the canine population, and promoted a new value system of settlement and snowmobiles, a wage economy and Western concepts of law and order.

Now the Chinook Project is in Labrador, spaying, neutering and rescuing dogs that may very well be the descendents of my grandfather's dogs. Does this veterinary team from PEI know what's best as well?

The Chinook Project is composed of expert-outsiders, and they bring with them a wealth of Western knowledge and skills, but they also seem to be adopting a more cooperative and respectful approach than other groups of this kind. They are not at war with the communities they aim to serve. They do not impose their interventions, nor do they isolate themselves from the people and cultures they encounter. They train their members to work through the complicated issues that arise from their northern experiences by keeping journals and telling stories. And they nurture more equitable and enjoyable relationships with indigenous people by listening to the stories they have to tell. Indeed, I first learned about the Chinook approach at a 2010 conference in Guelph, Ontario that explored the intersection of veterinary medicine and literature. The conference built on the work of the veterinary college Dean who was already exploring ways "to foster communication, enhance understanding and empathy, facilitate ethical

inquiry and explore the human-animal bond" in her classrooms through "the integration of literary texts into medical curricula" (Stone and Weisert 1249). As they presented their ideas at the conference, I could see the Chinook Project was trying to do things a little differently, and theirs is a model to which the other Northern Dog Projects should be aspiring.

The call to narrative sovereignty sounded in my final chapter is not a call to shut down dialogue between indigenous communities and the rest of Canada. It is, rather, a call to end the discursive monopoly the dominant culture has tried to impose on the figure of the northern dog for far too long. Veterinary medicine and Western animal welfare are important and necessary to the conversation, and to the future health of northern communities. But they must be delivered within an appropriate framework of local, lived indigenous knowledge. Striking the right balance will be a difficult undertaking. Story must be the starting point.

Glossary of Key Terms

Animal: non-human animal; an admittedly problematic and monolithic term, one that is socially constructed through human linguistic categorization and which denies the agency and diversity of non-human life. In conventional usage, the term can be seen to entrench the hierarchical human-animal divide however, when used within the framework of *all my relations*, it is my hope that the term loses some of its connotations of absolute difference and dominance.

Colonialism: a form of imperialism, colonialism is "the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically" (OED). In my work, colonialism also refers to the collective cultural attitude which underpinned the Western European project of settling Canada, and which persists to the present day. Colonialism is a mode of ongoing oppression akin to racism and sexism.

Colonial Culture: the dominant culture in Canada, namely the culture whose members enjoy the advantage of controlling media and other cultural outlets, and who see themselves reflected in the texts of mainstream cultural production.

Extinct: in common usage, this term signifies "no longer living" (OED), a concept which becomes highly problematic, if not outright impossible, when considering that stories perpetuate life (Fixico) and as long as the spirit memory endures, indigenous people can never truly be extinct. This term is often used in association with indigenous nations thought to have died out with the 'last of their tribe' (e.g. the Beothuk), and every attempt has been made to flag it in this dissertation by qualifying the term. When it is used in animal contexts (e.g. the *qimmiq* is thought to be an extinct breed) the same caution should be exercised.

Gaze: in cultural studies, the act of looking that determines subject/object relations and thus defines an asymmetrical relation of power. Laura Mulvey (1977) identified the male gaze in mainstream cinema as the look which creates and objectifies the female. Likewise, John Berger (1980) has written on the one-way gaze of human-animal interactions.

Imperialism: the extension of power of a dominant culture through various cultural, political and/or ideological means. In my work, this is most often a matter of cultural imperialism, namely the production and distribution of texts and images that promote the ideologies of the dominant group in Canada, especially in print culture (e.g. magazines) and tourism marketing.

Indigenous: originating in a place; an inclusive term used for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. Some find this word problematic, as it defines people and cultures according to a colonial frame of reference, and also because it muddies the rich diversity of many distinct cultures. While acknowledging these shortcomings, I prefer it as a term precisely because it connects people to place: to the land and to the localized knowledge that emerges there.

Indigenous Knowledge: experiential knowledge that emerges from place, that is transmitted in stories, and that cannot be separated out from interconnected ways of knowing and doing.

Narrative: different than story, narrative and narration refer to the presentation of a sequence of events by a narrator; narrative forms the basic core of an individual story, with the difference that story is more properly seen as the vessel for transmitting indigenous knowledge and memory.

North: following Daniel Francis, North in the context of my research is a myth, a social construction that exists in the cultural imagination of Canada. "To a Canadian," says Francis, "North is more than a point on the compass. To a Canadian, North is an idea, not a location; [it is] a myth, a promise, a destiny" (152).

Northern Dog: a figure or trope constructed in the dominant cultural imaginary. The Northern Dog is not an individual animal or breed, but rather a product of the various practices of representation.

Northern Dog Movement: my term for the unofficial and loosely connected set of agencies and organizations in Canada whose aims include the delivery of mobile veterinary medicine into indigenous communities; the reduction of canine populations in these communities; and the removal of dogs from these spaces and subsequent relocation to more southern areas. Taken together, these issues further constitute what may be termed the Northern Dog Problem.

Representation: "the production of meaning through language" with language being defined broadly as "any sound, word, image or object which functions as a sign" (Stuart Hall 28, 19)

Savage: a problematic (read: racist) term, which has deep roots in the colonial project, most typically used as a way to dehumanize and denigrate indigenous people. "Savage" typically connotes a base and animalistic nature, one that is uncivilized and unpredictable. The same term, with similar connotations, is also applied to indigenous dogs. It appears in this text in quotes to call its ethnocentric bias into question.

Story: More than an act of simple narration, "[s]tory is the basis of American Indian oral tradition. Story is the vehicle for sharing traditional knowledge and passing it from one generation to the next. Its purposes include sharing information, providing lessons in morality, confirming identity, and telling experiences of people. Stories sometimes tell us about the future" (Fixico 22-23).

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