THE ORDERING OF THINGS: NARRATIVE GEOGRAPHIES OF BLOODY FALLS AND THE CENTRAL CANADIAN ARCTIC

by

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Abstract

This study examines the geographies of the Bloody Falls massacre story, an account of a massacre of a group of Inuit by a group of Dene allegedly witnessed by explorer Samuel Hearne along the Coppermine River in July 1771. Working from an understanding of story as a relational and material ordering practice, and based on archival, ethnographic, and other qualitative research methods, I consider how the storying of Bloody Falls has ordered colonial and capitalist relations, relations of violence and desire, and relations of decolonization and Indigenous self-determination in the Central Canadian Arctic. The study contributes to theoretical, empirical, methodological, and ethical concerns in geography. I intervene in debates about the materiality of knowledge, power, and practice and suggest that recent turns to the material and the ontological in geographic scholarship risk abandoning important theoretical and political resources that are necessary for producing engaged and informed knowledge about the colonial past and present. Drawing on actor-network, feminist, postcolonial, and antiracist theories as well as geographic understandings of discourse, I advance a more rigorously materialist assessment of discursive processes and consider the methodological implications of tracing cultural, economic, and political geographies through stories. The study also contributes to understandings of the Bloody Falls massacre by highlighting the importance of copper in the event and describing the ways in which Inuit and Dene story the massacre and its implications. I advance an alternative framework for understanding northern Indigenous geographies and Indigenous-settler relations in Canada involving attention to the geographies of response and responsibility and to the materiality, relationality, and practices of storytelling. At a time when increased attention is being focused on the Canadian North, whether in terms of climate change, sovereignty, resource extraction, or militarization, this study elaborates a critical narrative geography of the region that might facilitate efforts to decolonize northern knowledge and practice.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

“[to] free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently”

- Michel Foucault

This study has been written during a time of immense interest in the Canadian North. Spurred in large part by evidence of climatic change and expectations that global warming will transform the environmental, economic, and geopolitical significance of the Arctic region, international attention is trained on the people, places, and things described in this study to an unprecedented degree. As the prospect of an increasingly ice-free Arctic raises possibilities of expanded shipping, mining, and drilling in the region, both polar and non-polar nations are scrambling to map and claim the region’s riches. The federal government’s new northern strategy aims to transform northern “potential into prosperity” (Government of Canada 2008) with particular focus on facilitating resource extraction and ensuring Canadian sovereignty over northern lands and waters. Amid these geopolitical rumblings Inuit struggle to place their concerns at the forefront of northern “development”, insisting not only that they have a primary claim to the lands and seas of the Arctic (Inuit Circumpolar Council 2009), but also that the federal government live up to the promises of the northern land claim agreements and devolve jurisdictional controls to northerners. Struggling to address not only rapid environmental change but also the social and cultural legacies of colonial rule, northern communities are simultaneously under immense scrutiny and systematically sidelined in the “new North” heralded by politicians and investors. Meanwhile, international networks of activists and policy-makers strive to conserve particular species and landscapes in the region while the very lands and animals at stake themselves shift under rapidly changing environmental conditions. Far from the timeless, mythic
place of nationalist imaginations, it seems fair to say that the Arctic is in fact a site of great political, cultural, environmental, and social change.

These changes do not occur in an historical or geographical vacuum. Contemporary Arctic geographies are shaped by histories of imperialism and colonialism, by the specific racializations elaborated in Canadian settler societies, by historic and contemporary flows of capital and resources, by state and missionary activities in the region, and by Inuit and other Indigenous political movements. Although some continue to imagine the Canadian North as an isolated, timeless, and far flung region whose very isolation and starkness anchors the nation’s symbolic economy, the Arctic is in fact deeply relational, a place constituted both imaginatively and materially by networks of people, ideas, and other things. Because of its immense symbolic and imaginative valence in Canada, the narrative articulation and organization of these networks of people, ideas, and things is particularly stark in the North (Grace 2002; Hulan 2002). That is, perhaps more than any other region, the Canadian North is constituted and ordered by stories that make legible the connections between particular people, places, and ideas.

By stories I refer not only to the classic tales of Farley Mowat and Pierre Berton (although these certainly make legible a particular form of relation between southern and northern Canada), and not only to the rich stories animating Inuit oral traditions, but also to the narrative construction of knowledge more generally and to the notion of story as a relational and material ordering practice. Stories, I argue, are not something separate from, nor merely representative of, the world around us; they are themselves material and intimately bound up with “the materials in which they are carried” (Law 1994, 142). As such, the stories anchoring knowledge of the Arctic are significant not only because of their imaginative force, but also because of their influence over the very material conditions of life in the region. Similarly, the shifting geographies of
capital, resources, governance structures, and climate in the contemporary Arctic are made
sensible, legible, and political through stories.

One of the most prominent stories shaping understandings of the Central Arctic and
particularly relations among Inuit, Dene, and Euro-Canadians is the Bloody Falls massacre story,
initially told as early as 1771 and reproduced countless times since then. It recounts the alleged
massacre of a group of Inuit camped along the Coppermine River in mid July, 1771, near present
day Kugluktuk, Nunavut. The Inuit were allegedly attacked by a group of Chipewyan Dene who
had guided Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) explorer Samuel Hearne to the river from Prince of
Wales Fort, a distance of more than two thousand miles. Hearne had been dispatched by the HBC
to look for copper rumoured to exist around the river’s mouth, to establish good relations with the
Indigenous peoples of the region, and to search for a northwest passage. His journey was
essentially a failure on all three counts, but his description of the massacre, published in 1795,
became an iconic Arctic story that was taken up with great enthusiasm in Britain upon its
publication and continued to be re-invoked and re-imagined throughout the following two
centuries.

It is a brutal story. Hearne conjures images of ruthless, bloodthirsty Chipewyan Dene
men and their unwavering compulsion to murder, torture, and pillage. He describes the massacre
as an uncivilized ambush in which sleeping families of Inuit are jumped upon, helpless, in their
tents, and naked young Inuit women are eviscerated with spears. Most importantly, Hearne
describes himself as neutral, horrified, and helpless; he describes his pained efforts to prevent the
massacre but laments that his efforts were in vain. Eventually he opts to arm himself in self-
defense, lest a fleeing Inuit victim come upon him and mistake him for an enemy, and casts his
participation in the event as inert, observing, and deeply traumatic. Hearne named the site of the
massacre “Bloody Fall” in memory of the event, a name that persists to this day and marks a
series of rapids along the river and the adjoining land upon which the attack is alleged to have occurred\textsuperscript{1}.


\begin{quote}
engenders an early version of whiteness in the Canadian North simultaneously embedded within overt colonial articulations of power and the vestments of innocence. The text renders a prototypical version of the Great White North as a colonial landscape … , develops a harsh landscape aesthetic, … systematically dehumanize[s] [Indigenous peoples] through racist ethnography … [and advances] claims to European authority through surveillance and intellectual management of “undiscovered” space.
\end{quote}

This is a compelling and important reading of Hearne’s text, but it is also limiting. As much as critical research into Hearne’s narrative aims to trouble and unsettle geographies of colonialism, whiteness, and racism in Canada, in many ways these critiques re-inscribe the very relations of power they aim to undermine. No account of Inuit and Dene relations with the story is provided, nor are \textit{practices} of storying Bloody Falls considered. It is the text, understood as words and ideas, that is highlighted, while familiar lines between Indigenous and settler, colonizer and colonized are assumed and reinforced.

This dissertation begins from another place. Based upon four years of qualitative research in Kugluktuk, Nunavut (a primarily Inuit community approximately 15 km from Bloody Falls) and archival research across Canada and the United Kingdom, I attend to the material and

\textsuperscript{1} There is more than one name for the rapids. They are known as “Kugluk” among Innuinaqtun speakers (a general noun for “rapids”) and specific parts of the rapids and adjoining land are also named in Innuinaqtun, such as “Onoagahiovik”, a gravelly stretch of land along the western edge of the river known as the “place to stay all night and fish” (Evyagotailak 2007; Meyok 2007).
relational geographies of *storying* Bloody Falls rather than to Hearne’s text as a wholly representational or imaginative signifier. I consider story as practice rather than text, and address in particular the relationality and materiality of storying. Story both emerges from relations and orders relations; stories are not simply *about* things, they make *material* particular relations between people, places, and things and their telling and re-telling can have transformative effects. Although the Bloody Falls massacre story has circulated most widely as a piece of writing, either as part of the longer published travel narrative within which it initially gained notoriety in Europe or as an excerpt in various books, magazines, pamphlets, and novels (e.g., Coates 1985; Laut 1918; McGhee 2004; McGoogan 2003; Mowat 1958), it is not only encountered as letters on a page, and a substantial portion of this dissertation is devoted to efforts to story Bloody Falls through flowers, plaques, rocks, and other things, as well as to conscious efforts to forget the massacre.

This dissertation, then, is about the making of worlds. It is about how stories make worlds – imaginatively, physically, socially, materially – and in particular how the Bloody Falls massacre story has made certain worlds possible while foreclosing others. Working from an understanding of story as a relational and material ordering practice, and based on a range of qualitative research methods, I consider how the storying of Bloody Falls has ordered colonial and capitalist relations, relations of violence and desire, and relations of decolonization and Indigenous self-determination in the Central Arctic. Although penned in the shadow of some formidably durable northern tropes, I have attempted in this dissertation to story the north *differently*. Rather than simply critique the racialized, colonial, exploitative relations certain northern discourses make possible, I have followed the Bloody Falls massacre story and the things of which it is comprised to other, sometimes surprising places. In so doing, I have not only
proposed alternative ways of knowing the North but have also outlined a different framework for conceptualizing story, Indigeneity, and colonialism.

I make three main arguments in this study. First, I argue that stories are material\(^2\). This argument should not be read as a claim that story is somehow not representational, ideological, or textual, but rather as an identification of the emphasis I place throughout this study on the materiality of stories and storytelling. Stories trace relations between people and things and I am specifically concerned with the ways in which such tracings materialize. Much of what follows can be understood as an effort to attend to the material composition and material effects of stories. Second, I argue that practices of storying Bloody Falls reveal important geographies that tend not to appear in studies of the discursive production of North, colonialism, and Indigeneity. By attending to how, why, under what terms, and to what effect people story Bloody Falls, I propose alternative understandings of colonialism (including notions of Indigenous resistance and counter-stories) and of the Bloody Falls massacre itself. Third, I argue that the relational geographies of story implicate a much broader range of people and things in the Canadian North than tend to be acknowledged in conventional accounts of North as a distant, isolated, “other” place. This line of argument should not be understood as a continuation of the longstanding nationalist claim that Canada is a “northern nation” with inherent and essential claims to its northern territories. Instead, it emerges from poststructuralist, posthuman, and postcolonial theories of relationality and responsibility that aim to situate productions of people and places as distant and different. If, as Haraway argues, when we “touch and are touched” by a story we “inherit” different relations and begin to “live” different “histories” (2008, 37), part of my intention in this study is to consider the geographies of such inheritances.

\(^2\) I elaborate in Chapter 2 on how I conceptualize the word “material”.
Following a more detailed introduction to the Bloody Falls massacre story and to Kugluktuk in this chapter, I provide an extended discussion of my approach to story and the broader literature within which this study fits in Chapter 2. I consider geographic as well as other disciplinary approaches to story and storytelling, Inuit and Northern Studies, and Colonial, Postcolonial, and Indigenous Geographies. In Chapter 3 I discuss the methodological aspects of attending to story as a relational and material ordering practice. Storying differently, I argue, is a methodological challenge as much as a narrative or rhetorical undertaking, and I discuss some of the methodological implications of attending to materiality, relationality, and practice, particularly in the context of research with Indigenous peoples.

In Chapter 4 I consider the role of the Bloody Falls massacre story in ordering violence and its importance in pervasive and persistent understandings of savagery, civility, and race. Through close study of the geographies of publication, circulation, and reception of Hearne’s narrative in the fifty years spanning Hearne’s journey and the first Franklin expedition, I consider the ways in which the massacre story was used to order racialized arrangements of people and things and particularly the production of Euro-Canadian bodies as neutral witnesses to the savagery of Indigenous peoples. Much of the persistence of Hearne’s story can be attributed to its implication in efforts to order violence, I argue, and Chapter 4 traces the specific ways this was achieved in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

If the Bloody Falls massacre has been mobilized in service of such troubling and trenchant geographies, I consider in Chapter 5 how it might be ordered differently. I pay particular attention to the role of things in Hearne’s version of the massacre story and trace an alternative understanding of the massacre and of the Central Arctic by attending to the narrative geographies of copper. I argue that stories of Euro-Canadian adventure and exploration in the Central Arctic must be considered in relation to geographies of mining, past and present, and that
attending to “copper stories” is useful in this regard. Chapter 5 is thus an effort to stake out an alternative imaginative geography of North that is more attentive to the material and relational effects of copper stories on the people and places of the Central Arctic.

In Chapter 6 I examine a specific instance of resistance to the ordering of Bloody Falls as a site of national heritage in the early 1970s. I consider how this moment of Inuit resistance relates to shifts in federal and territorial governance, northern Indigenous political movements, and the rise of resource extraction economies in the North. Resistance, I suggest, must be contextualized and situated within broader geographies of response and responsibility, not fetishized as the uprising of “canny subalterns” (Spivak 1999, 257) against a repressive colonial state. By attending to the geographies of response and responsibility a fuller and more nuanced picture of Inuit relations with the Bloody Falls massacre story emerges.

Finally, if Chapter 6 examines a moment of direct confrontation with the ordering of Bloody Falls as a massacre site, Chapter 7 considers the ways in which Kugluktukmiut engage both the site and the massacre story as part of an active ordering of the worlds they wish to live in. I examine practices of storying massacres and efforts to move away from Bloody Falls, physically, narratively, temporally, and symbolically. These orderings, I suggest, are anchored in geographies of responsibility and care and involve creative, active efforts to story a desired future. In Chapter 8 I conclude by considering the relations and responsibilities traced in this study and point toward future work.

3 “Kugluktukmiut” means “people of Kugluktuk”. The term emerged with the settlement of Kugluktuk (formerly Coppermine) through the twentieth century. Prior to settlement, various regional groups of Inuit (see Figure 5) visited the place now known as Kugluktuk on a seasonal basis. Collignon (2006, 5) refers to these peoples as “Innuinait” (described by earlier anthropologists as “Copper Eskimo”). The term is borrowed from linguistics (note that the singular of Innuinait is Innuinaaq, related to the dialect of Inuktitut spoken by the Innuinait, “Innuinaqtun”) and refers to those who have traditionally spoken Innuinaqtun and occupied the region that includes the contemporary settlements of Kugluktuk (Coppermine), Ulukhaktok (Holman), Qingaut (Bathurst Inlet) and Iqaluituutiaq (Cambridge Bay). Although I have never heard it used in Kugluktuk, Collignon’s term is a useful reference for the many “peoples” or “-miut” who were assembled into settlements in the Central Arctic and continue to share linguistic and family ties.
Bloody Falls

Bloody Falls is both a story and a site. Known as Kugluk in Innuinaqtun\(^4\), Bloody Falls is actually a series of rapids created by the narrowing of the Coppermine River and has been a fishing site for millennia (Figure 1). The rapids were made famous by Samuel Hearne’s description of the massacre that allegedly unfolded there and subsequent explorers made a point of visiting the spot Hearne so vividly described. Hearne’s account of the Bloody Falls massacre, the climax of an otherwise uneventful narrative, has been anthologized in northern literature collections (Warkentin 1993), reproduced in documentaries (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 2001), plays (Carefoot 1980), and poems (Gutteridge 1973; McGrath 1998), memorialized in stamps, murals, and street names, and even commemorated in song (Gumboots 2000). Hearne himself has been hailed as the “Marco Polo of the sub-arctic” (Luste 1985, 41) and as a sensitive and unusually perceptive explorer whose insights into northern Indigenous life represent “one of the best of any tribe in the early contact phase” (MacKinnnon 2000).

Although the reliability of Hearne’s account of the massacre has been called into question for at least two centuries (see Chapter 4), Hearne’s story continues to circulate as though it is an accurate portrayal of an historical event. A number of scholars have advanced arguments that suggest otherwise. McLaren (1991b; 1993a) considers the textual inconsistencies in various versions of Hearne’s story\(^5\), Chipewyan oral testimony recorded by the first Franklin expedition

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\(^4\) Innuinaqtun is a dialect of Inuktitut spoken in Kugluktuk.

\(^5\) According to MacLaren (1991b) Hearne’s (1795) published travel narrative is the fourth iteration of his massacre account. The first version, in the form of Hearne’s field notes, is believed to be lost. The second, a transcription of Hearne’s story by fellow fur trader Andrew Graham (dated anywhere between 1773-1792) has survived and is available at the HBC Archives in Winnipeg. It has also been published by Glyndwr Williams (Graham 1969). The third version, a draft manuscript of the book, is also believed lost. However, a transcription of what is believed to be Hearne’s original field notes, known as the Stowe
(1818-22), and the fact that Hearne’s narrative was published after his death as plausible grounds upon which to doubt the veracity of Hearne’s published account. Rollason Driscoll (2002) notes the longstanding belief among scholars that Hearne’s narrative was written by a ghost-writer and was shaped by the editorial influence of Bishop John Douglas (who had also edited Cook’s travel narrative). Using stories gathered through ethnographic research in the Arctic, McGrath (1993) is the first and only scholar to document Inuit versions of the massacre story and to trouble the authority of Hearne’s telling on these grounds. She also draws on St-Onge (1982), who called into question the first Franklin expedition’s visual depiction of the massacre site in 1821 as littered with skulls and bones (see Chapter 4, Figure 7). St-Onge argued that the bones depicted are highly unlikely to have existed; not only would ground squirrels have made off with the bones before the expedition arrived⁶, but the massacre site was in fact one kilometre downstream from the vantage point of the illustration. Allen Niptanatiak, an Elder in the community of Kugluktuk, concurs with St-Onge that the massacre site was more than likely downstream from George Back’s picturesque rendition (Niptanatiak 2006).

Manuscript, has survived. It was transcribed by the Marquis of Buckingham and is dated 1791 at its conclusion. The faithfulness of this transcription to its original is not known, although MacLaren suggests operating under the assumption that “no wording was changed but that spelling was likely standardized” (1991b, 29), because all three verb tenses appear in the document “a feature that rarely occurs except in field notes” (44).

⁶ McGrath (1993) disputes this supposition, arguing that ground squirrels would be incapable of moving large human remains. She agrees, however, that the bones are implausible and indulgent, and suggests it is more likely that any remains would have been washed away by yearly flooding.
Figure 1: Bloody Falls, Fall 2008

Figure 2: “Possible site of the massacre of the Eskimos by Hearne's Indians at Bloody Fall (from west bank, looking east), Coronation Gulf, N.W.T.” Photograph by Richard S. Finnie, 1931. Source: National Archives, MIKAN no. 3389005.
In addition to questions about whether the massacre actually happened, particularly as Hearne described it, there are other features of the story worth noting. First, unlike subsequent explorers, who would travel through the Arctic with large companies of officers and voyageurs, Hearne was the only non-Dene traveler in the variably sized group that journeyed to the Coppermine River between 1769 and 1772. His guide, Matonabbee, was as much the leader of the expedition as Hearne, as numerous scholars have pointed out (see especially Venema 2000). Hearne’s immersion in “Northern Indian” culture has been hailed as both the source of his ethnographic insights and of his vulnerability to the whims of his guides. It is also consistently highlighted in celebrations of Hearne’s journey as an extraordinary physical and mental accomplishment. Second, following Hearne’s identification of the rapids as “Bloody Falls”, the site itself has become an iconic stopping place for northern explorers, past and present, and has come to anchor a range of northern stories. Bloody Falls quickly appeared on maps of the region, was invented as the location for the murder of two Roman Catholic priests in 1913 (see Chapter 5), and became one of the sites for Richard S. Finnie’s 1931 film, *Among the Igloo Dwellers* (Finnie also produced a short film, *Bloody Fall*, in 1932 that was used in schools. See (Geller 1996)). Finnie was one of many visitors to Bloody Falls who endeavoured to piece together the historical details of the massacre (see Figure 2).

The massacre story itself takes place towards the end of Hearne’s narrative, seven months after his departure from Prince of Wales Fort. The crew had been following the Coppermine River north towards Coronation Gulf when spies were sent ahead to determine “if any Esquimaux were inhabiting the river-side between us and the sea” (Hearne 1795, 146). Five tents of Inuit were discovered and “when the Indians received this intelligence, no farther attendance or attention was paid to my survey, but their whole thoughts were immediately engaged in planning … how they might steal on the poor Esquimaux the ensuing night, and kill them all while asleep”
(148). Hearne goes on to describe the Indians’ preparations for battle before recounting the notorious massacre scene:

In a few seconds the horrible scene commenced; it was shocking beyond description; the poor unhappy victims were surprised in the midst of their sleep, and had neither time nor power to make any resistance; men, women, and children, in all upward of twenty, ran out of their tents stark naked, and endeavoured to make their escape; but the Indians having possession of all the land-side, to no place could they fly for shelter. One alternative only remained, that of jumping into the river; but, as none of them attempted it, they all fell a sacrifice to Indian barbarity!

The shrieks and groans of the poor expiring wretches were truly dreadful; and my horror was much increased at seeing a young girl, seemingly about eighteen years of age, killed so near me, that when the first spear was flung into her side she fell down at my feet, and twisted round my legs, so that it was with difficulty that I could disengage myself from her dying grasps. As two Indian men pursued this unfortunate victim, I solicited very hard for her life; but the murderers made no reply till they had flung

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flung
fluck both their spears through her body, and transfixed her to the ground. They then looked me sternly in the face, and began to ridicule me, by asking if I wanted an Esquimaux wife; and paid not the smallest regard to the shrieks and agony of the poor wretch, who was twining round their spears like an eel! Indeed, after receiving much abusive language from them on the occasion, I was at length obliged to desire that they would be more expeditious in dispatching their victim out of her misery, otherwise I should be obliged, out of pity, to assist in the friendly office of putting an end to the existence of a fellow-creature who was so cruelly wounded. On this request being made, one of the Indians hastily drew his spear from the place where it was first lodged, and pierced it through her breast near the heart. The love of life, however, even in this most miserable state, was so predominant, that though this might justly be called the most merciful act that could be done for the poor creature, it seemed to be unwelcome, for though much exhausted by pain and loss of blood, she made several efforts to ward off the friendly blow. My situation and the terror of my mind at beholding this butchery, cannot easily be conceived, much less described; though I summed up all the fortitude I was master of on the occasion, it was with difficulty that I could refrain from tears; and I am confident that my features must have feelingly expressed how sincerely I was affected at the barbarous scene I then witnessed; even at this hour I cannot reflect on the transactions of that horrid day without shedding tears.

Figure 3: Excerpts of Hearne’s narrative (1795, 153-5)

Hearne’s account goes on for another several pages. The scene becomes ever more horrifying as he describes the mob stabbing of a young man (his body, Hearne describes, rendered to not much more than a “collander” (157)) and the “butchering” (158) of an old woman who had remained oblivious to the massacre unfolding near her because of her failing eyesight and poor hearing. After the massacre, having “completed this piece of wantonness”
(162), Hearne and his companions “made a good meal of fresh salmon” (162) and Hearne
“instantly” (162) resumed his land survey and search for copper. Disappointed in the copper
resources of the region but heartened to spot the Northern Ocean, Hearne and his guides turned
around and headed back to Prince of Wales Fort.

Kugluktuk

With a population of 1,300 Kugluktuk is one of the larger communities in the Kitikmeot
region of Nunavut and is the westernmost settlement in the territory (68° N, 115° W). Accessible
only by airplane (or, if journeying from other northern communities, seasonally by boat or
skidoo), Kugluktuk sits at the confluence of the Coppermine River and the Arctic Ocean in
Coronation Gulf (see Figure 5). Kugluktuk is one of the few settlements in Nunavut located at a
traditional Inuit gathering place (Damas 2002). For centuries, Inuit traveling from as far west as
Bathurst Inlet, north and east from Victoria Island, and inland from as far as Contwoyo Lake
would gather in the spring at Kugluktuk for sealing and in summer and fall for fishing and
caribou hunting at Kugluk (Bloody Falls). The community is thus comprised of peoples who trace
their ancestry to these different sub-regional groups, as well as to Inuit who journeyed east to the
Coronation Gulf region from the Mackenzie Delta and from as far as Alaska as whaling and fur
trapping expanded into the region. Today, Kugluktukmiut maintain active links with relatives in
Ulukhaktok (Holman, NWT), Iqaluituittiaq (Cambridge Bay, NU), Kingoak (Bathurst Inlet, NU)
and Umingmaktok (Bay Chimo, NU), as well as with relatives throughout Nunavut, the NWT and
beyond. Those who do not trace their ancestry to Inuit (known collectively as Kablunaat) journey
from across Canada and, increasingly, from outside the country to work as teachers, nurses, social
workers, land use planners, administrators, and mineral consultants in town. 92% of residents in
Kugluktuk identify as Inuit as compared to 84% across the territory of Nunavut (Statistics Canada 2006a).

Figure 4: Kugluktuk in summer, looking towards Coronation Gulf

The Central Arctic (Kitikmeot) was one of the last regions in Canada to see intensive exploration, missionary activity, and state intervention (see Chapter 6 for additional discussion of the history of settlement). Many Kugluktukmiut living today grew up on the land and remember settling in town, although for many of their children and grandchildren life in tents and igloos seems a distant fiction. As Kugluktukmiut transitioned to settlement life, many maintained work as fur trappers until the collapse of the fox and seal skin trades through the post-war era. Today, most work in government, as teachers and health care workers, as hunting guides, or in the diamond, gold, and copper mines south of the community. Kugluktuk has a nurse’s station,
RCMP detachment, two hotels, two grocery stores, a postal outlet, a daycare, a heritage centre, an elementary school, a high school, a satellite campus of Nunavut Arctic College, a halfway house, three churches (Catholic, Anglican, and Presbyterian), one gas station, and a community recreation complex. Fuel oil is shipped in by barge every summer to power the town’s generator along with deliveries of construction supplies, appliances, vehicles, and food. Although it is possible to deliver goods to Kugluktuk on the daily flights that service the community, shipment by air is exorbitant and prices in the local grocery stores reflect those costs.

Surrounded by low slung hills and long stretches of open tundra, Kugluktuk is north of the tree line and situated along the southernmost route of the north-west passage. Although only a handful of ships traverse the passage every year, it is expected that shipping will increase significantly in the years to come as the sea ice becomes thinner and melts sooner each year. Most of the year Coronation Gulf is sealed with ice, but in summer lifeguards patrol a small beach along the shore and the sun shines all night, transforming the land into a teeming bed of wildflowers (and mosquitoes) and upsetting sleep patterns to the point where people live “backwards”, sleeping all day and wakeful at night. The Gulf contains ring seal, bearded seal, arctic char, whitefish, grayling, and many other species of fish, as well as the odd whale, while caribou, musk ox, wolves, wolverines, grizzly bears, the occasional polar bear, hares, ground squirrels, and lemmings wander the land. Geese, ducks, loons, eagles, plovers, owls, seagulls, and even robins pass in and out of town with the seasons, while ravens maintain their perch most of the year. Huskies, mostly tethered to stakes in yards or on the hills along the western edge of town, howl all year round.
Figure 5: Copper Inuit/Innuinait traditional territory and contemporary settlements
Chapter 2

Review of Literature and Theoretical Structure

“Never again will a single story be told as though it’s the only one”
- John Berger

“What you chart is already where you’ve been. But where we are going,
there is no chart yet”
- Audre Lorde

This chapter describes the intellectual context of the dissertation, including ideas I have worked “with” and worked “against”, and dwells most on the wide literature on story to contextualize the approach I have taken to story as a relational and material ordering practice. It also includes discussion of geographic and other research about the North and Inuit, and discussion of the project’s articulation with studies of Colonial, Postcolonial, and Indigenous Geographies.

Story

Story may well be one of the most expansive and elusive concepts around which to build a doctoral research project, let alone a brief literature review. Every major discipline in the humanities and social sciences has engaged the concept of story in some way, from debates in history about the narrative foundations of historical truth (e.g., White 1987), to close anthropological studies of storytelling practices in Indigenous cultures (e.g., Cruikshank 1998a), to postcolonial and comparative literature studies of the ways in which stories shaped imperial
imaginative geographies (e.g., Said 1993), to philosophical contemplations about how stories interweave with memory, identity, imagination, and being in the world (e.g., Ricoeur 2004). Poets, artists, actors, and novelists offer rich contemplations about what stories mean and do in social life, as do the everyday storytellings of a life lived among friends, colleagues, family, and “kin” of other kinds. As Sartre has observed, “A man is always a teller of tales; he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others; he sees everything that happens to him through them, and he tries to live his life as if he were recounting it” (1964, 56). The promiscuity of the term is a hazard but it is also tremendously interesting. It has allowed for a multidisciplinary study that I hope enriches geographic understandings of story and storytelling. In this section I trace some of the rich and diverse understandings of story that have given me food for thought, as well as a good deal of “indigestion” 7, in Donna Haraway’s terms, throughout the writing of this dissertation. The discussion necessarily ranges over a diverse set of theories and disciplinary traditions but is framed primarily in terms of geographic research, concepts, and debates.

I am primarily interested in what stories do, and what they ought to do. These interests and concerns lead me to dwell on literatures linking story with questions of practice, politics, and ethics, and to be attentive to story as ordering, belonging, assembling, distancing, and connecting. I am less concerned with more transcendental efforts to define story and to mark its beginnings and endings, its insides and outsides, than I am with specific stories and the historical and geographical contexts to which they relate. As such, I emphasize materiality and specificity in this study, not in opposition to the imaginative, the ideological, and the systemic (distinctions that, as Timothy Mitchell (1990) rightfully observes, are overdrawn and unhelpful for

7 Haraway has described herself as “willing to live with indigestible intellectual and political heritages” (Haraway in Gane 2006, 139), a commentary reflecting her commitment to thinking and acting within an already messy world and not rejecting particular ideas or possibilities because they do not cohere with other commitments and theories. It is by “nourishing indigestion” (2008, 300) that Haraway locates engagement and political possibility.
understanding social and political processes), but rather as a way of attending to the fullness of the people, places, and things that have shaped this study.

Not all discussions of story address issues of power, influence, discourse, and ideology (as geographers tend to do). This is particularly true of ethnographic, sociological, and historical studies of storytelling practice, a literature that is inordinately focused on storytelling among Indigenous peoples. Notably, studies of the “storylines” shaping colonial and racialized interactions *between* colonizers and colonized Indigenous peoples abound (e.g., Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1989; Bhabha 1990; McClintock 1995; Pratt 1992; Said 1993) and these studies are highly attuned to dynamics of power and to the importance of discourse. But when Indigenous peoples are studied on their own, story is treated quite differently. Thus, from the earliest anthropological studies of “traditional” stories as conveyors of myth and folklore (Jenness 1924; Rasmussen 1930) to more recent studies of storytelling as a much broader cultural and social practice (Archibald 2008; Basso 1996; Briggs 1998; Cruikshank 1998a), the ways in which Indigenous peoples story their histories, experiences, teachings, ethics, and futures has been a rich focus of research. It is crucial that this literature be considered in the wider social context within which it has been carried out and circulated. Notwithstanding the immense insights afforded by these studies, they make sense, in part, through comparison to their implicit outside: the modern, western, capitalist world in which storytelling, as Benjamin lamented, “has already become something remote from us and something that is getting even more distant” (2002b, 143). Armed with theories of discourse and ideology, scholars have dissected the ways in which even the most “innocent” and idiosyncratic narratives and performances are implicated in power relations, rendering storytelling an act complicit with all manner of oppressions. Curiously, but revealingly, these analyses have stopped short of storytelling practices among Indigenous peoples, a “stopping” that reveals both the temporal fantasies underpinning imaginative geographies of
Indigeneity (in which contemporary Indigenous peoples and cultures are assessed in terms of the persistence of the “traditional” and premodern) and the extent to which story has been evacuated of its many social relations and implications in discursive analyses.

A number of recent anthropological studies have taken a more generous and expansive approach to storytelling in and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous contexts. Julie Cruikshank’s (2005) recent work attends to storytelling as a social practice shaping a series of encounters between Tlingit, Tutchone, Europeans, Americans, and Canadians in the St. Elias region of present-day Alaska and Yukon. Her study has significantly informed my project. Not only does she insist that the meetings of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples involved the encounter of two very local cultures (refusing the habit of locating Indigeneity in the marginal, pre-modern, and static), Cruikshank challenges tendencies to undermine Indigenous knowledges on the grounds of their narrativity by showing that all knowledges are specific, contextual, and storied. Her interest in how stories shaped and continue to shape encounters with “others” animates this study. Leslie Robertson’s (2005) study of how non-Indigenous residents of Fernie, BC make sense of difference, particularly with reference to the alleged “cursing” of the Valley by the Ktunaxa-Kinbasket in the early days of settlement, carves a similar path. Robertson is “interested in the ways that non-Aboriginal peoples have come to imagine indigenous societies and how these imaginings constitute a lingering curse in Canadian society” (xliv). She is explicitly concerned with storytelling and the spectrum of ways in which ideas and impressions are articulated, reinforced, and inscribed: “I am interested in ideas deeply embedded in the colonial imagination that are kept alive by forms of storytelling” (5). Recent studies by Kosek (2006) and Raffles (2002) also direct ethnographic attention towards storytelling, place, colonialism, and capitalism, providing rich models for the stories I am interested in telling here.
Benjamin’s meditations on story together with exemplary studies of storytelling as a social practice among Indigenous peoples (e.g., Basso 1996; Cruikshank 1998a) emphasize storytelling as a practice of drawing together, teaching, entertaining, co-creating, performing, and animating (as opposed to coercing, oppressing, or tricking), practices that tend not to appear in studies oriented towards the discursive implications of story, particularly in (post)colonial contexts. These practices are persistent and worthy of renewed attention and political reframing. Benjamin’s extended contemplation of the role of the storyteller in modernity is not only a lament; it is also a detailed study of the delight, the imagining, the opening, and the gathering occasioned by stories. Benjamin argues that storytelling is a quintessentially human practice, derived over centuries of working, living, and traveling. Stories encapsulate something of the human experience of the world, he argues, rather than a more positivistic interest in information and the facts of the world. Storytelling is at an appropriate scale for living as humans (however much our living enrolls other things); it resonates with something essential in our minds, eyes, ears, bodies, and lives. For this reason, Benjamin argues, stories live on and have the capacity to

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8 My point here is not to draw a distinction between “innocent” storytelling and “bad” storytelling, and neither to suggest that critical geographers are too focused on issues of power, coercion, and oppression, but rather a more subtle one. As Foucault himself observed, power acts through pleasure, consent, and play as much as through coercion and domination, and there are most certainly power dynamics informing the kinds of storytelling practices Basso and Cruikshank describe, relations that tend not to be highlighted. I address this issue more extensively in Chapter 6. But I would also suggest that identifying the power relations at work in pleasurable, playful, and educational storytelling carries with it risks of reducing pleasure, play, and sociality to power relations. The ease with which geographers identify “power” in geographical processes is my concern, and particularly the racialized distinctions determining who, where, and what is subject to “power” analyses.

9 Benjamin also points to the radical openness of good stories and their ability to resist the discipline of information or explanation. “It is half the art of storytelling to keep a story free from explanation as one recounts it … [in Leskov’s stories] the most extraordinary things, marvelous things, are related with the greatest accuracy, but the psychological connections among the events are not forced on the reader. It is left up to him to interpret things the way he understands them, and thus the narrative achieves an amplitude that information lacks” (148). This comment echoes Benjamin’s critique of historicism and the imposition of historical narratives on the past (e.g., Benjamin 2003), informed by his sensitivity to the liveliness of things, ideas, images, occurrences, and interpretations (Benjamin 1999).
affect people long after their original tellings. They are communal and interactive in a way that other forms of expression (such as the novel) are not.

The claim of the past upon us and its expression in the most mundane objects was an enduring concern of Benjamin’s and one can detect in his concern with storytelling a yearning for a more embodied, experiential, collective world with a keener sense of connection to place, community, and past. It is precisely this embodied, collective, sensual form of relation that Jo-Ann Archibald (2008) attends to in her recent *Indigenous Storywork* and that Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) emphasizes in her discussion of storytelling as decolonizing methodology. Stories do not simply convey ideas, information, or history. They are practices of collective imagining and connecting “the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story” (Smith 1999, 145). But stories are also, Tuhiwai Smith reminds us, “about humour and gossip and creativity” (145). The somberness with which non-Indigenous peoples tend to approach Indigenous stories misses this important point (Taylor 2005). As in Tuhiwai Smith and Archibald’s work, Cruikshank’s (1998a) *The Social Life of Stories* focuses on storytelling as social practice and attends to the capacity for stories to make worlds, not simply reflect or describe them. In “Pete’s Song”, for example, Cruikshank dwells on the gifting of a story by Angela Sidney to her son Pete and the relations, histories, and futures that are made in the process. Although she focuses primarily on storytelling within Tlingit, Tagish, and Tutchone communities and landscapes, Cruikshank is also attuned to the ways in which stories make worlds beyond the Yukon. Thus, in “Yukon Arcadia” she critiques the uptake of Indigenous stories as “Traditional Ecological Knowledge” and focuses on the ways in which the translation and circulation of Indigenous knowledges beyond their context makes particular industries, policies, programs, and politics possible and forecloses others. Her argument echoes Haraway’s concern with the “troping” of life and the importance of choosing “less-deadly version[s] for
moral discourse” (1994, 71). The point is not to discern the stories from the truth, Haraway argues, but rather to attend to the ways in which stories structure worlds and purposely intervene in those worlds. Storytelling as material and political practice and as active intervention in the world has been richly and suggestively developed by scholars like Haraway, but it also has roots/routes in other cultures and places.

I draw attention to the various approaches to story discussed so far in part to contextualize geographic understandings of story and to highlight the very specific and narrow ways in which Foucauldian theories of discourse (as interpreted by geographers; see Callard 1998) position stories and storytelling. Indeed, story is both pervasive and elusive in contemporary geographic research. On the one hand, geographers are enormously sensitive to discourse and narrativity. The notion that knowledge is socially produced and structured by particular cultural “storylines” is almost axiomatic among contemporary critical geographers, stemming particularly from the influence of scholars like Edward Said (1978; 1993) and Michel Foucault (1979) but also from feminist scholars (Butler 1990; Haraway 1988), historians (White 1987), and postcolonial scholars (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1989; Bhabha 1990; Spivak 1990). Over the past two decades, geographers have demonstrated an ongoing interest in the interplay of narrative and power in productions of knowledge, space, and identity (Barnes and Duncan 1992; Blunt and Rose 1994; Duncan and Gregory 1999b; Gelder and Jacobs 1998; Gregory 1994; Kurtz 2006; Lawson 2000). Notably, these texts have been centrally concerned with colonialism and postcolonialism, suggesting that discourse and narrative are important considerations for geographers engaged in the study of colonial processes.

On the other hand, however, story is both undertheorized and marginalized in geographic scholarship. Discourse, of course, is not only or necessarily manifested as a “storyline”, but instead is understood by geographers like Derek Gregory to be a “series of representations,
practices, and performances through which meanings are produced, connected into networks, and legitimized” (2000a, 180). Discourses are heterogeneous and contradictory, they are at once ideological, material, and performative; discourse means something more and something different than story. And yet there is an enduring tendency for scholars to engage with discourse along narrative lines and to characterize discourse as a kind of broad storyline regulating what is said, thought, and done in modern life. The distinctions and relationships between “big”, discursive stories and the “small stories” told by individuals (Lorimer 2003) are not clearly articulated in these accounts. Neither do geographers necessarily elucidate the specific manifestations and limits of discourse in particular historical-geographical contexts. As Law observes, “discourse is discourse is discourse” (1994, 107), and the reach and importance of discourse is often assumed and asserted rather than demonstrated. There is tendency for scholars to assert a connection between small or particular discursive moments (such as an incidence of hate speech) and the broader imaginative and representational patterns to which they relate (such as racialized discourse) without accounting for how the particular articulates with the general, or for aspects of those stories and moments that are not enrolled in this discourse. Discourse, then, has been tremendously useful for understanding the reach and totalizing power of colonial processes, for connecting speech, text, performance, institutions, and a range of other actors in systems of knowledge and power, and for implicating specific, “small” acts on the part of individuals in broader political processes. It has been less helpful for understanding the specificities and contradictions at play in particular historical-geographic contexts, however, (including thinking through the ways in which such contexts might not be entirely understood through the lens of the colonial and the discursive) and in imagining political alternatives.

Geographers have critiqued discursive approaches to the study of social and spatial relations for a range of reasons. Some, like Callard (1998), are critical of the sweep of discursive
analyses; there is nothing, it seems, *outside* of discourse and the scope of resistance to the oppressions experienced through discursive production of both the self and broader subjectivities is limited. While critics like Callard acknowledge that discourse is extraordinarily useful in describing the myriad ways that hegemonic values, expectations, and meanings are embodied in people and places, it is less helpful, they argue, in discerning a viable response to such influences or informing a more collective politics (e.g., Mitchell 2001). Relatedly, to the extent that geographers conceptualize discourse as encompassing the full horizon of experience and practice, they have tended to believe that the identification of racialized and colonial discourses about Indigenous peoples is at the same time an identification of the experiences and practices of Indigenous peoples themselves. Kay Anderson, for example, has done excellent work elucidating the ways in which Indigenous peoples have historically been dehumanized and at times conflated with animals (e.g., Anderson 1998, 2003, 2007); she has established that conceptualizations of Indigenous peoples as “less than human” were central to colonial efforts to shore up the superiority of the European colonizer and justify all manner of oppressions. But such discourses do not necessarily encompass or reveal what Indigenous peoples think or thought about themselves, how they conceptualize their place in the world, or what practices they might engage in. As Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2004) argues, the notion that what westerners think and do encompasses the totality of social and political life is a conceit based on “lazy reason”. In geographical studies of the colonial and postcolonial, this lazy reason is supported by an interpretation of discourse as wholly determining and accounting for colonial relations. It leaves geographers with few intellectual resources for accounting for Indigenous peoples as active and alive, self-determining, and co-productive of colonial geographies. The point is not to imagine that Indigenous peoples act unfettered and without relations to others, of course, but rather to take

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10 Anderson would no doubt agree with this point.
seriously the vitality and life of Indigenous peoples, while at the same time scaling back on the
determinist understanding of colonialism as a sweeping, totalizing force. To do so requires re-
thinking the ways in which geographic scholarship has conceptualized discourse.

Part of this rethinking involves a renewed interest in the local and the particular, not as
instances of the global or the general, but rather as sites worthy of attention in their own right.
Drawing in part on Haraway’s (1988) famous argument that all knowledge is situated, partial, and
emerges from particular, inherently political contexts, geographers have emphasized locality as a
way of calling attention to the contingency and partiality of knowledge (Powell 2007; Rose
1997). The small, the particular, and the local has garnered the attention of a range of cultural-
historical geographers over the past several years, including Lorimer (2003; 2006), Matless
who all in some way seek to take seriously the specificities of place and the intimate scales at
which geographical processes unfold. There is a politics of scale underpinning this interest that
warrants discussion here. As implied in discursive analyses, part of the importance of the local
and the particular emerges from its “connections with and possibilities for interaction with other
settings”, as James Secord (2004, 664) points out. But a number of geographers have begun to
question the hierarchical understanding of scale underpinning this assumption. In a particularly
polemical take on scale, Marston, Jones, and Woodward (2005) argue for a flattened ontological
approach to geographic research and a “human geography without scale”. Alongside scholars like
J.K. Gibson-Graham (2002; 2008), Julie Cruikshank (2005) and Cindi Katz (2001b), who have
written extensively on the importance of taking seriously the local and the specific, Marston et al
(2005, 427) argue that political possibilities are foreclosed by collapsing the specificities of
particular places, movements, and experiences to the global, the general, and the structural:
we are convinced that the local-to-global conceptual architecture intrinsic to hierarchical scale carries with it presuppositions that can delimit entry points into politics – and the openness of the political – by pre-assigning to it a cordoned register for resistance.

They argue, in effect, that by locating the meaning of the particular in the general, we shore up an understanding of power and the political as sweeping, pervasive, and hegemonic, thereby overlooking the very real political possibilities of the local and the specific. There are important implications here for understanding story. Rather than assume that stories matter insofar as they are implicated in broader social and spatial processes (that is, that their work is “scaled up” to a more general or global scale), recent geographic contemplations of scale suggest that specific stories and story-tellings open up political and ethical realms that have too often been overlooked. To the extent that the local and the specific has been associated with Indigeneity (Howitt 2002), moreover, re-thinking the dismissal of specific stories and tellings on scalar grounds has been central to anti-colonial scholarship (see Cruikshank 2005 for a thoughtful intervention into the equation of Indigeneity with "the local"). I explore this theme more extensively in Chapter 5.

Geographers have also attempted to re-think (or abandon) the discursive through appeals to the non-representational, the ontological, and the emergent. Thrift (2007, 2), for example, argues that significant geographies are articulated outside of the realm of words and texts, and that a focus on the “non-representational” realm of practice, movement and affect might assist in outlining “the geography of what happens”. Affect, understood variably as “adding capacities through interaction in a world which is constantly becoming” (Thrift 2004, 61), as a “property of the active outcome of an encounter” (62), as a way in to the ethics of a lively world that might

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11 As with many trends in geographical scholarship, feminist geographers have been insisting on the importance of the particular and the local for some time, and indeed, Marston’s other writing on scale is informed by a feminist lens (e.g., Marston 2000). The dropping of explicitly feminist language from these more recent iterations is worth noting.
“charge the actual with the animating potential of the virtual” (McCormack 2003, 501) and, for some, as a politicized move away from “emotion” towards a masculinist desire to be “after or beyond human” (Thien 2005, 450), has come to preoccupy a number of geographers interested in the emergent and unpredictable assemblages that characterize social life. Similarly, interest in the ontological has grown in recent years as geographers struggle to think through the doing and being of geographical relations rather than the meaning and representational importance of such relations. The implications of these understandings for a study of story are suggestive, albeit worthy of careful and critical scrutiny. Following Gibson-Graham (2008), an emphasis on stories as productive, participatory, ontological interventions that might call into being the alternatives we wish to see in the world comes into view. Similarly, an emphasis on story as practice (and not wholly representational practices, for that matter) comes to the fore. This approach to story resonates with anthropological studies of storywork in Indigenous contexts (Archibald 2008; Basso 1996; Briggs 1998; Cruikshank 1998a). Stories are not only important for the meanings they convey or the histories they represent, but rather as practices implicated in diverse forms of relation.

Geographers have also become increasingly interested in the “material” in recent years, an interest that is partially informed by concerns about the overly textual, imaginative, and mental orientation of discursive studies. Some have been explicitly interested in attending to the materiality of discourse, a materiality that Foucault himself emphasized (e.g., Foucault 1970; 1979; 1991) but that has tended not to appear in geographical scholarship. Derek Gregory’s (2004) study of the colonial present, for example, is attentive to imaginative geographies and discursive processes without losing touch with the material relations and material consequences

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12 As I elaborate later in this chapter, there are resonances between recent enthusiasm for the emergent and ontological and (neo)liberal conceptualizations of freedom, subjectivity, and economic growth.
produced by and through the representational and the imaginative. His work suggests that the over-emphasis on the textual and representational in geographic scholarship cannot be entirely attributed to the writings of Foucault, but rather to a partial and particular uptake of his ideas among geographers over the past two decades and to a misapprehension of the representational and textual as somehow not material. Indeed, a number of geographers (and anthropologists; see Li 2007; Moore 2005) have (re)discovered Foucault’s more “material” writings in recent years, particularly his later work on governmentality. Foucault’s (1991, 93) interest in government as a “complex composed of men and things” resonates with the actor-network, posthumanist, and “more than human” theorizations that have underpinned a “material turn” among cultural, economic, and political geographers in recent years (Bakker and Bridge 2006; Whatmore 2006). For a range of reasons, then, there has been a palpable shift among human geographers over the past several years away from text, representation, and imaginative processes (processes that are emphasized in discursive studies) and towards “things”, bodies, affect, and practices (an emphasis that draws upon theories of emergence, ontology, practice, and vitality)13. My dissertation is informed by this shift. I have found the writings of materialist feminist and postcolonial scholars (such as Spivak and Haraway) and actor-network theorists (such as Latour and Law) to be particularly useful. My concern with the specific relations and materials at play in the telling of stories requires attending to the geographies of storytelling and not presuming to know in advance how and to what extent a particular story articulates with broader discursive patterns. Story, I argue, is a material practice, a strategic and social relation that is confined

13 There are glimmers of interest in thinking differently about story within this broad shift in geographic scholarship away from the textual, representational, and imaginative and towards the ontological, emergent, material, and “more than human” (e.g., DeSilvey 2006; 2007a; Lorimer 2003, 2006; Wylie 2002). But as Braun (2008) observes, the importance of narrative in relaying non-representational and other ontologies remains largely unexamined by geographers. Moreover, to the extent that geographers are returning to ethnography as a way into the material, experiential, “pre”-discursive, and political (see Chapter 3), a method that relies heavily on storytelling, it would seem that story demands more rigorous attention than it has hitherto been granted. My dissertation is partially aimed at addressing this oversight.
neither to text and representation nor to the imaginative and the ideological. In the chapters that follow I explore the contention that stories are material and that they materialize. I consider the ways in which stories relate to economic, political, and cultural geographies of the Central Arctic, not simply as imaginative or ideological narratives (un)masking the “real” work of colonialism, capitalism, racism, and other processes, but as practices in their own right.

But what does it mean to say that stories are material ordering practices? As Bakker and Bridge (2006, 5) recently observed, “notions of ‘materiality’ and ‘the material’ are abroad” in human geography but the very “plasticity of the term can elide different and even incompatible ontological commitments” (6). In part I draw from a longstanding material culture tradition of attending to the world of “things” and their role in sociocultural life (e.g., Miller 1998b; Miller 1998c; Thomas 1991). Here, the “material” is usually understood as physical objects, particularly commodities, and attention is paid to the ways in which things are constitutive of social relations. Much research in this tradition has focused on consumption and on the ways in which people make worlds through the things they consume (Cook, Crang, and Thorpe 2004; Crang, Dwyer, and Jackson 2003; Miller 1998a). Miller’s (1998a) study of “making love in supermarkets”, for example, attends to the ways in which everyday food products are implicated in processes of identity formation and the building of relationships. Others focus on “things in motion” and the different geographies made by processes of extracting, producing, marketing, and consuming a single commodity. The telling of “commodity stories” (Hughes and Reimer 2004, 1) has been central to this line of inquiry as geographers attend to the ways in which things like tropical fruit, clothing, and prepared foods shape the socio-spatial elaboration of capitalism. While their methods and political commitments are different, these two strands of material culture study share a similar conceptualization of the material as the tangible “things” of everyday life – fruit, clothing, sofas, cars, houses. Attention is paid to “when and where the materiality of material
culture makes a difference” (Jackson 2000, 13) rather than to problematizing the concept of materiality itself. Moreover, it is the implication of nonhuman things into distinctly human projects that concerns geographers working in this tradition.

This line of material culture scholarship has recently been extended to the study of books – as distinct from the study of “texts” – in an effort to trace the history of ideas and the production of imperial knowledge-power in material terms (e.g., Duncan and Gregory 1999a; Lambert and Lester 2006; Lester 2003; Livingstone 2003; Nash 2002; Naylor 2005a, 2005b; Ogborn 2002, 2007; Withers 2004, 2006). As Ogborn (2002, 167-8) observes,

Texts, when understood in terms of their materiality, and when taken as incorporating a much broader range of forms and practices of writing and reading than simply the discursive representation of ‘other’ peoples and places, do not inhabit a purely textual universe. Most obviously, these forms of writing are meaningless without the people, objects and practices that are required to make them work … Understanding texts as material objects retains a necessary place for questions of representation and interpretation in the work of unpicking and reconstructing how these objects and others function as specific material technologies of power and knowledge within particular contexts where they are read and acted upon.

Like Ogborn, I consider efforts to trace the materiality of books like Hearne’s (1795) A Journey to the Northern Ocean to be informed by and complementary to Foucauldian understandings of power-knowledge and their articulation in colonial settings. Although the turn to materiality in recent geographic scholarship has often been conceptualized as a corrective to conceptualizations of colonialism, racism, and capitalism as sweeping, inexorable, and purely representational discourses (e.g., McEwan 2003), I argue that this framing of the material as the real, practical, tangible outside of discursive formation is a dangerous and untenable strategy for understanding imperial geographies. Thus, in Chapter 4 I demonstrate that the habit of reading Hearne’s
narrative in terms of racialized, colonial discourse has an historical geography, one that is as contingent and heterogeneous as it is patterned and persistent. By attending to discourse as material I hope to both redress the overly representational and abstract uptake of discourse in geographic scholarship and the willful turn away from structural, systemic power in new materialist, actor-network studies of knowledge.

Other strands of “new materialist” geographic research pay greater attention to the ways in which processes and capacities we have tended to ascribe exclusively to humans (such as agency, power, invention, and so on) are in fact effects of complex assemblages of humans and nonhumans. Most often associated with actor-network theory and the writings of Bruno Latour and John Law, from this perspective “the competencies and capacities of ‘things’ are not intrinsic but derive from association” (Bakker and Bridge 2006, 16). Like the material culture approach, actor-network studies are concerned with the role of nonhuman things in human life, but no purely human realm is posited nor are “things” considered to be self-evident. As Saldanha (2003, 422) observes, “things” are understood to be “split, heterogeneous and multiple … depend[ent] on webs of relations for their existence”. By tracing heterogeneous networks and webs, actor-network scholars have demonstrated how supposedly human accomplishments and capacities are in fact deeply reliant upon a range of nonhuman things, as in Law’s (1986) study of the expansion of long-distance sailing and exploration in the sixteenth century and Latour’s (1988) study of the role of microbes in the invention of pasteurization.

Law has given the most attention to storying in his work (Law 1994, 2000, 2002; Law and Singleton 2000). Although developed in studies of technoscience and organizational dynamics rather than in processes of colonialism or racialization, Law’s reflections on the importance of stories in ordering networks of people and things has been an important contribution to this project. He argues that stories are not something separate from, or merely
representative of, the world around us, they are themselves material and intimately bound up with “the materials in which they are carried” (1994: 142). Stories do not sit apart from and merely represent some outside reality, they are “ordering strategies” that perform and solidify networks of people, places, and objects. Stories are ways of knowing, ways of generating knowledge, not simply conveying knowledge. As Law notes, “I find that I can make little or no sense of any particular mode of ordering or its interaction with others unless I also tell stories about these materials” (23). Stories, Law argues, are complex assemblages of people, places, and other things; while some may be narratively performed by humans, the stories themselves must be understood as relational networks of humans and nonhumans, not as representations that somehow sit apart from the materials they represent.

What is clear from this approach to stories is not only that they are material, but that they are relational; that is, stories are assemblages of heterogeneous human and nonhuman things that, although we treat them as single entities, are in fact constituted by the relations between diverse things. The ordering they make possible, moreover, is not simply cognitive or imaginative. Just as Said (1978; 1993) recognized the material effects of colonial discourse upon both the colonizer and the colonized, Law’s approach to stories attends to the ways in which stories order people and things in particular ways. From this perspective, the ordering effects of the Bloody Falls massacre story extend beyond its conditioning of a particular way of seeing or imagining North to considerations of the ways in which the story orders bodies, copper, capital, emotions, and a range of other things I consider in this dissertation. Moreover, the ordering made possible by stories is not deterministic or uniform. The Bloody Falls massacre story does not order by virtue of its existence, but rather through practice. In this regard actor-network theory’s debt to Foucauldian writing is clear. There is no transcendental order to which stories appeal. Rather,
stories are practiced and it is only their repeated telling and re-telling that lends durability to the networks they trace14.

Indeed, the notion of story as a relational and material ordering practice is not inconsistent with Foucauldian ideas of discourse. Foucault conceived of discourses as heterogeneous, relational networks of both humans and things and his writings highly influenced the development of actor-network theory. Where Law’s actor-network understanding of story departs from discourse is in its emphasis on the nonhuman and in its relative explanatory modesty: for Law, stories do not necessarily have broader social or political effects; such effects must be demonstrated and traced empirically rather than asserted. Actor-network accounts tend to emphasize description over explanation and advocate skepticism in the face of any totalizing explanatory claims. The strength of such an approach is its respect for the particularities and contingencies of any given historical-geographical context and, relatedly, its ability to accommodate relations and materials that do not fit within more sweeping and totalizing accounts. Its weakness, as Castree (2002, 141) notes, is that in shying away from the identification of patterns in actor-networks and in being reluctant to acknowledge that some human agents have “far more capacity to direct the course of socionatural relations than do

14 The topology underlying actor-network approaches is compelling in a study aimed, in part, at challenging and evading conventional divisions between Inuit and non-Inuit, traditional and modern. As Steve Hinchliffe (2000) points out, ANT and other relational theories conceptualize power, knowledge, and action as networked, multi-dimensional masses of connections in which power is distributed through relations, not held within particular bodies. ANT marks “a topological shift from surfaces to filaments” (223), countering the stability of accounts dividing the world into defined levels or homogeneous ‘spheres’. This study might well have endeavoured to recuperate an authentic, wholly coherent Inuit voice as a counter to an equally coherent (although more powerful) Euro-Canadian voice, for example, thus hoping to undercut some of the power held by Euro-Canadian stories. But such an approach relies on the ability to marshal people, objects, ideas, and places into opposite camps, a task that is not only impossible but also results in findings with limited relevance to lives lived. Instead, I describe and trace the ordering practices of diverse people (and other things) with interests in Bloody Falls, concerned more with the relative durability and strength of each story than with pre-determined categories like “Inuit” or “non-Inuit”. (Although, as I argue later in this chapter, this stance is best conceptualized as provisional and methodological, not as an end in itself. There is a great deal at stake in the erasure of categories like “Inuit”, as efforts to define Inuit in Canadian law attest to (see Kunuk 2006)).
"others”, it tends to blunt the critical and political edge of research into what is, after all, a contentious and highly politicized world.

Although I think Law and Latour are right to provisionally bracket off considerations of power in the description of actor-networks (arguing, in effect, that social scientists tend to attribute too much agency and coherency to this thing called "power" and assume that it explains various social situations; see Latour 2005), I am committed to addressing power in this study and to doing more than simply describe. I appreciate Latour’s conceptualization of power as strength and his suggestion that networks are powerful to the extent that they endure and succeed in performing and enrolling others, thus lending themselves increased strength and durability. This conceptualization is not incompatible with Foucault’s descriptions of disciplinary power (e.g., Foucault 1979). Latour’s optimism and sense of the possible is an important check on Foucault’s accounts of power (as Thrift (1997, 269) notes, “in Foucault country, it always seems to be raining”), but I would argue that Foucault’s historical sensibility is crucial in a study of this nature, as is his focus on the words and deeds of humans and his sensitivity to the production of difference (Foucault 1970, 1974; 1979; see also Saldanha forthcoming). While Foucault and Latour both imagine power to be distributed and relational, Foucault reminds us that it is, indeed, “people [who] build places, weave narratives, and extend networks” (Braun 2005, 351), even if such activities could not occur without enrolling the non-human world. Thus, it is not so much that Foucault and Latour imagine the world radically differently, but rather that in reading their texts different emphases and interpretative motifs emerge.

Notably, there are limits to both Foucauldian and actor-network conceptualizations of power and resistance. Although Foucault is more sensitive to the role of humans in shaping social and spatial processes and more inclined to identify the larger patterns defining these processes, he offers a very limited horizon for imagining change, resistance, and difference. These limitations
have been amplified in the incorporation of Foucault’s work into geographic thought. Callard (1998, 390) points out that geographers who have taken up Foucault’s ideas of power and resistance (as well as the writings of Judith Butler) tend to privilege the body “as a site around which the operations of power and resistance can be thought”. While not necessarily objecting to Foucault or Butler’s arguments, Callard charges geographers with an over-enthusiastic adoption of the notion of transgressive, hybridized bodies and to a fixation with abstracted, fantasized bodies against a more situated account of lived, labouring, fleshy bodies. Rosemary Hennessy (who, notably, finds much of value in discursive analysis) argues that enthusiasm for the “play” of hybrid, fractured, and transgressive subjectivities is grounded in crises over western humanism and part of a conscious “unhinging” of difference and identity from their “structuration in systems of exclusion and exploitation” (1993, 73). Both, it should be noted, draw on Marxian materialist and feminist thought. This diverse body of literature (as I argue later in this chapter) offers compelling resources for thinking differently about power and resistance, particularly in (post)colonial contexts.

Similarly, actor-network and posthumanist theorizations of subjectivity and the political raise alarm bells for scholars committed to addressing prevailing and systemic forms of oppression and inequality. What Latour describes as a commitment to description, tracing, and taking things seriously can also amount to a refusal to “take sides,” as Whatmore (2002, 161-2) points out. Far too many actor-network-inspired accounts fail to connect their descriptions to the political and social context within which they are situated. Certainly, not all scholars conceptualize their work in political terms, but a number of geographers working with actor-network and posthumanist ideas explicitly identify political value in attending to the “more than human” (e.g., Hinchliffe et al. 2005; Whatmore 2002; see also Braun 2007 and Castree 2003 for critical commentary and review). Hardt and Negri (2000) have outlined a politics based on
Deleuzian notions of emergence and becoming, one that is in line with (and indeed informs) calls for rhizomatic, “flattened” ontological conceptualizations of power and the political in geographic scholarship. Latour himself has worried over the political possibilities of actor-network conceptualizations (see Latour 2004), highlighting the political ambitions informing many geographic engagements of his ideas (see Routledge 2008 for an explicit application of ANT to political organization).

I have three concerns about the ways in which the “political” is imagined in these inquiries. First, as alluded to above, there is a tendency for scholars working in an actor-network tradition to frame description itself as a political intervention. It is assumed that by uncovering associations and relations that may not otherwise have been obvious to the reader, associations and relations that are emphasized as “contingent” and subject to re-working, that a different political horizon might present itself. I am not convinced that such a tracing intervenes in these ways. Just as the “unveiling” of the relations involved in commodity chains does not necessarily lead to any meaningful shift in the production, distribution, or consumption of commodities (Castree 2001; Cook, Crang, and Thorpe 2004), neither does the unveiling of actor-networks necessarily shift the composition or durability of such networks. As both Pratt (2009) and Haraway (2008) observe, telling stories does not necessarily create change. Second, notions of “becoming”, “emergence”, and “affect” bear striking resemblance to masculinist and (neo)liberal political imaginations in which all individuals have the capacity to participate equally in a public, political sphere. The notion that (post)human individuals (however much they are understood as assemblages of human and nonhuman relations) might come together and “become” otherwise through their associations fails to acknowledge the structural and systemic limitations placed on the “becoming” of particular bodies (Butler 1993a; Grosz 1994; Mohanty 2003; Young 2000). A keener sensitivity to which humans and nonhumans, under which circumstances, manage to
become “public” in response to “matters of concern” (Latour 2004) is required in order to flesh out the political potentials and pitfalls of such an imaginary. Third, although there is potential to use actor-network and posthumanist theories to understand processes of racialization, heterosexism, colonialism, and other prevailing structures of inequality, they are almost never rallied in service of this kind of agenda (although see chapters by Swanton and Lim in Dwyer and Bressey 2008). As Tolia-Kelly (2006, 213) points out with respect to the literature on “affect”, it is “particularly inattentive to issues of power; negated is a focus on geometries of power and historical memory that figure and drive affective flows and rhythms.” This critique applies equally well to actor-network-inspired scholarship.

Thus, although I think actor-network theory is an important resource for thinking through the materials in this study, like Castree (2002) I have found actor-network theory most useful when used in combination with other theoretical and political tools. Castree advocates a “weaker” version of actor-network theory that remains “critical of binarist thinking, of asymmetry, of limited conceptions of agency and of centred conceptions of power” (2002, 135) and yet acknowledges that, notwithstanding their differences, “many actor-networks are driven by similar processes, … that these processes might be ‘global’ and systematic even as they are composed of nothing more than the ties between different ‘localities’; that these processes are social and natural but not in equal measure, since it is the ‘social’ relations that are often disproportionately directive; … and that power, while dispersed, can be directed by some (namely, specific ‘social’ actors) more than others” (135). What Castree describes as a “weaker” version of ANT is perhaps better understood in Donald Moore’s (2005) terms as the study of “articulated assemblages” (see below), but it is nevertheless an important intervention into the limitations of actor-network theory. I have also employed Foucauldian theories of discourse and knowledge-power in combination with theories that call into question aspects of Foucault’s work. As Stoler (1995, 2)
observes, those with “ethnographic sensibilities” have been pushed to “challenge the limits of Foucault’s discursive emphasis and his diffuse conceptions of power, to flesh out localized, quotidian practices of people who authorized and resisted European authority, to expose the tensions of that project and its inherent vulnerabilities”. Stoler is of course enormously sympathetic to Foucault’s work and directly inspired by his writings, but describes a practice of “applying the general principles of a Foucauldian frame to specific ethnographic time and place, drawing on the conceptual apparatus more than engaging the historical content of his analysis” (2, emphasis in original).

Encountering the limitations of both Foucauldian and actor-network theorizations of power, resistance, and the political has led me to consider intersections between stories and Marxian understandings of “materialism”. Although I have framed revivified interest in the material among geographers as primarily underpinned by thinkers like Latour, Stengers, and Deleuze, not all recent appeals to materiality in geography emerge from these traditions. While cultural geographers tend to draw on posthuman, actor-network, and phenomenological theories in their efforts to inject materiality into studies of culture-nature (Whatmore 2006), Marxian understandings of materiality continue to animate the discipline and offer important resources in this project. Given my interest in a region that is hailed both as an immensely storied, imaginative, and mythic place (Grace 2002; Hulan 2002) and as a resource-rich and militarily strategic hinterland (Farish 2006; Lackenbauer and Farish 2007), I have sought out scholarship attempting to think through the narrative and imaginative articulations of capitalism. Featherstone (2005), for example, attempts to connect storytelling in eighteenth century England with both the London Port Strikes of 1768 and more recent radical scholarship and activism. Gavin Bridge’s (2001; 2004; Bridge and McManus 2000; Bridge and Smith 2003) sustained interest in narrative, commodities, and resource extraction also engages with Marxian analyses of capitalism to make
sense of “things” and the stories that order our relations with them. At a time when cultural,
political, economic, and historical geographers all seem to have an interest in the “material”, the
concept offers a rich platform for interrogating the interweaving of such diverse geographies in
the Central Arctic. I explore these themes at greater length in Chapter 5 and plan to expand my
research in this direction in my postdoctoral studies (see Appendix A).

Donald Moore (2005, 25) uses the concept “articulated assemblages” to explore the
entanglements of “livelihoods, landscape, and environmental resources as well as ancestral
spirits, rainmaking territory, and political rule” in the Kaerezi region of Zimbabwe. Unlike the
less critical concept of assemblage mobilized in some actor-network accounts, Moore uses the
word “articulation” to foreground “how power relations and historical sediments formatively
shape contingent constellations that become materially and discursively consequential” (25).

Drawing on Stuart Hall and Antonio Gramsci as well as Latour and Foucault, Moore is part of a
dynamic community of anthropologists who have taken up geographic contemplations of place
and spatiality to make sense of the constitution of particular peoples and places. While Moore
attends to Zimbabwe, Raffles (2002) focuses on a region of the Brazilian Amazon and Kosek
(2006) considers forest regions in New Mexico. All three are enormously sensitive to storytelling
and employ ethnographic methods to tease out the complex and political interrelation of people,
places, and things. As Castree (2009) recently observed, these studies are models for geographers
as much as they are inspired by geographic research.

Feminist materialist engagements with racism, colonialism, and transnationalism
(Emberley 2001, 2007; Katz 2001a; Parry 2002; Spivak 1987, 1990, 1999) also offer rich
resources for thinking through the intersection of capital, race, gender, and class in colonial and
neocolonial contexts. Indeed, the basic feminist argument that power and knowledge are situated
and material in very personal and political ways has been a crucial guideline for assessing the
various materialisms animating recent geographical scholarship. While Bakker and Bridge suggest that feminist approaches to materiality have been primarily aimed at “disrupt[ing] the sex/gender binary” (2006, 20) and biological essentialism, this is a limited reading of feminist scholarship, even within geography. The material origins and consequences of story, oriented particularly around questions about what stories do, what they ought to do, and what they demand of us, are well developed in feminist as well as Indigenous and antiracist literatures. These literatures maintain a keen sensitivity to the contingency and partiality of personal and collective expression while maintaining the importance of stories and storytelling as political projects. That is, feminist, Indigenous, and antiracist scholars have been instrumental in showing how the expressions of particular people are denigrated and circumscribed as “merely stories” (particularly women, women of colour, and Indigenous peoples), while at the same time underlining the importance of storytelling in social movement and political processes more generally. From Spivak’s famous question “can the subaltern speak?” (1988), to more recent critiques of how whiteness circumscribes the terrain of antiracist feminism (Ahmed 2004b; Fellows and Razack 1998; Razack 1998; Srivastava 2005) and decolonizing projects more generally (Gunew 2008; Lawrence and Dua 2005), questions of voice, expression, narrative, and power are well developed by these and other scholars.

Spivak remains an enduring presence in this literature and in my own work. Aside from her important checks on the enthusiasm of postcolonial scholars for recuperating a subaltern voice, her concerns about the “politics of metaphor” (Sparke 2005, xxvi) and the allegorical reception of particular stories as generalized examples of “that kind of history” (see Baucom 2001; Spivak 1999; also Cameron 2008a) are highly relevant to a study concerned with how and on what terms particular stories circulate and shape political, economic, and cultural relations. Razack (1993, 56) takes up related questions in her study of how the stories of “oppressed
groups” function in both legal and pedagogical contexts. Pratt’s recent work on testimony and the capacity for Filipina mothers’ stories to affect “a wider witnessing public” (2009, 17) similarly emphasizes the importance of circulation and reception in assessing the political potential (and pitfalls) of storytelling. The capacity for stories to affect people, Pratt reminds us, is shaped by an already-structured political and ethical field that is not as malleable and open to possibility as posthuman and actor-network theories of emergence and becoming tend to imply. The questions these scholars raise about the possibilities of “story-telling for social change” (Razack 1993) significantly inform the theoretical, methodological, and empirical directions this dissertation has taken (see also Chapter 3).

The importance of stories and storytelling in the expression of experience and in building oppositional politics among racialized, sexualized, and colonized peoples has been addressed by a number of feminist, antiracist, and anticolonial scholars. Feminist geographers, for example, have long accorded value to individual narratives as part of a wider project to challenge patriarchal and masculinist systems of knowledge and power (e.g., Domosh 1997; Moss 2001; Valentine 1998). These scholars emphasize the political and epistemological importance of heeding individual experience against totalizing “grand” narratives. Geographers have shown increasing interest in biography, too, not only as a form of expression for the intimate and experiential, but also as a way of understanding broader social and spatial conditions. Thus, Daniels and Nash (2004) are interested in the geographical elements of the “life path” and in querying the geographies of life storytelling. Lorimer (2003) engages with the “small stories” of students on a geography fieldtrip as a way in to the doing of geography, but also in order to challenge the authority of received disciplinary histories, a project that complements Barnes’ (2001; 2009) efforts to tell disciplinary histories through the biographies of geographers. The capacity for stories to make “strange” disciplinary self-understandings and to open alternative lines of scholarly engagement has been
highlighted by Noxolo et al (2008) with respect to postcolonial geographies in particular and remains an important focus of critical Indigenous scholarship in geography.

While for some scholars stories are understood as articulations of larger social and cultural contexts, for others story is considered to be ontologically and epistemologically distinct from other forms of knowledge and expression. This distinctiveness has been read hierarchically in legal and academic settings (leading to the dismissal of oral history as unreliable, non-factual, and irrational, for example) but the radical otherness of stories has also been a source of personal and collective strength for Indigenous peoples. David Newhouse describes the importance of his early exposure to Iroquois oral history in the development of his “strong sense of self as Onondaga” (2005, 46), for example, and calls for the writing of an Iroquois history for Iroquois, by Iroquois. Inuit songs, stories, poetry, and fiction frequently dwell on the strength imparted by words and stories\(^\text{15}\), as in Ivaluajuk’s song recorded by Knud Rasmussen in 1921:

Cold and mosquitoes,
These two pests
Come never together.
I lay myself down on the ice,
Lay myself down on the snow and ice,
Till my teeth fall chattering
It is I.
Aja – aja – aja

Memories are they,
From those days,

\(^{15}\) There are many articulations of the importance of story in sustaining Inuit life. Panegoosho (1980, 13) describes the homesickness of an Inuk taken south to hospital in 1962 as a homesickness “above all, not for his people, not for his country even, but for the stories of his people,” and a song sung by François Tamnaruluk upon the visit of the Governor General to his community in 1969 dwells on the happiness imparted by song before ending with “The end is coming/We are running out of words/Ai-ai-ai” (cited in Gedalof 1980, 49).
From those days,
Mosquitoes swarming,
From those days,
The cold is bitter,
the mind grows dizzy
As I stretch my limbs
Upon the ice.
It is I.
Aja – aja – aja.

Ai! But songs
Call for strength
And I seek after words.
I, aja – aja – aja.

Ai! I seek and spy
Something to sing of,
The caribou with the spreading antlers!

And strongly I threw
The spear with my throwing stick
And my weapon fixed the bull
In the hollow of the groin
And it quivered with the wound
Till it dropped
And was still

Ai! but songs
Call for strength,
And I seek after words.
It is I,
The importance of “good stories” (Bolt 2007) in nourishing strength and survival remains a preoccupation of Kugluktukmiut, as I discuss in Chapter 7. Efforts to preserve the stories of Elders are seen as central to maintaining Inuit culture, history, language, environmental knowledge, and intergenerational relationships in the contemporary North, not so much in the salvage tradition of earlier anthropological studies, but rather as an active project of maintaining and guiding Inuit lives. As Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 28) observes,

Indigenous peoples want to tell our own stories, write our own versions, in our own ways, for our own purposes. It is not simply about giving an oral account or a genealogical naming of the land and the events which raged over it, but a very powerful need to give testimony to and restore a spirit, to bring back into existence a world fragmented and dying. The sense of history conveyed by these approaches is not the same thing as the discipline of history, and so our accounts collide, crash into each other.

Indigenous scholars have written extensively on the “crashing” together of Indigenous and settler stories and the importance of challenging dominant histories (e.g., Battiste 2000; Dickason 1988; Lischke and McNab 2005; Newhouse 2005). At times this “crashing” has led to the suppression of Indigenous knowledges, but at other times it has involved the selective uptake (and misinterpretation) of Indigenous stories by settler populations to further nationalist, colonial, scientific, and personal projects (Atwood 2004; Cariou 2006; Cruikshank 1998b; Henderson 2000). Keeshig-Tobias (1997) and Stevenson (1999) have issued clear statements about the stealing of Indigenous stories and a number of Indigenous communities have developed ethical protocols for research relating to their knowledges (Archibald 2008; Schnarch 2004). As Archibald (2008), Cruikshank (1998a; 2005) and Kulchyski (2005) have emphasized, moreover,
there is more at stake than the circulation of written stories in taking seriously Indigenous knowledges. The importance (and immense challenge) of listening and of cultivating a receptiveness, openness, and ability to hear stories defines their efforts to engage in meaningful story-work.

As the foregoing discussion indicates, I have worked with several, sometimes conflicting understandings of story in this project. In part this is a reflection of disciplinary shifts (from discursive to “new materialist”, from humanist to posthumanist, from epistemological to ontological, and so on) and the productive openings such shifts make possible. In part it is also a reflection of the literature itself, which tends to employ different conceptualizations of story and storytelling depending on who is involved. It is female, Indigenous, and racialized peoples who tell “stories” about their particular and local concerns, for example, and more powerful subjects who are associated with knowledge, literature, and globalized discourse (see Hesse 2002 for an example of this dynamic). And in part it stems from the cross-cultural encounters and politics defining this study, which demand a certain openness to different stories and storyings. Some of these themes are revisited below as I situate this project within Northern and Inuit Studies and within Colonial, Postcolonial, and Indigenous Geographies.

Northern and Inuit Studies

Human geographers have only periodically turned their attentions toward the Canadian North over the past several decades. Important earlier works include the writings of Louis-Edmond Hamelin (1978), George Wenzel (1991), Peter Usher (Usher 1965; Usher and Beakhurst 1973), Richard Ruggles (1991), and Robert Bone (1992), whose careers have revolved around northern research, as well as the essays of scholars like Wreford Watson (1969), Denis Cosgrove
(1978), and Rob Shields (1991), who have addressed the north as part of a larger interest in landscape, place, power, and the geographical imagination. Although each of these authors offers insights and ideas that have found their way into the writing of my dissertation, their works do not necessarily comprise a canon of northern geographic research. These works do not collectively shape contemporary human geographic research in the North, nor do they provide an essential foundation for understanding the shape of current scholarship. Instead, much as these earlier scholars did, geographers interested in northern research necessarily engage with a multidisciplinary body of research by historians, anthropologists, literary scholars, political economists, and sociologists in an effort to come to terms with this vast and heterogeneous place. Geographers bring a unique perspective to northern studies and their contributions are distinctly geographical, but such contributions emerge from reading Harold Innis, Ken Coates, and Julie Cruikshank (not to mention Lefebvre, Foucault, and Latour) as much as from reading a geographical canon.

Rob Shields’ (1991) engagement with the North as a marginal place defined as isolated, pure nature has been an important contribution to critical geographic scholarship in the North. As part of a broader thesis about the role of marginal places in constituting modernity, Shields draws on well-established tropes of the North as isolated hinterland, site of masculine heroics, and timeless landscape that most Canadians know through “secondary images and narratives … and television news clips” (167) rather than personal experience. This romanticized North, one that appeals to those living in “the commodified consumer landscape of Toronto’s suburban strip developments” (199), is Shields’ target. Shields provides an important critique of scholars like

Farish (2006) makes the important point that this interdisciplinarity has a history with intimate ties to the exploration and militarization of the North. Organizing northern knowledge around geography – that is, conceptualizing vastly different intellectual projects as related to the extent that they are tied to the same (albeit heterogeneous) place – has been an important aspect of producing “North”.

I am thinking particularly here of the geographical tradition of blending assessments of the physicality of place with its social, political, and cultural importance, as Hamelin does in Canadian Nordicity (1978).
W.L. Morton who claim that “the ultimate and the comprehensive meaning of Canadian history is to be found where there has been no Canadian history: in the North” (quoted in Shields, 183).

“Such a displacement of meaning and sense – of the so-called ‘motor of history’- to the barely inhabited North obscures some of the fundamental socio-political ingredients which have shaped the progress of Canada as a national society”, he writes, including the role of transnational staples trades and social struggle in constituting northern geographies. Shields thus makes the crucial point that romanticized myths and stories about the North have effects. They motivate and articulate “with a set of active practices which are both institutional and personal … [and thus have] empirical effects on patterns of development, economic impacts on [northern] inhabitants, political implications for the nation-state and cultural impacts on Canadian citizens” (199). While Shields’ argument is in some cases overstated, and while he ignores the role of Indigenous northerners in shaping historical and contemporary northern geographies, his work is an essential reference for geographers concerned with the discursive production of the Canadian North as both marginal and central to Southern Canadian identity.

The North as an imagined, mythical place has concerned scholars for some time. Not only has the region and the very concept of “North” animated a great deal of Canadian fiction, poetry and literary criticism (Atwood 2004), northern scholars and writers have a strong appetite for travel narratives as sources of knowledge about the region (e.g., McGoogan 2003; Ross 1985; Vanast 2001). Scholars like Renee Hulan (2002), John Moss (1997), and Sherrill Grace (2002) have called attention to the extraordinarily storied nature of the region and have made important headway in identifying particular tropes dominating Arctic narratives. Their interest, however, has been in the Arctic as an imagined place and not so much as a place in which people live and work, or as a place with complex historical geographies. In a sense this should come as no surprise – as I argue above, when working within a discursive framework it is very difficult to do
more than critique the sweep of hegemonic narratives. Just as Said’s (1978) prototypical study of the discursive production of the Orient was both hailed for its importance and critiqued for its tendency to reproduce and reinforce the dynamics it sought to undermine (see Young 1990), studies of the narrative production of regions like the North have tended to offer limited resources for thinking outside of dominant narratives, except through the rather limiting concept of “counter-narrative” (see Chapter 7).

Sherill Grace’s (2002) work exemplifies this dynamic. Her comprehensive assessment of the “idea of north” and its importance in the Canadian imaginary is immensely thoughtful and thorough, but it also reinforces the northern imaginary she seeks to destabilize. While Grace adds a more nuanced and much-needed feminist perspective to the study of the north as an imagined place, the book, as Kulchyski (2004, 198) observes,

makes no consistent deployment of Canada’s settler-colony status. Hence, although in some chapters there is a sharp criticism of colonialism … the book wants to celebrate “being north” as a Canadian identity at the same time as acknowledging Canada’s colonizing impact on the lands and peoples in its far and mid north. The latter becomes increasingly muted, to the point that Aboriginal voices are appropriated to serve ends antithetical of the political project of decolonization that frequently inspired them.

Indeed, while Grace includes a chapter emphasizing northern Indigenous writings and expressions, tellingly, she can only account for these expressions as a “writing back”, a form of relation that feeds the kind of erotics of colonial subjectivity I address more fully in Chapters 6 and 7. In this regard, it reinforces rather than undermines the long heritage of going North to find the (white) Canadian Self. Like Lopez (1986), Wiebe (1989; 1994), and Moss (1993; 1997) (and before them, Berton, Service, and Kroetsch), whose work is rich and commendable in many
respects, Grace engages the north as a narrated, imagined, evocative place but fails to account for the material consequences of this longstanding form of relation.

I elaborate this critique to make two points that are crucial to understanding the position of my work with respect to Northern and Inuit Studies. First, northern scholars are keenly attuned to the narrative production of the region and have made headway in critiquing the racialized and colonial foundations of both iconic and more peripheral northern stories. Work in this regard has reached an impasse of sorts, however, and there is a need to develop a different idiom for engaging the north and its narrative geographies. This study aims to make a contribution along these lines. Second, to the extent that Northern and Inuit Studies exists as a coherent realm of research (and this is itself debatable), the racialized and imperial origins underpinning the very constitution of “North” and “Inuit” as objects of scholarly research requires more sustained critique. As Said (1978) made so clear in his own critique of the production of regional knowledge, Northern Studies is invariably about Southerners, and its insistence on marshaling a huge, heterogeneous, and vaguely defined region into a single signifier demands critique. There are good reasons to study the North as a whole and coherent place, not least because of the habit of governments, artists, and scholars to address it as such, but such studies must be more self-conscious of the power-knowledge dynamics underpinning the creation of regional and analytical categories.18

18 This is not to say that all northern scholarship is problematic, or indeed, that even writings I find objectionable on one level are not enormously useful in other ways. In addition to the individuals and works described above, I am indebted to the writings of political-economic and historical scholars like Harold Innis (1950; 1962 [1930]), Kenneth Coates (2001; 1985; 1991), Marybelle Mitchell (1996), Shelagh Grant (1998a; 1998b), David Neufeld (2002), Trevor Levere (1993), Mark Dickerson (1992), Robert McPherson (2003), and Olive Dickason (1988); to literary scholars including Julia Emberley (1997; 2001; 2007), Ian McLaren (1984a; 1984b; 1991a; 1991b), and Robin Gedalof McGrath (1980; 1993; 1998); and to anthropologists like Hugh Brody (1973; 1975; 1981; 2000), Richard Condon (1996), Gisli Pálsson (2005), and David Damas (2002). All have contributed greatly to this study, as have the early ethnographic writings of Jenness (1921; 1922; 1923; 1924), Rasmussen (1930), Stefansson (1914), Petitot (1886) and Métayer (1973). I am also indebted to the growing body of Inuit writings and collections of oral history.

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Geographers have made important headway in storying the North differently. Farish (2006), for example, insists on troubling the very production of “North” as a coherent region and category of analysis and is wary of the mobilization of concepts like nationalism and wilderness in northern studies. The “spacings” (2006, 180) of North as exceptional and isolated, he argues, have been central to its production as a site of scientific experimentation and militarization. Frank Tester and Peter Kulchyski’s two co-authored volumes on the histories, geographies, and political-economic dynamics shaping the North in the twentieth century (Kulchyski and Tester 2007; Tester and Kulchyski 1994) highlight the distinctiveness of imperial and colonial projects in the North in crucial ways. They show, for example, that capitalist geographies are central to the articulation of colonialism in the North, a point that has not been given sustained attention in geographic studies of colonialism more broadly. Caroline Desbiens (2004a; 2004b; 2007) has offered an important critique of the production of North and South through the political geographies of land claims and resource economies, with special attention to gendered and racialized geographies. Although her work is based in northern Quebec it intersects in many ways with my own and, as I aim to do, speaks to broader geographical questions than those animating the contemporary North. Matthew Kurtz’ (2002; 2006) writing on racism in Alaska and his contemplations on method, representation, and the ethics of geographical knowledge production are also important references. Together, these recent studies provide a rich context for thinking about some of the central themes animating this dissertation: the production of North and northerners in terms of power-knowledge dynamics, networks of resource production and extraction, and racialized understandings of territory, governance, knowledge, and culture.

available (e.g., Amagoalik 2007; Arvaluk 2007; Bennett and Riley 2004; Gedalof 1980; Ipellie 1997; Okpik 2005; Petrone 1988; Tungilik and Uyarasuk 1999). These texts have allowed me to cite Inuit extensively and to access perspectives and histories that were not as available to scholars even ten years ago.
Matthew Farish’s studies of science, the Cold War, and the militarization of the Canadian Arctic have been helpful in thinking through the Arctic as a political, tactical space (Farish 2006; Farish and Lackenbauer 2009; Lackenbauer and Farish 2007). Rather than perpetuate the habit of conceptualizing the north as a vast, geopolitical “space”, Farish is attentive to the ways in which such ideas come to prominence and their myriad effects. His work connects with Michael Bravo’s writings on science and empire (Bravo 1996; Bravo and Sorlin 2002) and with Richard Powell’s (2005; 2007; 2008) work, both of whom offer historically detailed and theoretically informed contributions to understanding the north as an imperial site of knowledge and practice. Arn Keeling’s interest in the production of the north as a site of mineral extraction (Keeling and Sandlos 2008) connects to my own post-doctoral research plans (see Appendix A) and is animated by a vibrant community of geographers and environmental historians interested in northern mining (e.g., Le Billon 2006; Piper 2007, 2009; Piper and Sandlos 2007). Studies of North as a “space” for militarization, scientific study, and mineral extraction tend not to be articulated with studies of the particularities of “place” (although see Farish and Lackenbauer 2009) and part of my intention in this project is to weave geographies of imperial science, exploration, and mining together with geographies of the specificities of place. In this regard, the handful of geographers whose work emerges form longstanding connections with northern communities, including in particular George Wenzel (1991; 2001; 2004; 2005) and Frank Tester (Kulchyski and Tester 2007; Tester and Irniq 2008; Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Tester and McNicoll 2004), has been particularly helpful19.

This dissertation is also informed by “polar geographies” (see Cameron 2008c) and the research conducted by a group of primarily British human geographers into Antarctic questions.  

19 Recent work by Nicole Gombay (2005) and Gita Laidler (2006) continues the longstanding tradition in northern studies of community-based, qualitative research. While some of this work lacks the critical edge I would hope for, it certainly foregrounds the perspectives and interests of Inuit and this is an important contribution in itself.
Although there are reasons to doubt whether any meaningful analogies can be drawn between the Arctic and Antarctic regions, to the extent that both are constructed as wholly other and extreme spaces of imperial conquest, geographical writings on the Antarctic are instructive. John Wylie’s (2002) piece on “icy” movement towards the South Pole has much to offer in understanding British imperial activity at the poles more generally, as does Kathryn Yusoff’s (2005; 2007) work on visualizing practices and embodied archives of polar knowledges. The work of Klaus Dodds (2006) and Simon Naylor (2008) is also instructive. Recent efforts to bring Arctic and Antarctic scholars together to think through climate change discourse and polar knowledges more generally are also suggestive (e.g., Yusoff 2008). Just as scholars have engaged the Arctic as an aesthetic, imagined space for centuries, however, Antarctic geographers tend to emphasize the alterity of the region and its translation into geopolitical, aesthetic, and scientific abstractions; Yusoff’s *Bipolar* (2008) is emblematic of this line of scholarship. The poles may have something in common from a British imperial position, but the regions are fundamentally different in important ways.

It is worth calling attention to the importance of climate change in northern research and broader public understandings of the region. Geographers have begun to question the discursive implications of climate change, not so much in an effort to question the validity of scientific research into climatic change (see Demerritt 2006 for a discussion of how social constructivist arguments have been mobilized in discussions of climate change), but rather to highlight the differential effects of climate change discourse on peoples and places around the world (e.g., Baldwin 2009). Aside from George Wenzel’s (1992; 1995) early and important critiques of global warming discourse and its influence on northern peoples, however, to my knowledge there has been very little engagement on the part of human geographers with the production of climate change discourse in the Canadian Arctic (although see recent issue of the *Journal of Historical*
Geography on “narratives of climate change”, particularly Bravo (2009)). By contrast, there is a large and growing body of research into the physical impacts of climatic change on northern communities, potential adaptations to future changes, and the intersections of Inuit knowledge and western science (e.g., Ford et al. 2008; Furgal and Seguin 2006; Laidler 2006)\(^{20}\). This scholarship tends not to incorporate critical perspectives on colonialism, racism, and capitalism and is more policy-oriented and pragmatic in focus; I would argue that the “human dimensions of climate change” literature in general is lacking in this regard and, to the extent that this dissertation engages the ordering of imperial knowledge, Indigenous peoples, and northern resources, it contextualizes contemporary interest in the northern articulations of climate change in important ways. I have not engaged the climate change literature to any great extent in this project but it certainly forms a backdrop to any discussions of contemporary Inuit or northern geographies.

There are remarkable works produced outside of geography that have informed this project substantially. Julie Cruikshank has been a theoretical, methodological, and empirical mentor and I am indebted to her writings (1989; 1992a; 1998a; 2005) and her generosity in reading my work. Cruikshank has made the crucial point that northern Indigenous knowledges matter in ways that exceed their confinement to the “local” or their uptake as wholly “traditional” complements to scientific study. Bocking’s (forthcoming) recent engagement with the role of Indigenous knowledge in histories of science, race, and colonial authority in the North makes related claims. Peter Kulchyski’s (2005) study of Aboriginal politics in Nunavut and Denendeh is a rare blend of critical social theory and extensive community-based research and in this regard it

\(^{20}\) It should be noted that Inuit organizations are also actively involved in the production of knowledge about climate change and its environmental, social, economic, political, and health effects (e.g., Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Nasivvik Centre for Inuit Health and Changing Environments, and Ajunnginiq Centre 2005; National Aboriginal Health Organization 2004). Research and policy on climate change has been an important platform for asserting northern Indigenous interests (Watt-Cloutier 2009).
is an important reference for this study. As Kulchyski (2005, 21) observes, northern scholars tend to be wary of theory and particularly critical theory. Nancy Wachowich (2001), Paul Nadasdy (2007), Sherrill Grace (2002), and Lisa Bloom (1993) have also taken more critical theoretical paths through the north, although each of these contributions varies immensely in its theoretical foundations, arguments, and the explicitness of its theoretical base.

There is also a small and multi-disciplinary literature addressing Samuel Hearne and Bloody Falls that bears mention here (see Chapter 4 for additional discussion). Ian MacLaren’s extensive writings have been important in destabilizing the reliability and authorship of Hearne’s narrative. He has made a close comparative study of Hearne’s unpublished travel notes and his published narrative (1991b; 1993a) and has also written more widely on travel narratives and northern knowledges (1991a; 1992a; 1992b; 1993b; 1994). One of MacLaren’s students devoted her entire doctoral dissertation to understanding the genesis of Hearne’s narrative from the time of his Coppermine journey to its eventual publication (Rollason Driscoll 2002) and this dissertation has been enormously useful. Robin McGrath’s (1993; 1998) academic writing and poetic engagement with the Bloody Falls massacre story is an important feminist and anti-racist treatment of the massacre story; she is the first and only scholar to document Inuit versions of the massacre story and to trouble the authority of Hearne’s telling on these grounds. Venema’s (1998; 2000) work is also strong and has been useful in unpacking the gendered, sexualized violence at play in the massacre story, although her use of geographical language is more aesthetic than geographers might wish. Terry Goldie’s (1989, 43-46) brief but trenchant critique of Hearne’s massacre story is also an important contribution, as is Milligan and McCreary’s (forthcoming) study of the neocolonial uptake of Hearne’s narrative.
Colonial, Postcolonial and Indigenous Geographies


This project is significantly informed by geographic literature on colonialism, postcolonialism and empire and particularly critical geographic interest in addressing Indigenous geographies from an antiracist, anti-colonial perspective (e.g., Cameron, de Leeuw, and Greenwood forthcoming; de Leeuw 2007; Gilmartin and Berg 2007; Johnson et al. 2007; Kobayashi and de Leeuw forthcoming; Louis 2007; Shaw 2006; Sundberg 2007). Colonial and

21 There are no clear definitional lines between the terms imperialism, colonialism, and postcolonialism, particularly in the Canadian context, where imperial and colonial domination have been carried out by a settler population that continues to occupy Indigenous lands. Cosgrove’s (2000, 375) understanding of imperialism as “the creation and maintenance of an unequal economic, cultural, and territorial relationship, usually between states and often in the form of empire, based on domination and subordination” is a workable definition. While Cosgrove notes that imperialism and colonialism are similar concepts, I understand colonialism to refer to a more intensive and intimate form of imperialism in which Indigenous lands and cultures are targets of dispossession, in addition to establishing economic and political domination and dependence. As Driver (2004a, 93) suggests, the “culture of colonialism is . . . articulated in a different register from that of imperialism. Empires look upward - to god, king, law; colonies are rooted in particular parts of the earth, inhabiting its patterned ground”. Understanding colonialism in much of Canada requires a sensitivity to the specific dynamics of settler colonialism (the establishment of a settler population on colonized lands, as opposed to a temporary occupying power, see Johnston and Lawson (2005)). But in the northern reaches of Canada “settler colonialism” is a much less obvious descriptor of the dynamics of colonial rule. At times, imperialism is a more fitting description of the dynamics of domination and subordination characterizing relations between Inuit and the Canadian state, insofar as Inuit lands have not been settled or even occupied to the same extent as the lands of more southerly First Nations, and insofar as the variant of colonial domination most Inuit experience(d) has more in common with high modernist governmentality than with the earlier forms of colonial rule experienced in southern Canada (see Chapter 6). Furthermore, Inuit in Nunavut settled a comprehensive land claim in 1993 that was based on the premise that they had never ceded their lands by treaty or war. Inuit have always been held apart as a different kind of Indigenous group in Canada, mostly governed as Canadian citizens (although in deeply racialized and paternalistic terms) and only briefly administered as wards of the state under the Indian Act. And yet, southern Canadian imaginative geographies of North are clearly connected to settler colonial dreams of national unity and the creation of a sense of settler “Indigeneity” (Grace 2002). Thus, both colonialism and settler colonialism remain important concepts for understanding northern geographies. I follow Gregory (2000b) and a number of other scholars in understanding “postcolonialism” as a critical orientation toward colonialism and its ongoing elaboration, including efforts to contest, rework, and evade colonial geographies. Postcolonialism is related to decolonizing and anti-colonial efforts, although I understand the latter to be more explicitly engaged in changing colonial geographies in a very material sense.
postcolonial scholarship tends to dwell on questions of power, relationship, response, voice, and
narrative, questions that animate this project. As Noxolo et al (2008, 146) point out, a
postcolonial perspective

offers much to geography—an understanding of the complex historical layering that
shapes global power relations, possible ways to overcome the divides between
geographies undertaken in different parts of the world (a relational way of thinking
regional geography), and a method that enables expression of those many voices on the
margins of European academic spaces. Much of this writing provides urgent and
continued reminders of the historical connections between different postcolonial spaces
and their lasting legacies, arguing that the inhabitants of imperial centres are implicated
in and therefore should take responsibility for the suffering that arises from the
postcolonial condition.

Understood in these terms, a postcolonial approach to the complex relations at play in the
storying of Bloody Falls has the potential to accommodate and integrate many of the questions
and concerns driving this study.

Although geographers have addressed colonialism and imperialism for decades (e.g.,
Blaut 1970; Harris 1977), the more historical and political-economic analyses that characterized
earlier disciplinary contributions shifted towards a distinctly cultural interest through the 1990s as
geographers engaged more closely with poststructuralist, feminist, postcolonial, and
psychoanalytic theories and particularly as they took up the writings of Edward Said (1978;
1993). These new theoretical tools energized a new generation of geographical research into
colonialism and imperialism and led to important studies of how colonial processes shaped the
material and imaginative geographies of both colonizers and colonized, conceptualizations of

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22 I am thinking here about the importance of Foucault, Spivak, Bhabha, Hall, Derrida, Lacan, Kristeva,
Cixous, McClintock, Pratt, Spivak, Irigaray, and others in geographic inquiry.
“race” and nature, and contemporary (neo)colonial geographies (e.g., Anderson 1991; Blunt and Rose 1994; Braun 2002a; Castree and Braun 2001; Clayton 2000; Duncan and Gregory 1999b; Godlewska and Smith 1994; Gregory 1994, 2004; Harris 2002; Jacobs 1996; Sparke 1998). “Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies” has since become a vibrant sub-field of geographic enquiry23, as numerous review articles attest (Clayton 2003; King 2003a; Lester 2003; Nash 2002).

It is a subfield with its own peculiarities, of course. The concerns I outlined earlier in this chapter regarding the influence of the concept of discourse on theorizations of power, agency, resistance, and scale in human geography are particularly applicable to the subdiscipline of colonial and postcolonial geographies, given that discourse has thoroughly dominated geographic studies of the colonial for the past two decades. But there are other peculiarities informing these studies worthy of mention here. First, geographic research into colonialism over the past twenty years has invariably (if implicitly) begun from the position that colonialism is/was “bad”. This may seem an odd observation, but it has real implications for the shape of the field and its limitations. To the extent that scholars are informed by a moral conviction that colonialism and colonizers were bad, and that they employ theoretical tools that assist in identifying both the sweeping discursive scope of colonialism and the specific, intimate reach of the colonial project into the bodies and minds of the colonized, these studies tend to assume in advance that colonialism was everywhere, destroyed everything, and that all those who were caught up in it were either bad or good. The point is not, of course, that colonialism was “good” – far from it – but rather that good/bad binaries structure the shape of the field to a notable extent and lead to studies that seem almost obsessively inclined to elaborate the particular evils and perniciousness

23 Noxolo et al (2008, 147) worry, in fact, that postcolonialism has become a bit too “cosy” a concept in geography and that its political claims are blunted by the partial ways in which postcolonialism is addressed in geographical scholarship. I share their concerns.
of the colonial project in specific\(^{24}\) places (see Chapter 3 for an antiracist critique of white investments in goodness). Certainly there are invaluable contributions here – understanding the operation of (neo)colonialism remains both politically and intellectually urgent – but as Ann Laura Stoler (2008a; 2008b) recently observed, something more is at work in the production of scholarship about bad colonial actors than an overhaul of historical narratives. As Stoler points out with respect to colonial and postcolonial studies in general, students of the colonial often work from the “premise that we who study the colonial know both what imperial rule looks like and the dispositions of those it empowers” (2008a, 238). Colonial scholars, she argues, too often peddle “charmed” (252) stories of the colonial and postcolonial in which “good and evil” are understood as transcendent rather than historical categories, and in which the colonizers (“with whom we do not sympathize” (238, emphasis in original)) are necessarily attributed “flat interiorities” (238) while hazy subaltern figures are held up as heroic and resistant\(^{25}\). Such storylines, Stoler argues, are analytically slack, historically inaccurate, and ultimately politically limiting to the extent that they blind us from understanding our own implication in ongoing racialized and colonial geographies.

I elaborate this critique not to dismiss what is in fact a rich subfield of geographic scholarship (a subfield to which I am enormously indebted) but rather to identify a particular trend in this subfield that merits reconsideration. Geographic studies of the colonial have tended to over-emphasize the actions and imaginations of the colonizer and to construct Indigenous peoples as either dominated by or resistant to colonial power. Indigenous peoples do not appear on their own terms, as rich subjects in their own right, or as people who might be shaped by

\(^{24}\) Gilmartin and Berg (2007, 120) make the important observation that this “place” is more often than not “a faraway past” rather than the ongoing articulation of colonial relations in the present.

\(^{25}\) Colonial and postcolonial scholars have been acutely concerned with the concept of resistance. I discuss the limitations of this concept for understanding colonial and Indigenous geographies in greater detail in Chapter 6.
relations other than those demanded by colonialism. Part of my goal in this project has been to call attention to geographies that are not entirely shaped by colonialism, not through an essentialist and romantic appeal to the traditional or to all that is “untainted” by colonialism and whiteness, but rather by taking Inuit seriously as conscious, strategic, complex, and heterogeneous people who sometimes work collectively to address colonial relations and sometimes not. I have also remained committed to an ethical stance of acknowledging that which I do not know and can not know of others; at times the different places and relations informing Inuit geographies are the focus of my writing, but at other times my project has involved acknowledging alterity without documenting and describing it.

There is a growing literature in geography pertaining to Indigenous geographies that is carried out in this vein. Not surprisingly, it is methodological and ethical in orientation as much as a description of Indigenous peoples’ geographies; the politics of knowing remain central to the study of Indigeneity (Cameron, de Leeuw, and Greenwood forthcoming). Thus Louis (2007, 131) argues that “geographers need to start building ethical research relationships with Indigenous communities” and to evaluate research on Indigenous issues in terms of its respect for and accord with Indigenous ethical standards. Numerous geographers have commented on the pressing need to decolonize the discipline (Shaw 2006; Shaw, Herman, and Dobbs 2006); a process not

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26 I elaborate on some of these issues in Chapters 3, 6, and 7. As an example, however, of what I mean by acknowledging alterity without attempting to map its contours and content, while participating in the week-long cultural exchange and meeting between Dene and Inuit that I describe in Chapter 7, I did not attempt to gain access to a meeting between Inuit and Dene Elders that I suspected would be partly animated by shared stories about Bloody Falls. I did not feel it was appropriate for me to be there, and yet I am also convinced that it is important to acknowledge that this meeting occurred and that these knowledges (may) exist.

27 I am working towards an edited collection considering Indigenous and colonial geographies in terms of the “Geographies of Response” with Sarah de Leeuw and Jessica Place. Growing out of a special session at the 2009 meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers and continuing at the 2010 AAG, the collection will bring together a number of cultural, historical, and political geographers interested in rethinking dominant conceptualizations of power and resistance in the discipline, particularly in colonial contexts.
necessarily well served by geographic studies of whiteness or even race, as Shaw (2006) argues (see also Lawrence and Dua 2005 for a commentary on the need to decolonize antiracism). Koopman’s (2008) extended contemplation of practices of solidarity and the role of white, middle class women in “alter-globalization” projects makes an important intervention into methodologies of working with others, as does Sundberg’s (2007) reflection on solidarity work carried out in Vancouver in relation to translocal efforts to resist the School of the Americas. Indeed, methodological writing on the challenges involved in working effectively with others tends to be informed by an interest in making research relevant to contemporary struggles and producing knowledge that might actively intervene in (neo)colonial and imperial formations (Benson and Nagar 2006; Nagar and Geiger 2007; Sparke 2005). Such work requires more than a simple or straightforward commitment to “relevance”. As Raghuram et al (2009) argue, geographic interest in care, ethics, and responsibility as a way of conceptualizing relations between people and places (e.g., Massey 2004) requires critical reappraisal and a sensitivity to the ways in which relations between the self and the other are historically and geographically informed by unequal (post)colonial power relations. To care about and feel responsible for others is, at best, a politically ambiguous grounds for engagement and can work to maintain rather than rupture colonial forms of domination (Ahmed 2004a; Koopman 2008; Srivastava 2005, 2006). Moreover, engaging with Indigenous peoples requires attending to differences in epistemological, ontological, and political commitments28 rather than simply incorporating Indigeneity into western frameworks of understanding (Cruikshank 1998b; Ermine 2007; Santos 2004).

A second peculiarity worth mentioning about colonial and postcolonial geographic scholarship is the tremendous interest in networks, mobility, and global interdigitation. A great

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28 Howitt, for example, has considered how research with Indigenous peoples in Australia calls into question concepts like scale, knowledge, and place (Howitt 2002; Howitt and Stevens 2005; Howitt and Suchet-Pearson 2003).
deal of geographic research into colonialism has emphasized networks and connections between centre and periphery, colony and metropole (e.g., Bravo 1999; Clayton 2000; Driver 2001; Lester 2001). The notion that colonial geographies transformed the imperial home as much as distant colonies has been an important focus of this work (Blunt 1999; Blunt and McEwan 2002; Hall 2002; Jacobs 1996). Interest in the ways in which “English” literature, political theory, and imaginations were shaped by encounters with colonial others have also emerged (e.g., Ogborn and Withers 2004), as has interest in connecting colonialism with transnational flows of people and commodities (Bebbington and Batterbury 2001; Cook, Crang, and Thorpe 2004; Cook and Harrison 2003; Crang, Dwyer, and Jackson 2003; Lambert and Lester 2006; Nagar 2002).

Imperialism and colonialism are, of course, tremendously mobile and networked processes. But as Clayton (2001/2002) observes, there is a universalizing impulse in the tendency to study colonialism as networked, extensive, and globalizing, one that overlooks the fact that “colonial places have histories and geographies that exceed what the centre made of them in administrative and historiographic terms” (71). There is an appeal here to take seriously the “local”, not as a “privileged discursive site of metropolitan criticism and longing” (69) populated with exotic Others, but rather as part of a crucial effort to “historicize [and] contextualize colonialism carefully” (69). Parry (2002) advances similar claims. This study has been informed by such efforts to trouble the preponderance of networks, mobility, and globality in studies of (post)colonialism.

The particular themes and concerns animating studies of Indigenous, colonial, and postcolonial geographies in the Canadian context merit description. Studies of settler colonialism has been particularly well developed in Canada, most notably Harris’ (1987; 1997; 2002; 2004) emblematic and exemplary studies of the historical-geographical transformation of Canada into a settler colony (see also Blomley 2003; Braun 2002b; Clayton 2000; de Leeuw 2007; Sparke
In his more recent work Harris attends to contemporary manifestations of these processes and particularly the challenges posed by land claims negotiations in British Columbia (Harris 2002). Although an historical-geographical sensibility is crucial for understanding the origins of land claims and other Indigenous claims and contests, histories that are consciously and consistently written out of the Canadian public education system (Newhouse 2005), there is more than historical redress at stake in addressing contemporary Indigenous-settler relations in Canada (as Harris himself recognizes). The notion that colonial histories “haunt” the Canadian state and particularly the white, middle class settlers who yearn to feel at home here is a longstanding trope for coming to terms with the dispossession informing Canadian nationhood and is an inadequate grounds for decolonization (Cameron 2008a). As Kobayashi and de Leeuw (forthcoming) argue, moreover, the tendency to reduce the tensions of settler colonial reconciliation to an imagined conflict between Indigenous peoples and white settlers (and their descendents) writes out the broader (neo)colonial geographies informing immigration and racialization in the contemporary nation-state. Similarly, the influence of neoliberal political and economic ideologies on the practices and possibilities of governance, politics, and place-making merit more explicit consideration by geographers concerned with Indigenous geographies and geographies of empire in the Canadian context, as recent work by a number of Canadian geographers makes clear (Dempsey, Gould, and Sundberg forthcoming; Rossiter and Wood 2005). To the extent that this study offers an alternative framework for storying settler colonialism in Canada, it engages this rich field of research.

Efforts to connect studies of colonialism with considerations of race and nature similarly seek to attend to the complexities of the neocolonial present in Canada. Bruce Braun’s longstanding interest in these themes has been an important influence (Braun 2000, 2002a, 2002b; Braun and Castree 1998) and has informed more recent collections attending directly to
race, nature, and the politics of difference (Baldwin, Cameron, and Kobayashi 2009; Moore, Kosek, and Pandian 2003). Desbiens’ (2004a) research into the colonial and postcolonial geographies of hydro-electric development has similar aims, although it dwells more on political-economic geographies than on questions of nature. Her commitment is also to building long term relationships with the communities she writes about, an important check on tendencies to engage with specific places to the extent that they demonstrate generalized theoretical insights or claims. Work by Mawani (2007) and Gunew (2004; 2008) pays particular attention to the ways in which Indigenous and other racialized subjects intersect in settler colonies like Canada and Australia, work that echoes Anderson’s (1991) research on Chinatown but aims to address contemporary concerns more directly. Together, these and other studies of the colonial past and present have greatly informed this dissertation.
“Methodology in its broadest understanding is not simply about method- or perhaps more specifically, technique – but encompasses questions of epistemology and, ultimately, ontology, to which method, or technique, is inextricably linked”

- Richard Schein

“The problem of the critic’s own methodology must … be addressed if he or she is to do anything more than simply repeat the structures that are being criticized”

- Robert Young

As described in the preceding chapter, I conceptualize story as a relational and material ordering practice and in this chapter I consider the methodological implications of such a proposition. Although I discuss each of the research methods I employed in turn (including archival research, ethnography, interviews and focus groups), there are a number of methodological themes running through this chapter that bear mention here. First, I consider the methodological imperative to “follow the thing” and related methodological responses to the material turn. Whether following the movements of the Bloody Falls massacre story itself (understood as text, practice, network, or otherwise) or attending to the particular materials of which it has been comprised (such as copper; see Chapter 5), I describe the methodological dimensions of coming to terms with story’s materiality. Second, I discuss the methodological implications of understanding story as practice. If stories are performed and practiced in specific social and cultural contexts, and that context matters, then ethnography’s attention to practice, culture, and performance is particularly suitable for understanding story as practice. But as ethnographers themselves have long pointed out, practice and performance are neither transparent
nor neutral. Dynamics of power, legibility and silence shaped my ability to attend to storytelling practice, and the political and ethical implications of performing stories throughout this dissertation are of fundamental importance. I thus consider issues of selection, translation, silence, and performance throughout the chapter, not just as methodological concerns, but as ethical and political concerns shaping my praxis as a researcher.

This study is itself a relational and material ordering practice, and to the extent that I am interested in performing decolonizing stories in the chapters that follow, it is crucial to consider the politics and possibilities of doing research with, for, and/or about Indigenous peoples. I thus begin the chapter with a discussion of the limits of self-reflexivity and other personalized political responses to the challenges of research with “others” and outline the ways in which I conceptualize my relationship with the various people I worked with in Kugluktuk and with the dissertation that has emerged from those relations.

**Methodological Approaches to Geographic Research with Indigenous Peoples**

The epistemological, ontological, and ethical questions raised by research with, for, or about Indigenous peoples are historically and geographically informed. Expectations about what matters, what can be taken for granted, and what ought to concern a geographer interested in conducting research involving Inuit are shaped by colonizing and decolonizing movements, by disciplinary and institutional histories, and by personal and political concerns and convictions. As such, it is important to stake out the ways in which research with Indigenous peoples figures in the geographical imagination and to attend to the ways in which that imagination has shaped my practice. I am particularly interested in how feminist, antiracist, poststructuralist, and postcolonial
theories have informed geographic engagement with colonized and racialized others and in understanding the implications and limitations of these engagements.

As a geographer whose training began in 1996, my thinking is fundamentally informed by the basic poststructuralist argument that knowledge is constructed and that this construction could be otherwise; that there is no universal, “true” font of knowledge we access as humans but rather that knowledge is a deeply social, cultural, and material practice informed by relations of power. This perspective emerges from a range of shifts in geographic thought and practice over the past several decades. Haraway’s (1988) work on situated knowledge and its uptake by feminist geographers (e.g., Rose 1995) was central in shifting from more positivist understandings of knowledge towards conceptualizations of knowledge as a thoroughly geographic practice in which both the positionality of the researcher and the broader spatialities inherent in knowledge production are at play. Geographers have also been deeply influenced by Foucault and particularly by Foucauldian ideas of knowledge, power, and spatiality (Foucault 1978, 1979), as well as by postcolonial critiques of knowledges about “the Other” (e.g., Said 1978). As critical geographic scholarship into processes of racialization, imperialism, colonialism, masculinism, heterosexism, classism, anthropocentrism, and ableism has proliferated (Blunt and Rose 1994; Braun 2002b; Browne, Lim, and Brown 2007; Callard 1998; Castree and Braun 2001; Clayton 2000; Davidson 2003; Godlewska and Smith 1994; Gregory 1995; Harris 2002; Jackson 1998; Kobayashi 2004; Longhurst 1997, 2000; McDowell 1996; Moss 2001; Rose 1996; Smith 2001), most human geographers have come to accept and even take for granted the notion that knowledge is produced, not transcendent or discovered, and that this (re)production is contingent, partial, and informed by spatialized relations of power. At the same time, geographers (particularly in the Anglo-American context) have become preoccupied with their own powers as knowledge producers and in tracing the historic and ongoing importance of geographic
knowledge in processes of colonialism, racism, masculinism, and other forms of oppression (Blunt and Rose 1994; Driver 2001; Livingstone 2003). Thus, self-critique, disciplinary critique, and more general critiques of knowledge and power have interwoven in distinctive ways for many Anglo-American geographers.

A prominent response that reflects this interweaving of personal, disciplinary, and broader knowledge/power critiques is “self-reflexive” writing. Beginning in the early 1990s, geographers began to explicitly address their positionality and partiality as it related to the knowledges they discerned and produced (e.g., Barnes and Duncan 1992; England 1994; Rose 1995). While some devoted extensive discussion to their subjectivity and its intervening effects upon research (e.g., Valentine 1998; see also special issue of the Professional Geographer on fieldwork, 1994) others called attention to their positionality by naming their race, gender, class, age, and other social locations as a preface to larger research articles. Whether self-reflexivity and positionality are addressed as a short disclaimer or explored throughout a piece of writing, the practice has been problematized in recent years. Some point out that the listing of one’s social locations tends to reify and essentialize such locations by implying that categories like race, gender, and sexuality adequately and predictably account for perspective and partiality (e.g., Pratt and Hanson 1994). Others question the very possibility of knowing and naming the myriad ways we shape our research and suggest that self-reflexive practice can be used to shore up, rather than destabilize, the knowing academic subject (Kobayashi 2005; Rose 1997). Kobayashi (2003; 2005) worries that reflexivity has become an end in itself, and that at its worst it can make too much of the differences between studier and studied, deny the reflexivity of others, and distract from the project of changing relations of power and knowledge by emphasizing the self-reflexive identification of power. Reflexivity, she argues, "has no meaning if it is not connected to a larger agenda—which for most of us is avowedly both political and personal—meant to change the
world. How we choose to change the world is a very personal matter; but the results are not” (2003, 348). To the extent that geographers with feminist, poststructuralist, and postcolonial understandings of power, knowledge, and geography continue to engage in research about/with/for others, issues of positionality, partiality, and power will continue to require their attention. In and of itself, however, self-reflexivity is an insufficient and often narcissistic response to the dilemmas of such research. It is also a peculiarly white response to dynamics of power and oppression, as a number of antiracist scholars have pointed out (e.g., Ahmed 2004b; Srivastava 2005).

Geography remains a predominantly white discipline (Delaney 2002; Kobayashi 1994, 2002; Mahtani 2006; Pulido 2002). Whiteness does not necessarily refer to skin colour; the physiographic criteria for whiteness are historically and geographically shifting. Instead, most scholars work with an understanding of whiteness as a relational category in which whiteness refers to the hegemonic norm against which others are positioned and to the cultural and social practices that privilege whiteness. To be white is to be normal, invisible, unmarked, individual, and self-determining (Dyer 1997; Frankenberg 1993). As whiteness has become an object of scholarly attention, including geographical attention (e.g., Baldwin, Cameron, and Kobayashi 2009; Bonnett 1997; Jackson 1998; Lambert 2005; McGuinness 2000), Sarah Ahmed (2004b) argues that a new white subject has emerged, one that is anxiously and emotionally invested in its own critical stance and goodness with respect to whiteness and racism. This “critical” white subjectivity, Ahmed argues, is also highly dependent on a “politics of declaration” (para. 11) in which by declaring one’s whiteness, privilege, racism and, crucially, one’s anxieties with respect to this whiteness, one can claim to be anti-racist. Ahmed insists, on the contrary, that such declarations do not do what they claim to do. Instead, they reinforce an individualized,

My comments here refer to academic geography in Canada, the United States and Britain.

29
depoliticized, psychologized understanding of racism in which white subjects aim to transcend their implication in structural, systemic forms of racism and in so doing to “feel better”30.

While Ahmed attends to the ways in which self-conscious claims to be “against” racism can actually re-inscribe white privilege to the extent that they center the individualized, critical white subject, Srivastava (2005; 2006) considers the ways in which white feminists and activists in particular engage in personalized, emotional responses to racism that fail to attend to racialization as an historically informed, structural and systemic issue. She argues that white feminists are deeply and emotionally attached to an image of themselves as inherently good and inherently “against” racism because of their sense of being oppressed themselves, and because of their good intentions and desires to be “not” racist. Their subjectivity is historically informed: as Srivastava (2005, 30) and other scholars have pointed out (e.g., Dyer 1997; Stoler 1995), “colonial and contemporary representations of virtue, honesty, and benevolence have been a historical foundation of whiteness, bourgeois respectability, and femininity”. If white women are constructed as inherently good, white feminists are particularly and peculiarly invested in their goodness in the context of political activism and scholarship. Ruth Frankenberg’s discussion of the responses of white feminists to antiracist challenges exemplifies this dynamic. She describes how white feminists in the early 1990s found the prospect of “not being able to ‘get it right’”

30 There are fascinating and important links to be made between the configuration of white antiracism as personalized, emotional, and therapeutic and broader social, political, and economic trends. Razack (1998) and Srivastava (2005) both address liberal, multicultural discourses of tolerance and their intersection with antiracist politics, arguing that such discourses shore up an understanding of racism as something individual people do and as something that can be resolved through personal, psychological, and educational transformation. Geographers have extensively critiqued the depoliticizing effects of liberal and neoliberal ideologies and have argued that the primacy of the individual in these conceptualizations of social, economic, and political life undermines collective and structural forms of belonging, affiliation, and experience. Engin Isin (2004) has specifically addressed the interweaving of therapeutic, personalized, emotional discourse with neoliberal models of citizenship and argues that citizenship itself is becoming reconfigured as a form of relation in which the individual’s role is to manage his/her feelings, feelings that he diagnoses as inherently neurotic. The resonances between this understanding of political life and geographic interest in self-reflexivity as a response to the politics of knowledge production are suggestive.
(1993, 4) in antiracist contexts “terrifying, in the sense that we constantly felt that at any second we might err again with respect to racism, that we didn’t know the rules” (3).

To what extent does this desire to “get it right” undermine or close off other political possibilities? Srivastava (2006) argues that, as a result of their intensely emotional and personalized understandings of themselves as “good” to/with others, white feminists tend to adopt a personalized and ultimately depoliticized response to racism: they center themselves, their feelings, and their knowledges as they “cope” with the challenges of race. Viewed in this light, the widespread adoption of self-reflexivity as a mode of producing geographical knowledge since the 1990s, a movement led by white feminist geographers and particularly prominent in the study of colonial and postcolonial geographies (e.g., Blunt and Rose 1994), takes on a different resonance. Alongside geographers like Kobayashi, both Ahmed and Srivastava challenge the construction of self-reflexive practice as inherently progressive or just, including efforts to name one’s social location and to publicly declare one’s emotional difficulties with respect to researching others. Srivastava (2005, 57) argues, in fact, that the personalized, emotional responses of some white feminists to the possibility of being racist actually undermines antiracist efforts to create broader structural change:

practices of self-examination and self-improvement may shift the moral and ethical climate or facilitate antiracist initiatives but lead to limited organizational change. A liberalist discourse that frames racism as done by ignorant or bad people and extirpated by confession dictates an individual solution. In social movements, these broader discourses are interpreted within moral communities that tie the personal to the political, nonracism to political goodness, and therapy and emotional expression to social change.

The personal, emotional work that may be required of white feminists to understand and come to terms with their implication in racialized systems and structures is not unimportant, Srivastava
argues, but neither is it an end in itself. The point is not that geographers should stop being self-critical, nor that the foregrounding of self-querying reflections in geographical writings has not advanced disciplinary understandings of the masculinist, colonial, racist foundations of geographical knowledge production. They should, and it has. Rather, critiques of the personalized, emotional responses of critical white scholars to whiteness and privilege aim to challenge the impression that such responses and declarations are inherently and sufficiently antiracist. They challenge the notion that critical white scholars have “done enough” by “coming to terms” with their privilege and racism.

What, then, are critical white scholars to “do”? Ahmed observes that this response to antiracist critique is itself white, that the desire to “do” something about racism as a white subject usually expresses “a hope premised on lack rather than presence” (2004, para. 56). There is a subtle argument here that is worth exploring. While Ahmed acknowledges that the impulse to act is complicated and can express a range of desires (including an interest in recovering from racism and feeling better, a performance of solidarity, or an “orientation towards the openness of the future (rephrased as: ‘what can be done?’)” (para. 56)), her emphasis on distinguishing between action informed by lack as opposed to presence is instructive. To the extent that whiteness is about being good, happy, and innocent, white subjects who are aware of the racism and privilege that comes with their whiteness can no longer inhabit such a subjectivity comfortably. They cannot be “happy” about the ways in which they embody and benefit from racialized privilege, but neither can they escape their bodies (they cannot be not white), and it is this condition that is experienced as a form of lack. Ahmed argues that this compromised sense of goodness and innocence leads a proportion of “critical” white scholars to want to “do” something about racism for profoundly narcissistic reasons and to narcissistic effect. Their actions aim at restoring their
goodness as antiracist subjects and ultimately at transcending their own, ongoing position in a racialized present.

Actions informed by a politics of presence, by contrast, are not based on transcendence or personalized, emotional recovery. “What we might remember”, Ahmed notes, “is that to be against something is, after all, to be in an intimate relation with that which one is against” (para. 47). It is to remain visible, implicated, and to “inhabit the [antiracist] critique, with its lengthy duration” (para. 57, emphasis in original). It is, in other words, to abandon the hope that one might personally and individually move beyond one’s whiteness or find a right and good form of relation with others; to become, in Ahmed’s words, “the good white anti-racist subject” (para. 57). This includes, as Srivastava (2005, 54) points out, economies of critique in which white feminists vilify their less progressive and “critical” colleagues and present their “personalized antiracist ethical discourse” as “a new yardstick for measuring other feminists: it is the self-made antiracist white feminist who is good, other white feminists who are not good enough”. To the extent that critical white scholars remain fixated on their goodness (or lack thereof) and continue to equate racism with “badness”, non-white others can only ever appear as signifiers of this goodness/badness and can not be heard on any other terms. A turn away from being good and the personalized center of antiracist politics would thus imply a reconfigured relationship with the bodies and expressions of non-white others, including the fetishization of the expressions of non-white antiracist scholars as sources of guidance and absolution.

The task for white subjects would be to stay implicated in what they critique, but in turning towards their role and responsibility in these histories of racism, as histories of this present, to turn away from themselves, and towards others. This ‘double turn’ is not sufficient, but it clears some ground, upon which the work of exposing racism might provide the conditions for another kind of work. We don’t know, as yet, what such
conditions might be, or whether we are even up to the task of recognizing them. (Ahmed 2004b, para. 59)

What might be involved in this “turn away” from the white self? In rehearsing the perils of whiteness and self-reflexivity I run the risk of re-centering the very process and concerns I have critiqued; I risk turning inward rather than away from myself31. But as Ahmed herself makes clear, so long as the world continues to be structured in racialized terms, there is no permanent and decisive turn away from the self available to white subjects. Pat Parker (1997, 297), in her instructions to the “white person who wants to become my friend”, encapsulates this dynamic in another way: “The first thing you do is forget that I am Black … Second, you must never forget that I am Black”. Issues of positionality, subjectivity, and partiality are clearly relevant to research with, about, and for Indigenous communities, but they are not resolvable and they do not encapsulate the possibilities for relation or action. The possibility of listening, learning, writing, and changing some piece of the world is inevitably deferred so long as injustice is understood in personalized, emotional terms. Ultimately, if geographers aim to decolonize the discipline and advance an antiracist agenda, they will need to do more than rethink themselves. For me, this has meant being and knowing in relation to others but, ultimately, taking responsibility for my words and my deeds and orienting my energies towards collectively worthwhile projects. It has meant refusing to frame my work as “collaborative”, “participatory”, and “community-driven”, which would implicitly and problematically imply that it enjoys the approval and furthers the interests of a coherent community32. And it has also meant putting into perspective the personal and

31 This may well be a function of the “double bind position” Comeau (2007, 159) describes as “unavoidable for White people who want to disrupt racial inequalities”. Comeau argues that it is incumbent upon white people to identify and critique racial privilege, and yet this identification can function to shore up the white self as good and helpful.

32 I point this out not as a critique of participatory and community-driven research. I have in fact been working to build relationships with various people and organizations in Kugluktuk with the hopes that
emotional struggles that accompanied this project. Their elaboration could only be framed as an antiracist contribution to geographical knowledge to the extent that the geographical community remains, as Delaney (2002) suggests, as white as professional golf, and to the extent that this community remains committed to a textual and emotional engagement with racism rather than to a structural, systemic, materialist antiracist politics.

**Methodological Implications of “Following the Thing”**

Much of my research revolved around “following the thing”, in this case following various iterations of the Bloody Falls massacre story through archives, books, films, magazines, vertical files, and sound recordings, as well as through social practices, places, and performances. The methodological command to “follow the thing”, made famous by Appadurai (1986) and the inspiration behind a range of geographical and anthropological projects in recent years (Cook, Crang, and Thorpe 2004; Cook and Harrison 2003; Crang, Dwyer, and Jackson 2003; Jackson 1999, 2000; Miller 1998b, 1998c, 1998a), has also been a cornerstone of actor-network methodologies (Hetherington and Law 2000; Hinchliffe 2000; Latour 1987, 2005; Thrift 2000). Notably, actor-network and material culture approaches to “things” emphasize different scales of analysis. Whereas Appadurai (1994, 89) argues that the politics and social lives of things are not future research endeavours will be more participatory and collaborative and will respond to community research interests. My comment is based on my concerns around the framing of research with Indigenous communities and the ways in which claims to be collaborative and community-driven can shield non-Indigenous researchers from certain kinds of critique and deflect important questions about who comprises and speaks for the “community”. As Berg et al (2007, 396) point out, even “in PAR framed research, the who and the how of participation is never innocent or purely process driven, but rather always already power-full.” My doctoral research could, in fact, be described as collaborative and community-driven to the extent that it was endorsed by the Kugluktuk Hamlet Council, the Kugluktuk MLA, the Kugluktuk mayor, and leaders of important community organizations, and to the extent that the research questions and methods were significantly shaped by community members. I have not claimed that it is participatory or collaborative, however, because of the concerns outlined above.
visible “in the mundane, day-to-day, small-scale exchanges of things in ordinary life” but rather in lengthy trajectories (an approach that complements commodity chain analysis, for example), Latour insists that it is only through attention to the micro movements and connections between things that the actual work and importance of things is revealed (Latour 2005). Scale, as all geographers know, is not a neutral consideration in any study (Howitt 2002; Marston 2000; Monmonier 1996); it is not equal to the sum of its parts. Instead, the scale at which one observes determines what one sees and emphasizes.

When the things one is following are stories, geographers attuned to discourse tend to emphasize lengthy and persistent scales of meaning. They tend to be concerned, in other words, with how a single story acts as an iteration of a larger discourse, and in the ways in which thinking, speaking, acting, and being are structured by patterns stretching over time and space (see Chapter 2). Thus, the repeated re-telling of Hearne’s version of the massacre story (its reproduction in subsequent explorers’ journals, anthologies of northern literature and history, school books, children’s novels, tourists pamphlets, and so on) might be read as a pattern that intersects with imperial, colonial, racialized, and nationalist discourse. There is merit in this analysis and I trace discursive connections in this dissertation. But there are also limitations and methodological dangers inherent in assuming that such connections exist, have meaning, and fully account for the work of a single iteration of the massacre story.

When attuned to the local, the lateral, and the relational rather than to the extensive, global, and linear work of stories, the instability, contingency, and materiality of social life comes to the fore. Thus, in Chapter 6 I trace the connections between a single version of the Bloody Falls massacre story and northern Indigenous political movements, territorial governance and nationalism, international resource extraction economies, and Inuit relations with missionaries in the early 1970s. Certainly, the massacre story in question connects to long histories of telling and
re-telling Hearne’s version of the story, but there are also rich and surprising geographies revealed in this specific telling that challenge the reduction of this moment to colonialism, economic exploitation, and Indigenous marginalization. As DeLyser (2004, 494) observes, “geographers interested in social memories of the past and how they were practised and lived by the thousands of individuals who helped to create them need to heed the small, and, in fact, to seek it out. For I think that it is often in the small that the stories we seek can be heard.”

Similarly, while the Bloody Falls massacre can be conceptualized as a single coherent “thing” that travels in books and through conversations, a single iteration of the Bloody Falls massacre story can also be conceptualized as itself a profoundly heterogeneous network of things. Thus, my journeys through archives, books, websites, meetings, and living rooms in search of iterations of the massacre story were partially oriented towards identifying where, when, and how the story appeared (and did not appear), and partially towards understanding the specific context of any given iteration. I employed archival methods, interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic methods to both find these materials and understand their significance.

33 There are clearly issues of interpretation and selection at stake here. Rather than dwell on the power relations informing the choices and interpretations I made, I found it helpful to strive for “agnosticism” (Latour 1988) in the face of received categories and concepts, particularly those I held most dear. As Lather observes, although feminist and poststructuralist understandings of knowledge have led to a moment in which “we no longer need apologize for unabashedly ideological research and its open commitment to using research to criticize and change the status quo”, researchers still need to “protect our research and theory construction from our enthusiasms” (Lather 2003, 190) and not marshal all that we find into a seamless narrative. In this regard I have found many of the methodological guidelines developed prior to the rise of feminist, poststructuralist, and postcolonial theories quite helpful. I have also found that my interest in thinking with somewhat “indigestible” theoretical traditions (see Chapter 2) has helped me to avoid reading the empirical materials at question in this study as mere illustrations of a coherent theory (see Castree 2009).
Archival Research

I consulted archival collections across Canada and the United Kingdom searching for massacre stories and for materials documenting Hearne’s life following his journey and leading up to the publication of his travel narrative (1772-1795). My efforts to find new materials about Hearne’s life were mostly in vain (this was not entirely surprising since whole doctoral dissertations have been devoted to unearthing Hearne’s presence in the archives. See Rollason Driscoll 2002), but the searching uncovered other materials that proved useful in piecing together the concretization of Hearne’s massacre story in the fifty years following the event. These materials are discussed in Chapter 4 (see also Cameron 2008c; Cameron 2009). They were gleaned primarily from the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, the University of Saskatchewan Archives, Kew Gardens Library and Archives, and from the Warwickshire County Records Office. I also consulted collections at the British Library, the Royal Society in London, the Linnaean Society, the Antiquarian Society, and the City of London Archives in the hopes of finding references to Hearne’s activities.

My search for iterations of the massacre story also led me to the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, the National Archives, the University of Saskatchewan Archives, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and the NWT Territorial Government Archives, and to materials held in Special Collections at Queen’s University, particularly explorers’ journals and published narratives. The Kugluktuk Heritage Centre also houses limited materials that I consulted. I am particularly indebted to the marvelous resources at the HBC Archives, particularly the subject files they maintain on topics such as Samuel Hearne, Coppermine, and Bloody Falls. These files include the notes of earlier researchers, newspaper clippings, old Beaver magazine articles, correspondence, and so on, and they proved enormously useful in my efforts to trace various
iterations of the massacre story. I also made extensive use of the photographs, transcribed oral
history collections, minutes, pamphlets, and other paraphernalia related to Hearne, Kugluktuk,
and Bloody Falls housed at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

Geographical reflections on archival research proved useful both in locating materials
and in making sense of them. Cole Harris’ (2006; 2008) command to “steep” oneself in a given
collection before presuming to interpret the significance of a given item (and, indeed, before
presuming to know what historical questions one ought to be posing) became, somewhat to my
surprise, an important methodological guideline. As a cultural geographer more inclined to dwell
on the cultural significance and resonance of a given item rather than to situate it in an archival
collection, I initially considered archival “steeping” to be impractical (given the enormous range
of archival collections I consulted), inappropriate (given my interest in contextualizing stories in
social practices, not in documentary collections), and rather positivist in inclination (to the extent
that it was premised on the notion of piecing together historical truths through archival
documents). I soon realized, however, that my interest in the specificity of historical iterations of
the massacre story required close attention to historical and archival context, and that steeping
described both my archival and my ethnographic practices quite well (see below). In that sense,
Harris’ methodological insights have been invaluable to me. So, too, are the writings of a range of
historical and cultural geographic scholars working with materials from the past (Cameron 1997,
2001; DeSilvey 2006, 2007a, 2007b; Hannam 2002; Kurtz 2002; Lorimer 2003, 2006; Matless
and Cameron 2006; Rose 2000; Till 2001, 2005; Turkel 2007; Withers 2002). I was informed by
both their methodological considerations and their philosophical musings on the meanings of
history and historical practice.

Geographers and other scholars have certainly problematized archival practices over the
past several years, calling attention to the partiality of archival collections, the specifically
colonial foundations of archives, and the difficulties of recuperating the voices, experiences, and interests of marginalized subjects from archival materials (Derrida 1995; Duncan 1999; Gagen 2001; Lester 2003; Rose 2000; Spivak 1990, 1999; Stoler 2002b, 2009). Indeed, following Spivak’s famous injunction that the subaltern “cannot speak”, one of the most pressing questions faced by scholars interested in recovering subaltern histories is whether the traces of speech, movement, and other expressions they distil from archival collections (whether explicitly stated or discerned “against the grain”, “between the lines”, and through silences) are projections imposed upon subaltern bodies by desiring researchers. Although the political imperative to write marginalized histories is clear, the status of archival evidence used to buttress those stories has been called into question.

I have not found it necessary to resolve the apparently contradictory aims of writing marginalized histories and unearthing an “authentic” subaltern voice. Authenticity is a relational and contextual effect, not an inherent quality of particular knowledges, and the measures of authenticity and reliability conventionally employed in academic research tend to privilege some voices and expressions over others. As Patricia Hill Collins observes, “epistemological choices about who to trust, what to believe, and why something is true are not benign academic issues. Instead, these concerns tap the fundamental question of which versions of truth will prevail and shape thought and action” (2003, 49). Furthermore, whereas knowledges with extensive archival documentation may demand particular standards of engagement and representation, making knowledge out of the shards and traces of less dominant voices requires different methods and different measures of reliability. Story, as a representational, performative, and imaginative practice, is particularly well suited to stitching truths out of the facts, documents, memories, feelings, and experiences of marginalized groups, and stories demand different modes of reception and evaluation. Hill Collins insists that “the narrative method requires that the story be
told, not torn apart in analysis, and trusted as core belief, not ‘admired as science’” (56); Jo-Ann Archibald similarly points to the importance of listening to stories differently than we might engage with other forms of knowledge. “We must visualize the characters and their actions. We must let our emotions surface. As the Elders say, it is important to listen with ‘three ears: two on the sides of our heads and the one that is in our heart’” (2008, 8). These directives are as relevant to archival research as they are to interviews, ethnography, and Indigenous oral history. They insist upon knowledge as an interactive and relational practice, and specifically on the capacity for particular knowledges to shape thought and action in the present.

Thus, attention to practices of creative confabulation and storytelling, to the materiality of historical memory and practice, and to the diverse temporalities of place have informed my archival work as much as notions of accuracy, reliability, and authenticity (Benjamin 1969, 1999, 2003; Cameron 1997; DeSilvey 2006, 2007a; 2007b; Lorimer 2003, 2006; Till 2001, 2005; Wylie 2002). As Geertz has observed, Western thinkers tend to confuse “the imagined with the imaginary, the fictional with the false, making things out with making things up … leading to the even stranger idea that, if literalism is lost, so is fact” (quoted in Visweswaran 1994, 2). I found a productive tension between efforts to be fair and thorough in my archival analysis and between my interest in telling the kinds of stories a single archival item inspires. Indeed, even while I insist on the dangers of imagining that truth and fact can be unearthed in the archives, I am equally wary of abandoning any sense of responsibility towards history and towards the bodies upon whom historical processes and events are inscribed. Aimé Césaire’s warning not to forget the (corpo)reality of life was never far from my mind.

Et surtout mon corps aussi bien que mon âme, gardez-vous de vous croiser les bras en l’attitude stéride du spectateur, car la vie n’est pas un spectacle, car une mer de douleurs
There are very real risks inherent in any effort to tell stories about others, risks that Spivak makes clear in her extensive writings on the politics of recovering subalternity (Spivak 1987, 1990, 1999). She questions the place from which subalternity is recovered (namely, the Western academy), the conjuring of idealized, “self-knowing, politically canny subalterns” (1999, 257) to nourish the desires of Western academics, and the implication of subaltern stories in Western academic economies, in what Spivak terms the “mode of production narrative” (244). Whereas Hill Collins and others emphasize the importance of narrating histories and stories that may not conform to gendered and racialized academic standards of truth and reliability, Spivak questions the desires and economies underwriting the recovery of such stories on the part of white, Western academics. It matters, she insists, who is telling these stories, and for what purposes. “The ventriloquism of the speaking subaltern”, she writes, “is the left intellectual’s stock-in-trade” (1999, 255). Her famous declaration that “the subaltern cannot speak” is thus not so much a lament about the difficulties of recovering subalternity from the archives, but rather a very political statement aimed at calling attention to the violences of ventriloquism and in staking out the politics of silence, secrecy, and opacity. Silence, as a number of antiracist scholars have observed, is not a straightforward thing (Chambers 1998; Chow 1993; Trinh 1998; Winders 2001), nor is its recovery necessarily an ethical undertaking:

As we challenge a dominant discourse by ‘resurrecting’ the victimized voice/self of the native with our readings – and such is the impulse behind many ‘new historical’ accounts

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34 “And especially my body as much as my soul, watch that you do not fold your arms across your chest in the sterile attitude of a spectator, for life is not a show, for a sea of suffering is not a proscenium, for a man who screams is not a bear that dances”.
– we step, far too quickly, into the otherwise silent and invisible place of the native and turn ourselves into living agents/witnesses for her. This process, in which we become visible, also neutralizes the untranslatability of the native’s experience and the history of that untranslatability. (Chow 1993, 37-38)

To acknowledge that truth and knowledge are constructed, political, social effects is not to license any kind of knowledge; it is not to liberate knowledge-producers from the very material effects of the knowledges they (re)produce. Rather, it is to attend to the consequences of particular knowledges, consequences that can not always be known in advance, and thus to be even more concerned about matters of reliability, accuracy, and fairness, even if such evaluations are themselves contingent, contextual, and social. My hope is that I have been as fair and honest as possible in the telling of these stories.

**Ethnography**

“It has been said that the ideal family in the Arctic consists of a husband and wife, four children and an anthropologist.”

- Minnie Aodla Freeman

There are longstanding and rich connections between ethnography and story. Ethnography has traditionally relied upon a narrative form of knowledge production and, not surprisingly, it was critiqued on these grounds through the 1980s, 90s, and to the present (e.g., Clifford and Marcus 1992). As a result, anthropologists have offered some of the most sustained and extensive critiques of the narrativization of knowledge and have re-imagined and re-thought ethnographic methods substantially in recent years. They have critiqued in particular the notion that one can go to the field and bring back authentic knowledge of another culture (e.g., Appadurai 1988), leading many to abandon the pursuit of cross-cultural ethnography altogether.
and to the burgeoning of ethnographic studies “at home” (see Visweswaran 1994 for a critical comment on this shift in focus). Others have rejected the essentialist understanding of identity and subjectivity underpinning suggestions that certain bodies belong to certain cultures/places and are thus uniquely placed to conduct research among that culture, and have aimed to re-think the notion of cross-cultural ethnographic research entirely (e.g., Clifford 1997). These considerations intersect with recent geographic reconceptualizations of knowledge, power, place, identity, and scale, and with discussions of the kinds of methods that might be appropriate for investigating this reconceputalized geographical landscape.

Indeed, as geographers have developed an interest in relationality, spatiality, “flat” ontologies and the “more-than-representational” (e.g., Braun 2006; 2008; Kobayashi 2004; Lorimer 2005; Massey 1997; Thrift 2004), they have begun to rethink the epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies most suited to geographic inquiry (Marston, Jones, and Woodward 2005 represents one particularly polemical intervention). Ethnography has been given renewed attention in this context and seems to have made a “comeback” after its initial demise in the 1980s. Not only are geographers making use of ethnography in a range of studies (e.g., Besio 2005; Butz and Besio 2004; Davies 2009; Katz 1992, 2004; Lawson 2000; Parry 2004), several have argued that ethnographic methods are particularly appropriate to contemporary critical geographic concerns and have made calls for their more widespread adoption (Hart 2006; Herbert 2000; Megoran 2006). Ethnography has been described as an important method for coming to terms with interconnected, networked processes (both Latour and Law emphasize the importance of ethnography in tracing networks), for countering discursive analyses of everyday experiences and understandings (Megoran 2006), and for foregrounding practice, feeling, and affect (Lorimer 2003). Against conventional understandings of ethnography as the intensive study of a single site and culture, geographers like Hart (2006), Katz (2004) and Davies (2009) consider the merits of
multi-site ethnographies and of ethnographic study of the relations *between* spatially extensive places, people, and ideas. Ethnographies of multiple sites and cultures and of their relations are immensely difficult to carry out, Davies (2009, 24) acknowledges (“We can follow the thing, the issue or the individual, but when lots of things are happening in lots of places at the same time, ethnography struggles to cope without a team of researchers at work”), but the attempt itself is necessary, he argues, for geographers working with a relational understanding of place and politics.

There is an important distinction between ethnographic study of a discrete and coherent “culture” and ethnographic study of the relations between heterogeneous people, places, and things. I engaged in the latter. My ethnography was not aimed at acquiring knowledge about “Inuit culture” for its own sake but rather at familiarizing myself with the multiple networks shaping life in Kugluktuk. I considered the months I spent in Kugluktuk to be an extended practice of steeping that might help me better understand the context and meanings of particular stories. I worked from the belief that the more time I spent getting to know people and building relationships in Kugluktuk, the better placed I would be to discern both the ethical and political stakes of my work and the importance and meaning of stories about Bloody Falls. I spent close to six months in Kugluktuk over the course of four years; the longest stay was just over two months in the summer of 2007. While in Kugluktuk I spent most of my evenings and weekends with the Niptanatiak family either in their home, around town, or traveling on the land. My relationship with the “Nips” pre-existed my arrival in Kugluktuk as a researcher; it began and continues as a friendship with Allen, Grace, Amanda, Mathieu, Jon, Catherine, Andrea, Jeffrey, and their (grand)children, initiated during a trip to Kugluktuk in spring 2005. And yet the Nips were also

35 I also spent a good deal of time with the extended Niptanatiak and Elgok families, Millie Kuliktana, Colin and Mavis Adjun, George Kapolak and family, Joe Allen Evyagotailak, Peter and Joanne Taptuna, Becky and Luigi Toretti, Natalie Griller, Twyla and Konrad Kryger, Mitch, Donna, and Roger Rand, and Pauline McKinnon.
my primary sources of learning and conversation about Inuit knowledges, stories, and
geographies, the history of Kugluktuk, current political and social concerns, and ethical practice.
Blurred lines between “friend” and “informant” are a mainstay of ethnographic research and
present particular ethical and emotional challenges. I also participated in Bingo and cribbage
nights, spent time with children and youth, babysat, worked as a substitute elementary school
teacher, joined an Elders sewing circle, and shared meals and coffee with a number of friends
made throughout my time in the community. These activities thoroughly informed the
understandings I have of life in Kugluktuk, of Bloody Falls, and of storying.

Ethnography understood as an extended practice of familiarizing and “steeping”, whether
in archives or in social settings, is an immensely valuable method. It is not without its pitfalls,
however. In addition to the obvious issues of postionality, partiality, and power that I discussed
more extensively at the beginning of this chapter, there are issues of consent and honesty inherent
in the method. Most people do not know they are being researched at any given moment;
ethnographers themselves rarely know in advance what will interest and inform them. It is

36 Judith Stacey (1988, 23) describes the experience of being both friend and researcher as a painful and
inevitable aspect of ethnographic research: “conflicts of interest and emotion between the ethnographer as
authentic, related person (i.e. participant), and as exploiting researcher (i.e. observer) are …an inescapable
feature of ethnographic method”. To some extent I agree with her, but I think her concerns are overstated
and a function of conflicting desires (between advancing one’s academic career and being true to one’s
friends) and an overestimation of her power as much as a conflict inherent in the method. I do concur with
Fuller (1999), however, that moving between one’s “various identities” as an ethnographic researcher and
coming to terms with “the effects of this movement on his/her research as a whole” is a skill that is “an
integral part of the learning and documentation of ethnographic method” (223-4). For me, this movement
was best negotiated with as much transparency as possible. I wrote a short piece for The Walrus
magazine in late 2007, for example, describing my experiences in Kugluktuk that summer and drawing primarily on
images of life with the Nips (Cameron 2008b; see Appendix C). I showed the piece to Allen, Grace,
Amanda, and Catherine (those mentioned in the article) before publishing it to ask their feedback and
thoughts on whether it should be published or not. I was committed to not publishing the piece if those it
depicted objected (much to the irritation of the Walrus editor) and there were many occasions over the
course of my time in Kugluktuk that I opted not to listen, write, or be present in situations that seemed too
sensitive, or simply not my business. As Haraway’s (2008) recent writings suggest, the relations we
develop with people come to demand particular responses of us, and the integrity of those relations
determines the integrity of the responses. Making my writing, thinking, and publishing interests as
transparent as possible seemed the best way to navigate these challenges.
difficult and sometimes impossible to obtain informed consent from all participants because an ethnographer watches, listens, and interprets the interactions of whole communities. This amounts to intentional deception\textsuperscript{37}. Moreover, the ethnographer’s interest in observing social life “as it really is” (i.e., without the influence of the researcher) rests on the gradual acclimatization of research subjects to the ethnographer, a kind of deception in its own right\textsuperscript{38}.

In my experience, the forms of deception arising from acclimatization tended not to preoccupy the people I met in Kugluktuk; other forms of honesty did. I learned early, for example, that my interest in aligning my doctoral research with the priorities and interests of Kugluktukmiut was naïve, presumptuous, and a form of dishonesty in its own right. Most people expected me to be forthright about my own interests, the things that I wanted to learn, and then to decide whether to participate and how they might help me. I was consistently led back to myself and reminded not just of the importance of owning my research interests, but also of the inflated sense ethnographers tend to have of their own powers. As a result I began to take my own interests more seriously and to become attuned to the ways in which critical scholars use the voices and expressions of Indigenous figures to articulate their own political agendas. This is particularly easy for critical ethnographers to do because they have so much leeway in presenting the voices of others. Ethnography famously results in mountains of data; the research journals and notes I have accumulated over the past four years amount to more than four hundred pages. Part of the method involves sifting through these notes, searching for themes (both while engaged in ethnographic fieldwork and “at home”), and digging for conversations, gestures, and silences that

\textsuperscript{37} One of my responses to this issue is to only directly quote people who spoke to me in the context of a formal interview, and who therefore had the opportunity to signal their preferences with regard to being quoted.

\textsuperscript{38} This is, of course, impossible, as feminist and critical anthropological scholars have demonstrated (Clifford 1997; Clifford and Marcus 1992; England 1994), and the best contemporary ethnographies write the researcher into the account (e.g., Robertson 2005). Indeed, a shift to the term research ‘participant’ rather than ‘subject’ signals this recognition of two-way negotiation and production of ethnographic knowledge.
might flesh out a given theme. Ultimately, most people and most comments do not appear in an ethnographic report. The myriad encounters and observations contained in field notes are distilled into storylines, storylines that are animated by ethnographic characters and anecdotes. It is not difficult to marshal particular people and encounters into a storyline that appeals to the political sensibilities of the ethnographer. Efforts to make these choices more apparent to the reader (e.g., Law 1994; Visweswaran 1994; Wolf 1992) work to varied effect.

As geographers embrace ethnographic methods, particularly in Indigenous contexts, it is crucial that we develop the skills to read ethnographic studies critically and carefully. Geographers stand to learn from the more nuanced representations of the voices of “others” in contemporary anthropological literatures (e.g., Li 2007; Raffles 2002; Robertson 2005), for example, nuances that tend not to appear in geographic research citing Indigenous peoples. Kulchyski (2005) has commented on the ways in which both academics and the wider public idealize Indigenous Elders, wryly observing that Elders “provide the final, ‘human’ touch to many a politician’s speech” (2005, 36). There are specific methodological issues raised by interviewing Inuit Elders and I address these in the following section. But there are also rhetorical and ethical issues inherent in emphasizing Elders over other Indigenous informants. Research with Indigenous peoples remains structured by idealizations of “traditional” culture and lamentations about the loss of that culture to colonialism, modernity, and technology, perhaps even more so among Inuit Studies scholars. Elders, as keepers of traditional knowledge, thus function as authentic Indigenous subjects in much academic writing and particularly in Inuit Studies. Elders are revered and respected members of Inuit culture, to be sure, but I was as interested in contemporary experiences and stories as I was in traditional stories, and a traditional/modern binary was unhelpful in understandings the words of both Elders and others. Instead, following Cruikshank (1998a; 2005), I was interested in dynamic movements between
old and new stories, in the use of stories to inform present concerns, and in understanding life in Kugluktuk for the diverse people who call it home.

I was also interested in discerning the kinds of stories that could be used to reconfigure non-Indigenous Canadian expectations about the North, Indigeneity, and colonialism. Part of my ethnography was in that sense a self-ethnography; I used myself as an “instrument” to listen for stories and possibilities that might shift hegemonic Southern narratives about the North. The challenge of writing differently was much greater than I anticipated. Indeed, an early attempt to story the North differently (Cameron 2008b) could only gesture to what I had not managed to do. Pratt (2009) describes similar struggles with not only producing different stories but also ensuring those stories are heard on different terms. I expand on the difficulties and possibilities of such a pursuit in Chapter 5.

**Studying Place**

Tim Cresswell (2004, 81) has observed that “thinking about and with place cannot easily be separated into ‘theory and practice’”. Indeed, although the apprehension of place is a longstanding methodological concern in geographic scholarship, there is no prescriptive or collectively-endorsed series of instructions that one might employ to study places. The way one theorizes place informs what one sees, experiences, and emphasizes and my understanding of Bloody Falls is thoroughly informed by the theorizations of place I find most compelling, particularly those of Cresswell (1996; 2004), Massey (1994; 1997; 2004), Mitchell (2003a; 2003b) and Raffles (1999; 2002). Although each of these writers understands place in slightly different ways, they are all in some way concerned with place as both lived and practiced at
intimate scales and as implicated in a range of more extensive social, political, and economic processes.

Hugh Raffles’ extended contemplations of place are particularly appropriate for a study of Bloody Falls. Raffles’ writing is sensitive to the ways in which places are meaningful without slipping into a romanticized or depoliticized humanistic account of place, and he also accounts for the ways in which places are constituted far beyond their location. He writes of Amazonia as “somewhere in which fantasy holds to multiple idioms, a place where narrative is deeply but contingently made and remade through a broad range of situated practices that include many forms of meaning-making. It is a place in which place-making is accomplished as much through the materialities of political economy—the translocal politics of the timber industry, for example—as it is through the articulation of memory, imagination, and affect” (Raffles 2005, 374). Elsewhere Raffles writes of the concept of “locality” as a way of conceptualizing the ongoing making of place: “Locality is both embodied and narrated and is, as a consequence, often highly mobile: places travel with the people through whom they are constituted. Locality, then, should not be confused with location. It is, rather, a set of relations, an ongoing politics, a density, in which places are discursively and imaginatively materialized and enacted through the practices of variously positioned people and political economies” (Raffles 1999, 324). Thoroughly informed by geographers such as Massey (as well as the writings of Benjamin, Latour, Foucault, and Stoler), Raffles’ understanding of place is also shaped by ethnographic study, and as such it blends some of the important theoretical insights offered by geographers with a close study of places as they are practiced.

Coming to terms with place, then, (especially a place like Bloody Falls, which far exceeds its geographic location and exists in the imaginations of people who have never actually been there), involves far more than simply studying its physical features or its “local” uses and
meanings. Much of the archival, ethnographic, and textual study involved in this project aimed at understanding the imaginatively, distant constitution of Bloody Falls and the materializations these imaginative processes make possible. But visiting the site itself was also an important component of my methodology. Not only was I interested in the relational production of place that transpired during each visit (see Chapter 8 for a contemplation of how a visit to Bloody Falls with Allen and Grace Niptanatiak illuminated aspects of the relational ordering of place), I was also interested in the materiality of the place itself. It was through repeated visits to Bloody Falls and repeated encounters with the rocks that make river travel hazardous that I came to appreciate its declining significance as a fishing site (see Chapter 7). Visiting Bloody Falls over a number of years also allowed me to witness its changes and continuities. The same eagle’s nest I saw in 2006 can still be found along the cliffs that mark the entrance to the rapids. Its gradual production as a tourist site has unfolded over the past several years as outhouses, picnic tables, and signs are erected, giving flesh to Massey’s (1994, 154) observation that places are “articulated moments in networks of social relations”. I also made an effort to visit Bloody Falls at different times of year and by different modes of transport (boat, skidoo, all-terrain vehicle, cross-country skis, and on foot). I made two trips to the Falls with knowledgeable Elders, two with local guides or friends with knowledge of the rapids, and multiple other trips with friends from Kugluktuk who generously accompanied me to the site. Each visit led to different stories, different things, and a different relation to the project itself. It is precisely the articulation of the specificities of place and practice with distant people, places, and things that interested me, and as such I engaged the “place” of Bloody Falls through these different registers.
Interviews, Focus Groups, and Oral History

I conducted twenty-one in-depth interviews, fifteen shorter interviews, and four focus groups in the summer of 2007 with a total of eighty-three participants, as well as countless informal meetings and conversations. I also met with municipal and territorial government officials, leaders of local organizations (including the Hunters and Trappers Organization, Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Tahiuqtii Society, Kugluktuk Heritage Centre, the Ministry of Culture, Language, Elders, and Youth (CLEY), and Kitikmeot School Operations), and presented to the Kugluktuk Hamlet Council. I was directed to Elders who had knowledge of the Coppermine River and the region stretching south from Kugluktuk; these were the Elders, I was told, who might know about Bloody Falls. Many of these Elders are no longer living and I met with as many as I could. As mentioned, however, I was also interested in meeting with other adults, with youth, with non-Inuit residents, and with tourists and ended up meeting with a representative cross-section of Kugluktuk’s population. I did so not so much in the interests of assembling a statistically significant sample, but rather because northern researchers simply tend

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39 Kugluktuk residents include Inuit from a number of regional origins. Some are informally referred to as “inland people”, those whose traditional regional travels were primarily inland from the Arctic Coast and for whom Kugluktuk represented the most northward extension of their travels. These are the Elders understood to have knowledge about the Coppermine River. For others, Kugluktuk was the southern boundary of their travels which revolved around seal hunting and travels to Victoria Island. See Chapter 1, Figure 5 for details.

40 When the canoe tourist participants are removed from the demographic information the profile of interviewees matches 2006 Statistics Canada data on Kugluktuk almost perfectly. 92% of Kugluktukmiut identify as Inuit (Statistics Canada 2006a) and 87% of participants in this study were Inuit. Statistics Canada (2006b) reports that in Kugluktuk 52% of the population is under the age of 24, and only 14% are over the age of 50 (the youngest of the Elders interviewed this summer was 53). Exactly 50% of participants were under the age of 24 and 13% were over the age of 50. Finally, according to 2006 data Kugluktuk is roughly 50% male/female and again, the participants match this profile (I did not gather gender data for the school focus groups, but of the formal and informal interviews, 18 men and 17 women were involved). Thus, although I was not aiming to match demographic profiles to quite this extent, it appears as though I engaged a roughly representative sample in 2007. Note that 62 participants represents 4.8% of the population of Kugluktuk.
not to talk to certain people, and I was interested in what these people had to say. Table 1 documents the gender, ethnic, and age breakdown of interview and focus group participants.

Table 1: Profile of Interview and Focus Group participants, July-August 2007

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Inuit  White</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-depth interviews</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18     3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal, shorter</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0      20</td>
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<tr>
<td>with canoe tourists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>~ 13</td>
<td>~ 14</td>
<td>27     0</td>
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<tr>
<td>with schools</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (83)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55     28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All interview and focus group participants were offered letters of information and consent (Appendix B and C) and their specific requests for publishing or otherwise sharing information were noted and respected. Very few interviews were recorded. Although the canoe tourist focus group participants were comfortable with tape recording and video recording, many residents were uncomfortable with recording. As such, I took extensive notes during interviews and typed them up immediately after to ensure I retained as many details as possible. Recorded interviews as well as other materials have been assembled and burned to DVD and sent to Kitikmeot School Operations to be used in the development of curriculum about local history.

^41 This is a crude categorization of ethnicity. It is presented here based on informal lines drawn in the community between those who come from afar to work in Kugluktuk (and are uniformly known as Kablunaat regardless of their ethnic identities) and those who are born in Kugluktuk or in other primarily Inuit communities (and who thus tend to identify as Inuit in relation to Kablunaat, even if they are of mixed parentage and have more complex relationships with the concept of ‘being Inuit’ than this category reveals)

^42 This figure includes three adults who are considered ‘younger’ Elders.
Non-recorded interviews were transcribed immediately after the interview. Recorded interviews were partially transcribed to flag different moments in the interview and facilitate searches for specific passages. Throughout the summer of 2007 I also maintained a research journal in which I noted emergent themes, ideas, and questions (I maintained journals of this nature during each of my visits to Kugluktuk). In spring of 2008 I read the transcripts and/or listened to all the interviews and expanded on the themes and ideas identified in 2007.

In accordance with local protocols for research with Elders, Elders were offered $50 honoraria for their time. Three of the nine Elders interviewed required translators from Innuinaqtun and I employed the same translator, Mona Tiktalek, for each. These interviews were some of the most fascinating, frustrating, and baffling of all those conducted. Mona was an excellent translator but was prone to condensing interviewees’ comments as the interview wore on and there were many times I wished my Innuinaqtun skills were sufficient to understand directly what was being said. Translation, and all it implies, was only one of the challenges raised by these interviews. I also encountered significant challenges in listening to and understanding the meanings of what Elders shared; these are the interviews I have returned to again and again, uncovering new layers and directions, and often wishing I could go back and listen differently. My challenges are not unique. Jo-Ann Archibald (2008) describes the particular kinds of patience and trust required to listen to Elders’ stories, something Cruikshank (1998a; 2005) has also discussed at length. Kulchyski (2005, 36) concurs that

Listening to elders, in particular, is a difficult matter. While the contemporary social veneration of elders makes their speech a valuable source of legitimation … listening to their speech demands attention and care of a particular kind. Good listening here means disentangling the web of anthropological practice, exploding the concept of ‘Native informant’ and the concept of fieldwork, attending to both the immediate power of the individual and the cultural knowledge that the individual bears. And putting oneself in
that state of grace, a self-forgetful, distracted boredom, that will allow the story to take root in memory.

Issues of listening and hearing are compounded when one attempts to write about what one has come to know and understand, as much through the “third ear” of the heart (Archibald 2008, 8) as through the ears. Archibald (2008, 7) describes the difficulties of translating Indigenous stories into academic text:

When I began to delve into Indigenous stories, the first contradiction that I faced was that I had to complete academic work steeped in literacy, analysis, and explicitness. However, the topic of Indigenous stories, which were presumably based on oral delivery and aural reception and were sometimes thought to have implicit meanings, conflicted with the academic literate traditions.

Indeed, much of what I understand about this project seems to slip away as I write academic prose, a challenge that is not limited to research with Indigenous Elders, to be sure. But when engaging with forms and structures of knowledge that are not Western, the challenges seem particularly great43.

In spite of the challenges of listening, understanding, and representing the expressions of Inuit Elders, framing my interviews with them (and with others) as engagements with oral history and stories rather than as more conventional interpretations of interviewing as a practice of posing questions and eliciting responses remains compelling. Geographers, sociologists, and anthropologists have called attention to the value of interviewing for oral history, life stories, and other narratives as well as the challenges inherent in this approach (e.g., Benson and Nagar 2006;

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43 These are not matters that can be resolved through methodological discussion, it seems to me, but can simply be flagged and made more visible to the reader where appropriate.
Cameron 2001; Chase 2003; Mills 2002; Perks and Thompson 2006; Riley and Harvey 2007; Shopes 2003; Smith and Jackson 1999). Cruikshank remains an important point of reference for scholars working with Indigenous oral histories. In addition to highlighting the social life of stories and the importance of attending to the oral and performative in oral history (rather than simply transcribing oral histories without attending to their contexts; see Cruikshank 1998a), she has also maintained an abiding interest in the intersections between stories and “things” (Cruikshank 1992b, 2005). Similarly, Andrews et al (2006) have suggested that oral history is particularly well suited to addressing the relations between things and the meanings of history, a point echoed by a number of oral history scholars. Indeed, the “cultural turn” in geography has partly been driven by an interest in cultural meanings, practices, and relations, and the performative, narrative aspects of oral history and storytelling are compelling for scholars engaged in this genre of research:

If we are interested in the ways in which history is lived, how it offers answers to the questions as to who we are and where we came from, if we want to know how we are produced as modern subjects, what narratives from the past enable us to construct identities, how historical memories and the shadows and ghosts of memories are internalised in our lives, then ‘the passions of identity politics’ may drive us to ask new questions of old and new sources, fiction may give us necessary tools, the construction of new myths may be part of our work. (Hall 1998, 66)

Stuart Hall’s sensitivity to fiction and narrative and to the role of intellectuals in “constructing new myths” is both cogent and cautionary when engaging with Indigenous knowledges. Indigenous scholars have highlighted the importance of storytelling, confabulation, and dreamwork in both knowing the past and creating more desirable futures (e.g., Battiste 2000; Cardinal 1991; Henderson 2000; King 1993, 2003b; Smith 1999) but have also emphasized the
importance of adhering to cultural protocols in the telling and reproduction of stories and other Indigenous knowledges (LaRocque 1988; Schnarch 2004). Winona Stevenson (1999) argues, for example, that most researchers are insufficiently attentive to oral history as cultural property and insists that the re-telling of stories without permission is a grave violation. She also critiques the very assumption that Indigenous knowledge is available:

One of the major tenets of Western erudition is the belief that all knowledge is knowable. In the Cree world all knowledge is not knowable because knowledge is property in the sense that it is owned and can only be transmitted by the legitimate owner. . . . You can't just go and take it, or even go and ask for it. Access to knowledge requires long-term commitment, apprenticeship, and payment. As a student of oral history, in the traditional sense, there is so much I have heard and learned yet so little I can speak or write about, because I have not earned the right to do so. (quoted in Smith 2005, 108)

Although Stevenson’s comments are important, they are not directly transferable to Inuit contexts. Inuit knowledge is not owned in the same sense as Stevenson describes, nor is it transmitted through strict lineages (Bennett and Riley 2004; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute 2006; Kublu, Laugrand, and Oosten 1999). This is not to say that Inuit are not acutely concerned about ownership and control over research in their territories, but rather to highlight that formalized ownership structures tend not to characterize the telling of stories in Inuit cultures (as they do, for example, in Tagish-Tlingit traditions, see Cruikshank and Sidney 1998). Dynamics of ownership, permission, and access to stories were thus addressed in this project with individual storytellers, through arrangements to return materials to individuals and community groups, and through a commitment to connect stories to contemporary concerns.
(particularly to connect youth with their Elders’ knowledges) through the development of curricula and presentations\textsuperscript{44}.

Before turning to a description of the ontological and narrative strategies I employed in the writing and telling of my findings, it is worth dwelling for a moment on dynamics of silence, refusal, and secrets. Some people refused to participate in this project, others participated but on their own terms: they alluded to knowledges they preferred not to share with me, they limited some stories and redirected my attention to their own priorities, they questioned my right to ask questions of their Elders, and so on. As Kamela Visweswaran (1994) has pointed out, it is important that these refusals and terms be accounted for and not excluded from academic prose. Jamie Winders (2001) has taken up Visweswaran’s argument and suggested that, in addition to accounting for those who refuse to act as research subjects, geographers should attend to other forms of silence and refusal, including critical commentary about one’s research, selective assistance in identifying appropriate interviewees, and other expressions and actions that shape who and what figures in a given research project. Indeed, as Heidi Nast observes, “secrets are relational” (2008, 396), and I explore dynamics of secrecy, refusal, and silence more extensively in Chapter 7.

Silence, of course, amounts to more than refusals and selective secrecy. As Trinh observes, “Silence as a will not to say, or to unsay, and as a language of its own has barely been explored” (1988, 73-4). Chambers (1998, 51) argues that “the refusal to respond can mark the refutation of a language in which one is being addressed. To reply in this mode is to adopt a voice that refuses to participate in the official record. This refusal of the ‘vocal mandate’ disrupts the positioning of power through the irruption of silence”. He adds, importantly, that there are

\textsuperscript{44} I also coordinated the production of a video documenting the Cultural Exchange described in Chapter 7 and will be traveling to Kugluktuk in November 2009 to discuss the findings of my doctoral research and potential future projects.
methodological and representational issues at stake in the representation and analysis of these silences. Just as Davies and Dwyer ask how geographers might “make sense of silence in the context of qualitative research” (2008, 401), Chambers insists that the absence of voice “articulates a presence” that is too often overlooked by scholars accustomed to “ignoring the ontology of silence; a silence which they invariably colonize as pure absence, absolute lack” (51). Although I strongly concur that silences of this ilk require attention, Chambers’ account is overly invested in silence as didactic and strategic; he is preoccupied with silence as refusal of power and as pointed expression. Such a perspective frames acts of listening to and for silences as inherently just and necessary, eliding the ethical imperative to acknowledge not the unknown but the unknowable in any academic study (Brown 2001; Butler 1993b). As Chow (1993, 37-38) observes, assuming one can hear the silence of others “neutralizes the untranslatability of the native’s experience and the history of that untranslatability.”

There is a different kind of silence I wish to attend to here. Much of my time in Kugluktuk was marked by silences. I learned to speak less and engage in endless hours of mostly silent, collective visiting. Silence, I learned, is more than refusal or strategic avoidance of speech. It is a shared language, an unfolding, and a way of being in relation. As Trinh T. Minh-Ha observes, “what you are creating in relationships is not the mere product of an accumulative process, but rather, a musical accuracy – the precise rhythm and tuning that allow what you say and don’t say to find its reverberation in other people” (1998, 8). Indeed, when I learned to stop asking questions and allow conversations and other interactions to lead other places, I experienced the kind of “tuning” Trinh describes. I expand on these aspects of silence in Chapter 7.
Writing and Storying: Performative Onto-Politics

Implicit in Trinh’s description of writing as tuning and resonance is a certain unpredictability, risk, and openness to emergence. She is more explicit about this approach elsewhere:

If one merely proceeds by opposing, one is likely to remain reductive and simplistic in one’s critical endeavour. Whereas in an approach where things are allowed to come forth, to grow wildly as ‘controlled accidents’ and to proceed in an unpredictable manner, one is compelled to look into the many facets of things and is unable to point safely at them as if they were only outside oneself. It is in indirection and indirectness that I constantly find myself reflecting back on my own positions. (1998, 4)

There is a resonance here with Benjamin’s (1999; 2002a) interest in juxtaposing unrelated images and other materials to see what might come forth, and with his interest in slowly, carefully assaying the layers of things that populate our lives. Geographers have commented on the methodological implications of Benjamin’s writings, including the notion of writing and interpreting though “conjunction and recontextualization” (Crang 2003, 135) and of the possibilities of thinking of historical materials as forming “constellations” with the present (e.g., Till 2001). I would suspect that most researchers experience surprise and discovery as they survey their research materials; such an experience is not necessarily remarkable or radical. What kind of politics, though, might be nourished by indirection? As discussed in Chapter 2, there are reasons to be wary of the liberal undertones informing theories of posthuman “emergence” and “becoming”. But it seems to me that Benjamin, Trinh, and other feminist writers who engage with the concepts of unpredictability, coming forth, and indirection, might be attending to a way of relating and engaging with the world with radical political potential. Haraway (2008), for example, dwells on the surprising and enthralling shifts made possible by being in tune with
others, being open to their expressions, and acknowledging our co-constitution through relation. Fuller (1999) explores the risks of “going native” in ethnographic research and the challenges it poses to epistemological and methodological conventions in geography. And Gibson-Graham (2002; 2008) describe their self-consciously partial writings as ontological interventions that, they hope, might shift discourses of economic and social life.

Gibson-Graham marry feminist and poststructuralist deconstruction with something they call “resubjectification”, a process that involves the creation of alternative discourses and a “micropolitics of enabling subjects to inhabit that [alternative discursive] terrain” (2002, 36). They advance a case for a “performative ontological politics” (2008, 620) that involves writing about, engaging with, performing, theorizing, celebrating, and taking seriously the alternatives they wish to see in the world as an act of conscious, political, and creative (re)production. They ask:

how we might begin to perform new economic worlds … how might we, as academic subjects, become open to possibility rather than limits on the possible? What would it mean to view thinking and writing as productive ontological interventions? How can we see our choices of what to think about and how to think about it as ethical/political decisions? How do we actually go about performing new economies – what are some techniques and technologies of performance? And, finally, how can we participate in what is happening on the ground from an academic location? (2008, 614)

These questions, when reoriented to studies of the (post)colonial, are instructive. Just as Gibson-Graham are critical of left scholars who claim to want to dismantle the injustices and violences of a sweeping, globalized, capitalist system and yet tend to stop short of imagining and validating alternatives to that system (choosing, instead, to focus on close analysis of globalized capitalism, “relishing our privileged insight into its workings” (2002, 51)), I am wary of the emphasis placed by critical scholars on diagnosing the immense and intimate reaches of colonialism into every
aspect of Indigenous peoples’ lives in what Daniel David Moses describes as a form of “dancing around the wound” (Moses and Goldie 1992, xvii). I certainly see the benefits of this scholarship and have benefited immensely from remarkable works produced in this tradition. But, as Moses points out, given that the vast majority of (post)colonial scholars are inheritors of colonial privilege (as are the majority of anti-capitalist scholars inheritors of capitalist privilege), this fixation on the ills wrought by colonialism seems narcissistic and willfully dismissive of alternatives, of “thinking otherwise” (Gibson-Graham 2002, 42).

There is a risk, of course, that in emphasizing alternatives and difference, and in actively orienting my activities towards documenting and imagining these alternatives, I will seem to be denying the scope and violences of colonialism and, like Gibson-Graham, be “cast, yet again, as the Pollyannas of the profession” (2002, 25). But such an accusation demands scrutiny. As Dempsey and Rowe (2004, 49) observe, “hopelessness can be as naïve as hope”. The dismissal of alternative formulations is too often grounded in a particular temporal and political imagination in which “nonexistence is produced as a form of inferiority” (Santos 2004, 16) and in which all that is not universalizing and totalizing is deemed irrelevant or doomed to insignificance. To believe in and encourage that which is marginal and even non-existent is not to be a Pollyanna, Santos suggests, but rather to engage in a sociology of absences and emergence that aims to dismantle the “modes of production of absence” (19). It is to engage in a conscious politics of emergence in which the future is envisioned as comprised of “plural and concrete possibilities, utopian and realist at one time, and constructed in the present by means of activities of care” (25).

Such a project involves a different orientation towards the local, one that refuses to construct it in advance as consumed by the global, the mobile, or the hegemonic (see Chapter 2). It involves paying attention to survival, hope, and creative reinvention. It is not necessarily to diminish or deny the ongoing effects and new manifestations of colonialism and imperialism, but
rather to put these processes (and the narratives that sustain them) in their place. As Bruce Braun (2008, 667) noted in a recent discussion of the posthuman and new materialist turn in geography, the point is not to replace formerly hegemonic ideas of the human or of nature, but rather to displace these ideas and add more ideas to the mix. Thus, the relevant questions about colonialism, postcolonialism, and neocolonialism become not just “where and how is colonialism continuing, advancing, and reinventing itself?”, but also, “what alternatives to colonial domination and destruction are available? How can we attend to what is already there and is becoming every day?” For me, these questions have manifested in decisions about what to story, on what terms, and to animate which politics. I have tried to write the stories that I want to see written, not at the expense of truth or evidence but as an ontological intervention along the lines of what Gibson-Graham attempt.

To attend to such emergences is not to romanticize a vaguely defined “multitude” (Hardt and Negri 2000) and neither is to lie or mislead. Geertz’ observation that we too readily equate “the imagined with the imaginary, the fictional with the false, [and] making things out with making things up” (cited earlier in this chapter) is instructive. Instead, this kind of writing involves consciously storying truths that are not substantiated by the same theoretical and epistemological structures as most academic knowledges and creating stories that convey something of an alternative path45. If, as Susan Smith (2009, 206) argues, “radical geography is

45 Such an approach is more in line with the practices and politics I observed in Kugluktuk. Although a handful of Kugluktukmuit mobilize colonial and decolonizing narratives in making sense of their lives and in forwarding particular agendas, the majority of people I met and interacted with tended not to conceptualize themselves in relation to colonialism, nor to take a great interest in dismantling colonial ideas, structures, and practices. Their eyes were cast backward and forward for different purposes and on different terms. I came to see that the ways in which people conceptualize their histories, their struggles, their relationships, and their futures in Kugluktuk are informed by ideas and practices that I could not apprehend if I remained fixated on colonial power. I would not have understood efforts to foster life, survival, and Indigeneity in relation to a desired future and through reference to the past and present stories, resources, and places that make sense. It is this creative and active tacking between past, present, and future
more comfortable with critique—explaining what is wrong—than with formulating a vision of how to put things right”, I would argue that white, feminist, postcolonial geographers have been particularly reticent about formulating visions of “how to put things right” (and for good reason). But as Haraway (1994, 62) points out, the production of “deadly” knowledges continues whether or not we critique them, and thus

the point is to get at how worlds are made and unmade, in order to participate in the processes, in order to foster some forms of life and not others. … The point is not just to read the webs of knowledge production; the point is to reconfigure what counts as knowledge … I am calling this practice materialized refiguration; both words matter. The point is, in short, to make a difference – however modestly, however partially, however much without either narrative or scientific guarantees.

Inspired by Haraway but also a number of other writers, I have consciously structured this dissertation around the stories and ideas that might make particular struggles and politics possible. It is crucial to emphasize, however, that these are struggles and politics in which I am invested and implicated, not the struggles of an idealized Indigenous “other”. They are struggles about which I care.

Conclusion

In sum, attending to story as a relational and material ordering practice requires methods appropriate to studying “things” and their movements, storytelling practice and context, a conceptualization of place as itself material and relational, and a sensitivity to issues of legibility and translation. It also, as I outlined in this chapter, requires contemplation of the politics of
ordering people, places and things through story, including the politics of research with Indigenous peoples and the politics of performing different ontologies through story.
Chapter 4
Ordering Violence

“How is one to lend one’s ear to the recital of abominable scenes without sinning oneself, that is, taking pleasure oneself”
- Michel Foucault

“Let us leave this Europe which never stops talking of man yet massacres him at every one of its street corners, at every corner of the world”
- Frantz Fanon

“Goodbye, Wild Indian, Goodbye.
I know it’s time
for you to go
It’s a good day too,
to go”
- Lenore Keeshig-Tobias

In the closing pages of their recent book-length attack on the “Aboriginal industry”, Frances Widdowson and Albert Howard invoke the Bloody Falls massacre as evidence of the “genocidal intentions” (2008, 263) that follow from Indigenous “kinship-based systems” (264) and “tribalism” (264). The Bloody Falls massacre, they argue, “occurred because the Chipewyan and Inuit were not connected by kinship” (263) and is evidence of the violence that inevitably flows from Indigenous political, cultural, and economic systems. “The perception that primitive peoples were peaceful is merely due to romantic wishful thinking on the part of many academics studying tribal societies” (264), argue Widdowson and Howard. “If we really want to achieve the aspirations of the Enlightenment, the answer does not lie with tribalism …. There would be no
such thing as the public sphere, where everyone is supposedly equal under the law, since kin would be favoured over others in the distribution of goods and services” (264). The book ends with an appeal to become “a global tribe” where the “world can live as one” (264), without the “special interests” of any one group prevailing.

My concern in this chapter is to trace the implication of Hearne’s travel narrative in the development of late eighteenth century discourses of violence, order, and savagery, beginning with its publication in 1795. If Widdowson and Howard can mobilize Hearne’s account of the Bloody Falls massacre today as evidence of the inherent violence of Indigenous peoples, that mobilization takes its cue from much earlier engagements with Hearne’s tale. Like Widdowson and Howard, moreover, Hearne’s contemporaries were not only interested in equating Indigeneity with violence, but also in emphasizing the extremity and distinctiveness of Indigenous violence. Widdowson and Howard’s framing of the massacre as a “genocidal” act is not incidental; it is consistent with a longstanding practice of ordering violence according to the interests of empire. I trace these orderings by attending to the ways in which Hearne’s Journey was initially received by his contemporaries and how it was reworked by members of the first Franklin expedition (1818-22). While readers of Hearne’s tale have engaged it for different reasons and in vastly different historical-geographical contexts over the past two centuries, Hearne’s framing of the Bloody Falls massacre as an extreme but essential instance of savage violence, witnessed by an emotional but neutral European, has been remarkably tenacious. If stories trace relations between people and things, my concern in this chapter is the relational construction of Euro-Canadian distance from the violence of empire through specific practices of witnessing, feeling46, and

46 I am concerned in this chapter with historical geographies of emotional practice and their social and political effects rather than personal experiences of emotion in a more phenomenological sense. Clearly the two are related, and the question of how personal emotional experience articulates with social and political norms is itself fascinating (and historically mutable). My focus here, though, is on the ways in which the social and political legibility of emotional practice informed practices of witnessing, classifying, and
description. These relations are clearly and systematically traced in Hearne’s narrative and in subsequent re-tellings of the Bloody Falls massacre story.

The question of what can and cannot be deemed violence remains a preoccupation of critical scholars, particularly as it relates to empire (Blomley 2003; Butler 2004; Dalsheim 2004; Escobar 2004; Fanon 2004 [1963]; Gregory and Pred 2007; Haywood 2006; Le Billon 2006). Blomley (2003) points out that the foundations of imperial and colonial “order” (including, in this case, regimes of property) are themselves underpinned by tremendous violence; a point Fanon (2004 [1963]) made with respect to the imperial project more widely. As Fanon made clear, empire has always been about denying the violence that underpins it, not just through the identification of non-European peoples and practices as inherently and extraordinarily violent, but also through the constitution and celebration of civilized man as somehow not implicated in the extraordinary violence of imperial dispossession and rule. There are three implications that flow from Fanon’s insight that I want to highlight here. First, if ordering violence in the interests of empire requires a re-framing of particular violent acts and ideas as not violent, then ordering violence is as much about constituting a non-violent, civilized observer as it is about naming violence as such. It is not only knowledge of Indigenous peoples that is at stake in the description of Indigenous violence, in other words, but also conceptualizations of the civilized observer.

Second, to the extent that ordering violence involves differentiating between particular acts and particular peoples, ordering requires ongoing work that should be identifiable and analyzable. I pay attention in this chapter to ordering as practice, in other words, and not to the more static and transcendent notion of “order”. And third, to the extent that empire relied upon the ordering of all ordering violence in a roughly fifty year span, from the 1770s to the 1820s. This approach to emotion is in line with recent and emerging research into the historical geographies of emotion; see Gobert (2009, 72) for a discussion of how our “understanding and experience of emotions are inexorably shaped by culture in general and discourse in particular”.

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manner of people and things, ordering violence must be considered in relation to orderings of race and nature.

I begin by describing the circumstances under which Hearne’s travel narrative was published and the specific geographies of its reception. Although his contributions to northern exploration were hotly debated, Hearne’s insights into Northern Indian customs, beliefs, and practices were celebrated as an important contribution to understanding the “savage state”. Savagery, and particularly savage violence, was enormously topical in the closing years of the eighteenth century and I describe the ways in which Hearne’s text informed concerns about empire, war, and domestic policy, paying particular attention to the ways in which discourses of violence served to delineate Indigenous peoples from Europeans and underwrite orderings of race and nature. To be civilized, in the context of Hearne’s travel narrative, was to be only reluctantly violent and to be affected by violence; it was to position oneself as a horrified observer of the extraordinary and extreme violence of others. Drawing on Foucault’s (1970; 1978; 1979) studies of late eighteenth century technologies of power-knowledge and particularly his work on the classification of things and people, I consider how Hearne’s insights into the habits of Northern Indians came to inform persistent racialized orderings in the Central Arctic. Next, I consider how members of the Franklin expedition engaged with Hearne’s story and with the people and things they confronted as they retraced Hearne’s steps. I pay particular attention to Senecio lugens, a

47 In the context of Hearne’s narrative “Northern Indians” refers to the Chipewyan Dene and “Southern Indians” refers to the Cree. Hearne’s mostly Chipewyan companions were joined by “Copper Indians” (Yellowknife Dene) at various points in the journey including at the massacre scene. The participation of Copper Indians in the massacre is elided by Hearne; he notes that there were Copper Indians among them as preparations for the massacre were made but throughout his description of the massacre itself he refers only to the “Northern Indians” or simply to “the Indians”. Venema (2000, 180) notes that Hearne also avoids direct reference to Matonabbee’s participation in the massacre in an attempt to “[shelter] Matonabbee from the censure of European audiences by neutralizing evidence of his violent outbursts”. The fact that Hearne found the Copper Indians to be remarkably “kind” (1795, 119) and “highly pleased” (119) at the prospect of meeting him and assisting with his survey, and that upon meeting Hearne they inspected him and determined him to be “a perfect human being” (121), may well have contributed to Hearne’s muted treatment of their role in the massacre.
flower conjured by John Richardson, surgeon-naturalist with the Franklin expedition, as a mournful witness to the Bloody Falls massacre. I consider how the flower perpetuated Hearne’s positionality as neutral and emotional witness to Indigenous savagery, even while its naming must be understood in the context of Richardson’s own, very personal orderings of violence.

**Publication, Circulation, and Reception of Hearne’s (1795) *Journey to the Northern Ocean***

Hearne’s travel narrative was published three years after his death, twenty-four years after the massacre. Versions of his travel journal had been circulating already, however, among several “learned and curious gentleman” (Hearne 1795, viii) in London and beyond, as manuscripts, excerpts, pamphlets and, no doubt, orally. Hearne first reported on his journey to his employers at the Hudson’s Bay Company headquarters in London in a letter sent 28 August 1772, two months after his return to the Fort and as part of the annual mailing from the Fort to London (Hearne 1772, fo 174-5). Captain James Cook was given access to Hearne’s reports and his maps when Cook set out on his third voyage in 1776 (Cook 1784, 57), as were a number of other explorers and scientists as the HBC increasingly opened its doors to Royal Society members through the 1770s and 80s (Ruggles 1978). French explorer La Pérouse is famously alleged to have read Hearne’s journal while the two sailed back to London from Prince of Wales Fort in 1782. La Pérouse had sacked the Fort after Hearne (who was acting Governor of the Fort) surrendered to the French offensive. According to the preface of the French edition of Hearne’s travel narrative, La Pérouse had seized the manuscript as bounty upon conquering the Fort, but

48 Not only was oral storytelling an important component of fur trade and Fort cultures (Payne 1979; Podruchny 2004), Hearne is known to have entertained Andrew Graham, Chief Factor at Prince of Wales’ Fort between 1774-1775, with stories from his journey which Graham recorded in his voluminous “Observations on Hudson’s Bay” (HBCA E.2/4–13; see also Graham 1969).
had generously returned it to Hearne “à la condition expresse de le faire imprimer et publier”\textsuperscript{49} (Lallemand 1799, unnumbered). Indeed, there were several calls for the publication of his Journals, calls that Hearne claimed not to have anticipated when he initially put his travel notes together:

> [W]hen I was on that Journey, and for several years after, I little thought that any remarks made in [my Journal] would ever have attracted the notice of the Public: if I had, greater pains might and would have been taken to render it more worthy of their attention than it now is. At that time my ideas and ambition extended no farther than to give my employers such an account of my proceedings as might be satisfactory to them, and answer the purpose which they had in view … But as the case has turned out otherwise, I have at my leisure hours recopied all my Journals into one book, and in some instances added to the remarks I had before made; not so much for the information of those who are critics in geography, as for the amusement of candid and indulgent readers, who may perhaps feel themselves in some measure gratified, by having the face of a country brought to their view, which has hitherto been entirely unknown to every European except myself. (Hearne 1795, v-vi)

Hearne may not have anticipated much interest in his travels in 1772, but by 1792, when his completed manuscript was handed over to publishers Strahan and Cadell (Hearne 1792), things had, indeed, “turned out otherwise”. Cook had begun to publish his travel narratives through the 1770s and by 1800 “more than 100 editions of various reports from Cook’s voyages were released” (Schaffer 1996, 342). Cook’s journeys were not only landmarks in establishing a particular “tradition of scientific travel”, as Livingstone (1992, 127) argues, but were also central to the emerging market for scientific travel narratives that would rapidly expand in the closing

\textsuperscript{49} “On the express condition that it be printed and published”. The preface is actually entitled “à La Pérouse” and is written in the form of a letter to the explorer by Lallemand: “It is you to whom Europe is indebted for the publication of this work” (“C’est à vous que l’Europe est redevable de la publication de cet ouvrage”)
years of the eighteenth century. Hearne was paid the remarkable sum of £200 for his manuscript (British Library, Strahan Papers, Add. 48901, ff.53-54)\(^{50}\) indicating that Strahan and Cadell anticipated healthy sales of the published narrative. By 1799 *A Journey* had been translated into German, Dutch, and French (MacKinnon 2000) and editions had been published in Ireland and the United States. The book was reviewed enthusiastically and extensively and copies were found in the libraries of many notable figures of the times.

Hearne’s preface to *A Journey* is revealing of some of his motives for publishing the narrative. He begins with a long response to his critics, particularly geographer Alexander Dalrymple, who had called into question the accuracy of Hearne’s cartographic readings and, by extension, his general credibility (see Dalrymple 1789a)\(^{51}\). Hearne presents lengthy refutations of Dalrymple’s critiques in an effort to “convince the Public that his objections are in a great measure without foundation” (Hearne 1795, viii) and to re-establish himself as a credible writer. As Schaffer (1996, 340) observes, eighteenth century “travelers’ tales … were notoriously hard to credit. So it became important independently to establish the credibility of the storyteller apart from the content of the story”. Having addressed and dismissed Dalrymple’s criticisms, Hearne resolves to “quit the disagreeable subject with declaring, that if any part of the following sheets should afford amusement to Mr. Dalrymple, or any other of my readers, it will be the highest gratification I can receive, and the only recompense I desire to obtain for the hardships and fatigue which I underwent in procuring the information contained in them” (viii). In spite of his

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\(^{50}\) Glover (1958) compares this payment to Jane Austen’s receipt of £10 for the first draft of *Northanger Abbey* in 1803.

\(^{51}\) Although some have suggested that Dalrymple launched a “venomous attack” upon Hearne’s credibility when he called into question Hearne’s latitudinal and longitudinal measurements, Fry alleges that “there is no justification” for this claim, and that Hearne was simply “upset by this questioning and tried to defend his account” (Fry 1970, 204). Dalrymple did have a habit of aggrandizing his own credibility through critiques of others (see Dalrymple 1773 for an attack on Hawkesworth’s narrativization of Cook’s first voyage) and his close relationship with Samuel Wegg likely led Hearne to worry that Dalrymple’s critique would damage Hearne’s standing with the HBC.
best efforts in the preface and throughout the published narrative, Hearne was not entirely successful in recuperating his credibility and the question of whether to read A Journey as an authoritative source of knowledge or as a literary “curiosity” remains unresolved to this day.\(^{52}\)

Hearne was defensive not only of himself but of the HBC, whose failure to extensively explore the land under its control had been critiqued by those who challenged the company’s economic monopoly (Williams 1970). Hearne’s journey had been undertaken in part to defuse such criticisms and the publication of his narrative was aimed at vindicating his former employer. The publication of the narrative was itself enabled by the HBC’s growing willingness to share its extensive holdings with explorers, scientists, and other “learned gentleman” and, indeed, with Hearne himself. At the time of his journey Hearne would not have been encouraged or even permitted to publish his narrative but, beginning in the 1770s, Samuel Wegg (Deputy Governor and Governor of the HBC between 1774-1799 and Treasurer of the Royal Society from 1768-1802) granted unprecedented access to the HBC’s journals, reports, letters, charts, and maps to Royal Society members (Ruggles 1978). It was Wegg who granted Hearne access to his own and other records at the HBC headquarters, Wegg who introduced Hearne to Andrew Pennant in 1782-3 (who would go on to pen Arctic Zoology in 1784 drawing on Hearne’s findings\(^{53}\)), and Wegg who would have allowed his close friend\(^{54}\) Dalrymple to scrutinize Hearne’s unpublished travel notes (Hearne 1795; Ruggles 1978).

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\(^{52}\) This tension, in fact, provides occasion for repeated commentary on the text and its ‘defense’ as a source of scientific, anthropological, and historical knowledge (e.g., Glover 1951; McGhee 2004; McGoogan 2003; Wilson 1949). As Mills (2004, 60-62) points out, following Foucault, discourses are sustained through commentary, and commentary on whether to read Hearne as an authoritative source of specific “facts” or as a more literary, general source of curiosities has been central to its circulation and sedimentation.

\(^{53}\) Arctic Zoology also includes a description of the Bloody Falls massacre, (see Pennant 1784, CLXXV)

\(^{54}\) Ruggles (1978, 193) emphasizes the importance of this friendship for the HBC, arguing that “perhaps more than most others it would have been Alexander Dalrymple who in his discussions and proselytizing undoubtedly was of considerable influence on the geographic and cartographic education of Wegg, and on the gradual emergence of the more cartographic, exploratory, and overt policies of the Hudson’s Bay
Reviews, although mostly enthusiastic, were informed by reviewers’ stances with respect to the HBC, Hearne’s credibility, and the scientific merits of his travels. While some took pains to note that *A Journey* was accompanied by an “*accurate* map of Mr. Hearne’s track” (Gentleman's Magazine 1796, 498; emphasis added), others opened their review by noting that “little accession has resulted either to commerce or to the stores of knowledge” from Hearne’s travels and called into question “the importance of the publication itself, or the discoveries and information it professes to communicate” (British Critic 1796, 54; 62). Driver (2004b, 75) argues that the boundaries between “scientific exploration and adventurous travel, the sober and the sensational, or the analytical and the aesthetic” were in the process of negotiation during these years and one can certainly observe these negotiations in reviews of *A Journey*. Whereas the *English Review* (1796) praised Hearne’s work as a stand-out example in the sea of “books of travels and voyages” (1) on the market, describing him as “a judicious observer, and …a candid and faithful reporter of facts; facts new, striking, and highly important” (2), others positioned the work as something that might appeal more to “persons of leisure” (Critical Review 1797, 139) and to those “who are desirous of becoming acquainted with savage manners” (127), not scientific or commercial fact. Certainly Hearne’s working-class, unlettered background would have limited his credibility as a scientific gentleman, but the stances taken with respect to Hearne’s credibility and accuracy were about more than policing the boundaries between learned gentleman and men of curiosity. Hearne’s “opinion against a north-west passage”, as the *British Critic* (1796, 62) observed, “[was] decided”, and it was this conviction that upset the interests of those advocating for extensive and ongoing Arctic exploration. Dalrymple (1789b) himself was actively agitating for another

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Company during the latter half of this century … They attended evening dinners together nearly a dozen times from 1768-1775, on the same occasions that Banks, Barrington, and Franklin were also frequent companions. From 1779 until 1799, when Wegg retired from Governorship, he and Dalrymple were at dinner together on approximately sixty-five occasions, which was the crucial period of stewardship of Company affairs by Wegg as Deputy and then Governor”. 116
expedition to find the north-west passage (that he would command) and the HBC recognized the importance of positioning itself as a promoter of such expeditions, following “allegations that the Company was concealing the existence of a Northwest Passage” (Williams 1970, 170). To undercut Hearne’s reliability was to enhance the case for additional exploration at a time when state funding was explicitly sought, and many came out against Hearne’s reliability precisely for this reason.

Assessments of Hearne’s contribution to cartography, science, and commerce were divergent, but almost all critics agreed that Hearne was a reliable and credible source of knowledge for understanding the “savage state” (Critical Review 1797, 127). Reviewers seized upon the Bloody Falls massacre story as a particularly evocative account of savagery and it was reproduced at length in a number of reviews, and for many years following (e.g., Kaleb 1823). The didactic importance of the massacre for delineating civilized and savage ways is emphasized in these reviews. The Critical Review, for example, positioned Hearne’s narrative as an antidote to the “praises of savage life” (127) and as a corrective to those who “foolishly … take pleasure in contrasting the defects of civilization with the little solid comfort to be found in their favourite state of independence” (127). Few such romanticized accounts, it was claimed, “are founded on an accurate examination of the facts” (127), and Hearne’s Journey was, if nothing else, “a plain narration of incidents … in the wildest part of North America” (127). The identification of savagery as a way of shoring up the civilized British self has been extensively attended to in geographic and other scholarship (e.g., Anderson 1998; Clayton 2003; Hall 2002; Pearce 1967; 55 The word “plain” can be read here is an indication of truth and reliability. As Mary Louise Pratt (1992, 88) observes, “travel literature did not remain immune to the professionalization of writing in the eighteenth century. Now that it had become a profitable business, traveler-writers and their publishers relied more and more on professional writers and editors to ensure a competitive product, often transforming manuscripts completely, usually in the direction of the novel. Debates about embellishment, seductiveness, naked truth, and the like are often debates about the role of these figures, and the compromises involved in writing for money”. To write in a plain, unadorned manner was to write truthfully, reliably, and credibly.
Said 1978). Its mobilization in reviews of Hearne’s narrative, however, was arguably informed as much by concerns about the French Revolution as about Indigeneity.

The French Revolution and Revolutionary Wars were of urgent concern to the British in the closing years of the eighteenth century (Deane 1988; Fulford 2006; Haywood 2006; Makdisi 1998), raising questions about violence, war, and social order that Hearne’s *Journey* attended to. Hearne’s nuanced and conflicted descriptions of Matonabbee, his guide, were particularly fruitful sources of contemplation for those concerned with questions about the inherent nature of men and their vulnerability to violence and mob behaviour. The *Critical Review*, for example, dwelled upon Hearne’s contributions to the moral geographies of murder, noting that among the Northern Indians murder was “in some cases, held dishonorable” (1797, 131) and murderers were shunned, although “the women, it is true, sometimes receive an unlucky blow from their husbands for misbehaviour, which occasions their death; but this is thought nothing of” (132, citing Hearne). The reviewer includes Hearne’s anxious note that Matonabbee had killed one of his wives in this manner (“and he is, in every other respect, a man of such universal good sense, and, as an Indian, of such great humanity, that I am at a loss how to account for his having been guilty of such a crime, unless it be by his having lived among the Southern Indians too long, as to become tainted with their blood-thirsty, revengeful, and vindictive disposition” (132, citing Hearne). Where Hearne struggles to account for the violence of a man who is otherwise “of such great humanity”, the reviewer scoffs at Hearne’s sympathies. “This Matonabbee”, he writes, “is the authour’s favourite: and besides pummeling one of his wives to death, he stabbed the husband of another woman several times, and made no scruple to be in a party with his brethren to assassinate a company of a different tribe, sleeping quietly in their huts” (132). The source of the reviewer’s

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56 I have not elaborated on the gendered dimensions of reviewer’s responses to Hearne’s travel narrative here, but there are rich and suggestive links to be made. For a fuller discussion of the politics of gendered violence and its relation to both eighteenth century and more recent imperial contexts see Wilson (2003) and Razack (2002).
concerns about humanizing savage murder are revealed in the sentence that immediately follows:

“The profusion of the rich, in civilized life, is often and deservedly cried out against: but it bears no proportion to that of the savages. A savage family frequently wastes more in one day, than the richest family in London or Paris does in a dozen years. Of this we have had frequent proofs in the narration of this journey” (132, emphasis in original).

This rather bizarre appeal to the relative scruples of the rich in comparison to the habits of Northern Indians likely made ample sense to readers in 1797. Penned as the Revolutionary Wars continued to wreak havoc in France, and as revolutionary sentiments circulated in England, anxieties about violence, murder, and their justification were of more than passing concern (Deane 1988; Fulford 2006; Haywood 2006; Makdisi 1998; Maniquis 2000; Thompson 2007). The specific possibility that the masses might rise up against the “richest families in London” was urgently considered as Hearne’s narrative circulated. As Edmund Burke warned in his widely read (1790) *Reflections on the Revolution in France*:

> Plots, massacres, assassinations, seem to some people a trivial price for obtaining a revolution. A cheap, bloodless reformation, a guiltless liberty, appear flat and vapid to their taste. There must be a great change of scene; there must be a magnificent stage effect; there must be a grand spectacle to rouze the imagination, grown torpid with lazy enjoyment of sixty years security, and the still unanimating repose of public prosperity. (cited in McCann 1999, 57)

Stories about death, torture, violence, and mass murder gained unprecedented appeal in Britain during the last decade of the eighteenth century (Haywood 2006; McCann 1999). The conditions under which people might be swept up into collective, violent action, and the bloody consequences of those actions, spoke to pressing social and political concerns both at home and
abroad. These themes are amply evoked in Hearne’s narrative. Consider Hearne’s description of the preparations for the Bloody Falls massacre:

> It is perhaps worth remarking, that my crew, though an undisciplined rabble, and by no means accustomed to war or command, seemingly acted on this horrid occasion with the utmost uniformity of sentiment. There was not among them the least altercation or separate opinion; *all were united in the general cause*, and as ready to follow where Matonabbee led, as he appeared ready to lead … Never was reciprocity of interest more generally regarded among a number of people, than it was on the present occasion by my crew, for not one was a moment in want of anything that another could spare; and if ever the spirit of disinterested friendship expanded the heart of a Northern Indian, it was here exhibited in the most extensive meaning of the word. *Property of every kind that could be of general use now ceased to be private*, and every one who had any thing which came under that description, seemed proud of an opportunity of giving it, or lending it to those who had none, or were most in want of it. The number of my crew was so much greater than that which five tents could contain, and the warlike manner in which they were equipped so greatly superior to what could be expected of the poor Esquimaux, that no less than a total massacre of every one of them was likely to be the case, unless Providence should work a miracle for their deliverance. (Hearne 1795, 150-1; emphasis added)

This passage evokes the pull of the “violent mob, the many-headed beast” that Maniquis (2000, 375), McCann (1999), and Makdisi (1998) argue was a defining image during the latter years of the eighteenth century as Britons agitated and worried over the possibilities of a republican revolution at home. Hearne’s struggle to make sense of Matonabbee’s violence resonated with struggles over whether the Jacobins were justified in their own violent, mob-like overthrow of the aristocracy. For the editors of the *Critical Review*, at least, to sympathize with Matonabbee was not just to sympathize with the savages of the Americas, it was to cast the violence of the French
Revolution in a more sympathetic light and accept savage behaviour in civilized Europe. As McCann (1999, 107) argues, Anti-Jacobins were specifically concerned about the influence of texts such as Hearne’s on the public. “They saw the public consumption of literary texts, political pamphlets, popular journals and philosophical tracts as the means by which a gullible and manipulable audience could be swayed from passivity to the violence and atavism of revolution.”

It was not only the eruption of violence in Europe that worried Hearne’s contemporaries. As Haywood (2006) observes, the closing decades of the eighteenth century were some of the most spectacularly violent in British imperial history, as wars, rebellions, and uprisings around the world not only resulted in death and torture on a massive scale, but such violence was also described in unprecedented detail in the growing news and publishing industries. The British were making sense not only of the “massacres [that] were taking place in France” (61) and the threat these posed to the “mythic image of Britannia endangered by violent republicanism” (60), but also of their own “savagery” in the Americas throughout the Indian Wars, the American War of Independence, and the slave rebellions across the West Indies. Reports of violent repression, murder, and torture on the part of British subjects had begun to undercut public support for colonial expansion, as had accounts of scalping, rape, cannibalism, and other “savage” acts carried out by Britain’s Indian allies in the American War of Independence (Colley 2002; Fulford 2006; Haywood 2006). Late eighteenth century interest in tales of Indian savagery was informed, in that sense, not simply by a straightforward confrontation with the colonial, Indigenous “Other” but rather by a complex mixture of anti-colonial sentiment in Britain, the rise of the abolitionist movement, successive violent uprisings in England and Ireland, and by growing public awareness of the atrocities committed by British subjects in the name of empire. Stories of Indian savagery, in other words, were not always and only about Indians, but rather were ways of making sense of complex political, economic, and social crises in the tumultuous late eighteenth century. If
Romanticism “originated in the contact zones”, as Mary Louise Pratt (1992, 135) convincingly argues, it did so through complex, relational flows between imperial centers and peripheries.

Indeed, some of the most celebrated Romantic poets drew upon Hearne’s work in order to make sense of the times (see Cooper 1906 for an early assessment of Hearne's impact on Romantic poetry). Fulford (2002; 2006) argues, for example, that Coleridge’s “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”, penned in 1798, was directly inspired by Hearne’s narrative. Based in part upon annotations made by Coleridge in his copy of *A Journey* and upon Coleridge’s claim that Hearne’s narrative inspired him to show that belief in superstition was “not peculiar to savage or barbarous tribes” (Coleridge 1975, 269), Fulford (2006, 165) argues that the poem’s study of superstition among a group of English mariners was in fact a commentary inspired by imperial and domestic crisis. In the Rime, he argues,

Coleridge had generated a poetry which collapsed the assumed superiority of Briton to slave, European to Indian, using the ethnographical information provided by travelers to lay bare the mechanisms by which fear and desire are produced and internalized, the mechanisms by which, in response to the culture they lived in, people shaped themselves in subservience to and/or in power over others.

Fulford also finds traces of Hearne in Wordsworth’s “The Complaint of the Forsaken Indian Woman” (1798) and in the uncompleted Wordsworth-Coleridge project “The Three Graves” (ca 1797). Similarly, Thompson (2007) argues that Wordsworth’s “The Excursion” (1814) was based on Hearne’s travel narrative. If Coleridge was questioning the assumed differences between slaves, Indians, and British subjects in 1798, however, Wordsworth, by 1814, was a firm proponent of the “civilizing mission” and the notion that “other cultures [were] backward and savage, in need of British guidance both practically and morally” (Thompson 2007, 227). Using
the figure of the “Solitary”, who returns from a voyage to America where he expected to find “a Rousseauistic idyll, and living examples of the Noble Savage”, Wordsworth writes that Indians are in fact

A creature squalid, vengeful, and impure
Remorseless, and submissive to no law
But superstitious fear, and abject sloth.

Just as reviewers of Hearne’s narrative warned against romanticizing savagery, Wordsworth’s poem makes clear the importance of distinguishing between civilized and savage ways.

What, then, separated the savagery of the British from the savagery of the Northern Indians? Staking out these differences was central to late eighteenth century responses to Hearne’s narrative, as the *Critical Review*’s anxious reference to revolutionary sentiments reveals. Hearne himself offered answers in his lengthy chapter describing “the persons and tempers of the Northern Indians” (Hearne 1795, 304). In it, he dwells on the Northern Indian “heart” and particularly Indian responses to violence, a theme that also informs his description of the massacre. Hearne observes, for example, that while the Northern Indians “are by no means a bold or warlike people”, and their attack at Bloody Falls represented their only act “of wanton cruelty on any other part of the human race”,

Their hearts, however, are in general so unsusceptible of tenderness, that they can view the deepest distress in those that are not immediately related to them, without the least emotion; not even half as much as the generality of mankind feel for the sufferings of the meanest of the brute creation. I have been present when one of them, imitating the groans, distorted features, and contracted position of a man who had died in the most
Response to the suffering of others is a key theme in Hearne’s writings. He uses it time and again to differentiate himself from the Northern Indians, not least at the scene of the Bloody Falls massacre, where Hearne’s horror at the torture of a young woman unfolding before him is contrasted to the Indians’ mocking question as to whether Hearne “wanted an Esquimaux wife” (1795, 154). Hearne’s self-conscious display of pity, disgust, and tears at the sight of the massacre, tears that would allegedly be triggered again and again as he recollected the event years later (in what McGhee (2004, 213) suggests “would today be diagnosed as post-traumatic stress”) was a sentimental outpouring that signified the humanity of his “heart” (see Pearce 1967 for an extended discussion of the association of savagery with a “lack of ‘social affections’” (86) and a tendency to “[glory] in hardship, cruelty, and torture” (87)). Indeed, reviews of Hearne’s narrative praised it as an “affecting narrative” and particularly noted his response to the “barbarous” massacre scene, which was deemed “a proper mixture of indignation at the brutalities, and of compassion for the miseries, of those wretched savages” (Monthly Review 1796, 250). In an ironic reversal of gendered and racialized associations of sentimentality with irrationality, to be civilized in the face of savage violence was to be overcome with emotion, and to be dispassionate was to reveal the savagery of one’s heart.

Fulford (2006, 68-9) makes the important observation that Hearne’s tears not only separated savage from civilized, they also helped him evade responsibility for the massacre:

To his fellow white men, he was supposedly in command of the expedition and should, therefore, have been able to prevent the attack, imposing civilized leadership on savage followers … [but] ‘Neuter in the rear’ he was not so much neutral as impotent – his
manliness in question not only by the Dene warriors who ridiculed him for pitying the
girl they had speared but also by readers who expected him to take control. Hearne’s tears
save him. They re-establish his difference from his fellow assailants, re-impose civilized
values on the text. They show that the white man feels guilt and pity when Indians do not.
If Hearne was complicit with murder, he purges his guilt by compassion of which tears
are the bodily proof … sensibility and compassion … were imposed on the narrative to
redeem it from the danger of aligning the white man with the Indian.

As Fulford makes clear, it is Hearne’s carefully managed performance of sentiment in relation to
specific forms of violence that marks his civility and masculinity, performances that effectively
divert attention from his complicity in and responsibility for the savage violence he describes57.
To pity the girl, to shed tears at the barbarous scene, was to confirm his difference and his
innocence. It was a performance defined by the self-conscious expression of feeling involving a
tense struggle between containing and being overcome by emotion:

…the terror of my mind at beholding this butchery, cannot easily be conceived, much
less described; though I summoned up all the fortitude I was master of on this occasion, it
was with difficulty that I could refrain from tears; and I am confident that my features
must have feelingly expressed how sincerely I was affected at the barbarous scene I then
witnessed; even at this hour I cannot reflect on the transactions of that horrid day without
shedding tears. (Hearne 1795, 154-5)

This passage of A Journey was cited again and again in reviews and, as discussed in Chapter 6,
has been a cornerstone of efforts to absolve Hearne of responsibility for the massacre. As the
territorial and federal officials interested in erecting commemorative plaques in the 1970s noted,

57 As I discuss in Chapters 5 and 6, Kugluktukmiut continue to lay responsibility for the Bloody Falls
massacre at Hearne’s feet. They insist that the attack would not have occurred if Hearne had not been
searching for copper and that, as leader of the expedition, Hearne was responsible for controlling the men
under his command.
Hearne “did not take part in the massacre and actually wished very sincerely that he could have prevented it” (Boxer 1973, 3). Hearne’s tears not only absolve him of responsibility for the barbarous scene, however; they also produce a place from which to view the event in all its gory detail and yet not be involved. To be civilized, in the context of Hearne’s account, is not only to be affected by violence, it is to be a neutral (if reluctant) witness to the violence of others. To be savage is to revel in violence, to lose oneself and one’s conscience to the pull of the savage mob, and to experience no emotional distress when “reflecting” on such violent acts. These are profoundly relational subject positions: Hearne’s emotional state differentiates him as a civilized, neutral witness capable of documenting the dispassionate, savage violence unfolding before him. His ability to order violence is contingent on his constitution as an observing and sentimental witness whose “proper” emotional response signals his civilized difference and distance from the scene rather than his culpability or responsibility.

Witnessing, classifying, and remediating the violence of Indians was a responsibility Hearne extended to the HBC more broadly, and it was a responsibility that involved acute attention to the Indian “heart”. When commenting on hostilities between Northern Indians and Esquimaux along the north-western shores of Hudson’s Bay, Hearne describes how the efforts of the HBC to smooth relations between them “have at length so far humanized the hearts of those two tribes, that at present they can meet each other in a friendly manner; whereas a few years since, whenever they met, each party premeditated the destruction of the other; and what made

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58 Feminist science studies scholars have long critiqued the “god-trick” of scientific objectivity as a claim to view the world “from nowhere” involving a denial of material and social situatedness (Haraway 1988). Something similar is clearly at work here, but what is interesting to consider is the importance of emotional reaction to the production of distance and neutrality. Objectivity is conventionally associated with performances of emotional neutrality and the ability to not be affected by what one sees. Here, Hearne’s performance of horror and grief is precisely what allows him to distance himself from the massacre scene and report upon its savage details. See Daston and Galison (2007) for a more historically subtle study of objectivity, in which they argue that objectivity, understood as “the suppression of some aspect of the self, the countering of subjectivity” (36), only emerged as a model of scientific practice in the mid-nineteenth century. See also Cameron (2009).
their war more shocking was, they never gave quarter: so that the strongest party always killed the weakest, without sparing either man, woman, or child” (1795, 340). Here, again, imperial violence is delineated from the “shocking” acts of Indigenous peoples, allowing for the HBC to be framed as a civilizing, benevolent force in the region that had, in fact, incurred “great expense …by introducing those strangers” (340). Emblematic of the “anti-conquest” style of travel writing that Pratt (1992) associates with this era, such a tack not only naturalizes the civilizing mission that would come to dominate subsequent imperial activities in the region⁵⁹, it masks the ways in which colonial expansion and the fur trade in particular had thoroughly disrupted land use, territory, and trade in the region, leading to the kinds of conflicts Hearne and other decried as inherent to savage life (Abel 1993; Ray 1974). To consign violence in the Americas to savages was an immensely disingenuous act, but one with significant discursive power.

Indeed, at stake in Hearne’s description of the massacre was much more than the amusement of “persons of leisure” or the absolution of a single man from complicity in a violent act. Hearne’s narrative was published during a crucial moment in the formation of modern racial classificatory schemes that became sedimented in subsequent decades but were emergent in the late eighteenth century (Banton 2007). Travel narratives like Hearne’s were avidly consumed by prominent racial theorists of the day (see Jahoda 2007, for example, on the importance of travel narratives in Blumenbach’s work) and were used to delineate racial typologies. Linnaeus himself posited five different taxa of *Homo sapiens* in his 1769 *Systema Naturae* (Europeans, Americans, Asians, Africans, and the “monstrous”) based on the reports of his colleagues and other travelers. Notably, Linnaeus classified Americans based on their “choleric” and “combative” tempers, with

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⁵⁹ Dalrymple himself, upon reading Hearne’s narrative, exclaimed that “Whoever has read Mr. Hearne’s Journal, must feel a strong desire, of correcting the brutality of the Indians, truly called *Savage*, by introducing amongst them the Comforts and Humanity of civilized Life, and nothing will be more conducive, towards effecting that desirable Purpose, than establishing the Knowledge of God, and the Light of the Gospel, amongst them.” (Dalrymple 1789b, 32; emphasis in original)
Europeans being identified as “sanguine” and “clever”. As the eighteenth century came to a close, Foucault (2002 [1970]) argues, these observations of behaviour came to be understood as an expression of an organism’s underlying structure. “Character” was conceptualized as “the visible point of a complex and hierarchized organic structure in which function plays an essential governing and determining role … a visible sign directing us towards a buried depth” (2002 [1970], 247-249). This way of making sense of character and behaviour was a hallmark of emergent modern epistemologies, according to Foucault. The “fundamental truth” (259) of things and their inherent, internal essence, as expressed through external appearance and behaviour, became the grounds for ordering and understanding the world. Certainly, long before the late eighteenth century, people and things were being classified and ordered. But Foucault argues that these earlier orderings were not based upon modern understandings of essence, true structure, and “deeper cause” (249). It is the belief that people and things are subject to and determined by internal, universal truths that came to prominence in the late eighteenth century, a belief that made Hearne’s study of the character of Northern Indians increasingly amenable to being read as a description of the essence of Indigeneity and, by comparison, the essential nature of civilized humanity.60

Ordering violence in the late eighteenth century was thus informed by, and contributed to, orderings of race and nature. The violence of the Northern Indians was understood, as Terry Goldie observes, as “an essential characteristic” (1989, 90) and an “expression of nature” (95), not as a “human response by the indigenes to oppression” (95). In this context, Hearne could be made to appear as an observing witness documenting the habits of the Northern Indians and measuring their divergence from civilized humanity. He could be judged based on his accuracy

60 See Braun (2000) for a discussion of how George Dawson’s specific geological observations in the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1878 were brought home to imperial centers to be “superimposed, reshuffled, recombined, and summarized” (quoting Latour, p. 44 note 46) in order to develop insights about the fundamental nature of “things”.

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and reliability rather than his complicity. For their part, the Indigenous figures conjured in
Hearne’s travel narrative could only appear as instances of a more generalized type supporting the
broader orderings of peoples and things at stake in *A Journey*. Their humanity and individuality
mattered only to the extent that it illuminated the underlying essence of Indigeneity. These
practices of ordering race and nature were thus profoundly relational; they produced the
subjectivities of the ordering witness as much as they produced understandings of racialized
others. Hearne’s subjectivity as distanciated and yet affective witness, moreover, was formed “not
just in the play of symbols”, as Foucault (1984, 369) observes, but “in real practices – historically
analyzable practices. There is a technology of the constitution of the self which cuts across
symbolic systems while using them”. Fifty years after Hearne’s visit, the Franklin expedition
would not only retrace Hearne’s steps through the Central Arctic but also retrace the relations he
staked between Indigeneity, emotional witnessing, and the Bloody Falls massacre.

“To Mourn”: Ordering Violence in the First Franklin Expedition

Hearne was not the only impotent witness to the Bloody Falls massacre:

I did not see any birds peculiar to those parts, except what the Copper Indians call the
‘Alarm Bird,’ or ‘Bird of Warning.’ In size and colour it resembles a Cobadekook, and
is of the owl genus. The name is said to be well adapted to its qualities; for when it
perceives any people, or beast, it directs its way towards them immediately, and after
hovering over them some time, flies round them in circles, or goes a-head in the same
direction in which they walk. They repeat their visits frequently; and if they see any other
moving objects, fly alternately from one party to the other, hover over them for some
time, and make a loud screaming noise like the crying of a child. In this manner they are
said sometimes to follow passengers a whole day. The Copper Indians put great
confidence in those birds, and say they are frequently apprized by them of the approach of strangers, and conducted by them to herd of deer and musk-oxen; which, without their assistance, in all probability, they never could have found. The Esquimaux seem not to have imbibed the same opinion of these birds; for if they had, they must have been apprized of our approach toward their tent, because all the time the Indians lay in ambush, (before they began the massacre), a large flock of those birds were continually flying about, and hovering alternately over them and the tents, making a noise sufficient to awaken any man out of the soundest sleep. (Hearne 1795, 172-173)

In this passage, Hearne’s preoccupation with the “superstitious” beliefs of the Northern Indians, a preoccupation that recurs throughout A Journey, is only half-heartedly dismissed by the classification of the bird as being “of the owl genus”. Clearly the bird’s capacity to have prevented the Bloody Falls massacre adds pathos to the massacre account (occurring only a few pages before), and its classification into Linnaean taxonomies does little to diminish its evocative powers. Although Hearne’s Alarm-Bird did not stand up to scientific scrutiny (there are no Alarm-Birds or Cobadekoocks to be found in subsequent catalogues of northern fauna), the interweaving of animate nature, violence, pathos, and witnessing that the Alarm-Bird assembled most certainly lived on.

In this section I consider the invention of another specimen of witnessing, emotional nature, Senecio lugens, a species of ragweed named by John Richardson, surgeon-naturalist with the first Franklin expedition (1818-22) as a mournful testament to the Bloody Falls massacre. Known commonly as the black-tipped groundsel in reference to the black tips on its involucral bracts (see Figure 6), the species name lugens is derived from the Latin lugeo meaning “to mourn”. The name lugens was accepted among early nineteenth century botanists as a kind of double entendre. Officially it referred to an organism’s black colouration (Charters 2003-2005; Jaeger 1955, 145) but that colouration was also understood as a reference to the mourning dress
that was increasingly common in Europe from the late eighteenth century onwards. The species name was thus in line with Linnaean taxonomical guidelines (which outlawed, among other things, references to historical events, Indigenous uses or names, and the personification of plant life) while offering a more evocative, emotional meaning for the titillation of readers. Indeed, its evocation of mournful feeling was of as much interest to Richardson as its morphology. *Senecio lugens*’ Latin description ends with the identification of the plant’s habitat or type locality: “Bloody Fall, where the Esquimaux were destroyed by the Northern Indians that accompanied Hearne, whence the specified name” (Richardson in Franklin 1823, 759).

61 Although in use from as early as the mid-eighteenth century (Heringman 2003), the early decades of the nineteenth century saw the official adoption of the Linnaean system of plant and animal taxonomy by scientific bodies like the Royal Society, a decision that was not without controversy. The Linnaean system was meant to overcome the long and unwieldy scientific naming systems that preceded it and to universalize a diversity of local, Indigenous names. Botanists were directed to classify plants according to their visible sexual features, stamens and pistils, and assign binomial Latin names (Genus, followed by species) to the proliferation of plants pouring in from around the world. Linnaeus was insistent that names be issued in Latin and that species names be assigned either in tribute to naturalists or prominent public figures, or as descriptions of the appearance or habitat of the organism. Names were not to reflect Indigenous names or languages, nor medicinal or other plant usage, nor were they to be biographical except in the form of attribution (Schiebinger 2004). These rules were not necessarily adhered to, even by Linnaeus (as Browne (1996, 155-156) observes, Linnaeus himself personified plants, describing plant fertilization as a form of marriage involving husbands, wives, and a marriage bed). Richardson’s personification of *Senecio lugens* as a grieving witness to the Bloody Falls massacre thus took its cue from Linnaeus as much as it subverted Linnaean naming protocols.

62 The plant’s range extends far beyond Bloody Falls, as Richardson himself most certainly understood when he named the plant. Although *Senecio lugens* still blooms every year at Bloody Falls, it also blooms in Kugluktuk and throughout the Kitikmeot region. Botanists now identify its range as extending across much of northern and western North America.
What does it mean to conjure an emotional witness to the Bloody Falls massacre through the language of botanical science? What orderings of plants and people did Richardson trace, and to what extent did he take his cue from Hearne’s narrative? In order to understand how Senecio lugens could come to make sense, it is important to consider the Franklin Expedition’s relationship to Hearne’s voyage. After a long hiatus in polar exploration, the British redirected their attention to the northwest passage following the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 (Levere 1993). Debates over Hearne’s reliability were renewed in order to justify extensive, state-sponsored exploration in northern North America, including a retracing of Hearne’s steps overland from Hudson’s Bay and along the Coppermine River. This time, Hearne’s inaccuracies were blamed on the weaknesses of his instruments and particularly the unreliability of magnetic compasses in northern latitudes (Levere 1993, 103) rather than his personal failings. In order to “amend the very defective geography of the Northern part of North America” (Lord Bathurst’s instructions to
Franklin, cited in Levere 1993, 105) provided by Hearne, John Franklin was dispatched in 1818 along with Surgeon-Naturalist John Richardson, expedition artist George Back, midshipman Robert Hood, and a sizeable party of assistants, guides, and voyageurs. Richardson’s responsibility on the voyage was to collect, preserve, and transport “various subjects of Natural History, which can be allowed consistently with the primary object of the Exploration” (Lord Bathurst, cited in Levere 1993, 105).

As much as Hearne’s cartographic findings may have been in doubt, he remained the only European to have traveled the region and both his official reports and his narrative were consulted extensively by the expedition members. Franklin’s party engaged with Hearne’s descriptions of the massacre and the massacre site, then, on very different terms than most readers of A Journey. As the first Europeans to visit the Coppermine River since Hearne, the Franklin expedition members were most concerned with the reliability and specificity of Hearne’s narrative and were uniquely placed either to refute Hearne’s testimony or to establish its truth. They opted for the latter, in spite of evidence calling Hearne’s account of the massacre into question and their own, personal doubts about his presence at the scene. In a letter to his wife written from Bloody Falls in July, 1821, for example, Richardson noted that Hearne’s latitudinal measurements were most certainly wrong but that:

I do not think his mistake willful, but the same excuse cannot be made as to his description of the Eskimaux girl clinging to his knees for his protection in his account of that bloody transaction, for the Indians assure us that he was left twenty miles or upwards in the river at a spot which they pointed out to us, and that when the war party was returning they met Hearne advancing alone having made a spear for himself by tying one leg of a pair of scissors to the end of a long pole … The Indian account[s] of this transaction … agree so well with each other that I believe it. (Richardson 1821)
This observation was never made public. In fact, the Franklin expedition members did their best to confirm Hearne’s story rather than call his witnessing into question, albeit by avoiding explicit reference to Hearne’s presence at the scene. Both the published expedition narrative and Richardson’s field journal make references to camping “on the very spot where the Massacre of the Esquimaux was transacted by Hearne’s party” (Houston 1984, 77) where “the ground is still strewn with human skulls” (77). Richardson endeavoured to cordon off the site of the killings as a kind of memorial space, noting that it was “overgrown with rank grass, [and] appears to be avoided as a place of encampment” (77-78). Expedition artist George Back produced the first visual representation of Bloody Falls (Figure 7), complete with skulls and bones, and Franklin claimed that the skulls “bore the marks of violence” (Franklin 1829, 174). Franklin noted, in addition, that “as the spot exactly answers the description given by Mr. Hearne, of the place where the Chipewyans who accompanied him perpetrated the dreadful massacre on the Esquimaux, we had no doubt of this being the place, notwithstanding the difference in its position as to latitude and longitude given by him, and ascertained by our observation” (174).
Figure 7: “Bloody Fall” by George Back. First appeared in Franklin’s (1823) *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea*, reproduced with permission from the original held in the W.D. Jordan Special Collections and Music Library, Queen’s University.

Figure 8: Illustration of *Senecio lugens* from botanical appendix to Franklin’s (1823) *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea*. Reproduced with permission from the original held in the W.D. Jordan Special Collections and Music Library, Queen’s University.
Perhaps the most stirring “proof” of the massacre’s occurrence, however, is *Senecio lugens*. The flower received special coverage in the Franklin expedition’s travel narrative and was among a handful of plants that earned a full-page illustration in the botanical appendix (Figure 8). Although the conjuring of a mournful flower seems more of a metaphorical gesture, there is reason to believe that Richardson actually conceptualized the plant as a physical manifestation of God’s grief at the slaying of the Inuit (see Cameron 2009 for more detailed discussion).

According to Rehbock (1983) and Brooke (1991), the botanical sciences in Britain remained thoroughly teleological until the 1830s; that is, plants were believed to be designed by God and outfitted with features that reflected specific meaning or purpose. It was God, in other words, who gave the leaves of *Senecio lugens* their black tips, and it was the job of naturalists like Richardson to decode God’s purpose in fitting the groundsel with its own peculiar features. The naming of the flower was thus very likely more than a memorial gesture; it was a kind of material evidence for the historical fact of the massacre and for God’s presence at the scene.

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63 The gradual secularization of botanical practice through the nineteenth century does not necessarily indicate a corresponding secularism among botanists themselves, nor even an immediate challenge to theological understandings of plant morphology, distribution, and origin. Early nineteenth century botanical theory was deeply informed by theology and metaphysics. Belief in God as nature’s designer was largely unquestioned at this time and the nascent sciences were understood, in part, as a process of revealing His work (Rehbock 1983). See White (2003) and Brooke (1991; 2001) for nuanced accounts of the relationship between religious belief and scientific practice.

64 There was a precedent in the travel narrative genre for seeing signs of God’s presence in plant life, particularly when confronted with personal hardship in “savage” settings. The climax of Mungo Park’s *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* is, much like Hearne’s narrative, a scene of absolute confrontation with savagery. Abandoned by his guides, pillaged by bandits, and left for dead, Park experiences what Pratt (1992, 75) describes as a “naturalist’s epiphany”: “Whatever way I turned, nothing appeared but danger and difficulty. I saw myself in the midst of a vast wilderness, in the depth of the rainy season, naked and alone, surrounded by savage animals, and men still more savage. I was five hundred miles from the nearest European settlement. At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss in fructification irresistibly caught my eye. I mention this to show from what trifling circumstances the mind will sometimes derive consolation; for though the whole plant was not larger than the top of one of my fingers, I could not contemplate the delicate conformation of its roots, leaves, and capsule, without admiration. Can that Being, thought I, who planted, watered, and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after his own image? Surely not. I started up, and, disregarding both hunger
Richardson was devoutly Christian, filling his letters to his family and his colleagues with theological interpretations of everyday life (Richardson 1821; 1823b; 1823c; 1824). He was convinced that the Arctic landscape was “inhospitable to atheists” and that only his Christian faith saved him from despair on the arduous journey. As he wrote to his wife from Bloody Falls,

I must now my Dear Mary conclude this hurried letter recommending you to the Almighty disposer of events, his protecting care is equally necessary in a crowded city as in a dreary waste – That he may watch over you is the daily prayer of your affectionate husband. (Richardson 1821)

This reference to the “Almighty disposer of events” watching over his flock was not unique; it appears in much of Richardson’s correspondence with colleagues and family members, and Richardson’s Christian faith was remarked upon by the expedition members with whom he traversed the Central Arctic (Franklin 1823). But his specific sense that God was watching over the “dreary waste” of Bloody Falls is significant, as is his conceptualization of God’s essential role in death, loss, and mourning. In a letter sent to Franklin in 1824, Richardson (1824, 23) commented on a Mrs. Gracroft who was bearing the death of her husband

… with a resignation so truly Christian. Time, the grand physician of the mind will soften down the poignancy of her grief into a tender remembrance of the excellent qualities and benevolent disposition of her departed husband. In the mean time her pious frame of mind will enable her to contend with the anguish inseparable from so recent and severe a deprivation by directing her to the contemplation of the Almighty disposer of Events who orders every thing according to his pleasure and all for the best. It is in the power of him who hath taken away to blunt the sting of death, destroy the victory of the grave and in

and fatigue, travelled forward, assured that relief was at hand, and I was not disappointed” (Park 1799, 225).
another and a better world bring about that reunion which is the hope to which a Christian most fondly clings when the ties of friendship are thus suddenly swept asunder.

Richardson’s concern with God’s ordering of death, loss, and the “victory of the grave” was surely informed by the fact that he had himself committed murder. In the weeks following their stay at Bloody Falls the party began to starve. Winter came early, the herds of caribou upon which the expedition had relied headed South, and the crew was forced to subsist on lichen and the leather from their shoes (Franklin 1823). Nine of the twenty crew members died of starvation that fall as they walked southwards across the open tundra. Surviving members are widely believed to have eaten the fallen. On October 20th, 1821, voyageur Michel Teroahauté, mad with starvation, shot and killed midshipman Robert Hood, an expedition member. Richardson retaliated a few days later by shooting Teroahauté in the back of the head (Houston 1984, 156).

In his carefully worded description of the events leading up to and following the deaths of Hood and Teroahauté65, Richardson delineates his own violence from that of Michel. While Teroahauté had for the most part been “good and respectful” (Richardson in Franklin 1829, 343) throughout the trip, Richardson claimed that “his principles, however, unsupported by a belief in the divine truths of Christianity, were unable to withstand the pressures of severe distress” (344). If Michel’s violence could be traced back to his spiritual weakness, Richardson’s own violence was framed as a rational, responsible, and even generous act:

Hepburn and I were now left together for the first time since Mr. Hood’s death, and he acquainted me with several material circumstances which he had observed of Michel’s behaviour, and which confirmed me in the opinion that there was no safety for us except in his death, and he offered to be the instrument of it. I determined, however, as I was thoroughly convinced of the necessity of such a dreadful act, to take the whole

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65 Note that the entries spanning the deaths of Hood and Teroahauté in Richardson’s field journal were excised from the Franklin expedition report and, to my knowledge, the originals have never been located. In their place “Dr. Richardson’s Narrative”, a carefully edited account of the murders, was inserted.
responsibility upon myself; and immediately upon Michel’s coming up, I put an end to his life by shooting him through the head with a pistol. Had my own life alone been threatened, I would not have purchased it by such a measure; but I considered myself as intrusted also with the protection of Hepburn’s, a man, who, by his humane attentions and devotedness, had so endeared himself to me, that I felt more anxiety for his safety than for my own. (Richardson in Franklin 1829, 342-3)

Here, Richardson’s framing of his act as necessary, carefully reasoned, and responsible differentiates him from the reckless, unfeeling, wanton violence of Teroahauté (notably referred to in this passage as “the Iroquois” (329)), and, indeed, the Chipewyan at Bloody Falls. In a letter to his wife describing the trials the Expedition members had undergone since his letter from Bloody Falls, Richardson was even more explicit about the specific role played by God in ordering the violent events of October 1821:

Bless the Almighty Protector of the Universe that he was pleased to comfort me under every trial by the consolations of religion—the consciousness of being constantly under his all seeing eye and forever an object of his paternal care, conjoined with his glorious declaration that all things work together for good to those who love him supported me under every trial and produced a calmness of mind and resignation to his will under the prospect of approaching death that I could not have previously hoped to attain … If it were possible that any man could remain an infidel in such a situation how dreadful would his sufferings be. (Richardson 1822)

Like Hearne, moreover, those “infidels” who demonstrated care and emotional reaction to the suffering of others seemed to Richardson to be inadequately named by the word “savage”. When describing to his wife the care provided by a group of Dene to the starving Expedition members, Richardson notes, “these savages, as they have been termed, wept upon beholding the deplorable condition to which we were reduced. They nursed us and fed us with the same tenderness they would have bestowed on their own infants” (Richardson 1822; emphasis added). While mixed-
race Teroahauté became known as “the Iroquois” in relation to his violent acts, Dene who exhibited “tenderness” seemed to undermine their categorization as savages.

Richardson clearly had a very personal interest in the ordering of violence, and he had at his disposal an idiom to frame his own acts as somehow not violent, perhaps even as ordained by God. The notion that God, “the Almighty disposer of Events who orders every thing according to his pleasure”, was present both at the Bloody Falls massacre and throughout Richardson’s own descent into savagery was unquestioned by Richardson. It was a conviction that made the naming of *Senecio lugens* a fitting tribute both to God’s watchful presence in the “dreary waste” of the Central Arctic and to the ordering role of witnesses like Hearne, Richardson, and subsequent Euro-Canadian observers of Indigenous savagery. If stories are practices of making sense through the tracing of relations between people and things, then Richardson’s conscious and careful engagement with (and confirmation of) the Bloody Falls massacre story must be understood as itself a relational and material ordering practice. That is, Richardson did not simply “cite” Hearne’s text in his effort to engage and retrace Hearne’s story; he actively enrolled a series of things as part of a situated effort to make sense of Hearne’s account and his own confrontations with the people, places, and things of the Central Arctic. Thus, even while Richardson’s conjuring of an emotional witness to the Bloody Falls massacre must be understood as a complex and translocal act, it nevertheless retraced the relations Hearne established between civilized and savage and was just as invested in the ordering of violence.

Conclusion

The relational subjectivities delineated by Hearne’s tears and Richardson’s flower have been remarkably tenacious. Not only has the positionality of passive yet horrified witness to
Indigenous violence continued to this day, it is deeply reliant upon the production of generic Indigenous “types” that fulfill the fantasy of non-complicity Hearne staked out in his story, and that so appealed (and continue to appeal) to those who wish to deny the constitutive violence underlying the wealth and power extracted through colonial ventures. Don Gutteridge’s (1973) poetic re-working of Hearne’s narrative, *Coppermine: Quest For North*, was published just as Southern Canadians began to look North again in search of oil, gas, and mineral resources, as well as some sense of national identity. It exemplifies the dynamic I have described in this chapter:

Last victim:
girl, maybe eighteen,
sacrificial virgin,
snow like a
bloodied altar
ringed with priests
(Matonabbee like Jason
eyes on the fleece)
their stiff spears
are a halo at her throat,
they thrust with all
the religious lust
with all the rage
of their twisted love:
her body a host
for the visiting sword
flies apart like a
shattered vessel,
blood a veil of
scarlet, everywhere
(flesh is victim to
everyman's darkness,
the victor's dance
on the scarlet snow
this rare immaculate
moment)

But

why don't they see
she's still alive,
flesh at my feet:
a torn coat!

blood sucked up
by snow like a
sponge, on my boots
now, like a blotter
sucked up my trousers
shirt clean collar,
pink sweat on my
arms, salt taste
on the tongue:
eyes burning with
fresh sight

O see the blade
break her heart open
like a new cunt

see her hump
like mad on
its copper tip
O look at her
fucking Death
like crazy
til they both
die!

(Blood is scarlet
its sound is the
slash of scimitar
sword hatchet
singing in the
flesh historic:
perpetual answer
to our chaos
of questioning,
we wear its wound
like Cain's badge -
blood on our guilt:
a scarlet tunic)

I look at
Matonabbee, he
laughs, blood
juggling on his lip

What is remarkable about this poem is not just its eroticization of rape but also its re-inscription of much earlier geographies of violence, responsibility, and guilt. Hearne, and by extension the “we” Gutteridge names as inheritors of his legacy, wears responsibility for the violence of empire like a stain or a wound, something passively and reluctantly soaked up like a sponge merely by
being present, whereas the Indian aggressors remorselessly wear the violence they have actively carried out on their laughing, bloody lips. Like in *A Journey*, Hearne is the star of this story, not Matonabbee, and most especially not the “girl”, who is indeed a “host” for a parable of colonial erotics and violent (dis)possession. Therein lies the violence of imperial orderings. If modern epistemologies involved, above all, new ways of translating the specific into translocal classifications and orders, these orderings had profound consequences for both masking and perpetuating the violence of empire. As Spivak has argued in relation to the metaphoric, generalized rendering of colonial violence, ultimately stories like Gutteridge’s say nothing about their victims. In Gutteridge’s work “the particular and personal geographies of especially marginalized and oppressed subjects, most notably those of hyperexploited or brutally oppressed women … are effaced from the geographies they underwrite and make possible” (Sparke 2005, xxvi). Indeed. The “young girl” has appeared almost as often as Hearne in northern literature, yet she remains a nameless, generic figure, produced for the enjoyment of the observer while underwriting a whole economy of racialized and sexualized possession in the North (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9:** *True Men's Magazine, 1947*
Baucom (2001) insists that this failure to register the specificity and humanity of racialized victims of violence was central to the circulation of such stories in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Stories of imperial violence, for all their sensational currency, circulated most effectively (and affectively) when stripped of their geographic, historical, and personal specificity. In a study of how stories about the Zong massacre, the forced drowning of 132 slaves by the English ship’s captain in 1781, circulated in imperial Britain, Baucom argues that “the story of the massacre was retold … not as the story of a particular historical event … but as one in a series of equivalent stories” (64). He traces the ways in which abolitionist William Wilberforce mobilized the story of the Zong massacre in the early nineteenth century by grounding “the value of memory in the substitution of the generic for the singular, the series for the event” (65). Wilberforce made no mention of the Zong by name, nor the precise dates or location of the event, nor the names of the those who had been killed, but instead told the story as a generalized kind of story, one revealing the underlying truths of slavery:

What Wilberforce seems to have sensed was that his story was imperiled by its very specificity, that its ‘value’ would attenuate to a zero point the more unique it became. The story, in other words, had to become generic if it was to have any use, if Wilberforce was to inspire in his audience anything but melancholy, anything but a paralyzed regret before the absolute specificity of a scene of irreversible human damage. (65)

Here, just as in Hearne’s narrative, there is a relationship between emotion, specificity, and complicity. To focus on the specific details of this event would lead to emotional paralysis in the face of irreversible human damage for which Britons were collectively responsible. An abstracted kind of story, however, provided emotional distance and enabled listeners to extract generalized truths about slavery and their own benevolent relation to the victims of the slave trade. The only
details of the *Zong* massacre that mattered, in this context, were those that served to illuminate Wilberforce’s conceptualization of slavery, not those that attended to the specific experiences of the slaves in question.

Baucom’s insight into the circulation of traumatic, violent stories from the imperial periphery is important for understanding the ways in which Hearne’s story was initially taken up, and, indeed, continues to be received. Upon publication, and for the general audience that engaged with it, Hearne’s account of the Bloody Falls massacre was valuable to the extent that it could be combined with other accounts of violence, torture, and war to derive general insights into savagery, order, and civilization. Its circulation and value was contingent upon its dislocation from its geographical, cultural, and historical context. Although ostensibly about the *particularities* of Northern Indians and northern landscapes, then, Hearne’s narrative was taken up for what it revealed about savagery and violence *in general*. This ordering was by no means distinct from the immense violence that marked the latter decades of the eighteenth century, but was rather a crucial discursive strategy aimed at recuperating the civility and innocence of an imperial project in crisis. Fifty years after Hearne’s voyage, the Franklin expedition would be similarly invested in ordering particular acts as violent and others as necessary, responsible, and in line with a watchful God. “Story” was crucial to these orderings, not simply in imaginative or textual terms, but as a situated, material, and relational practice.
Chapter 5
Copper Stories

“Place making … relies on the hard work of nature making. This is not just because nature, in its biophysicality, is never in stasis, although it does have something to do with the way this forces a constant reinvestment and reinvention of labor, debate, and knowledge. Nature, also, becomes a vibrant actor in the contemporary politics of place making and the ongoing struggle to mark and claim …. As individuals travel with their stories, narrating this placed nature and its associated histories, so these proliferations spread, becoming mobilized simultaneously in different contexts and with disparate meanings.”

- Hugh Raffles

“As it is a joy to me … that this distinguished servant of our country has let his friends persuade him that his own story of the opening up of the North is a part of our history and therefore belongs to Canada”

- Louis St. Laurent

As described in Chapter 2, my approach to the Bloody Falls massacre story is informed by the tensions and openings provoked by the so-called “material turn” in geography, a turn conceptualized by some as a move from the textual, discursive, and representational towards the affective, emergent co-constitution of human and non-human things. I consider this “turn” to involve a shift in emphasis rather than a wholesale turn away from prior interest in discourse. Not only are the textual and representational fundamentally “material”, but as Bakker and Bridge (2006, 21) note, the recent “appeal to materiality” among geographers is itself an “explicitly discursive strategy”. Nevertheless, making sense of Hearne’s account of the Bloody Falls

66 St. Laurent is referring to geologist Charles Camsell’s autobiography, discussed later in this chapter.
massacre in terms of colonial or other discourses tends to lead different places than a more explicitly “material” analysis, by which I mean an analysis that pays attention to the network of things involved in Hearne’s story. Rather than approaching this story in terms of discourses of colonialism, whiteness, and racism, an approach that tends to demand in advance the casting of particular people and practices into binaries of colonizer/colonized, white/Inuit, power/resistance, and so on, in this chapter I narrate Bloody Falls (and the Central Arctic more generally) by following a particular “thing”, copper. By following copper, different readings of the Bloody Falls massacre emerge, and a different understanding of relations among various people, places, and things shaping the Central Arctic over the past two centuries becomes possible. The copper stories that follow are not counter-stories, subaltern stories, or even necessarily more true or just stories. They are different stories, and as such they order the people and places of the region in different ways, calling into being not only a different understanding of the past, but also animating different futures.

This chapter can be understood, then, as both a methodological exercise and as the elaboration of an argument about the importance of copper in the Central Arctic. Methodologically, it illustrates a practice of assembling and juxtaposing a series of stories that trace relations between copper and other things, stories that tend not to appear together. In so doing, surprising connections and insights emerge and different understandings are generated67. Some of these understandings relate to histories of mining in the North, and what follows can certainly be read as a story of the intensification of mineral exploration and extraction in the Central Arctic. But rather than begin with the premise that copper mining in the region represents

67 This method resonates with Benjamin’s (1999) juxtaposition of images and ideas in the Arcades Project, but it also takes its cue from Latour’s (and Appadurai’s) injunction to “follow the thing”. There are also notable precedents for following “things” in northern scholarship, including Harold Innis’ study of the fur trade in Canada, in which he traces Canadian economic history in part through the habits of the beaver (e.g., Innis 1962 [1930], 3-6).
the extension of colonial and capitalist domination, a premise that would render many of the stories that follow anachronistic and perhaps even incomprehensible, this chapter proceeds without a firm sense of how particular people, places, and things are positioned in relation to copper. Such an approach remains “agnostic”, in Latour’s (1988) terms, with respect to notions like colonialism and capitalism, not because I aim to suggest that colonialism and capitalism do not exist or do not fundamentally inform northern geographies, but rather because I aim to trouble the racialized assumption that Indigenous northerners relate to copper in fundamentally different ways than do Euro-Canadians. Making worlds through copper is neither a wholly capitalist and modern undertaking, nor an authentically “traditional” Indigenous practice that has been marginalized by colonial relations. Instead, as these copper stories reveal, copper has been tremendously important in constituting relations between Inuit, Dene, and Euro-Canadians over the past several centuries, and by following copper it becomes possible to conceptualize the North on different terms. What follows, then, represents the beginnings of a different imaginative geography of North; it is an attempt to order the North not by “writing back” to hegemonic narratives, but by engaging some of the stories anchoring those narratives in new ways.

Copper Stories

My attention was initially drawn to copper not so much because of its importance in Hearne’s mission, but rather because, over the course of many months of research in Kugluktuk, it became impossible to overlook the importance of mining in the region. Every summer airplanes and helicopters zoom in and out of this tiny Arctic hamlet filled with mineral survey teams. Nearly every family has members employed in the mines south of Kugluktuk and the vast majority of Crown land in Nunavut is either under claim, exploration, or active extraction. As
Millie Kuliktana, director of the Tahuqtiit Society and Kitikmeot School Operations made clear to me, moreover, this is by no means a recent phenomenon. When asked about the significance of the Bloody Falls massacre in local history, Kuliktana (2007) replied that Hearne represented the first of a long line of outsiders who have exploited and colonized her people and the people’s land. “It’s the monster of economy that made this happen”, she said. “It was the first act of colonization.”

This is not generally how Bloody Falls is storied outside of Kugluktuk. In the south, Bloody Falls is primarily known as the site of a savage and bloodthirsty act of violence on the part of a barbarous tribe of Indians. It is an event narrated through the eyes of a supposedly neutral, civilized, and horrified European witness, Samuel Hearne, who looks on as the poor, innocent “Esquimaux” are ruthlessly murdered by their Chipewyan attackers. Hearne goes to great lengths not only to establish his neutrality but also his efforts to prevent the killings and in so doing sidesteps the possibility that he might have been in some way responsible for the event. Kuliktana, on the other hand, along with a number of other Kugluktukmiut (e.g., Evyagotailak 2007; Taptuna 2007), considers Hearne to be both personally responsible for the event (because he led the Chipewyan into Inuit territory and failed to control their behaviour) and representative of a broader history of economic exploitation and colonialism in the North.

Kuliktana’s critique of Hearne is based on the fact that Hearne was only in her people’s territory because he was looking for copper. Although Hearne’s journey is memorialized outside of Kugluktuk as an act of immense physical endurance (not so much as an economic venture) and his narrative is primarily known for its eye-witness account of the massacre, Kuliktana rightly pinpoints European interest in copper as the primary motive for the journey. Hearne was an employee of the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) and stationed at Prince of Wales’ Fort through the late 1760s. During that time the HBC was increasingly under fire from London for failing to
explore and develop the large grant of land under its control. There was mounting pressure placed upon both the East India Company and the Hudson’s Bay Company to make use of their sizeable economic monopolies or risk losing them to economic competition (Williams 1970). At the same time, the chief factor at Prince of Wales Fort had been hearing reports from the Chipewyan who came to trade there of a “Far Off Metal River” where lumps of native copper were so abundant as to ballast a ship. And so it was that Samuel Hearne was directed to set out and search for the river, determine the richness of the copper deposited there, make peace with local Indigenous groups and report any findings that might have a bearing on discovering a North West passage.

Hearne’s search for copper was a failure. It took him three attempts and more than six months to walk to the river (prematurely named the Coppermine) and, once there, Hearne and over thirty men spent hours searching for copper only to discover a single sizeable lump. Hearne and his guides promptly turned around and walked home. This would not have been a journey worth publicizing had it not been for Hearne’s alleged witness of the massacre at Bloody Falls the day before his futile search for copper. Key to the drama of the massacre story is the supposed senselessness of the event and the lack of a rational motive on behalf of the Chipewyan for launching the attack. The Dene are described as caught up in a kind of primitive, bloodthirsty trance, intent on murder and torture. If one reads the narrative closely, however, and particularly when compared to transcriptions of Hearne’s unpublished travel notes, it becomes clear that the Chipewyan, too, were intensely interested in copper. Immediately after killing the Inuit the Chipewyan raid their tents “of all the Copper Work and any other trifling things they thought worthwhile to take” (Hearne ca 1791, 29). Hearne makes extensive notes on the importance of copper in local trading economies, remarking on the annual journey undertaken by the Northern Indians to the region in search of copper to “shoe their arrows and make other necessary tools such as hatchets, Ice Chizzels, etc” (31). He records a list of trading ratios for copper tools and
notes that among the Indians of the region, copper was almost as valuable as iron and was highly sought after both for personal use and for trade. On more than one occasion throughout the journey Hearne records the plundering of neighboring groups, explaining such events as economically-motivated theft aimed at amassing goods sufficient to trade for copper and iron tools, not as acts carried out by an inherently uncivilized people. In fact, Hearne’s unpublished notes are littered with references to his “surprise” at the civility of his companions and his admiration for their character traits (e.g., Hearne ca 1791, 18). Clearly, the very metal Hearne had hoped to locate and claim for the British Crown was already circulating in a regional economy, embroiled in acts of war and trade throughout the central Arctic and Sub-Arctic. It would seem plausible that the Bloody Falls massacre was motivated at least as much by copper as by the “violent tendencies” attributed to Chipewyan men.

Until very recently, however, explorers, missionaries, and scholars have persisted in the belief that copper use was not centrally important to the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic and Subarctic, believing instead that interest in metals emerged with the introduction of iron into the region by Europeans (Pringle 1997). Recent research challenges this longstanding belief and suggests that “throughout Arctic Canada, metal in one form or another appears to have been highly appreciated long before even indirect European contact” (Morrison 1987, 10-11). The Thule that preceded today’s Inuit populations are now known to have relied upon metals traded over hundreds and even thousands of kilometres and origin stories of the discovery of metals, particularly copper, have been recorded among multiple Indigenous groups occupying the central Arctic. In the 1880s, missionary Émile Petitot recorded stories among the Dene about the discovery of copper, for example, stories that involved the trading and stealing of women between Dene and Inuit. In one story, a Dene woman stolen by the “Esquimaux” escapes her captors and attempts to travel back to her homeland but gets hopelessly lost. She is assisted by a
white wolf who leads her to an iron tool with which she is able to kill some caribou to eat. She continues on her route and is distracted by a bright light at the peak of a distant mountain, glowing like a fire. Curious, she makes her way to the source of the light and finds there a red metal that resembles beaver dung, which she collects and carries with her on her journey. Petitot understood this metal to be native copper. Eventually the woman finds her way back to her homeland and she shows her people the valuable metal. Thereafter, the Dene make journeys to the source of this metal and use it to make knives, spears, and other tools and live with ease thanks to the metal the woman procured for them. But one day, some of the men want to take advantage of the woman and she flees. They chase her all the way to the source of the copper whereupon she disappears under the earth, taking with her all the metal she had procured for them. And so it was that copper disappeared from their territory (Petitot 1886, 412-417).

These stories not only allude to a pre-contact copper economy in the region, they also indicate that copper was “good to think with” (in Levi-Strauss’ terms) in Dene oral traditions. As Cruikshank (1989; 1998a; 2005) has made clear in her writing on oral traditions, storytelling is an important venue for teaching law and ethical conduct among the Indigenous peoples of the Yukon, a point Keith Basso (1996) has also made about Western Apache storytelling practices. Briggs (1998) has made this point specifically in reference to Inuit (although not through work with the people who have traditionally lived around Coronation Gulf), profiling, for example, the ways in which fantastical stories are used to teach children the boundaries of ethical conduct. In other words, it is important not to limit the storytelling work of this copper story to a question of origins, but rather to attend to the importance of copper in conveying a broader legal and moral framework within which the Dene operated.

Copper was an important part of the regional economies and imaginative geographies of the Central Arctic and Sub-Arctic long before Euro-Canadian involvement in the region, but it
was also implicated in longer and larger networks of technology, labour, and trade. Copper was mined across the Americas (Abbott 1970; Barrett 1981) and in Britain (Burt 1995) from pre-industrial times through the early industrial era. The British copper mining industry expanded rapidly in the mid-eighteenth century due to an influx of capital and technological expertise from Europe, and by the time Hearne left on his mission Britain had become one of the world’s leading producers (Burt 1995, 29). Not unlike its uses in the Arctic, copper was used primarily in building and household utensils such as pots, pans, and pewter mugs, as well as in roofing, guttering, piping, and cisterns. But unlike the relatively circumscribed networks of copper extraction, manufacture, and trade in the Arctic, at the time of Hearne’s journey copper in Britain moved through more widely dispersed and longer networks of mines, smelters, manufacturers, distributors, and consumers, influenced by international capital and imperial acquisitions. What had hitherto been characterized as a very “local” industry in Britain was beginning to extend itself into other places and involve more and more “things”. Hearne’s journey must be understood in relation to this expanding copper economy. His interest in connecting Arctic copper with networks extending outside the region is revealed in a brief anecdote he recounts to the reader shortly after the futile search for copper:

68 There are copper deposits on every continent (except Antarctica) and copper has been used by peoples around the world for thousands of years. Although copper is available in a great number of places, the profitability of mining a given reserve fluctuates with global commodity prices, technological developments, and the relative remoteness of the deposit (Gilliland 1979). According to estimates in the 1970s, 66% of the world’s copper reserves were in developing countries, while the United States, Canada, and Western Europe accounted for close to 85% of world copper imports (Espenshade Jr. 1982, 41). Before WWII, the United States produced 26% of the world’s copper, but today accounts for only 7-8% of production (The Times London 2005, 44), with Canada producing even less. As the Rand McNally Atlas of Earth Resources observes, metals like copper “are among the commodities included in the North/South dialogue – the continuous discussions between rich and poor nations concerning the redistribution of wealth” (Gilliland 1979, 150), and countries like Zambia rely upon copper for as much as 80% of their exports over the past several decades (Gilliland 1979; Nkala 2008). The anticipated intensification of copper mining activity in the Arctic in the coming years connects the Far North to the Global South in complex and contradictory ways.
The Indians imagine that every bit of copper they find resembles some object in nature; but by what I saw of the large piece, and some smaller ones which were found by my companions, it requires a great share of invention to make this out. I found that different people had different ideas on the subject, for the large piece of copper above mentioned had not been found long before it had twenty different names. One saying that it resembled this animal, and another that it represented a particular part of another; at last it was generally allowed to resemble an Alpine hare couchant: for my part I must confess that I could not see it had the least resemblance to any thing to which they compared it. It would be endless to enumerate the different parts of a deer, and other animals, which the Indians say the best pieces of copper resemble: it may therefore be sufficient to say, that the largest pieces, with the fewest branches and the least dross, are the best for their use; as by the help of fire, and two stones, they can beat it out to any shape they wish. (Hearne 1795, 174-5)

Hearne includes this passage as a curiosity for the reader and uses it to underscore his own reliability and precision as an observer. But it can be read in quite another way; this passage also exemplifies the different narrative geographies within which eighteenth century copper circulated. By storying the copper as deer, the Chipewyan made connections between the piece of copper in their hands and a diverse network of things enabling them to hunt, eat, and imagine their world. Their co-existence with copper enrolled a particular network of things. Hearne, on the other hand, was more interested in connecting copper to international networks of trade and manufacture, to his own reputation as an explorer and to the esteem and wealth that would surely follow. Indeed, Kugluktukmiut consistently critique Hearne for “wanting to make a name for himself” (Adjun 2007; Evyagotailak 2007; Taptuna 2007) and in a sense that indictment gestures towards the very different narrative geography within which Hearne operated, even as these geographies overlapped in 1771.
Exploration for copper deposits in the Coppermine river region continued after Hearne’s time. Although the Hudson’s Bay Company gave up on the venture, subsequent British, American, and Canadian expeditions were inspired by Hearne’s effort and explicitly interested in identifying and mapping copper resources in the Far North. The first Franklin expedition report included an appendix on “geognostical” findings (Richardson 1823a) penned with “economic importance” in mind and emphasizing copper formations (Houston 1984, 292). Geologists were dispatched by various government and private organizations throughout the nineteenth century, including a venture by well-known geologist J.B. Tyrrell in 1893 sponsored by the Geological Survey Department of Canada, a trip that was widely publicized and amplified expectations of “great mineral wealth” (Tyrrell in Manitoba Free Press 1894, n.p.) in the barrenlands, particularly in the form of copper. Tyrrell (who went on to edit a 1911 edition of Hearne’s Journey) was cited in an imperial report on world copper reserves that anticipated the Canadian Arctic and Sub-Arctic would yield “as much copper as is now mined in Northern Michigan” (Imperial Mineral Resources Bureau 1922, 50), thus reviving imperial dreams of copper riches in the region.

In the summer of 1900 geologists Charles Camsell and James Mackintosh Bell explored the Great Bear Lake region in search of mineral resources and replayed Hearne’s fearsome descent into Inuit territory. “As we proceeded farther into the barren lands we saw more and more signs of Eskimo … these signs were rather disturbing to Johnny Sanderson, who like all the local Indians had at that time a wholesome fear of Eskimo, just as the Eskimo had a fear of the Indians” (Camsell 1954, 122). Rehearsing Hearne’s attribution of cowardice to Indians who abandoned the party “for fear of meeting some Eskimo” (123), Bell and Camsell eventually found themselves alone and hungry, and came upon a group of thirty to forty Inuit. “Johnny Sanderson had always told us that the Eskimo we might meet in this country would certainly be dangerous and might want to kill us” (124), Camsell recalls, but the two men decided to approach the group and the
Eskimo fled, leaving behind a stash of caribou meat and various supplies, including “arrows tipped with native copper” (125). Bell and Camsell ate the meat but left behind two steel needles and a tin plate as gesture of friendship. Throughout their journey back to Great Bear Lake Bell and Camsell “felt certain that they would be watching us from a safe distance away and might even be looking for an opportunity to kill us. These same people actually did kill the next two visitors to this locality, Fathers LeRoux and Rouviere\(^69\), by sticking a knife into them” (125). In the end the men survived and saw no signs of Inuit. Thirty-five years later, however, Camsell (1954, 128-9) would learn from fur-trapper D’Arcy Arden that the Inuit had, indeed, tracked the men all the way back to Great Bear Lake:

The experience of August, 1900 was gradually becoming little more than an interesting memory until actively revived in August, 1936, by a conversation with D’Arcy Arden during a brief visit that I made to Great Bear Lake. Some years after my visit to that country Arden had gone on a fur-trading expedition to the same region, and in the course of his operations established friendly relations with the Eskimo of the Coppermine River …. When in time he was able to converse with them, they told him the story of the visit of two white men to their camp some years previous – possibly the first many of them had ever seen. They told Arden that on catching sight of us they first took us to be Indians, but when they found that we did not run away at the sight of them, they came to the conclusion that we must belong to the same race of people who had visited the country many years ago of which their fathers had told them … They were naturally suspicious of all strangers, for the locality was not far from Bloody Falls on the Coppermine River where Samuel Hearne’s party of Chipewyan Indians had, in 1772, slaughtered a band of Eskimo men, women, and children in their sleep, and no doubt the story of this massacre had been handed down to these people from one generation to another. They told Arden of having watched us from behind some rocks as we ate our

\(^69\) As I describe later in this chapter, in 1913 two Catholic priests were killed by a group of Inuit near present-day Kugluktuk.
meal in their camp. They were determined to kill us if it could be done without risking
their own lives; but as their only weapons were arrows and broad, foot-long knives
beaten out of native copper found in the neighboring hills, this could not be done without
coming to close quarters. When we left their camp in the evening some of the men
followed us … looking for an opportunity to stick a knife into us. The chance did not
come …. In the mean time our needles had been found in the camp, and from that time on
our lives were safe … Human life has never been held in very high regard by these
Eskimo, and killings were perpetuated sometimes for very trivial reasons. A few years
after the visit of Bell and myself to this locality, two Roman Catholic missionaries were
killed in almost the same locality70, and possibly the murderers of these two priests may
have been the same men who watched for an opportunity to murder us also. Death by the
thrust of a blunt, copper knife is not one of the pleasantest things to contemplate, and it
makes one shiver even after a lapse of fifty years to think what might have been the result
if we had not left those two needles behind us in the Eskimo camp.

This passage not only emphasizes the importance of story in constituting both Inuit and Euro-
Canadian knowledges, it also traces the significance of copper in constituting and undermining
life in the region. Bell and Camsell lived to tell their own copper stories in part because “sticking
a knife” into them would have required a dangerous proximity; the fact that, thirty-five years
later, Inuit possessed rifles and thus “were no longer a Stone Age people” (127) underscores the
drama of the recollection, transformed from “little more than an interesting memory” to a
moment of historical significance71.

70 This would not be the first time that violence in the region would be linked to Bloody Falls (see Chapter
4). In spite of the fact that the murder of the two priests did not occur at Bloody Falls, publicity at the time
and more recent re-tellings of the story continue to localize the event at the infamous rapids (e.g., McKay
71 Arguably, of much greater historical significance was the ultimate outcome of Bell and Camsell’s
explorations. As a result of their survey uranium mining would begin along the shores of Great Bear Lake,
“which finally culminated in the release of atomic energy and the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan. It
was from Great Bear Lake that much of the uranium came that went into the first atomic bombs” (Camsell
1954, 113).
Inuit, Dene, and Euro-Canadian copper stories began to increasingly converge in the first decades of the twentieth century. Copper tool use among Kugluktukmiut had virtually disappeared by the early decades of the twentieth century as iron and other metals became more readily available (Morrison 1987). Ironically, it was at this time that anthropologists first visited the region and assigned the name “Copper Inuit” to the people living around Coronation Gulf in reference to their historic use of copper tools. While Diamond Jenness, anthropologist with the Canadian Arctic Expedition, catalogued Copper Inuit language and culture in 1915 and 1916, J.J. O’Neill, geologist with the Expedition, searched for copper deposits in the Coppermine River and Bathurst Inlet region. In addition to producing a detailed map of copper deposits in the area.
(Figure 10), both O’Neill and Jenness recounted stories of copper trade, theft, and usage, including stories of copper-related trade and conflict with Dene (e.g., Jenness 1922, 19; 52; O’Neill 1924, 60A). But these “historical” stories were of only anecdotal interest to the Expedition members; Jenness was primarily interested in “traditional” Copper Inuit stories and it was through his work that such stories came to be cordoned off from other forms of knowledge\textsuperscript{72}, along with the economies underpinning their telling. Jenness’ recently published field diary reveals the exchanges underpinning his extraction of stories from his informants. As he sternly informed Uloqsaq in January 1916,

\begin{quote}
I told him that he could not expect me to treat him very liberally is he did not tell me any stories. He said there was someone always hanging about the tent and he was afraid to tell. However, he came over late in the evening and told us a few shamanistic stories. I asked him whether he would care to have Ikpuk present, and he said no, Ikpuk would be angry with him. (Jenness 1991, 556)
\end{quote}

Uloqsaq went on to become one of Jenness’ primary informants. He was soon coming to Jenness’ tent “each evening to tell me stories” (560) under the arrangement that he would “have his .44

\textsuperscript{72} This was not a practice confined to Jenness, of course. Jenness conducted his studies at a time when “folk-lore” was favoured over stories about current and recent experience, in large part through the influence of Boas upon anthropological research (Wickwire 1994). Jenness included only a handful of “quasi-historical” stories in his official reports, including one conveyed by Uloqsaq entitled “Raids by White Men”: “Near the Rae River there were three Eskimo settlements. A party of white men came from the west and completely destroyed both the first and the second. They would have killed all the Eskimos in the third settlement also, but the latter changed into musk-oxen and fled. Then the white men traveled about looking for more Eskimos to kill. A shaman named Kalupik, however, brought his magic to bear on them and prevented them from approaching his fellow-countrymen. A man cut off the legs of Kalupik one night as he lay sleeping. When he wakened in the morning he saw them lying on the floor where his enemy had thrown them down. He began to weep, but presently dried his eyes and by the power of his magic restored them into place” (Story 74C by Uloqsaq in Jenness 1924, 82A). Jenness dismissed the historical value of this series of stories with footnotes leading the reader to similar accounts recorded by Boas in Cumberland Sound and along the west coast of Hudson’s Bay, stories identifying the aggressors as “Tornit” (a people that, according to McGhee, were the Palaeo-Eskimo ancestors of contemporary Inuit, see McGhee 2001, 135), not “Kablunaat” (white men). The story is certainly an evocative commentary on the power of white men, however, and foreshadows Inuit movements to restore control over their lives, bodies, and lands.
rifle changed to a .30-30 if I am satisfied with him” (560). Satisfaction came to be contingent on whether Uloqsaq would tell decisively contemporary stories, however; on 17 January 1916 Jenness made clear to Uloqsaq that any information he might have regarding the whereabouts of a rifle stolen in the camp would also be rewarded. Two days later “the rifle was discovered – by Uloksak” (560). It was with intelligence gleaned by Jenness from his informants, in fact, that Inspectors from the Royal North-West Mounted Police were able to locate the alleged murderers of the Catholic priests killed in 1913, Ulukrak and Sinnisiaq, although Jenness made clear his wish “to have my name kept out of the case altogether” (599). His wish was granted and “the Corporal in stating his case for the prosecution made no mention of my part in acquiring evidence and the property of the murdered men” (599). Jenness went on to pen a “document containing information concerning the Copper Eskimos for the benefit of the Police Department in their future dealings with the natives” (599). Jenness’ ability to “worm out a little information” (401) from the people he lived among for so many years clearly facilitated more than merely anthropological goals.
Indeed, the production of knowledge about Copper Inuit in the first decades of the twentieth century was informed by a particularly colonial interweaving of anthropological, economic, legal, and scientific interests. As Stefansson and Jenness published the first detailed anthropological studies of Copper Inuit culture (Jenness 1921, 1923; Stefansson 1914), traders, prospectors, and missionaries arrived in the region. Several decades after Jenness’ visit, as mineral surveying and mapping accelerated in the region, “traditional” copper stories were recorded by missionary-anthropologist Maurice Métayer. During the 1950s Métayer recorded a series of stories in Coppermine that included “Texte 80” told by James Qoerhuk, an account of a group of seal hunters that suddenly becomes stranded on a piece of ice. The full story was recorded in Innuinaqtun and summarized by Métayer for English readers, leading to a distinctive interpretation of the story’s meaning and particularly its revelations about Inuit relations with copper. The English summary is worth citing in its entirety:
It probably happened before I was born. A group of seal hunters were out on the ice when it broke loose from the shore and a thick vapor filled the sky. Ulukhaq realized the danger they were in and cried: “The ice is broken.” They started running towards the shore but it was too late: they were already drifting westward along with the ice. They built a snow house the following day, by the time the ice had stopped drifting, Nualiak urged them to try again to reach the land. However, they did not succeed and had to come back to their igloo where they remained for a good part of the winter. They were lucky enough to have among them real shamans who saved them from disaster by preventing the ice they were on to be crushed by an iceberg and by performing the rites that would bring them a good wind. One by one they let their knives sink in the water and offered them to the spirit of the sea. The last knife to be offered was a weapon made of solid raw copper; it floated a while before sinking. Qorvik also took a small block of ice and threw it towards the land. At the same time he asked the spirits to return them home, safe and sound. A short while afterwards the wind changed direction and brought them back home. The men leapt from an ice block to another finally making their way back to the shore. They reached it by the time darkness was falling. They yelled with joy, ate snow, cried, laughed, and walked home where they found their wives. Some of them, thinking that they were dead, had taken other husbands. Qinglorqana felt for a long time as though the roll of the ocean was still in his body, waking him up during the night. (Métayer 1973, 785-6)

The elements of the story Métayer chose to emphasize in this abridged translation are notable. The copper “weapon” (which was more likely a snow knife used to build igloos, the loss of which was particularly difficult for Qinglorqana because it “audlartijjutiplu” or “enabled him to travel” (Qoerhuk 1973, 565)) is understood to be more valuable than the other knives and its sacrifice is a central element of the abridged story. Although the knife’s loss is lamented by Qinglorqana in the longer Innuinaqtun version and it is, indeed, considered the most valuable tool in their possession, he consents to its being offered because “ajornarhingman utilimaermik … pingneramegoq audlartijun. … kivijaugame utqutilertainnarqatingoq kinranun kingunranun” (“because there is no
more hope, and they are not returning … because it is beautiful and it was used for traveling … [and then] because they let it sink, it brought them behind, to the land left behind” (Qoerhuk 1973, 560-1)). The knife, in the Innuinaqtun version, has agency; it is the knife that brings them home, not a sea god, as in Métayer’s somewhat Christianized understanding of “sacrifice” to the “spirit of the sea.” Furthermore, the fact that the knife leads them home is noted but not dwelled upon in Qoerhuk’s account. The bulk of the story is devoted to extended descriptions of snow and ice conditions, to the subtleties of decisions made about how to travel and under what conditions, and to the painful separation and complications of reunion with their wives.

“Texte 80” is thus as revealing of Euro-Canadian interests as it is of Copper Inuit oral traditions. As a story told in Innuinaqtun to a white missionary in the late 1950s, recorded on tape, transcribed and then translated first into French and then into short English summaries, this text has undergone multiple twists and translations. While Qoerhuk’s account does seem to indicate that copper was storied by Kugluktukmiut and, in this story at least, some of copper’s complex relations to travel and survival are considered, Métayer’s summary of the story produces its own distinctive assemblage of Inuit, copper, and other things. The capacity of the copper knife to lead and act is written out of Métayer’s summary, rendering the knife a kind of de-animated, fetishized object valuable to the extent that it can be offered to sea spirits. It is a story that draws lines between the spiritual and the real and places copper in an abstracted material hierarchy in which a copper knife is always more valuable than an iron or other tool, rather than conceptualizing copper’s value relationally and contextually. In Qoerhuk’s version the copper knife’s value is relational; he suggests that Qingalorqana drops the knife into the sea because its value as a survival tool has shifted. The men no longer need the knife as an igloo-building survival tool, they need to get off the ice floe, and the copper knife can lead them home from
under the sea. By contrast, Métayer implies that the absolute value of copper knives makes Qingalorqana’s “offering” the ultimate sacrifice and appeasement of the spirits of the sea.

Métayer’s abridged version thus produces a particular relationship between Inuit and copper in which copper is an inert natural resource whose value derives from its relative scarcity and its material properties, thereby rendering the metal object a particularly compelling sacrifice to external spirits that exert control over the fate of Inuit. The story conveys an essentially Euro-Canadian resource model of copper with a slightly Christianized Indigenous spiritual realm layered upon it, a reading that should come as no surprise given the active mineral surveying taking place in Coppermine at the time Métayer recorded the story, and a reading that works to naturalize Euro-Canadian resource extraction in the region as a more sophisticated iteration of a traditional copper culture. This narrative strategy continues in corporate histories of diamond mining in the region. As a recent brochure produced by multinational mining conglomerate Rio Tinto begins, “For centuries, people of the North have used the resources wisely. … Diavik is continuing this tradition.” (Diavik Diamond Mines 2002, i)

Donald Cadzow’s (1920) catalogue of Copper Inuit material culture also frames Inuit copper tool use as a kind of primitive iteration of more “civilized” natural resource economies. In a leaflet describing the various copper artifacts he collected while traveling in the Northwest Territories, Cadzow prefaces his tool descriptions with a short history of the region, beginning with the “discovery” of copper for Europeans by Samuel Hearne and mention of the massacre at Bloody Falls, an event alleged to have unfolded while Hearne was busy surveying and identifying copper reserves (1920, 6). After page upon page of photos and descriptions of copper artifacts, the report closes with the following comment:
The Copper Eskimo are at present rapidly becoming semi-civilized. The Hudson’s Bay Company has opened a trading-post near the mouth of the Coppermine river, and the Northern Trading Company operates a trading schooner along the shores of Coronation gulf. Within a few years the utilization of native copper by these Eskimo for making weapons and utensils will have ceased, the white man’s handy and practical materials having taken its place. (22)

Copper tools are made to make sense, in this publication, in terms of an historical progression from savagery to “semi” civility, a progression that involves a shift from making copper weapons and utensils towards mapping and mining copper as capitalist resource.

Indeed, by the 1930s, as stories of a traditional copper culture proliferated in the South, airplanes arrived in the North, revolutionizing mineral survey practices and enabling aerial identification of copper reserves (Science News Letter 1931). In the early 1960s Echo Bay Mines began to mine copper near the headwaters of the Coppermine River and mining has only intensified since then. The discovery of diamonds in the 1990s motivated the opening of three diamond mines within the Coppermine River watershed (Diavik, Ekati, and Tahera/Jericho), and two copper mining operations are proposed to open within the next several years (Zinifex 2007). Although some might wish to imagine that the “Copper Inuit” resist this shift in their ancestral relationship to copper, such a view speaks more to Southern imaginative geographies of the Arctic than to the views of Kugluktukmiut. As wary as some community members are about the impact of mining on the land, very few would advocate the stoppage of mining in the region. Mining offers the possibility of a viable economy in the North, if only for a short period of time and for a segment of the population, and people in Kugluktuk are gravely concerned about the future of their young people. Kugluktukmiut will be hired to build the ice roads and port facility necessary to service the mine proposed at High Lake, 175 km southeast of Kugluktuk, and they
will drive the trucks carrying copper-rich ore to the sea. Ships destined for Europe will indeed be ballasted with copper from the region within the next decade, in a sense over two centuries late.

Figure 12: Noel Avadluk (left) playing cards with unidentified man, ca 1950s. Source: Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Holman Photohistorical and Oral History Research Committee Fonds, N-1990-004: 0440.

Kugluktukmiut have been active participants in the northern mining industry for decades, in fact. Some, like “the famous Inuk prospector” (McPherson 2003, 265) Noel Avadluk (Figure 12), made a living as grubstakers in the 1960s and were celebrated as stand-out examples of Inuit modernization. Avadluk’s success was attributed to his “education,” which “enabled him to speak and write English well” (Schiller 1965, 44) and to his blend of traditional land skills and self-taught geological expertise:

Noel has acquired many of the exploration talents of the modern prospector. He uses aerial photographs and geological and topographical maps. Once a mineral showing is
found he investigates it with a plugger to drill a shallow hole and blast the rock with
dynamite. If the showing looks attractive he will stake claims to get ownership of the
minerals found. Using geology texts, Noel has acquainted himself with geological
principles and his knowledge of mineralogy is adequate enough to identify the important
sulphide minerals. (Schiller 1965, 45)

So celebrated was Avadluk that he was presented with a plaque during the course of the Nunavut
Land Claim negotiations honouring the “significant discoveries near Bathurst Inlet, including the
Pistol Lake gold occurrence” Avadluk had made in the 1960s with “his now-disabled wife, who
had also been his prospecting partner” (McPherson 2003, 265). The celebratory gesture was put
into perspective by Kugluktukmiut:

When I first mentioned Avadluk’s reputation to Joe Allen Evaigotailak [sic] … he said
‘Well, he hasn’t anything to show for it!’ since Avadluk was now a humble senior citizen
but Avadluk had worked for wages in his day, and none of his discoveries had ever
reached production … Another Coppermine resident, a woman speaking through her son,
told me that her husband was denied any benefit after telling prospectors about a mineral
showing in the late 1960s. She was referring to a copper sulphide showing (now the Hood
claims of Kidd Creek Mines Ltd.) at the south end of Takijuq Lake, reputed to contain
nearly a million tons of ore. The showing was at the site of an Inuit outpost camp
frequented by her husband. As the Hood claims were acquired by the Inuit at these
negotiations [the Nunavut Land Claim negotiations], I decided to check in to the story
late, using the mining recorder’s archives at Yellowknife. Sure enough, the ground was
staked by two prospectors during the Coppermine rush of the 1960s. However, no
assessment work was done, and the claims lapsed after two years. Later, Kidd Creek
Mines rediscovered the mineralization when they flew an airborne electro-magnetic
survey in the region. It was explored and drilled between 1974 and 1982. (McPherson
2003, 265-6)
It was experiences like these that had led Kugluktukmiut to agitate, as early as the 1950s, for fair access to the mineral wealth in their territory. In February 1953, alarmed at the increasing presence of prospectors in the region, the people of Kugluktuk sent a petition to the federal government outlining their concerns and demands regarding mineral exploration and staking in their territory (Figure 13) 73. Kulchyski and Tester (2007, 240) suggest that this may have been “the first time Inuit as a group in the Canadian Arctic formally petitioned the government,” and the petition is emphatic that Inuit have rights to the copper in the region. The petition reads (all sic):

Dear Sir,

Father Adam asked you what was our position regarding the copper deposits some of our boys have found around Coppermine.

You said that we had to follow the same laws as the whites regarding the staking and holding of the claims. We feel such a law is not right, because,

(1) The land is ours and we never gave it or sold it away and never will.

(2) We are one of the poorest people in the world; we have no money to buy a licence or to register a claim.

(3) We are too ignorant to steak a claim according to the regulations.

(4) We Eskimo feel we should be given a chance.

73 The volume of signatures on this petition calls into question Schiller’s (1965, 44) claim that prior to the 1960s staking rush, “few Eskimos in this part of the country were aware of prospecting for mineral deposits.”
Therefore we send you a petition requesting that any Eskimo finding ore deposit will have the right to stake it, and hold it free of taxes, and hold it free of taxes, and that he may well sell it to any Company free of taxes whenever he wants to do so.

Although we have no leader amongst us our signatures will tell you that we agree on those points.

Hoping that we find the Government most co-operative we sign:
The Eskimos of Coppermine”

(Coppermine petition, cited in Kulchyski and Tester 2007, 240-241)
This would be the beginning of a larger movement among Inuit to assert their rights to the land and resources of Nunavut, a process that gathered speed in the early 1970s following a meeting of Inuit leaders in Coppermine (Indian-Eskimo Association 1970) that led to the creation of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) the following year. The ITC (later known as ITK or Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami) was instrumental in articulating Inuit demands for land claims and resource rights, demands that became particularly urgent as “a new breed of explorer [came] to search for oil, natural gas, and minerals” (Inuit Tapirisat of Canada 1977, 4) in the North. The Nunavut Land Claim Agreement (NLCA) was finalized in 1993 and the territory of Nunavut created in 1999.

The NLCA outlines Inuit mineral rights (notably, Inuit retain subsurface rights over only 2% of the territory’s 1.9 million km², although they collect royalties from mining on non-Inuit land) and establishes protocols for environmental monitoring, land and resource management, and rights of entry and access to non-Inuit lands. Regardless of whether they hope to mine on Inuit or Crown land, mining companies must go through a process of community consultation, a process that is poorly defined (McCrank 2008, 34) and in some ways moot – in practice both the territorial government and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated are tremendously supportive of mineral exploration and extraction, seeing mining as a potentially lucrative source of “employment opportunities (both direct and in service industries), business and investment opportunities,

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74 “Nunavut” means “the people’s land” in Inuktitut and refers to both a territory within the Canadian federation and an Inuit land claim. The territory of Nunavut is not inherently Inuit – Inuit comprise 80-90% of the population of the territory and certain governance structures are modeled upon Inuit cultural values, but the territory’s relationship with the federal government is similar to that of the Yukon or Northwest Territories: it is a jurisdiction within the Canadian federation that happens to be predominantly Inuit. The Nunavut Land Claim Agreement, on the other hand, outlines the rights and benefits of Inuit with respect to the settling of their claim to the territory of Nunavut. In exchange for converting the majority of the land in the territory into Crown Land, a cash settlement was made, Inuit surface and sub-surface rights were determined for particular parcels of land, and rights to hunt and fish throughout the territory were articulated. For a fuller description of the Nunavut Land Claim and the creation of the territory of Nunavut, see Hicks and White (2000).

75 Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) is the corporation established to ensure that the NLCA is administered and implemented on behalf of its Inuit beneficiaries. Inuit in Nunavut are shareholders of NTI.
education and training, and infrastructure improvements in the communities” (Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated 1997, 1). Some community members express concerns that land use planning documents and legal acts have yet to be implemented in the Kitikmeot region (of which Kugluktuk is a part), limiting the ability of Inuit to assess mineral development activities on a regional, comprehensive basis (Buchan 2007). As it stands, environmental and community impact studies are done on a case-by-case basis, and no studies of the cumulative effect of multiple mines has been undertaken. In spite of these concerns, however, mineral exploration and mine development continues to be a priority in the territory.

**Figure 14**: Copper showings in the Kugluktuk region, 2008. Data courtesy of Nunavut Geoscience. The green triangles indicate copper showings. Of the 491 displayed, 15 are at advanced stages of exploration and are expected to be economically viable. Within this same region there are 11 active uranium exploration projects, 3 precious metal, 2 diamond, 5 base metal, 15 gold, and 3 nickel-copper PGE projects.
In effect, Kugluktukmiut are as tied to copper today as they were two or three hundred years ago, although now this copper is connected to networks of commodity pricing, multinational capital investment, federal and territorial bureaucracies and the expansion of shipping into an increasingly “warm” Arctic. Whereas in 1771 the Dene saw caribou shapes in the native copper chunks they would fashion into hunting tools, mine development today threatens the calving and feeding grounds of these same herds of caribou, even while the revenues from mines allow more Kugluktukmiut to access the capital and equipment necessary for hunting. The teenagers who occasionally steal skidoos for a night of joyriding are intimately familiar with the copper wiring systems that allow them to cut an ignition wire and jump start the machine. The copper mined in the region will soon find its way into the GPS units they rely upon to navigate unfamiliar lands and into the television sets that light up their living rooms. And ironically, the same copper that contributed to generations of conflict between Inuit and Dene has recently brought them together in a peace and reconciliation process. The rapid increase in mining in the territories of these groups has motivated them to come together and resolve their conflicts in regular peace-making visits (see Chapter 7) so that they might better coordinate their involvement in proposed mineral development plans (Kuliktana 2007; Powers, Mackenzie, and Baton 2008).

In fact, these reconciliation processes began with an apology from the Sahtu Dene for past wrongdoings, and a clarification that it was not their ancestors, but rather the ancestors of the Chipewyan Dene who transacted the massacre at Bloody Falls76. Stories of cooperation, trade, and collaboration between Inuit and Dene were shared by Elders in a recent visit, calling into

76 As I note in Chapter 4 (note 47), the exact composition of the massacre party is not clear in Hearne’s notes, and although formally the Sahtu, Tli Cho, and Kugluktukmiut emphasize that the massacre was carried out by the ancestors of the Chipewyan Dene, informally many Sahtu and Tli Cho Dene acknowledge that their ancestors may have played a role in hostilities. They also emphasize that the Bloody Falls massacre was only one of many conflicts between the groups. According to George Mackenzie, Grand Chief of the Tli Cho Dene Nation, the Tli Cho have not yet formally addressed the Bloody Falls massacre with Kugluktukmiut. “An apology may come later”, he notes, “but first we have to build good relations” (Mackenzie 2009). See Chapter 7 for a fuller discussion of recent reconciliation efforts.
being not only a different understanding of the past, but also forging new terms for future relations.

**Conclusion**

Following the settlement of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement Inuit became “the largest freehold owners of mineral rights in Canada” (McPherson 2003, xxiv). Celebrated not only as a political triumph but also as the beginning of a “new era of cooperation between the Inuit of Nunavut and mineral explorers and developers” (xxi), the settlement of subsurface title in the territory was hailed as a catalyst for both Inuit economic development and an expanded multinational mineral economy. It would seem an occasion far removed from the Bloody Falls massacre, but in this chapter I have argued that, in fact, the “new era” of relations between Inuit, minerals, and “explorers and developers” initiated by the NLCA has a much longer history. Not only was Hearne’s journey explicitly geared towards facilitating mineral extraction in the Central Arctic, the massacre story itself enrolled copper in ways that have been overlooked by northern scholars. Hearne’s narrative staked out relations between Inuit, Dene, Euro-Canadians, and copper that have shaped subsequent “copper stories” and had very material consequences through to the present. If, as Law (1994) argues, stories are material ordering practices that not only shape the imaginative but also the very tangible and concrete aspects of practices like mineral extraction, then it would seem that these copper stories might provide insights into the ways in which “storying the North” has been implicated in “opening” the North for imperial capital.

In conclusion, and in relation to the broader disciplinary shifts identified at the beginning of the chapter, there are four aspects of storying the North through copper that I would like to assess here. First, by attending to the ways in which copper figured in Hearne’s story, which has
tended to be assessed by critical scholars in terms of the racialized, colonial discourses it helps constitute (e.g., Goldie 1989; Milligan and McCreary forthcoming; Shields 1991; Venema 1998, 2000), it would seem that Hearne’s framing of the Bloody Falls massacre as a natural (if horrific) expression of Indigenous savagery is undone by his own story. That is, by paying attention to copper, an alternative explanation for the event and its consequences can be identified. The Bloody Falls massacre story is a copper story, one whose perpetuation relates to subsequent efforts to extract copper from the Central Arctic. By focusing on copper these geographies become more apparent.

Second, this chapter demonstrates the methodological importance of attending to “things” as part of an effort to story the North differently. Tracing the narrative geographies of copper not only troubles hegemonic understandings of the Bloody Falls massacre, it unsettles a range of assumptions structuring imaginative geographies of the North, including the notion that Indigenous northerners relate to copper on a wholly “traditional” basis, or the assumption that northern resource extraction is somehow not related to histories of colonialism. If the “charmed” notion of Inuit as either victims of empire or heroically resistant is one of the caricatures I want to resist (see Chapter 6), then following copper suggests a more active, complex involvement by both Inuit and Dene in their own histories and geographies. It undermines some of the tropes used to make sense of the colonial past and present, tropes that would cast Inuit as first victims of a sweeping imperial and colonial apparatus, and second as sidelined, bit players in contemporary mineral extraction economies. Let me be clear that I think it is crucial to elucidate the ways in which Inuit have been victimized, to outline the specific ways in which colonialism has undermined their cultural, economic, and political lives, and to call attention precisely to the ways in which they are sidelined by multinational mining companies. But like Ann Stoler (2008b), I am more and more interested in what these accounts do not reveal, what caricatures they rely upon,
and what conceptual and analytical binaries they shore up. An account that only attends to the
ways in which Inuit are marginalized by empire offers a bit too much “analytic slack” (Stoler 2008b); it deprives Inuit of complex, active, constitutive capacities that are more apparent when
one traces the geographies of the Central Arctic through copper.

Third, and relatedly, a focus on copper challenges some of the binary notions that tend to
structure understandings of the contemporary North, such as traditional vs. modern, Inuit vs.
White, and so on. Rather than understand contemporary copper mining in the region as a wholly
“modern” undertaking that alienates Inuit from a “traditional” way of life, for example, these
stories suggest a longer, more complicated history of relations. They blur racialized lines between
different constituencies and refuse to fetishize an authentic Inuit voice that might “speak back” to
colonial or capitalist oppressors. As such, stories like these more closely elucidate the complex
relations shaping the contemporary Arctic and open up important lines of inquiry and
intervention. They highlight, for example, how the production of anthropological knowledge
about “traditional” Inuit culture was central to efforts to naturalize industrial mineral extraction,
and how these productions turned on the relations identified between people and things. To the
extent that critical scholars aim to conjure an authentic Indigenous culture with wholly other
relations to things like copper as a means of countering multinational mineral economies77, they
risk re-inscribing deeply imperial framings of Indigeneity as somehow not modern and as tied to

77 I am referring here to a line of argument that tends to structure critical geographic research into
commodities and consumption, particularly “commodity chain” analyses. As Castree (2001, 1520)
observer, efforts to ground commodities like copper in “in a specific site and a particular constituency”,
usually the site of extraction or production, in order to highlight the moral geographies of consumption risk
essentializing diverse and complex constituencies. To “unveil” the social relations inherent in commodity
production thus “raises—rather than answers—a key question: what imaginative geographies both of
ourselves and of distant others are entailed in any attempt to make visible the geographical lives of
commodities?” (2001, 1519, emphasis in original). As Castree makes clear, efforts to expose some of the
ills of capitalist relations too often rely upon romanticized understandings of the people and places involved
in primary production, and as such their political effects are at the very least ambiguous.
a wholly other, “traditional” realm. Indeed, if these copper stories have the potential to assist in rethinking dominant Arctic narratives it lies in their capacity to order the region differently, not as counter-stories grounded in a romanticized Inuit constituency.

But fourth, these copper stories expose some of the risks accompanying recent shifts among human geographers from an interest in the imaginative, representational workings of power towards a more materialist register. While a focus on copper helps in stepping outside of dominant representational frameworks, there is a risk of avoiding issues of power and scale in this kind of approach and of tending to treat all copper stories as equal insofar as they assemble diverse people and things in relation to copper. If, as Law (1994) and Latour (2005) argue, we are intimately interconnected with things and, indeed, constituted by the assemblage of diverse bits and pieces, we must take seriously the ways in which copper has both constituted and undermined life in the Central Arctic, and not lose sight of the very real and material effects of these networks. Networks are not neutral; they are ordered, powerful, and strategic, and one’s position in a network matters. How, then, to balance the need to loosen dominant representational frameworks and allow alternative perspectives, with the need to maintain an acute focus on relations of power and to keep in mind the consequences of being positioned in particular ways within networks of capital, technology, resources, and governance?

Embedded in this question is a problematization of scale and, in particular, how the small, the local, and the specific matter and can be made to matter. Rather than reproduce the hierarchical assumption that the small and the local matter insofar as they radically alter global or hegemonic understandings, in this chapter I have considered the possibility that alternative “global” understandings of the North already exist, and that they can be made legible and durable

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78 As Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 74) observes, “indigenous cultures cannot change, cannot recreate themselves and still claim to be indigenous. Nor can they be complicated, internally diverse or contradictory. Only the West has that privilege”.

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to the extent that we train our attention on different stories, ordered in different ways. Ultimately, these copper stories matter insofar as they touch people, surprise people, and allow for both old and new copper stories to emerge and become legible. As Haraway observes, when we “touch and are touched” by a story we “inherit” different relations and begin to “live” different “histories” (2008, 37). That is, our relations demand responses of us, and to the extent that conventional accounts of the Bloody Falls massacre and of the Central Arctic trace relations between white and “other” subjects in self-referential terms, they demand self-referential responses.

The copper stories I have traced in this chapter have a certain political potential, then, but their potential is not realized merely in the tracing and describing; there are no guarantees that the telling of different stories will lead to the kind of touching Haraway describes. Pratt’s (2009) recent contemplations about the capacity for stories to circulate and affect “a wider witnessing public” (17) are thus central to the kind of re-narrating project I have considered in this chapter. As Pratt makes clear with respect to her study of the affective capacities of Filipina mothers’ life narratives, efforts to ensure “the testimony [is] heard” (6) are formidable in and of themselves and carry with them additional concerns about “what dangers attend” the successful circulation of such stories. There is always the risk that the story of an “other” “preserves rather than disrupts the status quo” (6). Pratt’s efforts to think carefully and strategically about how, where, and on what terms stories are told (and heard) is thus an important check on the sense of radical possibility and contingency in actor-network and posthumanist accounts. The capacity to connect, affect, and relate, Pratt reminds us, is shaped by an already structured political and ethical field that is not as malleable and open to possibility as we might hope.

“In any narrative tradition,” writes Barnor Hesse, “it is always possible to remember otherwise, although this can be studiously avoided” (2002, 146). The telling of alternative stories
about the Central Arctic is an important part of remembering otherwise, not because they are necessarily the right stories, the more just stories, or the more comprehensive stories, and neither under the pretense that remembering otherwise will necessarily dismantle the studious avoidance (what Stoler (2008a, 18) calls the “educated ignorance”) enabled by hegemonic narratives. In a typically wry commentary on efforts to re-narrate his homeland, Alootook Ipellie (1997, 96) recently observed:

No living generation of Arctic narrator will ever get enough satisfaction out of spinning yarns about the Arctic and its cast of thousands, from the bygone days to this very moment. I am standing here in front of you to announce, unfortunately, that none of us will ever live long enough to finally complete the elusive final book on the Arctic and its people … The Great White Arctic will remain an unfinished story to the very end of human habitation on planet Earth. How sad.

Ipellie, like Haraway, recognizes that the project of storying North is not so much unfinished as unfinishable, and so we proceed, “without either narrative or scientific guarantees” (Haraway 1994, 62), to attempt to produce less “deadly” stories, and to attempt to make them heard.
Chapter 6
Power and ‘Resistance’ in Coppermine, 1972-3

“The ventriloquism of the speaking subaltern is the left intellectual’s stock-in-trade”
- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

“Questions about the significance of resistant agency, its geo-historical reach, limits, conditions, organization and impact are all often unanswered at the very same time as the rhetoric of resistance obscures the objects against which resistant agents are said to resist”
- Matthew Sparke

Introduction: Crossed Wires

On August 4, 1972, Simon Taipana sent a telex to S.M. Hodgson, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories:

Mr Ted Boxer, Historical Committee, has advised us that there are two cairns planned to honour Samuel Hearne.

You have advised us that there is no money available to install pressure systems in new northern rental houses in Coppermine.

The Settlement Council of Coppermine has expressed strong disapproval of spending money on these historical monuments while at the same time there are greater useful needs such as bath-tubs and running water in the new northern rental housing.

Please also remember that Samuel Hearne is not regarded as a local hero, and should you insist on historic plaques, we would recommend that the plaque be in memoriam of those persons massacred at Bloody Falls.
We request preferably, that these plaques not be erected, and that the money instead be more usefully spent.

Simon Taipana  
For Settlement Secretary  
For Coppermine Settlement Council (Taipana 1972a)

In what seems to have been a bureaucratic oversight, Hodgson did not see the telex in time and territorial and federal officials landed in Coppermine ten days later, intending to finalize the details of a plaquing ceremony. Upon landing and being made aware of the telex, Ted Boxer, Secretary of the Northwest Territories Historical Advisory Board, requested a community meeting to “talk about Hearne’s visit, in case it was not understood” (Boxer 1973, 3). The notion that Inuit in Coppermine must not “understand” the importance of Samuel Hearne’s “visit” recurs throughout correspondence related to the plaquing dispute that followed. A well-attended community meeting was held a couple of hours later and was characterized by Boxer as “completely unproductive” (3):

The Community Council stated that Samuel Hearne meant nothing to them except in the context of the massacre. Also, that no one in Yellowknife would erect a plaque to someone from the south who came up and murdered their relatives. It was emphasized that Hearne did not take part in the massacre and actually wished very sincerely that he could have prevented it. All that was to be commemorated was Samuel Hearne’s journey, and the historic fact that it had taken place. All arguments were rejected by the Council. They stated that the fact of his visit was recorded in the history books. The economic advantage of cairns to the community was also rejected on the grounds that they were arguing a principle which was related to the Land Rights issue. This outweighed any monetary gains from tourism. Nothing could be said to change their views on this point. (3)

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A protracted dispute between the Settlement Council and the Government of the NWT (GNWT) followed. A month after Boxer’s visit the people of Coppermine voted 53 to 2 against the erection of plaques commemorating Samuel Hearne and advised the GNWT of their decision. Frustrated, the Commissioner asked Reverend John Sperry, Anglican Arch-Deacon of the Arctic Diocese and a man with longstanding ties to the community to fly to Coppermine and speak to the people. Sperry had been a missionary in Coppermine for twenty years (from 1950-1970) and is still highly regarded by many in Kugluktuk today. Following his visit, the community reversed their decision and indicated that they would allow the plaquing to proceed, although in the end no plaques were erected.

In this chapter I assess the intricacies of this dispute over memorializing Hearne and Bloody Falls in order to draw broader conclusions about the shifting geographies of colonial governance, federal-territorial jurisdiction, and Inuit self-determination in the 1970s. I will argue that the dispute took the particular shape it did because of the concurrent rise of non-Indigenous territorial nationalism and Indigenous movements for self-determination and land claims, the intensification of federal and territorial governmental involvement in the North, and the rapid increase in northern resource development. I will explore the ways in which Inuit resistance to the plaques was linked to a burgeoning Inuit land claims movement with strong roots in Coppermine while at the same time attending to the fragility and precarity of overt political resistance in a small, isolated community still dominated by Southern Canadian administrators, the RCMP, and religious figures. Following Ann Laura Stoler (2008b), I will also attempt to convey a less “charmed” story of colonial and postcolonial life, one that “dispenses with heroes, subaltern or otherwise” and endeavours to attend to the contradictions and ambivalent interests of those involved in this dispute. It is possible to narrate the plaquing dispute as a “good vs. evil” parable wherein a newly organized Inuit political constituency “spoke back” to colonial power; indeed,
that story is worth telling and I sketch out the contours of such a narrative in this chapter. But such a story tends to rely on “monochrome heroes dedicated to a struggle against power” (Li 2007, 157), which is not only a simplification of the diverse peoples and interests engaged by the plaquing question; it also fails to historicize, problematize, and place notions like “Inuit resistance” within a particular political, economic, and cultural context. That is my task in this chapter.

In an effort to contextualize Inuit responses to the plaques, I present archival, oral, biographical, and theoretical materials, drawing on Foucauldian theories of power, resistance, and governmentality, as well as the writings of scholars who have engaged his ideas (e.g., Abu-Lughod 1990; Li 2007; Robinson 2000; Stoler 2002a; 2006; 2009). If, as I have been arguing throughout this dissertation, story can productively be thought of as material, and as an assemblage of ideas, people, places, and other things, I ask in this chapter how relations of power and resistance are expressed in and through these assemblages. I argue that Kugluktukmiut resisted this particular Bloody Falls assemblage not so much as an abstract anti-colonial gesture, but as a specific response to the materialities it implied: for the first time, the Bloody Falls massacre story enrolled land claims, bathtubs, and the possibilities of exercising a measure of control over the materialities of everyday life in Coppermine, and that is why people responded in the particular ways they did. These responses reveal as much about the shape of governmental power in the early 1970s as they do about Inuit resistance, moreover, and in this chapter I follow Lila Abu-Lughod’s directive to “use resistance as a diagnostic of power” (1990, 42, her emphasis), and particularly to “help detect historical shifts in configurations or methods of power” (48). Governmental interests in erecting plaques commemorating Bloody Falls and Inuit responses to this ordering of the massacre story intersected and shaped each other and must be accounted for as co-creative and interdigitated actions and interests.
Inuit resistance to the plaques requires contextualization not only in relation to governmental power, however, but also in relation to what I describe as the geographies of response and responsibility shaping relations between Kugluktukmiut and Bloody Falls. Although their rejection of the plaques was certainly a conscious act of resistance to the “whiteman” (Kamingoak in Indian-Eskimo Association 1970, II-2), I caution against the romanticization of Indigenous resistance and the “regulative ‘pull’” (Sparke 2008, 423) it seems to exert upon students of colonialism away from the messy, empirical details of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations. The plaquing dispute is only one of a range of responses Kugluktukmiut have mobilized in relation to the ordering of Bloody Falls and many of those responses are anchored in geographies of responsibility that make little or no reference to colonial or governmental power (see Chapter 7). Informed by Spivak’s skepticism about leftist intellectual efforts to “give voice” to “self-knowing, politically canny subalterns” (1999, 257) whose actions and very existence are framed in terms of colonial power, I aim in this chapter to conceptualize the events of 1972-3 along different lines79.

The Coppermine Conference and the Rise of Inuit Self-Determination

Let me tell you a little about Tuktoyaktuk and what oil exploration has done for us. It’s the most messed-up place. They put roads in about a mile apart and these have exposed the permafrost so that they become ditches and each spring they get deeper and deeper when they thaw out. The exploration crews dam up creeks and stop the water, block the fish. They set off explosions in shallow lakes and we see lots of dead fish. They don’t

79 This chapter is undeniably a story in its own right that is informed by my “own complicity” (Spivak 1999, 244) and desires as an investigator. What I know is thoroughly situated, but this does not make it unhelpful or untrue, and so I have cobbled together a series of stories in this chapter that I hope prove “less-deadly” (Haraway 1994, 71) than others I might have told.
Charlie Gruben’s account of “what can happen to your country” was one of many sobering stories of oil, gas, and mineral exploration shared at a meeting of Arctic Native Peoples held in Coppermine in July 1970. The meeting was one of the first gatherings of Inuit from across the Canadian North and was a galvanizing political moment in the history of land claims and Inuit self-determination. The following year Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC, later Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami or ITK) was founded and the movement towards the settlement of Inuit title and the establishment of the territory of Nunavut was underway. Spurred by the rapid acceleration of resource exploration and extraction activities in their territories and their continued exclusion from consultation processes, resource revenues, and employment benefits accruing from these developments, the group of delegates gathered at Coppermine shared a sense of urgency about the cultural, economic, and environmental impacts of the booming northern resource industry and a growing interest in establishing their Aboriginal title in a context where that title seemed either to be ignored or under active threat of extinguishment.

Informed in part by a report prepared by Peter Cumming (1970), legal advisor to the meeting, the delegates were well aware of the then federal government’s hostility towards land claims and Aboriginal rights, made clear in the 1969 “White Paper”. They were particularly concerned, however, about the implications of transferring legal and jurisdictional powers from the federal to the territorial government over the preceding decades. As Cameron and White (1995, 47) observe, “in the 1950s [the NWT] was a colonial dependency, administered from Ottawa, delivering only very basic public services”, and as the NWT moved towards greater independence from the federal government in the 1950s and 60s, “issues of constitutional development and governance … were framed and resolved with almost total lack of recognition
of the status, needs and values of the Aboriginal peoples” (47). Cumming highlighted this
disregard for Aboriginal rights in his report to the Coppermine delegates. He pointed to specific
Territorial Acts and amendments passed in the 1950s and 1960s that eroded Inuit control over
their lands by transferring federal controls over Crown lands to the Territorial Commissioner, and
by granting the territorial government the power to “deal with the Eskimo Aboriginal title in
respect to such lands” (Cumming 1970, 5). In essence, the transfer of federal control over the
lands and peoples of the North to the Territorial government was paving the way for the
extinguishment of Inuit Aboriginal title (which had never been ceded by treaty or war), much as
had occurred in the province of British Columbia. Indeed, Cumming drew the attention of the
delegates to the case of the Nisga’a First Nation and their appearance before the BC Supreme
Court the previous year objecting to the unlawful extinguishment of their Aboriginal title by the
province of British Columbia.80

The urgency of the matter was obvious to all the conference participants. The pace of
development was so swift and so unchecked that the delegates worried they would have no
meaningful land or resources to claim if they did not act immediately. Discussion focused in
particular on the case of Banks Island in the Beaufort Sea and the oil and gas exploration
occurring there that very summer. Given that the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern
Development (DIAND) had issued 308 oil and gas exploration permits for Banks Island
(McPherson 2003, 51) and having heard stories of the destruction wrought by oil and gas
exploration at nearby Tuktoyaktuk, delegates such as Peter Sidney of Sachs Harbour (an Inuit
community on the Island) worried about “how much damage they will do to Banks Island … they
say they will work there four or five years. They will scare away the caribou, spoil the fox and

80 Ultimately the Nisga’a were successful in their efforts and paved the way for modern land claims in
Canada through their triumph in the Calder case in 1973.
geese” (Sidney in Indian-Eskimo Association 1970, II-9). Agnes Semmler of Inuvik warned that “things happen so fast, look at Tuktoyaktuk. Everything happened before the people knew what was going on …. Banks Island’s a pretty small place; in five years you’ll have nothing” (II-8-9). Led by delegates from Sachs Harbour, the conference members prepared a Resolution on the matter that they sent by telegram to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Jean Chrétien, on July 16, 1970:

The Eskimo People of Sachs Harbour Banks Island unanimously and strongly object to any oil or gas exploration on Banks Island. Your government has issued leases for such exploration without any prior consultation whatsoever with the Eskimo people. These actions are an example of your government’s continuing complete disregard for the rights of the Eskimo people and are contrary to the standards of common human decency … Banks Island has a very delicate ecological balance which will be destroyed if exploration is allowed and the land surface disturbed, as your government will readily understand if it will only choose to consult with the Eskimo people and have biologists conduct the necessary research …. The people of Sachs Harbour urgently request that you direct that no further exploration take place until consultation can be made with the Eskimo people in these matters. Your government’s failure to do so can only be interpreted as conscious consent to the destruction of the people of Sachs Harbour. (Appendix 2, Indian-Eskimo Association 1970, 1)

The Resolution, signed by all the conference participants, went on to demand that the government “always have prior consultation with the Eskimo people in respect to any service, exploration, or any other activities to be undertaken” (2) and that “your government recognize our rights as Aboriginals in the lands of the North and give us fair compensation where there is expropriation of our rights in the lands” (2). Lest the government fail to appreciate the “seriousness of the situation” (1), the signatories gave warning that they were “quite prepared to take whatever action
is necessary to protect their community and environment” (1-2). Peter Kamingoak, a respected Elder still living in Kugluktuk today and a key player in the organization of the Coppermine Conference, was a signatory of the resolution. According to McPherson, the resolution caused “a furor” (2003, 52) in southern Canada when the story reached the Globe and Mail. Indeed, the delegates purposely aimed for media coverage, having learned that “if it doesn’t get in the press, you never seem to get any action. When we wanted this school you see here in Coppermine, we didn’t get any action until we drew up a petition and got it in the press – then things happened.” (Kamingoak in Indian-Eskimo Association 1970, II-2).

Transcripts of the Coppermine Conference discussions reveal a conscious and forceful rejection of the deferent, peaceable, “smiling” Eskimo figure and an articulation of a shared resolve to establish their rights as Indigenous peoples. As David Tukutuk of Great Whale River, Quebec asserted: “For a long time the whiteman has come to the Eskimo and told him to ‘do this, do that’ and the Eskimo said ‘yes, yes’ and did whatever he was told, no matter how menial the job. But today we are beginning to think of what’s best for us and for our people and we are starting to say ‘no, that’s not what I want to do’ (Applause!). As native people, we must stand up today and fight for our rights” (I-5). The frequency with which delegates referred to the importance of speaking out, of refusing to stay silent, and of acting as a collective to resist the forces affecting Indigenous communities across the North reveals the importance of the meeting in building a sense of political consciousness and shared resolve. Kamingoak himself made clear his intentions to stand up to the “whiteman”, particularly in terms of land claims and treaties: “All the provinces were Indian lands, you know and the whiteman came in and took them over. What they did in the south, now they are trying to do to our land in the north …. We don’t want any treaty – this is our land. If we sign a treaty, they’ll treat us like Indians – push us around. We don’t want no whiteman telling us ‘you move over to here because I want this land.’” (II-4)
This, then, was the political context within which Inuit leaders were operating in the early 1970s, a context that the territorial and federal governments were slow to appreciate. Indeed, when the Coppermine Settlement Council was informed of government intentions to erect territorial and federal monuments to Samuel Hearne and the Bloody Falls massacre in 1972, the Council’s stern rejection of the monuments not only shocked government officials, it also struck them as profoundly irrational, misinformed, and out of character. Ted Boxer attributed Inuit resistance to the proposed plaquing to the undue influence of the white Settlement Manager, a Mr. W. Bean, stating in a memo debriefing his superiors about the debacle that “it was apparent … that the Settlement Manager had had something to do with the reaction of the Settlement Council to the proposed commemorations” (Boxer 1973, 3), and insisting that Inuit resistance to the plaques was grounded in a failure to “understand” the importance of Hearne. This statement was not only paternalistic and seeped in a colonial understanding of Indigenous agency81, it was also naïve. Inuit were actively organizing against government failures to consult, against the management of their territories as Crown Lands over which they held no jurisdiction, and against the control of the North by people with no intention “to actually live in the Arctic” (Inuit Tapirisat of Canada 1977, 9, emphasis in original) throughout the early 1970s (e.g., Usher and Beakhurst 1973). They were making use of the modest powers of newly implemented Settlement Councils in their communities to register their concerns (see Kulchyski and Tester 2007 for a discussion of the Baker Lake Settlement Council; and McPherson 2003 for a discussion of the Arctic Bay Settlement Council) and were increasingly forceful in their articulation of their rights

81 Speaking during the Berger Inquiry regarding reactions to the Dene Declaration, Stephen Kakfwi observed a similar process at work: “Because we never wrote [our rights as a Dene nation] down on paper before, the Government says we are being influenced by radical outsiders. We have always governed our lives before the Government came along. Long before Canada was formed, we governed our lives. We have always seen ourselves as Dene … It is insulting to read narrow-minded people speak of us as being influenced by outsiders, as if our views have just been dreamed up a short while back” (quoted in Scott 2007, 16-17).
and demands. The federal and territorial governments’ gradual awakening to the implications of these movements is registered in the archival and oral materials documenting the dispute82.

**Governmentality, Power, and Resistance to the Proposed Plaques**

To describe the shifting relations between Inuit and various government officials and departments over the years leading up to and following the plaquing dispute as a matter of Indigenous uprising against a colonial government would be an over-simplification, and in some senses misleading. Certainly, Inuit resisted in unprecedented ways the myriad incursions of government into their lives, and their combined efforts aimed at decolonizing and reclaiming their lands, cultures, languages, and political processes. These movements, however, were shaped and defined by their context, including the particular constellation of government programs and initiatives directed at northern Indigenous communities during this time. Resistance emerged from and within a range of relations, including relations of domination and coercion but also through relations of care, trust, and “development” that were marked less by physical violence than by a sense of optimism, progress, and a “will to improve” (Li 2007) on the part of government. Inuit resistance, in that sense, was both aimed at and enabled by governmental power, and its intensity marks both a shift in forms of political organization and expression among Inuit and an intensification of governmental power through the 1950s, ‘60s, and ‘70s.

82 Ultimately, and particularly following the Calder decision in 1973, government responses to Indigenous political movements shifted rapidly and are evidenced in the calling of the Berger Inquiry in 1974 and the settlement of various comprehensive claims such as the Inuvialuit Final Agreement in 1984 and the Nunavut Final Agreement in 1993. In an interview with James Arvaluk, Noel McDermott recalls a sudden and dramatic shift in government attitudes toward Inuit in 1973 (Arvaluk 2007, 69), no doubt precipitated by the federal government’s realization that ‘the writing was on the wall’ with regard to Indigenous land claims. This shift had not yet occurred as the plaquing dispute unfolded.
Inuit were faced with a very different state in the years following WWII than they had ever encountered. The early 1950s “marked a turning point for federal government policy in the NWT” (Dickerson 1992, 61) as the federal government took an unprecedented interest in its northern territory. Until the 1950s the NWT had been governed almost exclusively from Ottawa and, as Louis St-Laurent famously observed in 1953, “in an almost continuing state of absence of mind” (cited in Dickerson 1992, 63). Beginning under St-Laurent the federal government embarked on a massive expansion of government services in the North, motivated by concerns over Arctic sovereignty, by interests in expanding the northern resource economy, and by what Dickerson (1992, 62) describes as a post-war shift in policy-making towards a more “interventionist”, liberal reformist understanding of northern government, particularly in terms of the governance of Indigenous peoples. Programs in health, social services, education, economic development, and political development were launched as the government endeavored to bring the north into its purview and to shape a particular kind of Indigenous subject. In Foucauldian terms, this was the beginnings not just of colonialism in the North, as Dickerson (1992, 62) argues, but also of an intensified form of governmentality understood as an active interest in shaping the “relations between men and things”:

What government has to do with is not territory but rather a sort of complex composed of men and things. The things with which in this sense government is to be concerned are in fact men, but men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those other things which are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility, etc; men in their relation to that other kind of things, customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking, etc; lastly, men in their relation to that other kind of things, accidents and misfortunes such as famine, epidemic, death, etc. (Foucault 1991, 93)
The federal government was actively concerned with shaping relations between “men and things” in the years leading up the plaquing dispute. After decades of efforts to ensure Indigenous peoples in the NWT maintained “traditional” lifestyles supplemented by trapping incomes (thus avoiding dependency on the state), the federal government reoriented its northern agenda in the face of a collapsing trapping economy, challenges to Canadian sovereignty in the Far North, famines related to changing migrations of caribou, and the increasingly attractive resource extraction potential in the region (Damas 2002; Tester and Kulchyski 1994). Whereas in previous decades Inuit were encouraged to disperse and minimize their reliance on settlement services (which were minimal), in the 1960s and ‘70s (although beginning as early as the late 1940s) Inuit were encouraged to settle in communities, participate in wage employment, enroll their children in schools and adopt “Western ideas about the family, work, community, and social relations” (Tester and Kulchyski 1994, 3). Notably, as Tester and Kulchyski (1994, 4) point out,

Inuit history is … characterized by something almost unique: the central historical dynamic that came to link Inuit to non-Inuit society politically was put in place during the period of high modernism. Unlike Indian affairs, where a pre-welfare state employed largely coercive measures, in Inuit affairs it was a liberal form of welfare state, which gave the appearance of having a more benign face and which employed a greater reliance on ideology, that became the means for attempting assimilation.

Foucault’s account of governmentality as an interest in transforming relations between people and things is highly applicable to the post-war welfare state and its extension into Inuit affairs. Dickerson documents how, beginning under St-Laurent, the federal government aimed to “provide northern residents with government services equivalent to, or nearly equivalent to, those services enjoyed by most Canadians” (1992, 62-3) in the form of welfare and relief payments, family allowances, old age pensions, health care, education and employment training, and
housing. Tester and Kulchyski (1994) point out in particular how the system of credit employed at fur trading posts collapsed as fur prices fell through the 1950s and ‘60s, and eventually the federal government intervened in the form of massive relief payments and other forms of welfare as Inuit across the Arctic struggled to survive. Relief and family allowances “became essential to survival” (1994, 4) as the fur economy declined and a wave of government policies and programs were subsequently developed in the hopes of transforming Inuit into modern wage earners.

The settlement of Coppermine, which had slowly grown up around a trading post established by Christian Klengenberg in 1916 and then around a Hudson’s Bay post established in 1928 (Usher 1971), only grew to be a regional center as medical services, the RCMP, and missionaries based themselves there through the 1920s, ‘30s and ‘40s, and particularly after the range of trading posts around the Coronation Gulf region were closed beginning in the 1930s (Condon 1996), forcing Innuinait83 engaged in trapping to trade at Coppermine. Innuinait came to establish more permanent residence at Coppermine (which had been a seasonal stopping and meeting place for centuries) for a range of reasons84. Some gained employment at nearby DEW line sites through the 1950s, others moved into settlements to be closer to their children who were attending the school built in Coppermine in 1948, while others moved to be closer to medical services or to access government relief payments as fur prices fell (Condon 1996; Dickerson 1992; Kulchyski and Tester 2007; Tester and Kulchyski 1994). Earlier attempts to move into town had been thwarted by government; Damas (2002, 75-79) documents how the annual gathering of Inuit in Coppermine during Christmas 1952 lingered a little too long for the tastes of

83 “Innuinait” is a term used by Collignon (2006, 5) to describe the peoples who traditionally occupied the Central Arctic region and were described by early anthropologists as “Copper Eskimo”. See Chapter 1, note 3.
84 Damas makes the important point that Coppermine was “virtually unique” (2002, 80) among northern settlements in that patterns of caribou migration led Inuit to want to concentrate there around the same time that government began aggressively promoting settlement. The repeated pattern of forced migration across the North, which involved moving Inuit to settlements that were sometimes hundreds of miles away from their homelands, did not play out in the same way in the Coronation Gulf region.
the local clergy, RCMP, and nurse, and the people were run out of town. Inuit had remained in Coppermine because of the presence of caribou there and their absence in the interior lands, making it pointless to head back out to camps that offered no game. Concerned that Inuit were lazing about and developing slothful habits, the “white agents” (76) worked together to ensure their dispersal. The nurse85 announced that “a contagious disease could come and kill all or most of them and that they should, accordingly, spread into smaller camps” (76) and the RCMP officer “asked” the people to leave town. They did. After decades of periodic outbreaks of chicken pox, measles, influenza, and tuberculosis, the threat of disease must have been an effective deterrent to remain in town. Only a few years later, Innuinait were prevailed upon to settle in Coppermine in part so that medical services could be delivered more effectively. Sperry (2005, 157) recalls that during the latter years of his residency in Coppermine (the late 1960s), “year by year, support agencies, particularly in the medical and social assistance fields, became a part of settlement life.” Tellingly, Sperry complains that these services “affected the [Inuit] sense of security even to the point of transferring some of the earlier belief in and dependence on divine assistance to dependence on a benevolent government” (157), a comment that is as revealing of an intensifying governmentality as it is of Sperry’s loosening grip on his “flock”.

John Amagoalik (2007, 39) describes how, with the rise of governmental power in the North, Inuit encountered new forms of dispossession:

It was around the early sixties that we started to discover that we had become powerless in our own homeland. We had become non-citizens in our own country. Our human rights were ignored and violated …. The laws were already in place. We only started finding out about these laws when some people started breaking them. It was becoming

85 This may well have been Betty Sperry, Reverend John Sperry’s wife. Sperry recalls that they married in Coppermine in 1952 and that Betty “served for some time as the community nurse” (2005, 112) during their stay in the community, which ended in 1970.
obvious that through the introduction of game laws, and through the introduction of the justice system and the education system, we had basically lost control of our lives. We found out that we were powerless. The other thing around that period in the late fifties and sixties, was that there was an exploration boom in the High Arctic for oil and gas. Multi-national corporations were coming from everywhere and they were exploring almost every foot of those islands …. We discovered that these oil companies could do whatever they wanted, with the blessing of the federal government, on our lands. We had no say about it. We had no say in how the environment was going to be protected, or what kinds of benefits we would derive from this activity. We had no say. We looked at all these things together, and it became obvious that things had to change. That’s when the idea of aboriginal rights and land claims first came on the scene.

Amagoalik’s phrasing is instructive: Inuit who had hitherto experienced a degree of control over their lives “found out” that they were “powerless” in relation to this new government; power is deeply relational and material in Amagoalik’s account. Notably, the laws and services Amagoalik critiques were implemented with the intention of helping, improving, and transforming Inuit into better citizens, and Kugluktukmiut had objected to this “help” on more than one occasion. The Coppermine representative to a 1960 meeting of the Committee on Eskimo Affairs, Kilikaviyak, stated that

he had been asked by the people in Coppermine to say that many Eskimos there, particularly the older people, regarded the old way of life as still best for them. Only a minority of the people in Coppermine wanted to change their old way of life and the rest wanted to be left alone to make a living. (cited in Tester and Kulchyski 1994, 357)

But change was rapid and few Inuit managed to be left alone. Most continued to spend extended periods of time away from the settlement at outpost camps, where government programs, the RCMP, and missionaries exerted less influence over their daily lives. Some continue to divide
their time between Kugluktuk and a range of camps and cabins across the region, but almost all Innuinait had settled more or less permanently in Coppermine, Holman, Cambridge Bay, and Bathurst Inlet by the late 1960s and early 1970s.

An additional dynamic was introduced to northern governmental interests in the late 1960s as a newly empowered territorial government took shape. The seat of government was moved from Ottawa to Yellowknife in 1967 and the government of the NWT gradually assumed jurisdiction over a range of portfolios, including lands, health, education, and economic development (although portions of these portfolios continued to remain under the purview of various federal departments). The first Yellowknife-based Territorial Commissioner, Stuart Hodgson, was committed to governmental expansion and making government relevant to northerners. He opened the November 1967 Territorial Council with telling remarks:

I take great pleasure in being able to stand before you in our new capital today, on what is indeed a historic occasion, to officially open the Thirty-Fifth Session of the Council of the Northwest Territories. I have always believed that people with their needs and aspirations must be the most important consideration that any government has if it is to function democratically as the servant of those it purports to govern. It is for this reason that I am so very happy to address you from this seat of government in Yellowknife - because I can say to you that the Government of the Northwest Territories has moved so much closer to our people. We are among them now, as neighbours, patrons of their businesses, and social acquaintances. And we are trying, each in his own way, to become true northerners and members of a community that stretches far wider than the confines of Yellowknife but spreads across the one and a quarter million square miles of Canada's Northwest Territories. This cannot help having a tremendous effect on the attitude of northern residents towards our government and indeed the effectiveness with which we operate (Hodgson cited in Dickerson 1992, 88-89).
John Amagoalik (2007, 59), who worked under Hodgson in the early 1970s, argues that while it was the mandate of the GNWT and of Hodgson himself to “improve the lives of our people … their vision was one North. We are all Northerners, we are going to have a common future. That was their philosophy in Yellowknife. It was certainly not to settle land claims or create a new territory … Their position was that aboriginal rights did not exist in northern Canada or the Northwest Territories”. James Arvaluk similarly recalls that, as much as Hodgson wanted to foster community development and local political involvement, he was primarily interested in establishing Yellowknife as the seat of the NWT government (Arvaluk 2007, 134) and in promoting the independence of the territory from Ottawa. The NWT government may have been based in the Territory, but from the perspective of most Indigenous northerners it was still dominated by white men from the south with their own ideas about the future of the region and its Indigenous peoples.

The territorial heritage plaquing program, initiated in 1970 as part of a broader move to build territorial archives, museums, and other heritage resources (Leonard 1984), was in line with the goal of building a single territory for all northerners and in fostering a sense of regional, territorial identity in the NWT. The NWT Historical Advisory Board had selected Bloody Falls as an “impressive” site for territorial commemoration in November 1970. According to Ted Boxer, it was selected in part because of the archeological merits of the site recently uncovered by the Archeological Survey of Canada (archeologist Robert McGhee had “discovered” in the late 1960s that Bloody Falls had been used as a fishing site for millennia), and in part due to “the historical value of the location resulting from its relation to Samuel Hearne’s historic journey of 1771” (Boxer 1973, 1). As federal and territorial government representatives strained to “explain” to the Coppermine Settlement Council members, “the first white contact at Coppermine had long lasting effect on the future of the nation …. There was an achievement locating the arctic overland
making the outside aware of the route. This fact is recorded in history and the plaque shows the
visitors that here is the destination for that historic journey” (Innes 1972, 1). The plaque, then,
which would be the first territorial heritage plaque in the NWT, would locate an event of national
importance in the territory and gesture both to the importance of the NWT in Canadian history
and celebrate a distinctly northern accomplishment.

Federal interest in commemorating Hearne was slightly different. Although the Trudeau
administration’s insensitivity to Aboriginal interests and rights was made famous by the 1969
White Paper, the federal government was more sensitive to the political dangers of
commemorating Indigenous massacres than was the Territorial government. The federal Historic
Sites and Monuments Board, administered through Parks Canada, was interested in
commemorating the “discovery of the Coppermine River” and opted to locate its own plaque at
the mouth of river, in the town of Coppermine, rather than up the river at Bloody Falls where the
territorial plaque was to be erected. In a June 1972 letter to Boxer, L.H. Robinson, Regional
Director of the National and Historic Parks Branch of DIAND, made clear that “although the
Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada objects to historical reference to the incident at
Bloody Falls, and would prefer to have our plaque located elsewhere, we were wondering about
the feasibility of having a joint federal-territorial commemorative ceremony to unveil the two
plaques this fall” (Robinson 1972a, 1). The proposed federal plaque inscription did, indeed, avoid
explicit reference to the Bloody Falls massacre, but certainly made oblique references to the
event:

86 This was a somewhat banal event to commemorate. Hearne himself made clear that the Coppermine
River was useless as a shipping route, offered little in the way of copper reserves, and was of limited
imperial value. He also ‘discovered’ the river far inland and many miles upstream from the settlement of
Coppermine. The selection of the discovery of the Coppermine River as a heritage moment rather than the
massacre seems instead to have been a political move to avoid explicit reference to the Bloody Falls
massacre, while still evoking that event. Notably, interest in commemorating the Coppermine as a heritage
river is ongoing, and provides an indirect mode of commemorating Arctic exploration and adventure
without explicitly referencing Bloody Falls (see Nunavut Parks 2002).
In July 1771 Samuel Hearne of the Hudson’s Bay Company and a large party of Indians led by the Chipewyan, Matonabbee, reached the Coppermine River after an arduous seven-month trek from Fort Prince of Wales (Churchill) on Hudson Bay. Hearne found neither the great mine he sought nor a direct water route to the Pacific. On the return trip Hearne became the first European to see Great Slave Lake. His narrative of this journey is a masterpiece of Canadian travel literature. (National and Historic Parks Branch; Ministry of Indian and Northern Affairs ca 1972)

Federal and territorial interests would prove to be largely aligned throughout the plaquing planning process, as both sought to enroll Euro-Canadian heritage sites in the distant north into the national imaginary.

Both Boards were encouraged in their efforts by Lena Pedersen, NWT Territorial Council member for the region and a resident of Coppermine. Pedersen, of Greenlandic Inuit descent and the first woman (and Inuit woman) to be elected to the Territorial Council (Library and Archives Canada 2000), had apparently requested funds from the Territorial government in 1971 to “celebrate the 200th anniversary of Samuel Hearne’s visit of July 17, 1771” (Boxer 1973, 1). The celebration involved the erection of a cairn by the local boy scouts, a cairn that one year later was described by the Settlement Manager as already “somewhat deteriorated” (Boxer 1973, 1) and in need of replacement, suggesting that this “community” (Innes 1972, 2) commemorative act may not have been as well-received as Territorial officials might have hoped. Although Pedersen and her Danish husband, Red, were “completely behind the erection of this monument”, an internal memo to Commissioner Hodgson quoted Lena as saying that “others in the community, particularly a number of young Eskimos, are against it. The young Eskimos say we should not commemorate the visit of a white explorer, and the massacre of a number of Eskimos by the
Indians who traveled with him. They have influenced the council, although Lena is still entirely in favour of the monument” (GNWT Internal Memo 1972).

Ironically, Lena and her husband, Red, had helped establish the very forum through which these “young Eskimos” were articulating their objections: the Coppermine Settlement Council (Canadian Parliamentary Review 1987-88). Settlement Councils were established by the Hodgson government as a move towards representative government at the local level, motivated in large part by the recommendations of the Carrothers Commission, a federal commission undertaken in the mid-1960s to study the future of government in the NWT. Carrothers (1966, 189) identified “a strong desire, among both indigenes and whites, for local self-government and for political responsibility” and recommended the formation of a territorial “department of Local Government” (188) which would implement representative government structures at the settlement level. Carrothers insisted that the implementation of meaningful and responsive government structures at the local level was “crucial to the economic, social, and political development of the north. ... decentralization is of first importance” (189), and Hodgson seems to have taken this recommendation to heart. Notably, both Carrothers and Hodgson conceptualized local government structures as transformative bodies that would educate Inuit in democratic principles and processes, not as means for the articulation of distinct rights or claims. Indeed, Carrothers recommended the creation of an “Institute of Political Affairs” that would engage in “grass roots political education” (195) among Indigenous peoples; tellingly, it was to be staffed by anthropologists. The Councils themselves had exceedingly narrow mandates and paltry budgets (Condon 1996; Dickerson 1992) and seemed designed to function as practice governments rather than venues for meaningful representation or self-determination. Hodgson evinced a genuine commitment to their implementation, however; Amagoalik recalls that “Hodgson used to travel all over the territory. He tried to visit every single community at least
once a year” (2007, 53) and he “used to say that he was working himself out of a job. He knew
that he was only filling a void in the political leadership which would one day be filled by
northerners themselves” (Amagoalik 1996, n.p.). The deferral of meaningful Indigenous
government to a future “one day” is telling (and ongoing87) – as Li (2007) has so persuasively
argued, the “will to improve” colonized peoples on the part of their self-appointed “trustees” is a
hallmark of governmental power, and it is accompanied by the identification of the limits and
deficits in colonized peoples’ abilities to manage themselves. She argues, moreover, that
governmental power is only strengthened by moves to enhance the representation and agency of
those being governed: “To govern means to act on the actions of subjects who retain the capacity
to act otherwise” (2007, 17). Settlement councils, as they were conceived in the late 1960s and
early 1970s, seem to exemplify this dynamic of governmentality.

According to McPherson (2003, 95), Inuit were keenly aware that, even as “the people
were being encouraged to assume a larger responsibility for their affairs through settlement
councils … the real power and authority remained in the hands of the government.” Indeed, a
follow-up report to the Carrothers Commission published in 1980 found that

there are … complaints that local governments in the NWT are, in effect, administrative
extensions of the GNWT, and used for the sole purpose of delivering its programs. Local
councils and committees are perceived by the communities as possessing no real
authority over those issues that are of vital importance to the lives of residents of the
communities. The territorial and federal governments consider the local councils and
committees to be their agents, or merely advisory bodies, and not part of a separate and
distinct level of government. Thus, the same phenomenon occurs at the community level
as at the territorial level: despite the existence of fully elected representative bodies, there

87 Kulchyski (2005, 16) documents the persistence of this phenomenon in present-day northern Canada,
where Indigenous peoples are still not deemed “ready” for self-government. Similar concerns were voiced
by Indigenous northerners at a national northern planning conference (2030 NORTH) in June 2009.
is a sense of powerlessness and a feeling that government is being 'administered' from afar. The principles of accountable and responsive government are not being fulfilled. (Drury 1980, 34)

Inuit nevertheless made use of the Settlement Councils to articulate their interests. Amagoalik (2007, 42) suggests that Inuit involvement in the Councils and other political fora expanded in the 1960s and 1970s as part of a transition in leadership:

It was in the early sixties that we started to feel anger, not for the first time, but we started to express it openly. It was around this time that the Inuit were going through a transition in leadership. There was a younger generation becoming community leaders. This new generation of leaders was educated, not in the university sense, but was able to speak English, and had some education. They were the first generation of Inuit leaders who really started to express our frustrations.

Amagoalik claims that the generation of Inuit who attended residential schools through the 1960s and 70s were politicized by the civil rights movement, the American Indian movement, and by the realization that Inuit across the North were experiencing similar things. It was at residential school in Churchill that Amagoalik and other students started to think about “how we were going to change the Arctic” (45). Other Inuit leaders also attribute, in part, the rise of the Inuit land claim and self-government movement to residential schooling (Arvaluk 2007; Irniq 2008; Ittinuar 2008), although they also insist on the high social and personal costs of this schooling. As Peter


d88 Elleke Boehmer argues that resistance to colonialism usually grew out of the networks established by Indigenous intellectuals from a range of locations: “anti-colonial, cross-nationalist links adapted from and exploited an empire-wide reality” (2006, 113), and it was through their exposure to colonial language, education, and metropolitan networks that “early nativist and nationalist intellectuals” (114) were able to adapt western theories to their own ends, learn from other histories of resistance, and articulate resistance movements for their people.
Ittinuar (2008, 119) observes, “the only way to … stop being a colonial figure administered from afar, a colonial subservient semi-oppressed type of person … was to become white, was through politics.” James Arvaluk (2007, 146) describes the adoption of “white” politics and practices as a trade-off necessitated by the fact that “the traditional Inuit leaders … were not respected historically by the government, the RCMP, the mission etc. They were not respected. Instead of trying to make that work, the trade-off was to have democratically elected councils.” Tester and Kulchyski (1994, 356) echo Arvaluk’s observation, suggesting that “a basic lack of respect for traditional leaders and political values generally informed the judgments and approaches of government staff in Arctic administration [through the post-war era].” The “young Eskimos” of Kugluktuk who made use of their democratically-elected Settlement Council to resist the erection of plaques commemorating Samuel Hearne and Bloody Falls did so not so much as an exercise in the formation of territorial and national citizenship, then, but rather as part of a new strategy for the articulation of Inuit interests.

The grounds for their objection to the plaques were both practical and symbolic. As Taipana outlined in his initial telex, the Settlement Council felt that any monies spent in Coppermine ought to be directed to the more urgent need of providing running water and bathing facilities in government rental housing. Although government employees had long enjoyed homes with solid construction, effective heating, electricity, and running water, most Coppermine residents had only recently moved into “match-box” government rental housing that was hastily built, difficult to heat, and without water pressure systems. These houses were meant to replace the scrap material structures that Kugluktukmiut had built for themselves as they settled in Coppermine. A 1963 report submitted to DIAND regarding housing conditions in Coppermine describes the housing many Kugluktukmiut still lived in during the early 1970s and underscores the urgency of Taipana’s demands for fully equipped housing:
... the scrap houses are constructed of a wood frame, generally of wood from packing cases, with canvas on the outside (the outside covering varies from canvas to sheet metal, cardboard or skins). The insides of these houses are generally floored, although in several cases they are not, and the material most generally used is the lumber from surplus packing cases. Insulation is generally lacking, although in one or two cases cardboard and moss is being used. None of the wood or scrap houses have chemical toilets or electricity. The sanitation problems caused by this are only accentuated by the fantastic overcrowding that exists. ... in the homemade houses the average is only 23.3 square feet per person. ... Due to the limitations of the building material, used walls must be frequently patched and buttressed, and even when banked with snow during the winter cannot keep out the wind and extreme cold. In the spring the melting snow turns the canvas and cardboard outer walls into a soggy sodden mass, and the interiors become damp and inordinately cold. (E. M. Cotterill cited in Dickerson 1992, 74-5)

This description requires contextualization and deconstruction. It was written by a white government official with an interest in amplifying the unsuitability of Inuit housing and informed by a racialized understanding of the links between housing, family, and health; Cotterill’s description highlights the reach of government into the minutiae of daily life and identifies a problem that governmental officials could then proceed to solve. Notably, the report was penned at a time when significant numbers of Coppermine residents were being evacuated from the community to tuberculosis hospitals in the South. Condon (1996, 138) suggests that 11.3% of Coppermine residents were sent away for treatment between 1962-1966, their infection rates attributed to overcrowding in the housing Cotterill described, and indeed to other “failings” in sanitation, hygiene, diet, and so on. But the memo nevertheless conveys something of the

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89 Condon also documents Inuit recollections of housing conditions in Holman during this time, including comments by Joshua Oliktoak that he did not experience the housing as overcrowded: “it was fun. There was always some family there … it was just part of life” (1996, 166-7). Note, too, that missionary and
contrast between government housing provided for white employees and the housing resources available to Inuit residents. Taipana’s demand for pressure systems and running water in the newly constructed rental homes built for Inuit reflected community concerns about the poor quality of this new housing and particularly in relation to the superior homes built for white residents. Although Territorial officials were at pains to “explain” that the budget for settlement housing was federal and their own small plaquing budget would barely cover the costs of upgrading a single house, this explanation did not “make much impact on the Council” (Innes 1972, 1), who were familiar with the inertia and obfuscation engendered by the parsing of bureaucratic jurisdictions. The Council’s insistence that Kugluktukmiut have a say in determining budgetary priorities, including the many federal and territorial budgets that so shaped settlement life, exemplifies the clashing sense of what Settlement Councils were meant to achieve. Whereas the NWT Historical Advisory Board had hoped to simply inform the people of Coppermine, via the Council, of their plaquing intentions (over which the Settlement government had no official jurisdiction), Kugluktukmiut were using the Settlement Council as a forum for conveying community needs and articulating their demands to government in general, regardless of jurisdiction. They were asserting their jurisdiction over their own affairs and reorienting governmental power towards their own ends. This reorientation resonates with what Kulchyski describes as a “specific logic of resistance that takes place in Aboriginal politics in northern Canada: a logic of subversion, whereby structures or gestures or policies of the dominant order are turned against themselves, are operated so as to achieve an effect that is precisely the opposite of the one aimed for” (2005, 268). Li’s (2007) study of governmentality similarly documents how governmental “improvement programs” (26) stimulate their own undoing and subversion, anthropological observers had long complained about the “dirtiness” of igloos; Sperry mentions his own observations of igloos in his memoir (2005).
however inadvertently, in part because they invent and address a coherent group, thus stimulating a kind of group consciousness and enhancing the legibility of the group’s claims. Peoples that had hitherto identified themselves as Nagyukturmiut, Ahiarmiut, Ualliariungmiut, and other names referring to the regional and seasonal patterns of specific sub-groups of Innuinait (Collignon 2006; Niptanatiak 2006; Taptuna 2007), or on still other terms of affiliation and identity, had been assembled at Coppermine and every government program addressing them as such facilitated their ability to articulate common interests and demands.

These common interests and demands extended beyond Coppermine and were increasingly articulated with a pan-Inuit movement towards land claims. Kugluktukmiut were acutely concerned that the erection of plaques at Bloody Falls or in town would compromise their “Land Rights” (Boxer 1973, 3). Government officials dismissed their concerns and Sperry later went so far as to point out the “irrelevance” of land rights to the question of plaquing, but the Council’s concerns were well-founded. Informed, no doubt, by the legal insights shared at the Coppermine Conference in 1970, Kugluktukmiut were well-aware that the transfer of federal Crown land to territorial control, whether through explicit ownership or through usage, paved the way for the extinguishment of Inuit title. Kugluktukmiut were adamant that Kugluk (Bloody Falls) was Inuit land and they feared that the erection of government monuments would compromise their control over its usage and ultimately undermine their intention to claim Aboriginal title over it and the surrounding lands. They were right to be concerned. The GNWT had submitted a request to DIAND on April 24, 1969 to reserve federal Crown land on both sides of Bloody Falls for the creation of a “future historical and archeological site” (Government of Northwest Territories 1969b). Two weeks later they revised their submission to request “a parcel of land commencing one mile above Bloody Falls on the Coppermine River and extending downstream to the southerly boundary of the community of Coppermine” (Government of
Northwest Territories 1969a), in effect requesting control over the most intensively used stretch of the Coppermine River (see Figure 15). The intensive usage of the river and Bloody Falls was, in fact, precisely what the GNWT aimed to curtail. Dr. Robert McGhee, archeologist at the National Museum of Man who had led archeological excavations at Bloody Falls in the previous summers, wrote to Commissioner Stuart Hodgson in October 1968 outlining his concerns that the “archeological value of the site (which is great—it looks as if it has been an excellent fishing spot for several millennia) could be partially or largely destroyed through the construction of buildings on the site, without contravening any existing antiquities legislation” (McGhee 1968, 1). Hodgson had actually visited the site during the excavations (1) and was apparently supportive of any measures to protect “Territorial antiquities” (1). McGhee informed Hodgson that his efforts to have Bloody Falls declared a National Historic Site were unsuccessful and that he had been advised that the GNWT “would have much greater control over the site, since you would have to issue licenses for the establishment of tourist camps or outcabin in the area” (1), cabins that would very likely have been built by Inuit. It seems, moreover, that the notion of “preserving” the site and marking “the location of Hearne’s massacre … [with] a cairn or plaque” (1) came directly from McGhee. According to longtime Kugluktuk resident Larry Whittaker, there were only two cabins along the stretch of river between Bloody Falls and Coppermine when he arrived in 1970, his own and a cabin used by the Catholic Father Lapointe, but cabins quickly began to pop up in the ensuing years (Whittaker 2007). These would have been built by Inuit. The GNWT’s interest, then, led by McGhee, was not merely to mark an historical site but to control a roughly 50km² stretch of land and river that was crucially important to Kugluktukmiut. As Kugluktuk Elder Alice Ayalik observes, “when white man put monument in places, they always start to do research and work, and start to say Inuit can’t use that land … it’s our hunting place, or
drinking water, it’s our water tank and we’ll have a hard time if they try to do something with Bloody Falls” (2007).

Joe Allen Evyagotailak, former MLA for Kugluktuk, recalls that objection to the plaques was driven as much by the concerns of Elders as by the “young Eskimos” who had “taken over” the Settlement Council. “The people who knew the history, the Elders, they said if Samuel Hearne didn’t stop them, those Chipewyan, from killing their people then why should they have a monument for him? Samuel Hearne stood back without trying to stop it, maybe he couldn’t stop them, but the Elders didn’t want to see that monument” (Evyagotailak 2007). According to Evyagotailak, Elders were particularly concerned about being confronted with unwanted, painful memories when they visited the Falls: “If they wanted to go up to the Falls to fish, spend the day fishing with their family or something, they didn’t want to have to see something like that monument to remind them of it … Inuit don’t like to remember what really happened”, a sentiment that is still commonly expressed in Kugluktuk today. Rosemarie Meyok (2007) echoes

Figure 15: Requests to reserve federal crown land submitted by the GNWT to DIAND, 24 April and 8 May 1969. Source: Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Northwest Territories, Dept. of Culture and Communications fonds, G-1993-007, Box 11, File 3.
this recollection of community resistance to the plaques. “The community at the time did not want to be reminded of the massacre because so many of our ancestors were killed there, and they refused to have that monument”. Whether community members objected on the grounds of not wanting to be reminded of a traumatic past, or whether they took exception to the control exercised by outsiders over their lives, lands, and histories, Kugluktukmiut were resoundingly united in their objection to the monuments. In a vote held on the matter in September 1972 the community voted 53 to 2 against the plaques (Taipana 1972b).

Tania Murray Li observes that the rejection of government regimes on the part of Indigenous communities is often attributed to “the people’s failure to understand what is good for them” (2007, 16), and the dispute over plaquing was indeed read, initially, as a matter that might be resolved if only the people could be made to understand the importance of both Hearne and a heritage plaque. Alarmed at the level of resistance to the proposed plaques, Hodgson asked Anglican Reverend John Sperry, a member of the NWT Historical Advisory Board who had recently completed twenty years of missionary work in Coppermine, to visit the community and “explain” the importance of the plaques to the people. Sperry traveled to Coppermine and presided over a community meeting on October 25, 1972. According to Sperry’s report to Hodgson regarding the visit,

The [Community Hall] was full and after Colin [Adjun, Chair of the Settlement Council] introduced me I told the story of Samuel Hearne at fair length in Eskimo … I pointed out the irrelevance of the land settlement issues and stressed that if the plaques could be placed with honour, then there would be a great tourist attraction apart from the important factor of preserving history. The chairman publicly admitted that he had never heard the full story before and it was an obvious surprise to many to hear that Hearne did not organize and lead the attack on the Eskimo village!! There were a few enquiries and a lot
of enthusiasm although I cautioned that perhaps they should think the whole thing out at leisure and then write to inform you of their final decision. (Sperry 1972b)

The suggestion that the people should “think the whole thing out at leisure” is not incidental; a hallmark of governmental power is its refusal of the use of physical violence or explicit coercion to achieve its ends. Without access to violence, governmental trustees can “operate only by educating the desires and reforming the practices of the target population” (Li 2007, 16) under the pretense that people can choose not to be reformed; it is crucial that governmental subjects “retain the capacity to act otherwise” (17) in order for governmental power to function. Sperry was optimistic about his education of Kugluktukmiut. He enthused that he anticipated a “favourable reply” from the community regarding the plaques and hoped that they would soon “have this great hero of history preserved forever in formal plaquing” (Sperry 1972b). Hodgson forwarded copies of Sperry’s letter to territorial and federal departments who were indeed “encouraged to learn from Rev. Sperry’s letters that the Eskimos now show a clearer understanding of the purpose of erecting the plaques” (Robinson 1972b; emphasis added).

Sperry also wrote to Colin Adjun upon his return to Yellowknife to thank him for calling the community meeting and under the pretence that “perhaps I should write down a few things so that my words can be kept on your files if any should ask more questions” (Sperry 1972a, 1). The letter reads rather more like a directive. It is in this letter that Sperry’s effectiveness as an agent of the NWT government is laid bare, effective precisely because of his intimate knowledge of Innuinait/Kugluktukmiut language, beliefs, and concerns. Consider Sperry’s opening remarks:

All people like to remember the past and the Eskimo people have always done this. Sometimes they remember the happy things which happened and sometimes they remember sad things. Inuenigit is that island not far from Coppermine we call Dead
Man’s Island. That name is like a plaque which remembers an unhappy time when people
died there one summer long ago. There are lakes around named after the first man who
caught a fish there and so forth. Today we still name lakes and islands after people but
putting up a plaque with writing on is a better way because it tells the story better. Both
the Government of the N.W.T. and the Federal Government wish to remember Samuel
Hearne with plaques. (Sperry 1972a, 1)

Sperry went on to outline the main points he had shared at the meeting, including the teaching
that “on the whole trip [Hearne] was not really the boss and it seems that most of the Indians only
helped Hearne because the chief Indian Matonabbee made them” (1). According to Sperry,
Hearne “could do nothing to stop the Indian war party” (2) and when he “called for mercy they
laughed at him and mocked him. After, Hearne said that he wept to see such a killing of men,
women, and children” (2). Sperry assured Adjun that no plaques would be erected without the
consent of the people and that the plaques would make no mention of the “unhappy killing of the
Eskimos” (2), but instead would “just say that Hearne was the first whiteman to see the Arctic
Ocean” (2). As a member of the Historical Advisory Committee (“a meeting of people who think
about oldtime things and happenings” (2)), Sperry assured Adjun that “putting a plaque in the
Coppermine area had nothing to do with Land Settlement or land ownership. The land business is
a very different matter and you can believe the Commissioner’s word on this as you can on other
matters” (2).

Sperry concluded his letter with a stern observation: “One other important matter, Colin,
is that if there is one plaque or two put up to remember Samuel Hearne, then this will be known
everywhere outside and we can expect more tourists to visit Coppermine taking pictures and
bring[ing] trade with them; this is very important” (2). The grandiose materiality of this claim is
striking – the notion that merely by erecting a plaque “everywhere outside” would come to know
of Coppermine and would travel there no doubt raised legitimate doubts among Kugluktukmiut.
But Sperry’s claim was not out of line with government visions. Mitchell (1996) notes that tourism was an increasingly important component of the GNWT’s economic development plans as fur trapping declined. A tourism plan developed in the late 1960s identified Coppermine as a promising site for tourism, in fact, and included intentions to recreate a Copper Inuit village and provide other amenities to attract tourists (Mitchell 1996, 274). Tourism has never been a lucrative industry in Coppermine, however. The current owner of the Coppermine Inn, Kerry Horn, claims that in the 23 years he has managed the business, only one visitor has come to Kugluktuk specifically to see Bloody Falls, and this was anthropologist Robert McGhee (Horn 2007). Excluding sport hunters and fishermen, who account for a large percentage of his business, Horn suggests that tourism makes up “less than 1%” of hotel stays. Horn’s comments must be qualified: Kugluktuk experiences an annual influx of recreational tourists who arrive in town by canoe, and who show great interest in Hearne and Bloody Falls. These tourists tend not to stay at the Coppermine Inn because of its cost. But Horn’s observations are nevertheless indicative of the limited importance of cultural-historical tourism in Kugluktuk.

Sperry’s suggestion (as conveyed to Hodgson) that the people think over the plaquing matter at their leisure was defined with more precision in the letter to Adjun: Sperry suggested that Adjun respond to the Commissioner within two weeks advising of the community’s final decision on the matter. Adjun took six months, ignoring several requests from the GNWT, and his eventual response is revealing:

April 25/73

Re Samuel Hearne Plaung

At a public meeting regarding the above the people of Coppermine voted in favor of allowing this cairn to be erected after Mr Sperry had been in town telling the people of his and the Historical Advisory Board’s wishes
Clearly missing the accusatory tone of Adjun’s telex, territorial officials immediately revived the plaquing program and began developing plans for a plaquing ceremony that very summer. Internal correspondence indicates, in fact, that plans had already been made and the GNWT was merely waiting for word from Coppermine that the people would “condone the erection of the historic marker” so that they could proceed with the arrangements (Dixon et. al. 1973). The unveiling of the two plaques was to be presided over by an impressive list of officials traveling to Coppermine from across the country, including Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs) and his wife, Stuart Hodgson and his wife, the chairs of the federal and territorial historic sites boards, Lena Pedersen, Reverend Sperry, various other federal and territorial government officials, and Colin Adjun, Chair of the Settlement Council. Peter Kamingoak was identified as a translator for the event and the agenda included time for Inuit drumming, games, and the singing of songs by local children. Plaque inscriptions were translated into Innuinaqtun, plaque designs debated and commissioned, and extensive memos circulated wondering over entertainment, food, gifts, bottles of water, appropriate footwear, supplies of life jackets for the boat ride to Bloody Falls, and other sundry details.

When Ted Boxer and R.B. Mitchell of the DIAND Parks Branch traveled to Coppermine on July 9-10, 1973 to make final arrangements, however, they were informed by Adjun that he “did not wish to take an active part in the ceremonies” (Elkin 1973b, 1), raising concerns that “a situation might arise [during the plaquing ceremony] which would be most embarrassing to the Commissioner and the Minister” (2). According to Boxer, Adjun apparently indicated that
“although the community were in favour of the plaques, the Council were still opposed, but would allow the commemoration because of the wishes of the community” (Boxer 1973, 5). The Council, in effect, would not actively block the ceremonies but refused to legitimize the plaques with their presence. Sperry, informed of Adjun’s comments, advised the government not to proceed with the ceremony “unless someone who knows the people at Coppermine were to attend” (5), claiming not to be available himself due to holidays. The NWT Executive Committee met to discuss the matter and decided that “to pursue the plaquing ceremonies at this time would not be desirable” (Elkin 1973a). Letters were sent to the range of federal, territorial, and community representatives involved in the undertaking that the ceremonies were canceled. Hodgson hoped to revive the matter the following year, but it would be over thirty years before any signage was erected at Bloody Falls, and then under the auspices of the government of Nunavut.

Resistance and the Geographies of Response

This dispute unsettles a number of assumptions informing geographic conceptualizations of power, resistance, and colonialism. First, it challenges the spatiality of resistance insofar as it locates resistance within governmental power structures rather than in a realm outside of and oppositional to “power”. Throughout the dispute Kugluktukmiut used governmental power structures like the Settlement Council to promote their interests, which were, in this case, to undermine governmental power over their lands, their history, and their jurisdiction over local decision-making. Although the Settlement Council was not empowered to have any jurisdiction over federal and territorial plaquing, nor over the lands upon which the plaques were to be erected, Kugluktukmiut made use of the structure to provide the impression that local
governmental approval had been denied. Adjun’s refusal to attend the plaquing ceremony was not the refusal of a single resident of Coppermine; it was the refusal of the Settlement Council chairman, and as such it presented the possibility of embarrassment at what was supposed to be a celebration of local as much as territorial and national history. Colonial and postcolonial scholars have long argued that resistance is a form of relation structured by colonial power (e.g., Bhabha 1985), drawing on Foucault’s primary insight that “where there is power, there is resistance” (1978, 95-96). But as Lila Abu-Lughod (1990, 47) argues, scholars have tended to hang on to a romanticized understanding of resistance as “a reactive force somehow independent of or outside of the system of power”, rather than attending to the ways in which acts and expressions of resistance reveal parallel acts and expressions of power. She argues that the value of studying moments of resistance lies not so much in their “hopeful confirmation of the failure-or partial failure-of systems of oppression”, but rather in “letting [resistant] practices teach us about the complex interworkings of historically changing structures of power” (53). Her insight is instructive: the opposition of Kugluktukmiut to the proposed plaques reveals as much about changing forms of power in post-war NWT as it does about Inuit strategies to resist that power.

Second, and relatedly, the dispute challenges assumptions about what colonial and anti-colonial bodies, both individual and collective, look like. It is tempting, for example, as a “metropolitan enthusiast of ‘third world resistance’” (Spivak 1999, 260), to frame Sperry as a coercive religious authority who extracted an uneasy acquiescence from Kugluktukmiut at the meeting, and whose claims about a converted, enthusiastic audience were exaggerated in service of his own interests and identity. Or, perhaps, to understand Sperry as a more benign agent of governmental power who aimed to “educate the desires” of his subjects, rendering him no less a colonial villain, and to imagine, in turn, that the people of Coppermine were ultimately unmoved by his wishes and conspired to undermine the plaquing plans in other ways. These would make
for good postcolonial resistance stories. Such stories have their place, and they may well characterize the relations between Sperry and Colin Adjun, but I am not convinced that they do justice to the events of 1972-3. I am inclined to argue, instead, that an analysis of Sperry’s role in the plaquing dispute can accommodate both a critique of his power as a missionary and as a representative of the territorial government, and also a certain hesitancy and unwillingness to let this tale unfold as a “charmed” account of colonial power/resistance, where the good and the bad occupy clear and separate realms.

Sperry was surely a highly effective agent of governmental power. Speaking in Innuinaqtun and playing upon the sensibilities of the people he knew so well, Sperry was able to convince the people of Kugluktuk to consent to the erection of territorial and federal plaques commemorating Samuel Hearne and Bloody Falls, consent that the bureaucrats involved in the matter had repeatedly failed to secure. He was particularly well-suited to “educating the desires” and “reforming the practices” (Li 2007) of Kugluktukmiut because of the intimate relationship he had with so many community members, an intimacy that carried with it different risks and stakes than those informing relations between Kugluktukmiut and anonymous government officials in Yellowknife. In the early 1970s missionaries still wielded a great deal of authority in communities like Coppermine, underlining the personal risks involved in challenging Sperry’s “wishes” (Adjun 1973) and the precarity associated with overt acts of resistance in a small, isolated community like Coppermine90. And yet the bonds between Sperry and Kugluktukmiut

90 As Amagoalik (2007, 36) recalls, “the missionaries, in many ways, represented the government if there were no official representatives in the communities. They registered births and deaths, and in some cases handed out family allowances and that sort of thing”. A recent collection of Inuit Elders’ memories about the first missionaries in the North includes descriptions of the profound fear some Inuit felt towards Christian missionaries and describes the extensive influence they had over Inuit practices (Tungilik and Uyarasuk 1999); Abraham Okpik (2005, 319) notes in particular that as Inuit organized politically in the 1970s they were actively discouraged by the clergy: “For a long time they said ‘don’t do that’. They said, ‘We are going to keep them this way as long as we can.’” Tester and Kulchyski (1994, 29; 248) document the role missionaries played in distributing relief payments in certain communities through the 1950s and
are not reducible to dynamics of fear or coercive influence, nor even to the dynamics of power deployed through more intimate, friendly means. Scholars such as Stoler (2002a), Perry (2004), Mbembe (2006) and Robinson (2000) have explored the importance of intimacy, trust, and friendship in colonial power relations and made provocative arguments about the ways in which these more “tender” dynamics could both facilitate surveillance and coercion and provide openings for mutuality and more convivial forms of power. Power, in these cases,

need not be thought of as simply objectifying, intrusive and imposing. In many circumstances modern tactics of power operate by enticing subjects to participate in forms of self-surveillance. … Power can be understood as a mutual, although rarely equal, relationship (rather than simply a technology) in which active subjects (both the ‘dominated’ and ‘dominator’) participate. (Robinson 2000, 68)

Sperry’s claim that the room was full of enthusiasm as he recounted stories to a packed Community Hall that evening in October does not, in that sense, necessarily jar against prior and subsequent opposition towards the plaques, not does it disqualify an analysis of his power. Sperry was very likely received as warmly as he claimed and he enjoyed the friendship of Kugluktukmiut who still remember him as a trusted and respected religious figure. Peter Kamingoak, the outspoken local delegate at the Coppermine Conference, was one of Sperry’s closest friends and guides (Sperry 2005, vii; 89) and Millie Kuliktana (2008a) attributes the high proportion of Anglicans in Kugluktuk to the strength of Sperry’s character and his long-term commitment to building relationships with locals. This warmth and friendship did not necessarily diminish Sperry’s power; on the contrary, following Robinson, one could argue that friendship their willingness to use these payments to influence potential converts. There were clearly both material and more metaphysical risks associated with challenging someone like Sperry.
was a component of his power, it was a tactic, a modality, and describes the shape of his influence.

And yet even this assessment of Sperry requires the relegation of individuals into categories of either powerful or oppressed, colonizer or colonized, and seems to emblematize Sparke’s (2008, 423) concerns about the “regulative ‘pull’ [of romanticized understandings of resistance] … away from examining the messy middle grounds” of conflicts like the one described here. One can certainly view community consent to the plaques as a kind of convivial coercion and argue that the possibilities for resistance in these circumstances were vastly reduced precisely because of the Sperry’s power. Indeed, James C. Scott’s landmark study of the “weapons of the weak” would identify Adjun’s stalling and “foot-dragging” (Scott 1985, 29) following the meeting as emblematic of his weakness in relation to Sperry’s power. But to argue that power relations were inherent in every encounter between Inuit and the various religious, government, and corporate figures active in the North in this era is not necessarily to argue that power dynamics encapsulated every interaction or accounted for the totality of peoples’ experiences. As Amagoalik notes, Inuit “discovered” their powerlessness at particular moments and under particular circumstances; they did not conceive of themselves as a wholly oppressed people, and few if any associate Sperry with coercion. Indeed, Sperry (2005) unwittingly gestures to the diminishing influence he wielded among Kugluktukmiut in the late 1960s and ‘70s in his memoir when he describes the replacement of divine authority with governmental services. Although I think it is crucial to account for the ways in which bonds of friendship, love, and trust can deploy power in some of the most insidious and intimate ways, I also think it is important to account for that which is not about power or resistance. To imagine that power was everywhere, always, constitutive of relations between Inuit and others is ultimately to advance a colonial fetish, and it is to undermine the complex subjectivities and agency of Inuit themselves.
Indeed, Sperry is not the only figure who would require caricature to uphold conventional narratives of colonial oppression and resistance. Such a narrative also requires, as Spivak observes, “self-knowing, politically canny subalterns” (1999, 257) united against their oppressors. The possibility that some Kugluktukmiut did, indeed, change their minds about the plaques following Sperry’s visit becomes a sign of their manipulation and coercive victimization rather than a thoughtful decision made by self-determining individuals. As I argued above, the formation of a coherent “Inuit” community is as much an effect of colonial governmental power as it is a shared oppositional consciousness among Inuit. Working together as Inuit against others has an historical geography, one that was emergent in the decades leading up the plaquing conflict, and one that requires ongoing effort to realize. It becomes inconvenient in such a narrative that Lena Pedersen was an Inuk – how does one account for her vehement support for the plaques in a story of “Inuit” resistance? Moreover, her advocacy for the people of Coppermine was constant and often oppositional: she stated publicly in 1974 that “the NWT Government moved North in 1967 to get closer to the people, but it has achieved only to get closer in miles to some communities. It is still as far as or further removed from the people as it every [sic] was” (cited in Mitchell 1996, 240-41). Some of the most prominent Inuit leaders who led the movement towards the creation of Nunavut are widely regarded as misogynist and abusive; many have been charged with crimes ranging from child abuse to sexual assault to possession of cocaine. John Amagoalik (a complex character to say the least) recalls that the generation of Inuit who led the “transition” in leadership in the 1960s and ‘70s were thoroughly

91 Alice Ayalik recalls, for example, that she not only disputed the proposed plaques herself, she “agreed to say no with the other people … we always have to agree with each other to say no, because if we keep saying yes to the white people if they want something with our land, then some day we’ll have a hard time taking it back” (Ayalik 2007). Agreeing to say no, together, requires work and the nourishing of collective interests. Peter Kamingoak similarly emphasized the importance of speaking out and standing up for the people of Coppermine when asked about the plaquing dispute, and went on to observe that the current MLA “needs to be a strong voice for the area and keep saying no when things aren’t good for people here” (Kamingoak 2007). There are contemporary directives in these recollections.
alienated from their parents and grandparents, and upon returning to their home communities after residential schooling their “rebellious attitudes” (2007, 43) distanced them from others. It would be misleading to characterize the actions of the young men who sat on the Coppermine Settlement Council as wholly representative of community concerns, not least the concerns of women, who are glaringly absent from histories of Inuit politics. If, as Sparke (2008, 423) observes, the “allure of the r-word … tends to pre-empt empirical research with metaphorical moves that make descriptions of socio-economic forces, racial and sexual subjectification, or even just everyday life seem somehow beside the point”, then “resistance” is not an adequate concept for understanding the events of 1972-3.

Rather than foundering on the limitations of conceptualizing the dispute in terms of power and resistance, this moment might be better accounted for in terms of the geographies of response and responsibility. Responsibility can be conceptualized in two ways. First, as it is commonly used, it refers to the ethical obligation to respond (to be responsible to, to be responsible for). But it can also be understood as “response-ability”, the ability or capacity to respond to a situation, and the terms upon which that response might be effective. Taken together, these two meanings blend what are often conceptualized as separate processes and separate subject positions in colonial studies. In most accounts of colonialism, for example, it is the colonizer who claims a sense of “responsibility” to or for the colonized, whether framed as the “white man’s burden” or in a more postcolonial register as the responsibility of the state to settle outstanding disputes with its Indigenous peoples. “Response-ability” understood as the ability and capacity to respond, however, is a condition scholars have tended to associate with the colonized. Indeed, Indigenous resistance as a form of response to colonial power relations has preoccupied colonial and postcolonial scholars for some time. The actions of Indigenous peoples are
understood as *responses to* colonialism rather than as actions informed by responsibilities anchored in other geographies.

Both senses of the term “responsibility” reveal important dynamics shaping this dispute. Not only do they focus our attention on the capacity and terms by which Kugluktukmiut were able to respond to the plaques, they also raise the important question of who and what Kugluktukmiut felt responsible for. As they made clear in their correspondence with the territorial government, Kugluktukmiut felt an acute sense of responsibility for the land and for ensuring a successful land claim. Their rejection of the plaques was informed by this sense of responsibility (see Chapter 7 for further exploration of how geographies of responsibility and care inform orderings of Bloody Falls in Kugluktuk). The concept of “response” is consistent with understandings of power and resistance as intertwined and co-constitutive, but it conjures a field of conversation and relationality in which the “colonized” can speak and act within a broader spectrum than simply as resistant or oppressed, and in which *legibility* becomes an important consideration. Kugluktukmiut responded to a situation that angered and worried them using whatever means were at their disposal, including the languages and structures of white colonial government. Their strategy was driven by their interest in *being heard*; the concept of “response” carries with it the assumption that acts of power and resistance must be legible to be effective.

This very legibility, moreover, must be contextualized. The plaquing dispute is the only “official” moment of organized Inuit resistance to nationalist, colonial obsessions with Bloody Falls that appears in federal and territorial archives. It is not, however, necessarily the most important, consistent, or effective means by which Kugluktukmiut have addressed the effects of this story on their lives. Most of the time Kugluktukmiut ignore, downplay, and refuse to talk about the Bloody Falls massacre. Their silences do not register as “resistance” because they are not necessarily organized, oppositional, or highly visible, but they are enormously effective for
the purposes they aim to achieve. If the uprising of Kugluktukmiut against commemorative plaques in the 1970s registers as one of the most resistant acts undertaken by Inuit against the storying of Bloody Falls, it is because this resistance was legible both to the government officials it was aimed at and to the contemporary scholar. Kugluktukmiut resisted in written form, in English, and through an elected representative; their telegrams and offhand comments are logged in territorial and federal archives and filed by appropriate department; they voted. And this was precisely the point. Other responses have not been aimed at governmental or colonial audiences. They are anchored in geographies of responsibility that cannot be reduced to colonial power relations. Conceptualizing resistance to the plaques as one response in a spectrum of responses better captures these silences, refusals, and re-imaginings and their relations to more overt, organized moments of “resistance”.

Conclusion

Sherry Ortner’s (1995, 190) oft-quoted study of resistance includes the observation that resistance studies are thin because they are ethnographically thin: thin on the internal politics of dominated groups, thin on the cultural richness of those groups, thin on subjectivity – the intentions, desires, fears, projects – of the actors involved in those dramas.

She argues that the thinness of resistance studies stems from an “ethnographic refusal”, a “failure of nerve” (190) on the part of scholars chastened by the crisis of representation to probe into the messiness of internal politics or write critically about dominated groups. The result, Ortner claims, is an intellectual “black hole” (190) that she urges scholars to fill. I agree with Ortner on
the charge that studies of resistance, particularly as carried out by colonial and postcolonial scholars (geographers included), tend to be thin on messy details and populated with stock characters, including the self-knowing, politically canny subalterns that Spivak describes as the banal, stock-in-trade currency used as exchange in the postcolonial “mode of production narrative” (1999, 244). But I disagree with Ortner’s assay of “black holes” calling for exploration. Her argument is informed by the belief that more knowledge is better, that knowledge is ultimately good even if it stings, and that knowledge lies waiting for discovery by intellectuals. I would argue instead, following Spivak, that the banality and predictability of resistance stories is informed by the uncritical (and impossible) desire among critical intellectuals to recuperate a speaking subaltern and is too often accompanied by a refusal to recognize the complicity of the intellectual in globalized systems of inequality; but it is not only the habit of intellectuals to peddle stock stories of resistance. Resistance stories, stereotyped and simplified, “strategically essentialized”, nourish contemporary orderings in Kugluktuk and animate the present in crucial ways. They have their place.

I have argued that resistance to the erection of commemorative plaques in the early 1970s was shaped by an emerging political culture among Kugluktukmiut that was articulated with broader political movements across the Arctic and beyond, and that these cultures and movements were themselves shaped by the intensification of governmental power in the post-war NWT and related interests in economic and political development in the north. Kulchyski (2005, 268) sums up this dynamic of articulated power/resistance with the observation that “residential schools, ‘total institutions’ whose function was totalizing, generated an Aboriginal leadership who could more effectively stand against totalization and whose first demand was to end the residential school system”, and in addition to residential schooling I have discussed the ways in which Settlement Councils and other governmental initiatives were used to address governmental
power. This interdigitation of governmental power and Inuit resistance does not make the latter any less compelling or authentic. Resistance involved work, practice, and risk, and the creative reorientation of programs and policies designed to do otherwise. As Li (2007) argues, struggle and activism are transformative, emergent practices that are neither inevitable nor predictable, even if they aim at precise goals. They are also profoundly situated, and I hope in this chapter I have managed to convey some of the complexity and specificity of the various people, places, ideas, and things that jostled about as Bloody Falls was ordered and re-ordered in the early 1970s.

The ambivalences, contradictions, and questions raised by studying—and storying—this event are highly instructive and suggest that moments of Indigenous resistance must be accounted for within broader geographies of response and responsibility. One need not idealize Inuit resistance as coherent and heroic to draw fascinating and instructive insights from this dispute. If anything, the courageous and creative ways in which particular people raised their objections to the ordering of Bloody Falls as a commemorative site are all the more instructive when situated in their context, and suggest that resistance is fundamentally practice; it is emergent and shaped by its context but not wholly contained by that context. Resistance is but one moment in a broader geography of response and responsibility, one that is less anchored in colonial domination than students of the colonial have tended to acknowledge.
Chapter 7
Towards an Emerging Past

“We cannot afford to run our lives in the small confines of the Government mind. The reason our views may seem strange and unrealistic is that no one ever bothered to take us seriously – to look closely at us as Dene people … We are the only people who know and realize our worth as a unique people – as a people with our own land and way of living.”
- Stephen Kakfwi

“There is no single, univocal way of not existing”
- Boaventura de Sousa Santos

In the 1960s, if you were to walk to the Northern Store along Coronation Drive in Coppermine to buy flour or ammunition, you would have been confronted with a wall-size mural recreating the Bloody Falls massacre. Complete with “spurts of sand and blood” (Horn 2007), the mural now hides behind pallets of toilet paper, potato chips, and canned milk in what has become a storage building for the new Northern store two blocks away. It’s hard to find a moment in history where Kablunaat did not work to materialize Hearne’s version of the Bloody Falls massacre story in town. From Richardson’s ragweed (see Chapter 4) to efforts to name streets and schools after Hearne, Kablunaat have been telling and re-telling the Bloody Falls massacre story not only in national films or postage stamps, things that are designed to circulate widely, but also through tangible, concrete, material iterations in town.

Kerry Horn, who has lived in Kugluktuk since the early 1970s and operated the Coppermine Inn for much of this time, claims that Inuit “don’t know the storyline” of the massacre. “They know they don’t like Indians but they’re not sure why”. In spite of their lack of
knowledge of the story, however, Horn claims that for Kugluktukmiut, Bloody Falls operates as a kind of signifier for animosity between Inuit and Indians and that in that sense, “Bloody Falls is still very much alive” in town. He links the animosity between Inuit and Indians as expressed in the Bloody Falls massacre story to a number of political and social effects, including most significantly the creation of Nunavut. Not only was the creation of the territory “racially motivated” by Inuit who did not want to be represented by “Indians in Yellowknife”, Horn suggests that the long years of negotiation leading up to the creation of the territory were significantly shaped by hostilities between Inuit and the Dene nations involved in the process.

During the 1970s and ‘80s, when the Coppermine Inn hosted delegations of northern Indigenous groups for negotiations about the creation of the territory, Horn and his wife allegedly spent time “passing notes back and forth between them [Inuit and Indian parties] because they wouldn’t speak to each other”. And yet, at the same time as Horn acknowledges the important role played by Kablunaat in glorifying and sustaining the Bloody Falls massacre story, he suggests that the event was not necessarily that significant: “It was a nasty thing to happen but not really that many people died …. Those were cruel times and standards of living were different”. The story, in other words, has its rightful place – in history books, in murals, but not in matters of territorial politics.

Horn’s implication that Inuit knowledge of Bloody Falls is unreliable, incomplete, and an irrational basis for contemporary Inuit-Dene hostilities is common among Kablunaat both in Kugluktuk and beyond. In this chapter, I want to challenge the notion that Inuit do not “know” the story of Bloody Falls, in part through a consideration of the geographies of storytelling about the massacre, and in part by challenging the foundation of Horn’s understanding of storytelling, knowledge, and meaning. I also want to challenge the notion that relations between Inuit and Dene have always been marked by war, whether with spears or through contemporary political
disputes, both by calling attention to the rich and varied history of interaction between Inuit and their neighbours to the South (the Tli Cho and Sahtu Nations) and by considering the ways in which Bloody Falls figures in contemporary relations between these peoples. Inuit storytelling about Bloody Falls, I will argue, is shaped by geographies of responsibility and care that weave relations between past, present, and future, even – and perhaps especially – when that storying involves conscious acts of forgetting, refusal, and departure from the site itself.

**Geographies of Responsibility**

Geographers have grown more interested in care and responsibility in recent years (e.g., Barnett and Land 2007; Conradson 2003; Lawson 2007; Massey 2004; Milligan 2001; Popke 2007; Raghuram, Madge, and Noxolo 2009). The literature is diverse, but a proportion of it, particularly that which addresses geographies of care and responsibility on a more global scale (as opposed to the geographies of care shaping the provision of health services, for example, see Parr and Philo 2003) is informed by the assumption that privileged, urban, Western subjects have an ethical responsibility to “distant others”. It is the privileged who need to develop a sense of care and responsibility towards the underprivileged, according to this line of inquiry, and thus geographies of responsibility are implicated in efforts to expose and make people care about their relations to other people and places. As Doreen Massey writes, particularly for those who dwell in places like London, the task is to cultivate “a recognition of the responsibilities which attach to those relations and aspects of our identity – including those of our places – through which we, and our places, have been constructed” (Massey 2004, 14; emphasis in original). Much like earlier research into commodity chains, which assumed that the process of making spatially extensive relations of extraction, production, and consumption visible would lead to shifts in
those relations, recent work into the geographies of global responsibility rests on a moralizing agenda. It is expected that those who benefit from historically and geographically constituted inequality will experience a kind of ethical awakening and choose to act better. As Massey writes regarding the constitution of London by global networks of labour, capital, and commodities, “any ‘exemplary’ global city should want to address” the “political ambiguities” and “difficult issues” raised by one’s “relations with elsewhere” (15, emphasis added). The “should” is revealing on two fronts. It reveals both the moral geographies underpinning recent research into responsibility and the assumption that responsibility involves choice – choices that too often fall short of higher moral standards. It is the Londons of the world, moreover, that have the capacity to exercise choice and to be more responsible, locating responsibility among those who benefit most from their relations with distant people and places.

Even when the geographies of responsibility flowing from histories of colonialism are taken into account, responsibility remains the purview of the privileged. As Popke (2007, 513) writes, “postcolonial theory … is concerned with the nature of our responsibilities arising from the material and discursive forms of violence that lie at the heart of the western tradition”. The “we” who “should” care about distant others is clear in this passage, and no mention is made of the responsibilities and interests of the colonized. Popke frames postcolonialism as an address to the inheritors of colonial privilege to be more responsible to those they have violated. This is an important component of postcolonial politics, to be sure, but Popke’s statement rests on a narcissistic reduction of postcoloniality to the refiguration of “our” (Western) relations to the colonized. Such a formulation is not only inadequate, it perpetuates colonial relations insofar as it defines the colonized only in relation to the colonizer, and positions Indigenous peoples as the recipients of benevolence from their enlightened “postcolonial” oppressors. The “will to improve” the lot of Indigenous peoples as an exercise in the formation of the colonial self, as Li
(2007) documents, remains a pernicious force in the (post)colonial present. Indeed, Inuit are all too familiar with the devastation that can be wrought by the caring interventions of distant, white, urban, Western figures. As Wenzel (1978; 1991) has documented, the anti-sealing campaigns led by Brigitte Bardot in the 1970s devastated trapping economies and rendered Inuit increasingly reliant on the state for their subsistence. Today’s efforts to curtail polar bear hunting have raised similar fears. Inuit rightly point out that they should not have to carry the burden of remediating southern pollution and ongoing environmental destruction (e.g., Watt-Cloutier 2009) and they look with suspicion on the ways in which care justifies dangerous rearrangements of their livelihoods and cultural practices. Lost from these distant geographies of responsibility and care is an accounting of the responsibilities Inuit trappers and guides have to their families, communities, and the land92.

Against this line of discourse, Raghuram, Madge, and Noxolo (2009, 8) insist that “responsibility for change is not the preserve of the relatively powerful acting on behalf of the relatively powerless, but is a dialogic, intersubjective process”. While the condition of postcoloniality “requires us to recognize the mutual constitution of different geographical places and the importance of each for the other’s formation”, they argue, “it also forces us to acknowledge that places are not always entirely constituted through this relation” (9). Just as Ahmed (2004b, para. 59) suggests a “double turn” away from the white self and towards others as a step towards “another kind of work” (see Chapter 3), Raghuram et al open to conceptualizing

92 The moralism underpinning research into the geographies of care presents further challenges for understanding contemporary priorities in Nunavut. According to Lawson (2007, 3), “care ethics questions (neo)liberal principles of individualism, egalitarianism, universalism, and of society organized exclusively around principles of efficiency, competition, and a ‘right’ price for everything”. From this vantage point, Inuit promotion of mineral development in Nunavut would seem ‘un’-caring and misguided. And yet mining represents the most viable option for short and medium term employment in the North. Many Inuit promote mining in order to build a future in which people can live and work in their homeland and gain greater self-sufficiency. As Stephen Kakfwi observes, the choices northern Indigenous peoples make only seem “strange and unrealistic” to the extent that Indigenous peoples are not taken seriously as thoughtful, responsible, and self-determining.

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geographies of responsibility that do not revolve around the inheritors of colonial privilege. I aim to make a similar move here.

To do so requires thinking differently about responsibility. Rather than conceptualize responsibility as an ethical duty towards others that one might choose to actualize, I follow Spivak (1994) and Haraway (2008) in their conceptualizations of responsibility as a condition of being. Responsibility cannot be fully grasped or reduced to calculation, nor can it be conceptualized in terms of abstract moral standards. It is the condition of relation to others. What we care about and the ways in which we become with others determine the contours of our responsibilities, such that we “answer to” and are “answerable for” as a kind of “draw[ing] forth” in relation to others (Spivak 1994, 22). Haraway describes a moment, for example, where she feels compelled to buy specialized food for her dog, Cayenne, even as she signals her awareness that buying this food implicates her in the “multispecies chain” (2008, 49) of labour laws, chemicals, factory farms, diseases, and military conflicts (among other things) that help constitute the multi-billion dollar global pet food industry. Haraway is keenly aware that buying dog food implicates her in these networks and that she perpetuates the vastly unequal allocation of global resources with each purchase of “scientifically formulated …, immune-function enhancing … raw organic … freeze-dried carrot-fortified” food for Cayenne. And yet she feels “obligated” (49, my emphasis) to buy these foods, and she does. Her obligation flows from her relationship with Cayenne, honed over endless days of agility training and play. She and Cayenne are “entangled” in a process of “becoming with” (3); they are engaged in practices that make them otherwise and come to demand unanticipated responses of them.

93 The influence of Levinas and Derrida here is strong. I work with Spivak and Haraway, however, because of their more explicit engagement with the politics of race, gender, and colonialism.

94 Indeed, the stories I tell here are fundamentally shaped by my relations with people in Kugluktuk, Behchoko, and Deline. My responsibilities are firmly located in, and emerge from, those relations, not as a pre-determined ethical or political stance, but rather as something that has been defined through interaction and care.
Haraway’s account unsettles the moralistic assumptions underpinning much geographic research into the translocal, relational constitution of people and places. Exposing the networks that constitute her being in the world does not necessarily lead her to make more “responsible” choices, at least not if responsibility is conceived of as something that Haraway possesses in relation to the many people and places involved in provisioning Cayenne with food. Haraway knowingly turns away from her responsibilities to the distant humans labouring for poor wages in industrial feed factories (see Harvey 1995 for a different conceptualization of our obligations toward industrial food labourers) but she does so as a turning towards the lines of care and responsibility she stakes with Cayenne. Her responsibility to Cayenne cannot be conceived of as a rational evaluation or abstract ethical calculation that leads her to choose the optimization of her dog’s nutrition over ensuring basic living standards for the people that labour to produce Cayenne’s food. Haraway has not “chosen” dogs over people in any kind of rational or calculable sense, even if, as she plainly reveals, her actions amount to a choice. Instead, Haraway’s obligation to Cayenne is an outcome of a relationship that has come to demand this decision of her. It is the care and co-becoming that she and Cayenne share that presents that food as a necessary choice.

I would not make the choice Haraway makes. Choosing elite dog food over people gives me “indigestion”, in Haraway’s terms (see Chapter 2, note 7). But then, I do not love a dog the way that Haraway does. And this is precisely Haraway’s point. Haraway insists that we live in a world of relations. Every day we choose and act and in the process enable some networks and foreclose others; in the affirmation of certain relations we inevitably close off others. There is no pure space outside of this condition. It is lines of care and love that define these relations, moreover; we become in relation to those we love, those we spend time with, and that which we care about. Part of Haraway’s concern in When Species Meet is to consider how practices of
becoming and emerging in relation to others are practices of “becoming worldly” (3). She is keenly interested in the politics of becoming, acting, and being in the world in ways that enable “eating well together” (300). When describing the very different positions her colleagues Marc Bekoff and Gary Lease have in relation to hunting and eating animal flesh, for example, Haraway writes:

They are both deeply knowledgeable and active animal advocates … both committed to knowing well and eating well. That I feel them both in my gut is not relativism, I insist, but the kind of pain that simultaneously true and unharmonizable things cause. Dialectics is a powerful tool for addressing contradictions, but Bekoff and Lease do not embody contradictions. Rather, they embody finite, demanding, affective, and cognitive claims on me and the world, both sets of which require action and respect without resolution. That’s my idea of nourishing indigestion, a necessary physiological state for eating well together. (300)

To eat well in Kugluktuk is to be implicated in relations that demand particular responses and responsibilities. Some of these flow from histories of colonialism, racism, and dispossession, from state neglect, residential schooling, militarization and the fickle movements of multinational capital, but not all. Some, as I describe below, are opaque to me and my impressions are themselves borne out of relations that led to certain places and not others. But my account need not be decisive and complete to gesture towards this basic claim: that people story Bloody Falls based on what they care about and as part of a productive, generative turn towards the worlds they want to live in. People story towards what they want to manifest, not against a hegemonic power. If story is a relational, material ordering practice, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, then here I aim to “take seriously”, in Stephen Kakfwi’s words, the relational, material, world-making practices of northern Indigenous peoples.
In the summer of 2007 Nellie Hikok was 97 years old and still living on her own. She was known to throw herself on the back of a snowmobile in the winter and still prepared her own caribou meat and skins. Nellie was a teenager in 1915 when Diamond Jenness, anthropologist with the Canadian Arctic Expedition, traveled through the region and wrote the first extensive accounts of Copper Inuit culture. She grew up and raised children on the land and was middle aged by the time she settled more permanently in Coppermine. A laughing and generous woman, Nellie was also an enthusiastic storyteller.

Like most people I interviewed, Nellie did not want to tell the Bloody Falls massacre story. Through a translator, Mona Tikdalek, Nellie shared stories about traveling to the Falls to fish with her husband, but when asked whether she might share any knowledge she had about
Inuit being killed at the Falls, Nellie said she “don’t remember them quite well” 

95. She offered, instead, to tell a story about “when all the females were killed out at 14 mile Island”. This was a familiar move. Nearly every Elder I spoke with declined to discuss the Bloody Falls massacre but keenly recounted stories about Ikiaridlik, “Escape Hill” (e.g., Adjun 2007; Atatahak 2007; Buchan 2007; Evyagotailak 2007; Kamingoak 2007; Niptanatiak 2007a; Niptanatiak 2007b).

Nellie told the story in rich detail. In her telling, unlike those offered by storytellers like Joe Allen Evyagotailak (2007) and Jerry Atatahak (2007), women and their survival are prominent themes. The story begins with the women and children waiting at their camp for the men to return from sealing.

Long time ago when people started hunting seal or looking for seal, in the winter, they always used to leave the females behind. /96 My mom used to tell me, because they never had calendars in those days, they only know when the sun is coming up and when it’s starting to get warm weather all the men start going seal hunting and all the females are left behind with the children. The Indians came from the South and they poked [stabbed] all the ladies. / The kids really thought their fathers were coming, the seal hunters, but it was the Indians and they starting poking them. And when all the men came back to the camp it was really noisy because they were screaming and crying because all the ladies

95 Something is lost in translation in claims of “not remembering” or “forgetting” stories, skills, places, and words. Remembering and forgetting is an expression of competency rather than the presence or absence of knowledge. If one is not competent enough in telling a story or performing the task to do it well, it is better not to do or say anything than to do it poorly or inaccurately. As Aime Ahegona (2006) explained, “I might have heard things about it but from my kind of way, when I’m not sure I don’t want to tell about it. Some people like to tell a story and they never even heard about it …. That’s why I never wanted to say and tell you this story, because I don’t remember it”. Similarly, when Rosemarie Meyok talked about life in Kugluktuk in the 1970s, her claim that people had forgotten about living in tents is more of an expression of having lost the competency and facility and perhaps some of the language and knowledge of the land that goes with tent living: “When Kugluktuk became a permanent settlement, it gathered people from all those places”, and “really the last to move in” to town were the Algonas. She was a teenager or older when they moved in, and they brought a caribou skin tent with them that they lived in and put it up in town “to show people”. She said those who had gone to residential school “forgot about that” way of living, and they also brought “so much dried meat which the people had also forgotten about” (Meyok 2007).

96 When providing transcriptions of stories recounted in translation I have inserted “/” marks to indicate breaks between the interviewee’s Innuinaqtun storytelling and the translator’s English version.
were killed. Before the guys came, there was a mother and daughter, and the daughter had just had a baby and the afterbirth hadn’t been put anywhere yet because she’d just had her baby. And from the blubber lamp, you know the lamp that they used to use long ago? They started burning the afterbirth and it got really thick inside the igloo. They were trying to protect themselves, that’s why they did this / …. / They used to use ice blocks for windows in the igloos, and when those Indians came one by one and tried to jump inside the igloo, they opened the window and when they smelled that strong smell and they put the window back, one by one. / And when there was hardly anymore, you could hear the footsteps outside the igloo, when there was hardly anymore footsteps they started to relax. /

Nellie went on to describe the men’s reactions to the scene and their preparations to track the Indians and carry out their revenge. Along the way the men encountered an Inuit woman:

When they were all set to go and they started going, this old lady was really tired. I guess she was really tired, she got really heavy and she got left behind [by the Indians]. So she started telling those guys that she’s got really good something. How you call it? She’s got really good stuff [vagina] and she’s got really good needle and thread. I guess she didn’t want to get killed when those Inuit catch up to her. Because she got really weak and heavy, I guess she got left behind. / They took her along and she started saying again that she’s got really good something [vagina] and really good thimble and needle. When those people were praying to make the Indians weak, it really helped. They made this lady weak so she got left behind. / She was telling those guys that she’s got everything good on her, needle and thread, thimble also, she’s got everything good on her, and they kept saying “yeah yeah” and they really started poking [stabbing] her. / She kept saying that she’s got really good something but I guess they got really mad at her because she was telling those Indians where all the ladies were. / When they finally stopped poking her, killing her, they said that lady was dead long ago but she came alive97. / And when they

97 Nellie names the woman as Navarana in Innuinaqtun in this passage but Mona does not translate it as such. McGrath (1993) has traced Navarana stories throughout the Arctic region and studied them as a genre in which Navarana refers to a cast out woman who leads rival peoples to Inuit groups.
finished killing that lady they started praying again so they could continue traveling and tracking those Indians.

Eventually the men discover the Indians camped between the Rae and Richardson rivers and kill them all, except two, who escape by fleeing up a hill. Like the women that saved themselves by burning the afterbirth, the two Indians save themselves by their ingenuity and quick thinking:

Two Indians were saved because they ran away, they got saved and they ran up the hill, that’s when they got saved. They saved themselves because they ran up the hill. And the Inuit couldn’t get to them. And that hill they always call it, once in a while when we’re camping we always see it, they call it Ikiaridlik. They killed all the Indians that were staying in the igloo but two ran away and saved themselves so they started calling that land Ikiaridlik. There was two ladies that got saved, they saved themselves, and two Indians saved themselves too because they climbed up the hill. The end.

The story of Ikiaridlik, in Nellie’s telling, provides much richer materials for contemplating life in the region, both past and present, than does Hearne’s account of the massacre. In her story Inuit are the central characters and their decisions, actions, and feelings are foregrounded. The story details some of the precarity of life and the strategies Inuit employed to survive. On the face of it Ikiaridlik is a massacre story, but it is primarily told as a survival story. The two Inuit women and the two Indian men are the heroes of the story; in some versions Inuit so admire the Indians’ ingenuity in escaping that they allow them to live as a gesture of admiration and respect (e.g., Adjun 2007; Buchan 2007; Niptanatiak 2007a). Whereas Hearne’s account of the Bloody Falls massacre casts Inuit as helpless and hapless victims, Ikiaridlik celebrates Inuit agency and ingenuity. In Nellie’s telling the survival and ingenuity of women was particularly emphasized and she went on to tell a series of other stories describing women’s lives.
Nellie told me this story August 9th, 2007, the morning after a young man had committed suicide in Kugluktuk. He was the ninth in a series of suicides that had rocked the small community since the spring. Five days later the Hamlet Council unanimously imposed an immediate ban on the importation and sale of alcohol in the community and began preparations for a plebiscite to impose more permanent restrictions “at the request of the community, and to ensure the safety of children and youth” (Hamlet Council motion, cited in Allen 2008). The community began to rally together to address the effects of suicide on their lives and to demand action. That same week, when discussing how research into the Bloody Falls massacre might intersect with community interests, Millie Kuliktana, director of Kitikmeot School Operations and a keen proponent of Inuit-centered curriculum and language retention, emphasized her interest in tracing the survivors of the Bloody Falls massacre and their descendents:

It’s because our Elders persevered and survived the harsh world our ancestors lived in. That’s why we are here today. If that could be recorded, if the young people could realize that they come from a tradition of survival, maybe that would help them avoid all these suicides … Who are the actual descendents of those survivors [of the Bloody Falls massacre]? They should be part of that history, saying ‘we’re the survivors’. If we could celebrate survival, surviving, maybe there wouldn’t be so many suicides. (Kuliktana 2007)

98 The young man who killed himself on August 8th was described informally as the ninth suicide that year, but accurate community-level suicide statistics are not available. Michael Byers (2009) recently claimed that “15 young men killed themselves in Kugluktuk” in a 12 month period spanning 2006-07 but his source is not cited. Kugluktuk is consistently targeted in suicide prevention programs in Nunavut (Working Group For A Suicide Prevention Strategy For Nunavut 2009) and has one of the highest suicide rates in the territory. The sudden spike in suicides in the summer of 2007 elicited national attention, including extended coverage on CBC television’s The National (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 2007).
Marion Bolt (2007) expressed a similar need for “good stories” to share with young people struggling to survive in the contemporary North. A cherished Elder in the community, Marion had also been deeply affected by the loss of so many young people. She spoke about her despair to see both young and old dying and the importance of stories and the land in nourishing strong communities.

When the old people die, the stories will be gone. It don’t matter if they told their grandchildren because they may not remember or they may not have understood because of the language. They should be recorded … It’s better to share the stories. We’ve got to share the stories, we’re losing them. Nowadays the young people don’t know their language and they don’t know how to hunt. I really worry about them … they should take the young people in Kugluktuk out on the land like that, they need it ….
young my parents taught me how to be, just like I taught my kids how to be. I can’t make them do anything, but I can talk to them. I can tell them stories and tell them the right way to be …. I’m worried about our future.

When asked what kinds of stories the young people ought to hear, Marion said simply “good stories”.

Good stories are good stories. But maybe also stories for their future, so they can know how to be. Old stories, from when we were growing up. I could tell the story of how my grandpa and granny raised me. Right from the start, from when I was born up ‘til I lose them. That’s a good story … God gave us a life to live, to be happy. Our parents brought us into this world to live. We have to tell the young people that.

Like Millie, Marion traced lines between stories told and lives lived and emphasized the possibilities of staking out a more hopeful and strong future through stories that nourished histories of survival and “knowing how to be”. Marion and Millie also worried deeply about the loss of the “knowledge keepers” (Kuliktana 2007) and the permanent forgetting of “good stories”. Indeed, both Marion and Nellie have passed away since I spoke with them, as have a number of other Elders. While Marion emphatically insisted on recording the stories of Elders, however, others were less keen. At the end of a long conversation with Joseph Niptanatiak, an Elder who was less enthusiastic to share his most cherished stories, I asked: “are there stories Kablunaat shouldn’t hear, only Inuit should hear?” He replied (in translation):

**JN:** The traditional way, even now when the people tell stories, the government always makes a book out of it. They make money. That’s what I’ve heard. I’ve heard when they make a book out of it they make lots of money. I always go anywhere, to the heritage buildings and anywhere, when I go down south. I always see stories about my
grandparents. They make lots of copies, they make money with it. Should go to [my] grandchildren …. I’ve got lots of stories to tell. I guess if I’m not doing anything anymore I’ll make a book out of it.

EC: What does he think should happen to the old stories? What would he like to see?

JN: Long time ago these stories were told, and when I go out camping with some of my nephews or grandchildren, they always want to hear stories. And one time when we got stuck we didn’t have any camping stuff. There was Teddy, George, and Andrew. They came to where we got stuck and they had a tent and was it ever cold at night. No blankets. And the old man started telling stories. It was really dark too. And I fell asleep! Just like I got warm from the stories and I fell asleep. And when you try to do things out there, if you start having a hard time, it’s just like a story even when you’re cold.

EC: So stories are for hearing out there.

JN: I just love hearing stories since long ago. Even my grandparents or other people, they’re really good to hear. When we go out camping, people always want to hear stories so they always visit around and people tell stories. (Niptanatiak 2007b)

Joseph made it clear that stories were for telling on the land, among relatives and friends, in situations where they were meaningful, and not to government or for southerners’ books. There is a geography of storytelling elaborated in his response that jars against the urge to record traditional knowledge before it is “lost”. Joseph made it clear that he can live with the forgetting of stories. He accepts that some of his stories will die with him, especially as the young people lose their ability to understand Innuinaqtun. He asserts the right to determine where and under what conditions those stories will be remembered, and under what terms they will be forgotten.

Peter Kamingoak took a similar stance. Like many interviewees, Peter declined to be recorded and preferred that I take notes during our conversation. Peter also refused to tell the Bloody Falls massacre story but offered his version of the Ikiaridlik story. In it, a single Indian boy escaped from the Inuit attack “by flying, like a bird. He must have had some magic powers too”. Peter paused. “I knew a magic man like that too, when I was a boy, my friend’s dad. In
1932 at Bloody Falls”. And then Peter fell silent again. He went on to say that he knows lots of stories and that his father was a great storyteller. He used to tell Peter stories in the evening when they were getting ice for water and melting it for tea. “Sitting on his backside like that”, his father would tell lots of stories, Peter recalled. After another long pause I asked him about the stories. He replied, simply, “they’re locked up”. I asked Peter whether that meant that he didn’t want to tell them to me, or whether they were locked up from everyone. He said “I’m only going to tell them to a tape recorder”. “So the young people can hear them?” I asked, and he nodded. When I indicated that I had a tape recorder with me, and could pass the recordings on if he wanted to record anything that day, Peter said these were the stories that the oldtimers told his Dad and they weren’t meant for me.

Whatever stories Peter might hold about Bloody Falls, he, too, clearly articulated the relational geographies of storytelling. As one in a long line of outsiders who had asked Peter about Bloody Falls, I was an irritation to withstand, not a trusted and respected friend. As he staked out the geographies of storytelling, moreover, Peter also outlined the relationalities of silence and secrecy. Nast (2008, 396) observes that “secrets are relational” and they are made as much by the “relationalities that hegemonies justify or efface, that is, the secrets that hegemonies make” (399) as by personal withholdings and forgettings. The pauses, the silences, and the purposeful forgetting Peter shared with me that day spoke volumes about histories of manipulation and dispossession in the North. However much colonialism might be abstracted as the workings of far away institutions and structures, Peter had witnessed the personal betrayals.

Peter is one of the few Elders living in Kugluktuk who others anticipate will know something about the massacre. Because he grew up in the vicinity and his ancestors knew the river well, Peter is regarded as a reliable source for river stories. Aime Ahegona, himself a highly respected storyteller, indicated in 2006 that Peter was likely the only one who knew anything about the massacre, if indeed knowledge had survived to the present. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 6, Peter spent much of his life navigating between Inuit and Kablunak worlds as an interpreter and politician. No doubt his years of relations with Kablunaat made him a regular target for inquiries about local understandings of the massacre.
and fraught intimacies of life in a small, isolated community where colonial policy was implemented by known individuals, sometimes friends. His decision to keep secret what Kablunaat most wanted to glean from Inuit oral tradition was an act of power and self-determination.

It was also an act heavily imbued with silence. In a recent contemplation of qualitative methods in geography, Davies and Dwyer stake familiar lines between the powerful researcher and the vulnerable research subject, lines that my conversation with Peter throws into question. “In what ways”, they ask, “do the processes we stage oblige actors to perform particular manifestations of the public sphere and how do we make sense of silence in the context of qualitative research?” (Davies and Dwyer 2008, 401). Rather than assume that research subjects feel the obligations to perform that Davies and Dwyer outline, and rather than read their silences as a straightforward refusal enacted from a place of vulnerability, I prefer Trinh’s contemplations on the rich language and conversations made possible by silence:

I would say that creating rhythm is a way of working with intervals – silences, pauses, pacing – and working with intervals means working with relationships in the wider sense of the term: relationships between one word, one sentence, one idea and another; between one’s voice and other women’s voices; in short, between oneself and the other. What you are creating in relationships is not the mere product of an accumulative process, but rather, a musical accuracy – the precise rhythm and tuning that allow what you say and don’t say to find its reverberation in other people …. When you let things resonate and approach them indirectly, you are opening up a space in which absence and presence never work as mere oppositions. So, although you cannot be exhaustive and totalising, you are not excluding either. Silence here resonates differently. It is not equated with absence, lacuna or emptiness; it is a different sound, … a ‘soundless’ space of resonance, and a language of its own. (Trinh 1998, 8)
Indeed, the more time I spent in Kugluktuk the more I learned to engage silence and its resonances. Silence is not absence; Kerry Horn’s belief that Inuit silence around the Bloody Falls massacre reflects a lack of understanding and knowledge of this history demands critique. Silence can be palpable and purposeful, and not just in the context of interpersonal conversation. While many references to the Bloody Falls massacre were met with silence, that silence usually grew into a movement elsewhere, away from Bloody Falls, and it is this moving away that I consider in the following section.

Moving Away

The move to Ikiaridlik was perhaps the most common move away from Bloody Falls. Others moved along the river, away from the rapids as massacre site and towards a longer history of relation with water, land, and animals. When asked to tell stories about Bloody Falls, Joseph Niptanatiak recalled an old story about the creation of the Coppermine River:

You may have heard this story before about the person who made the river. His name was Itiktajjak. / This Itiktajjak was getting attacked by a bear. / When he was getting attacked by the bear he started pretending he was dead, so he saved himself. / This bear, he had a couple of cubs, they took Itiktajjak back to their den. The bears thought the person was frozen, so they started trying to thaw him out. He was pretending to be dead but these little cubs they can’t sleep, they can’t fall asleep. / They put him upside down to thaw him out, his feet were up here and his head was down there. / The little cub looked at the man that they were thawing out and he said “Dad! The person we’re trying to thaw out, his other eye opened!” / Their Dad said, “how can it be that the person we’re thawing out, how can he open his eyes? How can a frozen person open his eyes?” / Everybody fell asleep, even the cubs, and Papa bear fell asleep also. / When the Papa bear noticed that the person had slipped out he started tracking him. The person could hardly walk
This person was really tired, he could see the Papa bear was getting closer. And he licked his left ring finger and said “let the river flow!”, and then the river started to flow and made a big noise. They were talking to each other [from across the river], and the Papa bear asked the man “how did you cross that river?” and the man said “by licking it and kissing it”. That person told that bear he licked it so the water would go down so he could cross it. So the bear started licking the river and he drank so much water he burst. When he burst, long time ago people didn’t used to see clouds. They never used to have clouds long time ago, and when that bear burst because he drank too much water, it was really foggy and became cloudy and foggy. That’s how people used to tell it, it’s from way back, a long time ago. The Elders used to say if you killed a bear it would get cloudy and foggy. (Niptanatiak 2007b)

Joseph went on to sing an old drum dance song about Itiktajjak and his difficulties with the bear. This story, versions of which were transcribed by Jenness, Métayer, and other visitors to the region, gestures towards some of the broader and longer geographies within which Kugluk (Bloody Falls) is storied.

Indeed, Kugluk is just one of many places along a river that is crucially important to Kugluktukmiut. Like Joseph, Marion Bolt was not interested in talking about the massacre but she insisted on the importance of the river: “it’s our water tank … they got to look after it. I want to live a long time, I want my grandchildren to live, and we need that river, we can’t mess it up”.

“I’m worried about our future”, Marion said. “There are too many mines, and they don’t look after them. They say they look after them but they don’t always, they should be monitored. They care about ‘this kind’ [money]. But we need that water instead of ‘this kind’. The Elders say that too. We need our water. We need our fish”.

This move from the rapids to the wider river and beyond to the Coppermine watershed occurred in almost every interview I conducted. As mining activity accelerates in the watershed Kugluktukmiut have grown increasingly concerned about the river, particularly Elders, who
remember the days when the water was clear and the fish and caribou were healthier (e.g., Ayalik 2007; Kamingoak 2007). River quality is inextricable from the health of the land and the animals and, by extension, the health of the people. Alice Ayalik ended a long conversation with the following comment:

Like I said before, a long time ago my parents used to live in Nepaktulik area, that’s inland, and the caribous used to be so healthy in those days because there was no blasting, you know, the mines always use so much blasting, and nowadays sometimes the caribou are really skinny, sometimes their lungs are stuck together, stuck to their ribs. That’s the most important part of what I’m saying. (Ayalik 2007)

The river, it seems, preoccupies Kugluktukmiut more than the rapids themselves, even though Kugluk was an important fishing site for their ancestors. Today, as the river silts up and the river bottom becomes an increasing threat to propellers, few risk a trip all the way to Kugluk by boat. Most boaters are forced to tie their boats a mile or more from the rapids and hike across the land, a wet and buggy undertaking at the best of times. A long and bumpy ATV trail running along the western edge of the river is the only practical means for most residents to access the rapids directly in the summer, rendering it a more appealing destination for teenagers looking for an escape from town than for adults, and making the journey prohibitive for Elders and young children. As usage of the Falls declines, Elders strain to remember the names of the various places at the rapids. Allen Niptanatiak recalls a few, including Onoagahiovik, the flat rocky area along the western shore “where the people camped” and Naohiovik which means “place to stay behind”, “it’s below the falls, a nice bay for fishing near Alistair Harvey’s cabin”. There is Arauryak, the “place for hunting” caribou over “the cliffs beyond where the outhouse is today”.

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And there is the “first hills” where “the boardwalk is”. “It has an Innuinaqtun name too, but I can’t remember it” (Niptanatiak 2007a).

Figure 18: Jimmy Niptanatiak spearing fish at Bloody Falls, ca 1950. Detail from mural at Kugluktuk airport, June 2006.

Onoagahiovik is very rarely used today to “stay all night and fish”, although young men occasionally practice spearing fish with *kakiaviks* along the edge of the shore. Others etch messages into the picnic tables placed at the site in recent years, now a well known place to make out (Figure 19). These shifts have been gradual and many interviewees were surprised to note how long it had been since their last trip to the Falls. Most fish elsewhere. At certain times of year Kugluk is a very good fishing site, but it is not the only one, and at most times it is inferior to other fishing sites throughout Coronation Gulf. The habits of char, grayling, and whitefish and the gradual shifts in the river bottom combine with longstanding and intimate knowledge of the
region to determine where and how people fish. This move away from the Falls\textsuperscript{100} involves not so much an act of conscious forgetting, then, but rather an active storying of other places. On a late July weekend the Niptanatiaks are more likely to travel to Locker Point than to the Falls, or perhaps to Kugaryuak, east along the coast towards Bathurst Inlet. For a day trip they might go to Nauyat, a small island in Coronation Gulf named for the seagulls that perch there, or perhaps to 14 mile Island, the site of the massacre that led to retaliation at Ikiaridlik. The Bolts are more likely to travel to Nagyuktuk, the Ahegonas to Read Island, and George Kapolak travels almost every summer to Bathurst, if he can. These movements are as invested in ancestral knowledge and family patterns as was the annual gathering of Innuinait to fish at Bloody Falls, although gasoline and outboard motors render travel today faster, easier, and less dangerous.

\textbf{Figure 19: “Winnie Was Here”, detail of picnic table at Bloody Falls, July 2007}

\textsuperscript{100} During the summer of 2007 it seemed that it was resident Kablunaat who journeyed most often to Bloody Falls, at least by boat. This was a function not so much of its iconic status in Canadian history but of its relative accessibility. If the upper reaches of the river presented dangers to propellers most preferred to avoid, the river nevertheless offered one of the only safe travel options for Kablunaat intent on getting out of town. The knowledge required to venture out into Coronation Gulf was simply inaccessible to most, and those who did attempt ocean travel tended to accompany Inuit travelers, carry long wave radios, and extract detailed advice on travel routes.
However much its usage has shifted over the past several years, it would be misleading to suggest that Bloody Falls is no longer important in Kugluktuk, either as a story or a site. Nunavut Parks and the local wildlife office actively maintain the site and have been instrumental in improving the ATV trail in recent years, including installing bridges over the small creeks to protect the land (Figure 20). Informational placards have recently been installed along with amenities like picnic tables, a boardwalk, and an outhouse. Nunavut Parks is charged with carrying out a cultural inventory for all its sites, including detailing traditional usage, stories, and archeological remains (Torretti 2009). To this end, Robert McGhee has been invited to return to Kugluktuk and assist community members in identifying evidence of old tent circles, a Thule house, and other features located during his visits to the site in the late 1960s (McGhee 2009; Torretti 2008, 2009). As Becky Torretti made clear, those involved in organizing McGhee’s visit see it as part of a larger process grounded in community priorities, one that will involve training for youth and extensive discussions locally before any archeological identification takes place. “We see it as an end point rather than a starting point” (Torretti 2008).

Figure 20: Jerry Atatahak on bridge leading to Bloody Falls, 2008. Source: Rebecca Toretti
In quite another way, Bloody Falls is an end-point for the canoeists who travel down the Coppermine River every summer. As the last camp site before venturing into town, canoeists see Bloody Falls as a “stark transition to civilization” after weeks on the river as much as a remote and perilous massacre site (Blackfeather Focus Group A 2007). Focus groups with canoeists revealed that only about a quarter had heard about the massacre before departing on their trip, and they had learned of it in much the same way as Kugluktukmiut – “through my grandfather”, and “I read it in a book”. Canoeists also see the Falls as an important “barrier to development” that prevents the upper reaches of the river from turning into “cottage country”, in much the same way as McGhee worried over development forty years ago (see Chapter 6). Many commented on their disappointment in the way the site had been signed and developed, preferring a more naturalistic site, a claim that not only flies in the face of received wisdom about tourism to the Falls but also reveals some of the imaginative geographies informing wilderness canoe trips in the North. Comments about trash, fish remains, and other signs of human use at the Falls recurred as the canoeists described their disappointment to see cabins lining the final stretch of river to Kugluktuk. This was a prematurely peopled landscape – while the Inuk who allegedly waved to the arriving canoeists from a dock in town was a “nice touch”, signs of “modern” living outside of town jarred against the temporalities and geographies of nature, Indigeneity, and North that inform the wilderness canoe “experience” (see Braun 2002a for an extensive discussion of this issue).
As Figure 21 indicates, signage at the Falls is far from obtrusive, but it frames the site in distinctive ways. Canoeists are welcomed “to the land of the Copper Inuit” and immediately directed not to Bloody Falls as a massacre site but as a physiographic feature:

Bloody Falls is the last set of rapids on the Coppermine River before you reach Kugluktuk on the Arctic Coast, about 13 kilometres down stream. What makes this such a unique place? Look along the steep cliffs that rise up from the rapids. This is one of the few locations along the Coppermine River where there is volcanic rock (gabbro sill) which resists the powerful forces of erosion from the ice, wind, and the never-ending flow of the river. The dark rock cliffs squeeze the wide Coppermine River into a narrow, fast flowing set of rapids. This creates a wonderful place for fishing.

Other placards draw attention to pre-Dorset and Thule use of the site and to the wildlife that make use of region today. The massacre does not earn a placard of its own and is only mentioned as part of a longer story about “Dene Ancestors”, which begins with the observation that “for
thousands of years, early Indian cultures have hunted for caribou near Bloody Falls. About 1500 years ago, you would find the ancestors of the Dene setting up a caribou camp on the sandy terraced hills just downstream”. Because of its riches in fish and caribou, “early Indian and Inuit cultures were attracted to this place”, and occasionally, as in 1771, the meeting of the two cultures “resulted in warfare”. As I argue in the following section, situating the massacre in a longer history of relations with Dene and according ancestry to Indians at the very site of the conflict is part of conscious re-imagination of regional historical geographies.

**Unleashing Pasts, Emerging Futures**

In January 1998 a delegation of Sahtu Dene leaders flew to Kugluktuk from Deline, NWT (Andre 2008; Buchan 2007). They came to begin a new era of relations with each other, and to put to rest, among other things, antagonisms flowing from stories about the Bloody Falls massacre. Whether or not their people were involved, the Sahtu Dene apologized for any part they had played in the massacre (Adjun 2007). Soon after Kugluktukmiut traveled to Deline to attend a healing ceremony. Millie Kuliktana (2008a) suggests that the gatherings “created new friendships” and renewed a longstanding relationship between the two communities. In order to build on these relationships the Sahtu were invited to travel to Kugluktuk in spring 2008 to participate in the annual Nattiq Frolics festival as well as a series of healing workshops and youth workshops responding to the community’s struggles with suicide. Delegates from the Tli Cho Dene Nation were also invited to visit Kugluktuk for the first time. Beginning in late March travelers began an overland journey from communities across the Great Bear and Great Slave Lake regions towards Kugluktuk. They were greeted at the tree line by a group of Kugluktukmiut who guided them safely to the community.
Figure 22: Map of Sahtu, Tli Cho, and Kitikmeot regions. Travelers journeyed overland to Kugluktuk in spring 2008 from all the settlements indicated on the map (with the exception of Lutselk’e).

Throughout the week of feasting, dancing, workshops, and meetings that followed, the Bloody Falls massacre was never mentioned. Although histories of conflict and war hung in the
air and the massacre was part of the motivation behind the Tli Cho visit (Betsidea 2008; Mackenzie 2009), this was a meeting geared explicitly towards telling different kinds of stories. Indeed, I was welcomed to the community to participate in the event but was advised not to mention Bloody Falls. Millie Kuliktana noted that “nobody ever blamed them”\textsuperscript{101} for the massacre and that histories of conflict were not the point of the gathering. I was invited to participate “as an observer of today’s relationships, of a cultural exchange between two peoples who share a homeland” (Kuliktana 2008a). Leroy Andre, a leader from Deline, also emphasized the importance of remaining silent on the matter of Bloody Falls and building relationships based on shared ties to the land rather than histories of conflict (Andre 2008), as did Sahtu wildlife officer Ron Doctor (2008), who traveled all the way from Tulita, NWT (a community on the southern side of Great Bear Lake) to attend the event. Doctor acknowledged that histories of conflict had defined Inuit-Dene relations for many years, “but that’s not something we want to talk about here. That’s in the past”.

\textsuperscript{101} This statement reflects the active shifting of historical consciousness involved in building relations between Inuit and Dene communities in the region. Contrary to Millie’s statement, many people from Kugluktuk and from the Dene communities represented at the event testify to the importance of the Bloody Falls massacre in creating hostilities between the groups and explicitly claim that Inuit blamed their Dene neighbours for the killing. Peter Taptuna (2007) suggested that “in the old days, Elders didn’t differentiate between Indians, they were all ‘Itkilik’ … that’s all we knew until the history books”. It was in school that many Inuit learned “it was the Chipewyan who did it, not the Dene from south of here … There has been some re-education of people here since then, so when there was the healing initiatives with the Dene from Deline and elsewhere, people would say ‘why are you going there to those Indians who killed your ancestors?’ and people would tell them ‘no, it wasn’t them who did it’”. On other occasions Millie echoed this claim that earlier hostilities towards the Sahtu and Tli Cho were founded on misinformation (Kuliktana 2007). To my knowledge there have not been any formal efforts to mend relations with the Chipewyan Dene (from communities such as Lutsel’ke, NWT) and hostilities towards Chipewyan Dene continue (Buchan 2007). One interviewee (who asked to remain anonymous) described struggling with his feelings towards the Chipewyan as a young man while living outside of the community, and Rosemarie Meyok recounted a rather more lighthearted experience with confronting the legacy of the story. She described a visit to Yellowknife where she had been reading about the Bloody Falls massacre and a friend waved over another friend “and asked him if he was Chipewyan. He said ‘yes’. [Rosemarie’s friend] said ‘your ancestors killed all her people’ and we all had a laugh about it. That’s a modern version of the story!” McGhee (2004) documents a similar exchange at the Gold Range Hotel bar in Yellowknife in the 1960s. Others, like Judy Poitras, a woman of Gwich’in descent living in Yellowknife, continue to feel a deep sense of shame and sadness for the massacre. Poitras referred to the massacre as an important component of her recent walk against violence (McKeon 2009).
Different pasts, though, were actively nourished. Kuliktana anticipated that the “stories shared will be like ones about hand games, about how many generations ago people from this region played hand games with the Dene to trade implements … that’s the kind of stories we are going to be sharing, stories of that connection” (Kuliktana 2008a). In night after night of handgames that week people did indeed recall such stories, as women jokingly voiced their concerns about being “traded away” like their great grandmothers may have been. Elders from the many communities gathered one afternoon to tell stories about their recollections of relations with each other and stories centered around histories of cooperation, trade, intermarriage, and collaboration flowed between them. These were stories that were recollected not out of a static bank of knowledge, but rather as a result of meeting each other and being reminded of relations long forgotten. As George Mackenzie, Grand Chief of the Tli Cho Nation observed,

In the past our leaders have shared the caribou, have shared the land, have shared their skills to survive, to help each other. Yes, before we came, way before we came, since last year our Elders have told us many different stories, stories of how the Tli Cho, the Inuit, and the Sahtu shared the land, shared the animals, and shared their skills. We heard many stories before we came. When we announced this trip, I heard stories I had never heard before, and I’m very honoured to have heard those stories. I want to share that with you. (Mackenzie 2008)

The very act of meeting traced lines not only to the past but also to present concerns and a shared resolve to shape a future that might support northern Indigenous peoples. Speakers and storytellers moved seamlessly between past and present, as did Kugluktuk MLA Joe Allen Evyagotailak in his welcoming address: “Our ancestors met by walking, dogteam, and today by snowmobile. And this won’t be the last time. As long as we live, we need healing and counseling to have a better life”. Here, Evyagotailak references a past that might nourish present healing, not
just between nations but as peoples struggling to heal at the most intimate scales. Indeed, the agenda of the visit was as much about healing from residential schooling, alcoholism, abuse, and the many other effects of racialized, colonial intervention in the North as from distant histories of Inuit-Dene conflict. But beyond the confines of the healing workshops, few dwelled on pain and struggle. This was a celebration mean to “empower us as people to continue with past traditions of our ancestors for the future generations as people of the land, water, and the animals” (Powers, Mackenzie, and Baton 2008). Spring, Millie noted, is traditionally a time to gather in Kugluktuk and “celebrate life” (Kuliktana 2008b). In a ceremony welcoming visitors from Edmonton to the community, Millie recalled histories of Inuit gathering in Kugluktuk every spring from “East as far as Tree River, from the West, from Victoria Island and from inland”. The community was grieving the death of a community member that day, she noted, “but life must go on, and even now that family is expecting new family members, babies to be born. We come together to celebrate life”.

Millie’s call to “celebrate life”, issued again and again throughout the week, was geared towards the youth. It was an effort to train their eyes on a more hopeful future, not as an empty or abstract command, but rather as an act made possible through grounding in their culture and land.

This gathering marks the unity of leaders with the focus on youth. The youth-focused visit demonstrated the three aspects of youth incorporated in past, present, and future, ways of being as people of the North and Arctic region of Canada, where culture, language, and the land and its rich resources are changing within our communities. The original idea was to focus on youth empowerment through healing and grieving. This allowed for separate workshops to be held for both adults and youth, and was enhanced by the involvement of Dene visitors. The cultural significance of exchanges of clothing, language, and the drumming traditions of the Dene and Inuit centralized the spirit of being as a people. The prayers, songs, and the beat of the drum signifies the unity of all
people who gathered to celebrate. The significance is captured in a quote shared: ‘Hold on to our culture as long we can’. (Powers, Mackenzie, and Baton 2008)

Here, youth empowerment is thoroughly embedded in the land and in collective acts of grieving and healing. Youth are taken up as a responsibility that is inextricable from responsibilities to the land, to the past, and to the future. These responsibilities, moreover, are in turn linked to mining activity in the region:

As industry changes and reshapes our communities … [the gathering] demonstrates the fact that Inuit and Dene have always shared the land and its resources. This was captured as ‘using the land to signify the power of friendship’. The mining industry impacts economically on the people, the land, and its resources, the caribou, fish, and water. For the future of our people, it is beneficial that industry continue to contribute to future events that unify the youth in all aspects of northern development. Both the Inuit and Dene are working to keep their traditions strong with the land, believing it is the land that heals the spirit of living as whole Inuit and Dene. (Powers, Mackenzie, and Baton 2008)

It is not insignificant that the gathering occurred after the Nunavut, Tli Cho, and Sahtu comprehensive land claim settlements had been finalized102. With the settlement of claims came the delineation of Indigenous jurisdiction over specific lands and the implementation of protocols for consultation regarding mineral development on non-Indigenous lands. The Nunavut Land Claim was the first agreement to be finalized (in 1993; the Sahtu Dene and Métis claim was settled slightly later that year, and the Tli Cho agreement was settled in 2003; see Indian and

102 It is important to note, though, that today’s rapprochement started long before the resolution of land claims. Pauline Plamondon recalls that decades ago, when some men from Kugluktuk went to work at the mines in Port Radium, they interacted with Dene: “Some men wanted to marry Dene women but were told by their Elders that ‘it’s not time to do that yet’; that there would be a time, but not yet. The Dene Elders told their women the same thing”. Plamondon suggests that over the years, Elders in both communities began telling stories about visiting and trading with the Dene “and that got people thinking they should have a visit”. “The Dene liked tobacco” she said, and seal oil, “which is an excellent oil for preserving things in the winter …Hearing these stories led people to start thinking about visiting” (Plamondon 2008).
Northern Affairs Canada 2009) and the land claim nearly foundered over disputes about shared lands in the Great Bear region. McPherson (2003) recalls a particularly heated exchange that took place in Coppermine in 1991 over the drawing of boundary lines between the NWT and Nunavut. The so-called “Parker Line”, proposed by former NWT Commissioner (and mining consultant) John Parker, would reserve significant lands in the Contwoyto Lake area (see Figure 22) for Dene use on the federal government assumption that “it was little used by the Inuit” (266)\textsuperscript{103}. Elders in Coppermine, according to McPherson, “were furious” and “were adamant that this was their historic hunting territory” (266). The proposal brought the “Inuit land-claim process to a halt” and elicited impassioned stories about Inuit use of the area:

The exact parcel of land to provide the Indians with access to Contwoyto Lake was said to lie along a traditional trail of [the Dene]. Peter Kamingoak said it was a trail from nowhere; if there was a trail, we should be able to find it on the ground. Joe Niptanatiak said that if the government could not provide facts [of Dene usage], the Inuit could not accept the decision …. Many stories by Walter Topilak, John Magsagak, and other poured forth, describing the late arrival or non-arrival of the Indians there. The speakers demanded to know the names of the Indians [who claimed traditional use of the Contwoyto Lake area]. Noel Avadluk, who had taken in many of the sessions, said in his experience there were never any Indians in the area, whereas the Inuit had lived there continually. Indians had not been there since he frequented the area in 1942; otherwise, their trails and camps would be in evidence. Other speakers also related their experiences over the years and swore they had never seen any Indians. One story recounted how, in 1988, Indians were heard on the side band radio who did not know how to get to Contwoyto Lake, so an Inuk picked them up and showed them the way. This land was evidently cherished by the Inuit elders in attendance, and their chorus of protest was bringing the discussion to an impasse. (266-7)

\textsuperscript{103} McPherson suggests, in fact, that the Parker line was advanced in order to avoid “a Dene lawsuit over the issue” (266).
The land claim negotiations, which were on the verge of completion at the time, were forestalled as representatives from Cambridge Bay made it clear that they would not sign the agreement if the matter was not resolved to the satisfaction of the people of Coppermine. Eventually a compromise was reached, although some Kugluktukmiut remain disgruntled about the drawing of the Nunavut/NWT boundary (Buchan 2007; Horn 2007).

The contrast between the stories shared in 2008 and those informing negotiations over the Nunavut/NWT boundary in the early 1990s is stark but this contrast by no means undercuts the reliability and accuracy of regional oral histories. As Donna Haraway might observe, these stories are different but not opposites, and both “embody finite, demanding, affective, and cognitive claims” on the world that are at once “true and unharmonizable”, told in service of “eating well together”. These stories, moreover, open to challenge some of the ways that Indigenous oral traditions have been framed in academic literature. Although it may well be a compelling account of Western Apache knowledge systems, the generalized notion that Indigenous knowledge “sits in places” in the ways Basso (1996) describes is inappropriate for understanding the ways in which Inuit and Dene story their relations. Basso’s argument rests on an understanding of place as static, fixed, and timeless, concepts that have conventionally been used to make sense of Indigeneity in general but that demand rethinking. If one begins, instead, with an understanding of place as actively and continually shaped by practice and as embedded in efforts to tie the past to an emerging future, one can more fully account for the emergence of different pasts and different stories under different circumstances, oriented toward different futures. The Contwoyo Lake region is rich with stories of both enmity and collaboration and both have shaped relations between Inuit and Dene over the past several decades. Now that the comprehensive land claims have been signed, there is much greater interest in working together and the stories that might shape a collaborative future are thus recognized and “seized” as they “flash up” (Benjamin 2003,
In real-life encounters. Of the many stories that might relate Inuit, Dene, and the Contwoyto Lake area, the people who gathered in Kugluktuk trained their attention on those that emphasize commonality. As Nellie Hikok remarked as the travelers prepared to return home, “We come from one Creator, one land … It’s true of our spirit, we have one breath, we believe in that ….The land is our home, and when you travel home may you be guided by the spirit we all breathe”.

There are resonances between these storying practices and Benjamin’s writings on memory, materiality, and social change. Benjamin was acutely interested in the ways in which past, present, and future might inform revolutionary change, not in the context of a linear temporality or through a determinist confidence in historical progression towards change, but rather through creative, careful practice in the present that might unleash different pasts (Benjamin 2002a, 2003). For Benjamin there are many pasts, most of them consigned to oblivion, but with the potential to flash up in dialectical relation to the present, thus opening up different futures. Past and present are not divided by a linear, homogeneous temporality; the past has a material power of its own with the capacity to radically alter the present and future, provided it is witnessed and not lost as the forgotten trash of history. As Hamacher (2005, 40-41) argues regarding Benjamin’s conceptualization of history:

For the past to have a future merely means that the past’s possibilities have not yet found their fulfillment, that they continue to have an effect as intentions and demand their realization from those who feel addressed by them. When past things survive, then it is not lived-out (abgelebte) facts that survive, facts that could have been recorded as positive objects of knowledge; rather what survives are the unactualized possibilities of that which is past. There is historical time only insofar as there is an excess of the unactualized, the unfinished, failed, thwarted, which leaps beyond its particular Now and demands from another Now its settlement, correction, and fulfillment.
In effect, Benjamin was interested not only in that which had been forgotten, but also that which never actually happened, but was possible. It is an argument buttressed by a radically different understanding of temporality, materiality, and agency. Similarly, when Elders spoke of their shared histories and cultures, their stories were informed by a selective turning towards certain pasts and an openness to the futures those pasts might make possible. Although there was certainly a measure of political rhetoric in the repeated emphasis on shared pasts and cooperative co-management, again and again people spoke of having memories and stories triggered by the act of visiting, recognizing, and sharing:

Even though we don’t speak the same language, we are all relatives. We come from the same Creator. That’s why we shake hands. Here, we are all fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles. We are all related …. From Whati an Elder came, he’s 75 years old, he came because this is our way of life. This is our culture. This is what it means to be a native person, a Tli Cho. When he saw the [Inuit] Elders here, he remembered his grandparents and parents and their way of life, how they used to gather together, in respect. (Elder from Behchoko, name unknown, 30 March 2008)

As the week-long gathering came to a close, plans were made to build a cabin in the Hornby Lake area to facilitate future meetings, a materialization that might allow past and future to mingle again, this time on the land.

**Conclusion**

Although it was not mentioned over bannock and caribou stew last spring, the Bloody Falls massacre lingers in town. As Colin Adjun puts it, “it’s a sad thing but people have to live
with it”. Living with the past does not necessarily involve “dancing around a wound”, as Daniel David Moses has observed of Euro-Canadian relations to colonial history. It involves “becoming with” the pasts that might nourish futures worth living for. John Lutz (2007, 12) recently observed that “contact stories are kept alive … because they have continuing importance – a role to play in each of the respective performing communities”. It would seem that the Bloody Falls massacre story is alive in Kugluktuk in order to be forgotten, transcended, buried, and ignored. It is a fitting form of remembrance for a story that has never been “good” for Kugluktukmiut.
Chapter 8
Conclusion

My first trip to Bloody Falls was with Allen and Grace Niptanatiak. The trip had been offered at the last minute, the day before I was to leave Kugluktuk, and after I had accepted that I probably would not be taken up at all. For ten days I had angled, hinted, and hoped, but Allen was noncommittal. Allen and I had become friends in 2005 when I spent six weeks living in Kugluktuk. When I returned the following year to investigate the possibilities of building a doctoral dissertation around the Bloody Falls massacre the terms of our friendship shifted; suddenly I was a researcher, asking questions around town, making requests, and yet also straining not to involve people like Allen in my research in a misguided attempt to keep friendships and research relationships separate. The day before I had come to Allen to apologize for my clumsiness. He gently accepted my apology and we sat watching TV for a long time. The next morning, when Allen suggested we head up to the Falls, I knew this was a gesture of forgiveness and care. It was an offering and an opening.

That same morning I had learned that my grandfather had died the day before. My grandfather had been a difficult and angry man, and his passing ushered in a mix of relief, regret, sadness, and disorientation, but not quite grief, at least not yet. We climbed into Allen’s big boat and sped out of town, weaving our way up the river past the clay banks, past the cabins that dot the river’s edge, and towards the rapids in silence. As we landed in the gravel along the western edge of the rapids, I told Allen and Grace the news. They burst out with condolences and concern and I responded that it was not necessary, that I was fine, and that his passing was not something I was entirely sure I felt mournful about. Allen responded that this may be so, but that I must not
forget that he was the father of my mother and that he was responsible for my being in the world; that we needed to respect our Elders, even if it was difficult.

We tied the boat and started making our way along the boulders and gravelly banks towards the rise of land overlooking the rapids. As we walked, pausing from time to time, Allen or Grace would offer memories of their times at the Falls. They showed me the places where it was best to fish for char. It was still too early yet that year, but they showed me the pools where exhausted fish paused in small eddies and one could plunge a kakiavik into the pool and come out with a char every time. They recollected times fishing there as children and then as parents themselves. Grace pointed to a patch of willows, crowberry, and blueberry bushes that was always full of berries in the fall. She remembered the time they spent almost a whole day there, she and the girls, picking berries when the kids were little. “So many berries”. They showed me an eagle’s nest tucked into the sheer cliffs marking the entrance to the rapids, and recollected crossing the river with an ATV piled into the boat, making caribou hunting on the other side a significantly easier undertaking.

As we sat on the rocks, looking out at the fast moving water, talk slowly turned to those who had died. Grace talked about when her Dad died, how hard it was on her, and how hard it had been on Allen, too. John Elgok is still mentioned today as the man who most knew the river. Stories of pain, loss, grief, and forgiveness interwove as we sat in a place known, for some, for death and loss and mourning. Thousands of black-tipped groundsels (Senecio lugens) bloomed around us that day, just as they would have when Richardson had been here so many
years before. Some of what Allen and Grace shared was about Bloody Falls. Allen pointed to a
place where the river rocks are brilliantly red, like blood. He said the Elders believe this is the
blood of their ancestors. It is the blood still washing away from those who were killed in the
massacre. But mostly, they told stories about how to grieve, how to mourn, and how to live with
the pains and betrayals of loved ones. This was not wisdom that “sits in places” (Basso 1996),
waiting to be retrieved, but rather stories evoked and stirred relationally. These were stories told
in the intimacy of caring and fraught relations, by people seeking out their footing as a friendship
grew, by Elders wanting to teach a young woman how to sit with foibles and failings. It was a
bringing together, a growing closer through fragile bonds of trust, honesty, and vulnerability.

Bill Brown (2001, 4) observes that “we begin to encounter the ‘thingness’ of objects,
especially technological devices, the moment they stop working for us”. It seems to me that the
same is true of stories. Some stories seem glaringly “thing-y”; their constructed, artifactual
qualities are obvious. These are the stories that could be told anywhere, always the same, like
tropes or fables. We handle them like museum objects, as something from another place and time,
always and only meaningful in the same, tired ways. But some stories are not like this. They
emerge, they are suddenly recollected. We have a mysterious sense that these stories connect! to
the matter at hand and we tell them as though we, too, are discovering them differently, almost
like the first time, but differently.

What I learned from Allen and Grace that day is to pay attention to these other kinds of
stories and to the differences they make, to pay attention to the ways in which we build worlds
through the stories we share. It was Allen and Grace who drew my attention to story as a
relational and material ordering practice. It was also Allen and Grace who helped me to
understand my own relationship with Bloody Falls, and who reminded me that my stake in
studying this place and this story was itself constitutive of the stories I would hear and the stories
I would go on to tell. I have attempted in this dissertation to call attention to the geographies of stories and to gesture toward some of the mysterious, emergent, creative ways in which stories shape our lives, while keeping a close eye on the political and ethical dimensions of storytelling. It has been an endeavour animated by rich materials and rich relationships, but also by my own relations with the people and places described herein.

What, then, are my responsibilities to the Bloody Falls massacre story? If I considered in Chapter 7 some of the ways that Kugluktukmiut respond to the ordering effects of the Bloody Falls massacre story and work to order their lives differently, what responsibilities anchor my relation to this story, and how might I relate differently? It is precisely because I have inherited a subjectivity defined as not involved in the Bloody Falls massacre (see Chapter 4) that such a question might strike some readers as misplaced, overly personal, perhaps even absurd. And yet I believe it is a critical question, one that highlights some of the theoretical, empirical, and ethical contributions I have aimed to make in this study. If, as Spivak (1994, 22) argues, responsibility “involves … ‘answering to’ as in being responsible for a name …; of being answerable for”, then it is crucial to attend to the ways in which, as an inheritor of settler colonial privilege, I am named by and thus responsible to and for this story. I am not free to determine the contours of these responsibilities on my own, moreover; responsibility is a relational condition of being in which one’s “task and lesson” (22) is to attend to the response of others “so that it can draw forth one’s own” (22).

To what extent am I named and addressed by the Bloody Falls massacre story? As I demonstrated in Chapter 4, the circulation and reception of the Bloody Falls massacre story in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was fundamentally implicated in efforts to order violence in the interests of empire. That ordering, moreover, involved the production of Euro-Canadian bodies as emotionally affected but politically neutral witnesses to the violence of
Indigenous peoples, a tracing of relations between peoples that was itself implicated in orderings of race and nature. These orderings have enabled a persistent and pernicious form of relation to the Bloody Falls massacre story that has been reproduced in subsequent commentary, from Gutteridge’s (1973) poetic interpretation of the massacre to Widdowson and Howard’s (2008) more recent mobilization of the massacre as proof of the inherent and extreme violence of Indigeneity. To the extent that these commentaries reproduce a subjectivity in which one can gaze upon the ills of others and yet somehow not feel responsible for that gaze and its constitutive effects, not feeling involved as a reader of the Bloody Falls massacre is an historically-produced and fundamentally political condition. That is, the very conceit that such stories name people and processes that are distant from my own reality has an historical geography with ongoing, contemporary effects. I am named and addressed as a reader of the Bloody Falls massacre precisely by not being named.

What responsibilities flow from such a condition? In Chapter 5 I traced a different interpretation of the Bloody Falls massacre story, one less reliant on essentialized understandings of the inherent and senseless violence of Indigenous peoples and more explicitly focused on the interdigitation of imperial exploration, Inuit and Dene relations, and copper. This tracing names me in more familiar ways, including my inheritance of anthropological scholarship that naturalizes industrial mineral development in the North and the role I play in globalized geographies of metal consumption that actively reshape the people and places of the Central Arctic. And yet Chapter 5 also blurs lines between Inuit and White, colonizer and colonized. Reckoning with mineral economies in the North, both past and present, requires abandoning the notion that Indigenous peoples are “natural” guardians of the land’s resources, that their participation in industrial mineral economies represents an anachronistic break with tradition and with Indigeneity itself, and that Indigenous peoples are always and only victims of multinational
capitalism. If the Bloody Falls massacre involved, in part, the collision of very different narrative geographies of copper, then the point is not to advocate a return to eighteenth century Inuit and Dene copper economies, but rather to account for the ways in which the networks of people and things upon which contemporary mineral economies rely work to constitute and undermine life in the Central Arctic. Part of the responsibility I trace in Chapter 5, then, is the need to think differently about the North and the relations through which it is (re)produced.

Chapter 6 profiles a response on the part of Kugluktukmiut to the ordering effects of the Bloody Falls massacre story. This chapter most clearly exemplifies the ways in which the response of an “other” can draw forth one’s own response. I contextualized the uprising of a group of “young Eskimos” in the early 1970s within a series of processes and shifts, including the rise of Indigenous political movements, the rapid increase in northern resource exploration and extraction, and the reshaping of governance structures in the NWT. This contextualization exposed some of the limitations of “resistance” as it has been conceptualized by critical scholars. My response, then, to the response of Kugluktukmiut to the proposed heritage plaques, involved questioning the framework within which the events of 1972-3 might become legible and meaningful to “students of colonialism” (Stoler 2008a). If Alice Ayalik’s (2007) responsibility to these stories involves “agree[ing] to say no with the other people”, both in the 1970s and in the present, mine involves, in part, learning to listen in different ways and challenging conventional, romanticized, and ultimately narcissistic accounts of Indigenous resistance.

Chapter 7 is in many ways a continuation and counterpart to the responsibilities I began to trace in Chapter 6. It explores the proposition that our relations demand certain responses from us, and that the ways in which Kugluktukmiut story Bloody Falls is anchored more in geographies of responsibility and care than in an explicit rejection of colonial domination. It is precisely my relations with people in Kugluktuk that shaped the contours of this chapter and,
indeed, that shape my understanding of contemporary northern issues. By attending to the ways in which people story Bloody Falls, I not only expose the limitations of imagining that Indigenous story-work centers on the production of “counter-stories”, I also stake out the limitations of my knowledge of and participation in these orderings. I do not and cannot work towards precisely the same pasts and futures I describe in Chapter 7, even while I insist that these practices be granted greater consideration in studies of the colonial present. My responsibilities to the Bloody Falls massacre story are slightly different; they emerge from the relations I have with Kugluktukmiut, to be sure, but also from the relations I have with colleagues, students, readers, family members, friends, and places far away from the massacre site. If, as Haraway (2008) suggests, our responsibilities and obligations emerge from the relations of care and becoming we trace every day, and if we can come to feel responsible to others and obligated in ways we might never have anticipated, then it seems to me that where we place our daily energies and cares is of paramount importance. We must be care-full about what we care about, for these cares will come to demand responses of us. In this regard, the effort I have put into writing about the “ordering of things” enabled by the Bloody Falls massacre story has implicated me in practices and projects that I could never have anticipated, and that I am now obligated to and becoming with.

This brings me to a consideration of future work and future relations. As alluded to in Chapter 5, I have become increasingly interested in the ways in which mineral exploration and extraction are transforming the Central Arctic, and particularly with the ways in which stories structure these geographies. I plan to expand my analysis of copper as an important component of

104 I am thinking, here, of my relationship to the polar bear hunt. Prior to spending time in Kugluktuk I expect that I would have been more inclined to support the recent American ban on polar bear hunting. I had more affective ties to polar bears than I did to the economic interests of Inuit. But, having developed relationships with people who make their living as hunting guides, having witnessed the importance of work in maintaining the dignity and self-determination of Inuit, and having been involved myself in hunting with the Niptanatiak family, my relations have come to demand that I think otherwise about polar bear hunting.
pre-contact Inuit and Dene relations and economies, early imperial mineral exploration, and imaginative geographies of the Arctic to include the material networks and flows involved in contemporary mining activity. I am particularly interested in the history of work in Kugluktuk and with efforts on the part of the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. to establish viable and sustainable economies in the North. Against tendencies to frame mineral development as something that wholly victimizes Indigenous peoples (either because of its environmental consequences or because of the lack of control Indigenous peoples are expected to exert over mineral exploration and development), I am interested in exploring mining from the perspective of Kugluktukmiut. The methodological framework and theoretical insights I have developed in this study, in addition to the empirical research I have undertaken into the history of copper stories, will provide a good foundation for carrying out this project.

I am also involved in designing a collaborative research project in partnership with the Tahiuqtiit Society in Kugluktuk, a non-profit organization that aims to respond to rapid social, cultural, economic, and political change in the community and to build capacity among youth and adults to engage with Elders, learn new skills, and enhance their quality of life. We plan to investigate environmental knowledges and place genealogies in the Kugluktuk region, and to think through the production, circulation, and forgetting of regional knowledges. Methodologically, the project will entail community meetings, interviews, and the organization of youth-Elder trips to key sites in the region. It will involve the training of local youth and adults to conduct interviews, record and transcribe stories, and the development of interactive maps and websites that will document some of these knowledges and experiences. The project is in the early planning stages, but I hope it will move a bit closer to doing research that is meaningful to both northern and southern audiences.
I opened this study with a snapshot of the wider context within which northern research is carried out. As geopolitical, scientific, environmental, economic, and decolonizing practices collide in the “New North”, it is worth considering, in conclusion, how the stories traced in this study might intervene in the production of Arctic geographies and, furthermore, to what extent these geographies truly are “new”. While much is shifting in the contemporary Arctic, the heralding of newness in the North is itself an act of power, one that relies upon what Mitchell (2002, 57) describes as the “misapprehension” of the “mixed way things happen” in order to divide people, places, and things into “neatly separated realms”. To name the North as “new” shifts attention from the persistence of imperial and colonial relations in the Central Arctic and works to render cultural-historical practices associated with the “traditional” less relevant to present concerns. Indeed, one of the most persistent misapprehensions I have aimed to trouble in this study is the notion that Indigenous peoples’ knowledge is somehow limited to the realm of the traditional or the oral. While the knowledges emerging from different cultural-historical contexts demand inclusion and valuation, so too do the very pressing and pointed claims of Indigenous northerners on matters of health, housing, governance, economic development, self-determination, environment, and sovereignty. These claims are consistently sidelined in discussions of Canada’s “New North”, while a “traditional” Indigenous Arctic is celebrated. Far from being a new form of relation between South and North, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, storying the North along these lines takes its cue from much older and entrenched tracings.

If there are to be any meaningful shifts in Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations in Canada, the stories that structure and make legible those relations must also shift. This study has aimed to contribute to such an undertaking. My hope is that readers will be named by this study, and that this naming might lead to a “touching” (Haraway 2008) that will become politically consequential. While the past is very much alive in the North, the futures it demands are by no
means determined. To story differently is to practice and make legible a different North, one that, arguably, is already there.
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Appendix A: Information and Consent Form (English)

Storying the North: Re-Telling the Bloody Falls Story”

Description of Project: This project aims to collect a range of stories relating to Bloody Falls and to explore the importance of storytelling about Bloody Falls in contemporary Kugluktuk.

Purpose and Procedures: The purpose of this meeting/interview is to discuss some stories you might know about Bloody Falls and to get a sense of your experiences and impressions of that place. There are no ‘right answers’ to the questions I might ask you and you do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or are in any way objectionable to you. Results from the study (including, with your permission, quotes, photographs, or other descriptions of our conversation) may be published in academic books and journals, and/or in materials for school children at Jimmy Hikok Ilihakvik. There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Do you consent to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tape recording this interview?</th>
<th>Having photographs taken?</th>
<th>Having stories you share repeated to others?</th>
<th>Having stories you share appear in articles or books?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes ____ No ____</td>
<td>Yes ____ No ____</td>
<td>Yes ____ No ____</td>
<td>Yes ____ No ____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please ask before showing or publishing</td>
<td>Please ask before telling any stories</td>
<td>Please ask before publishing any stories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conditions of release for recorded information:

Information recorded in this interview will only be accessed by the researcher and by authorized research assistants (such as translators and transcribers) unless permission to release the information to another party is granted by the participant. Recordings will be kept in a secure location. Participants have the right to refuse release of recorded information and/or request that recordings be destroyed at any time.

Statement of Informant Rights:

“I have been fully informed of the objectives of the project being conducted. I understand these objectives and consent to being interviewed for the project. I understand that steps will be undertaken to ensure that this interview will remain confidential unless I consent to being identified. I also understand that, if I wish to withdraw from the study, I may do so without any repercussions”

Participant’s Name:_________________________ Date:______________

Signature:_______________________________

Witness:_______________________________

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact :

Emilie Cameron  Dr. Joan Stevenson
Department of Geography  Chair, General Research Ethics Board
Queen’s University  Queen’s University
Kingston, ON K7L 3N6  Kingston, ON K7L 3N6
Tel: (613) 533-6000 ext 75941  Tel: (613) 533-6288
Fax: (613) 533-6122  Fax: (613) 533-2009
Email: 4esc@qlink.queensu.ca  Email: stevensj@post.queensu.ca
Appendix B: Information and Consent Form (Innuinaqtun)

Angigutinut Titigaqvik

**Havanguyup Atia:** “Unipkauhiginia Ukiuqtaqtuq: Unipkagiphaqnia tamna Kuglukuk Itimnia Unipkanga”

**Unipkauhia Havanguyup:** Una havanguyuq pinahuaqtuq akigaqtuqniinnik Qaplunaat Kanatamiut kangiqhiqimani taphumunga Kugluktuk Itimniani inauqhimani tapkuatlut naunaiqtitlugit ahii unipkauhiuhimanii taphumunga unipkamun. Pinahuaqhiqimayuqulu naunaiyauqniinnik tapkuat atuqpiaqnia tamna Kugluktuk Itimnia talvani tataq Kugluktuk-mi, tamnaluttauq unipkauhiq atuqpiaqnia ahiini inauyunii (ilaatuqtiugu Qaplunat Nunatmi Kanatami England-mulu).

**Hunauyakhai Apigugutaayut (titiqlugu naliak atuqtuq):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>❄️ Tautugutipluni</th>
<th>❄️ Hivayautikkut</th>
<th>❄️ Nipiluqhimayuq</th>
<th>❄️ Qangialiuqhimayuq</th>
<th>❄️ Piksaliuqhimayuq</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Maliktakhat tuniyangini titigaqhimayut tuhagakhat:**

Tuhagakhat titigaqhimayut ukunani apiqhuqutini piniaptut naunaiyaqtutulutik taphumangat naunaiyaiyimin tannalul piyungnaqitaumahimayuq naunaiyaiyip ikayuynta (tahapkuatat uqaqtit titigaqtitlu) kihimiuyuq piyungnaqitinii tuniyauqiniunik tapkuat tuhagakhat ahiini ilagiiniunik pikipagaukpata taphumangat ilauyumin. Titigaqhimayut piyaimauniat piyuaqtaumahimayumi inikhani. Ilauyut pilaqtaut tapkuat piyumagutiniunik tuniyauqniunik tapkuat titigaqhimayut tuhagakhat tapkuatlul/tapkuatluniiit tuhagakhat titigaqhimayut alikutuqtauniunik qakugu quyagitna.

**Uqauhia Tuhaqhittiyup Pilaqtainik:**


**Ilauyup Atia:**

**Sainiqtaa: __________________________ Tautuktiuyuq: __________________________**

**Uplua: __________________________**

**Naunaiyaiyup Tugagutanut Tuhagakhat:**

Emilie Cameron
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Queen’s Hilattsiaivik
Kingston, ON K7L 3N6
Hivayautaa: (613) 533-6000 ext 75941
Faxkut: (613) 533-6122
Qagitauyakkut: 4esc@qlink.queensu.ca

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Tel: (613) 533-6288
Fax: (613) 533-2009
Email: stevensj@post.queensu.ca
It’s not uncommon to see a whole caribou carcass on the kitchen floor at the Niptanatiaks. This time, I help Grace cut the meat into cubes for freezing. We sit on the floor with strips of flesh on flattened cardboard cereal boxes, she with an semicircular ulu knife and I with a sharp conventional blade, working our way through the pile in front of us. Days of Our Lives plays in the background while the kids compete for their uncle Matt’s attention. Soon Matt and Amanda will go check the nets. Grace and Catherine will take a smoke break and Allen will find something to keep himself busy outside. From time to time, Allen looks out at the sky, discerning things that seem wholly mysterious to me. I watch, as usual, and wait.

I’m not sure if it was six or seven young men who died this spring and summer. Someone told me, after the fourth one I think, that you gradually learn to not let it get to you. You have to. That’s what most people seemed to be doing. Sometimes, though, I felt this tight, choking band across my chest and I wanted to walk out the road to the dump and keep on walking. So did Catherine. So did a lot of people.

I spent the summer in Kugluktuk trying to understand how a massacre story from the eighteenth century has been told over the years. What seemed to be an ancient and peripheral story nevertheless led me into peoples’ kitchens to talk about death and loss amid the worst suicide epidemic the town had seen in years. Young men, one after
another, were gradually bringing the town to its knees. Death was everywhere, and yet it wasn’t. The Nip girls organized a beach volleyball game for the family on the sand bars behind town. Boats came and went as people headed off to cabins and campsites around Coronation Gulf. Teenagers continued to make midnight rides out to Hart Lake, urging their Hondas along the hard packed sand as they tried to top 100 km/h. There wasn’t a lot of talk about the suicides, even though you could feel it in every conversation, every encounter.

Occasionally, once the kids had gone to sleep, Allen would tell stories. He talked about his trapping days and how he’d put tens of thousands of kilometres on his snow machine each season, circling his trap line over and over and over. Grace told me the story about the first caribou she shot, and laughed about how scared she was, how she thought she’d never shoot it in time. They talked about the last time their daughter’s boyfriend had come camping with them and how hopeful they had been that he was finally getting out on the land. Mostly, though, there was silence, broken by the odd comment about the weather and an invitation to “have coffee, have tea.”

When Allen was young, the Elders told him not to linger in grief. They taught that the dead were in a better place, that death brought relief and a peaceful, happier existence. There was no time for grief, Allen said. Life was for living. And so the people were told not to be sad, but to wish their loved ones well on their next journey. Some of that spirit survives today. And yet among the Elders I spoke with, there seemed also to be a deep sense of bewilderment at what was happening to the young people. “There was no suicide when I was young”, one Elder told me. “We survived, back then. We lived.”

When I told people down south what was happening this summer, they nodded and offered tight, consoling smiles, but the news didn’t actually shock them. People expect grief and tragedy from Canada’s northern Aboriginal communities. They politely prod for stories that might confirm their ideas about alcoholism, poverty, depression, and abuse. In trying to account for the devastating losses people faced in Kugluktuk this summer, I seemed always to be on the verge of recounting the banal. Maybe death is more banal than we want to admit. Or maybe people have grown accustomed to glancing north with glazed eyes. I stopped talking about it.

Once, towards the end of August, I saw a woman bent over with grief, wailing off her back porch. A few teenagers shuffled by and a toddler poked at the dirt with a plastic shovel, happily building trenches between puddles tinged with gasoline. Across the street an old man readied his boat for a trip to Tree River. It’s hard to find words to describe how life goes on in Kugluktuk, even while acknowledging that it doesn’t. I left town a few days later.
Appendix D: Ethics Approval, Nunavut Research Institute

Nunavummi Qaujisaqturirijjikut / Nunavut Research Institute

Box 1720, Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0  phone: (867) 979-7279  fax: (867) 970-7109  e-mail: slcni@nunanet.com

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH LICENCE

ISSUED TO:  Emilie Cameron
Department of Geography
Queen's University
Kingston, ON
K7L 3N6  CA
613 533-6000 x75941

AFFILIATION:  Queen's University

TITLE:  Storying the North: Re-Telling the Bloody Falls Story

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH:
Stories are central to how we come to know ourselves and our place in the world. But stories are not benign; among other things, they are central to the establishment and maintenance of colonial and racial power. In the case of the Bloody Falls massacre stories, the narrative has been used to symbolize Inuit-Dene relations, racialized notions of morality, law, and survival in the Arctic, and to suggest that the Copper Inuit were innocent and helpless victims of attacks from neighboring groups. In this project, I aim to challenge this persistent "Arctic" story, a story that has circulated well beyond its location for the past two centuries. Building on work by McGrath (1993) and MacLaren (1991), I aim to not only question the details of the story as narrated by Samuel Hearne, but also to situate the story in a broader critical geography of narrative.

DATA COLLECTION IN NU:
DATES:  April 14, 2006-May 15, 2006
LOCATION:  Kugluktuk

Scientific Research Licence 0400906N-M expires on December 31, 2006
Issued at Iqaluit, NU on April 07, 2006

Mary Ellen Thomas
Science Advisor
Appendix E: Ethics Approval, General Research Ethics Board, Queen’s University

May 10, 2006

Emilie Cameron  
PhD Student  
Department of Geography  
Queen’s University  

GREB Ref #: Ggeo-046-06  
Title: “Storying the North: Re-Telling the Bloody Falls Story”  

Dear Ms. Cameron:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB) has given approval to your proposal entitled “Storying the North: Re-Telling the Bloody Falls Story”. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D.1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been approved for one year. At the end of each year, GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this approval period (form available on our webpage www.queensu.ca/vpr/greb/pdf/forms.html#Adverse ). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that any adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be approved by the GREB. Examples of required approvals are: changes in study procedures or implementations of new aspects into the study procedures that affect human subjects. These changes must be sent to Linda Frid at the Office of Research Services or fridl@post.queensu.ca prior to implementation. Ms. Frid will seek the approval of the GREB reviewer(s) who originally assessed your application.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours truly,

Joan M. Stevenson, Ph.D.  
Professor and Chair  
General Research Ethics Board

cc: J. Davidson and A. Kobayashi, Co-Chairs of Uit REB  
Laura Cameron, Faculty Supervisor

PREPARING LEADERS AND CITIZENS FOR A GLOBAL SOCIETY