
RESEARCH

Constructing Human Versus Non-Human Climate Migration in the Anthropocene: The Case of Migrating Polar Bears in Nunavut, Canada

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Critical anthropology is currently awash with research aimed at disabling human exceptionalism, alignment with indigenous knowledge, decolonisation of thought, and the taking of the posthuman turn. Meanwhile states with settler colonial histories, such as Canada, also seek to align policies with indigenous knowledge and seek reconciliation with indigenous peoples. This article examines this trend by analyzing the conflict occurring in Nunavut between the Canadian state and Inuit communities living there, over the migration of polar bears. In this context, indigenous knowledge clashes with the rationalities and policies of the state. Claiming support from biological science, the state argues that the migration of the bears indicates their threatened status, while the Inuit argues it to be an expression of polar bear resilience. What does this clash of rationalities tell us about the integrity of the posthuman turn, given that its legitimacy depends on claims of alignment with indigenous knowledge and interests as well as opposition to western science and colonial state power? States with colonial histories, including Canada, as well as international organisations including the United Nations, are at pains these days to stress the extent to which their policy responses to the climate crisis are informed by indigenous knowledge. However, the construction of indigenous knowledge in the policies of colonial states, as much as in critical anthropology, is rendered problematic by the analysis offered in this article. Were Inuit knowledge and perspectives on the climate migration of polar bears to be taken seriously, different policies and different approaches, based on the privileging of the human over and against the interests of the animal would have to prevail.

Keywords: climate; migration; anthropocene; posthumanism; indigeneity; anthropology

'It is easier for Euro-Western people to tangle with a symbolic polar bear on a Greenpeace website or in a tweet than it is to acknowledge Arctic indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems and legal-political realities.' (Todd 2016: 6)

Introduction

Climate migration is a major cause of concern internationally but it is responded to in different ways depending on the human versus non-human nature of the subject feared to be migrating. The climate migration of human poor, for example, is mostly constructed as a threat to the security of the global liberal order, while the climate migration of non-human animal species is more often constructed as a cause of concern for the wellbeing of the animals themselves. The survivability of species such as the polar bear, forced to move by changing climates, is a matter of grave concern while the reproductive capacities of human climate migrant communities are targeted with programs of sterilisation

and population control designed to reduce their life potentials. This paper investigates the ways in which this contrast is playing out in Nunavut, Canada, where the lives of impoverished Inuit communities are threatened by an increasing number of polar bears migrating closer to their homes. In this context, indigenous knowledge clashes with the rationalities and policies of the state. Claiming support from biological science, the state argues that the climate migration of the bears indicates their threatened status, while the Inuit argues it to be an expression of polar bear resilience. What does this clash of rationalities and analytics tell us about the different ways in which human and non-human climate migration, security and resilience is constructed today, both in western regimes of climate migration governance, and in indigenous knowledge? States with colonial histories, including Canada, as well as international organisations including the United Nations, are at pains these days to stress the extent to which their policy responses to the climate crisis are informed by indigenous knowledge (Government of Canada 2019; Diaz et al. 2019). What happens, this paper asks, when indigenous knowledge enters into direct conflict with climate migration policy?

Indigenous Humanism

This paper is especially interested in how to situate critical anthropological theorising amidst this clash. As a discipline, anthropology is, as Danielle diNovelli-Lang has described it, doubly structured by questions of both the human-animal distinction and of indigeneity-modernity (diNovelli Lang 2013: 139). These two questions are also heavily interlinked in the historical development of the discipline. Critical anthropology today is, in the broadest sense, awash with attempts both to disable human exceptionalism, align itself with indigenous knowledge and take the posthuman turn (Chandler and Reid 2020; Holbraad and Pedersen 2017; Haraway 2016; Tsing et al. 2017). For the most part this alignment is seen to be non-problematic as the turn of critique to indigenous knowledge is seen to hasten the process of the shift from humanism towards posthumanism in anthropology. Anthropologists, especially in North America, are inclined to invoke indigenous ontologies in support of their own projects to posthumanise knowledge, following trends with strong vectors, ironically, in Western philosophical traditions with foundational links to colonialism (diNovelli Lang 2013: 139).

By 'posthumanism' I mean the now widely shared view that the human is not superior to other beings or life forms, and that the West, in having once believed so, has done a lot of damage to the human as much those other species which it once took to be inferior. A classic example of a work of critical anthropology which represents the attempt to make this turn happen is *How Forests Think* by Eduardo Kohn, a book which won the 2014 Gregory Bateson Award for Best Book in Anthropology (Kohn 2013). The book opens with an account of the author's conversation with an indigenous interlocutor in the Ecuadorian Amazon about jaguars. The purpose of recalling the conversation is to underline the idea that indigenous peoples see other animals as beings with equal capacities to us humans, and as a means to making a more general argument, foundational to the book, 'that seeing, representing, and perhaps knowing, even thinking, are not exclusively human affairs' (Kohn 2013: 1). Kohn's aims in the book include answering the question of how recognising this 'fact' and 'coming to terms with this realisation' might change the methods, scope, practice, and stakes of anthropology. 'And, more important, how does it change our understanding of anthropology's object – the "human" – given that in that world beyond the human we sometimes find things we feel more comfortable attributing only to ourselves?' (Kohn 2013: 1).

Taking anthropology 'beyond the human' and contributing to the development of wider 'posthuman critique' is Kohn's mission (Kohn 2013: 7). But as Kohn himself recognises, doing so isn't simply in order to align anthropology with indigenous knowledge, but to create for it an analytical framework already in place in a wide range of different kinds of Western knowledge, including the science and technology studies championed by French philosopher, Bruno Latour and his followers going back to the twentieth century, the 'multispecies turn' associated with the work of the American historian of science,

Donna Haraway, and the Deleuze-influenced American philosopher, Jane Bennett (Kohn 2013: 7). Kohn's own contribution towards the updating of anthropology and the creation of such an analytical framework is itself derivative of the nineteenth-century American philosopher, Charles Peirce and his work, especially, on semiotics (Kohn 2013).

I mention Kohn's book because it has been heralded as a work of such great importance for the future of anthropology, and cited already well over a thousand times. I am not arguing that all anthropologists share the same understanding of the problem as Kohn, nor that they follow the same methods. Obviously anthropology is a diverse discipline, and the methods and practices it follows are of many different kinds too. However the questions of both the human-animal distinction and of indigeneity-modernity are central to its remit and heavily interlinked in the historical development of the discipline.

For much of its recent history anthropology has been severely taken to task for its tendency to project Western assumptions onto indigenous communities, including Eurocentric versions of humanism according to which the human is distinct from and superior to other species. The struggles of anthropology to rectify this history, find a way out of the traps that led it to support Eurocentrically modern concepts and logics, contributing to the colonisation of indigenous peoples in the process, have taken many different forms. There can be little question, however, that many anthropologists are advocates of posthumanism precisely because they see it as a way of avoiding the critique of Eurocentrism. Posthumanism is part of a new 'consensus' in anthropology even while anthropologists continue to work as if humanism is still dominant (diNovelli Lang 2013: 138).

The clash occurring between the Inuit of Nunavut and the Canadian state problematises the alignment of posthumanism with indigenous knowledge in an overtly political context which critical anthropologists ought to pay heed to. For here we see an indigenous people whose humanism is explicitly at stake in a conflict with a state that insists on the need to protect a nonhuman species over and against an indigenous human population, as well as in deliberate denial of the knowledge of that people. As Environment Canada has put it, Inuit knowledge is 'not in alignment with scientific evidence' when it comes to the wellbeing of polar bears in Nunavut (CBC News 2018a).

How should critical anthropologists respond to this clash and seeming contradiction of one of its contemporary, defining aims? This paper argues that the representation of indigenous knowledge in the posthuman turn, and within anthropological critique especially, is shown to be problematic and to some extent simply wrong by this conflict over how to interpret the migration of a nonhuman species. As a result, critical anthropologists need to challenge their own assumptions about the temporalities and spaces of human exceptionalism. It is wrong to assume, as some theorists such as Donna Haraway have done, that indigenous knowledge is predisposed to treat animal life with as much reverence as it does human life. Haraway's work is full of stories about the collaborative nature of relations between indigenous peoples and animals: how

they have helped each other to survive historically as well as how indigenous knowledge can help humans to save other species from extinction in the Anthropocene (Haraway 2016: 88). To some extent her arguments are very similar, if based on different foundations, to those of ecological anthropologists such as Tim Ingold (2000), as well as Nurit Bird-David (2006), who have both contributed to the view of Inuit and other indigenous cultures as being based on pure reciprocity between human and animal life processes and forms. This view, which emerged at the turn of the century in ecological anthropology, has only become more popular over time, and owes much to the same dynamics as the influence of Haraway, whose own interest in promoting ideas about interspecies living or 'companion species' as she puts it, goes back some way (see also Haraway 2008, 1991).

The reality, in contrast, is that indigenous peoples are as inclined to privilege themselves and their own interests over other nonhuman constituencies as any ordinary settler society or state. Even a cursory engagement with the origins of anthropological literature on indigenous peoples, and the Inuit in particular, reveals the deep antagonisms between the human and the animal in indigenous cultures. In the nineteenth century, the great German Jewish anthropologist, Franz Boas, documented the ways in which Inuit culture centred around a mythology of envy and rivalry between the human Inuit and the polar bear especially (Boas 2013: 485–488). The principal function of the bear in Inuit mythology is to serve the Inuit (Boas 2013: 487). Animals in general are conceived of as gifts from the gods, which the gods may provide or withhold, 'for the benefit of man' (Boas 2013: 369, 376–377). The 'happy land' to which the Inuit depart upon death, is known as Qudlivun, and it 'abounds with deer, which are easily caught' and large lakes plentiful with 'fowls and fish' (Boas 2013: 381, 385).

The ethics by way of which Boas conducted his field research are questionable but even those contemporary critics who raise such questions don't dispute his importance for the preservation and development of Inuit culture (Pohl 2008: 36). Yet so much of what Boas told of animal-human relations in Inuit culture is in danger of getting lost in the rush of critical anthropologists to reduce Inuit human-animal relations to just another example of fashionable cross-species interdependence (McHugh 2013). Writing in the journal *Arctic Anthropology* in 2004, George Wenzel noted that while animal-human interactions had been of long-standing interest to anthropologists and other researchers, the Inuit's own conceptualisations of human-animal relations had been largely missing from the studies that resulted (Wenzel 2004). Attempts to reduce the nuances and complexities of Inuit conceptualisations to a fact-based Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) are also insufficient, as Wenzel argued (Wenzel 2004: 239). Back in 2004, Wenzel was especially interested in the irreconcilability of TEK with *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*, a term designed to encompass 'all aspects of traditional Inuit culture including values, world-view, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions, and expectations' (Wenzel 2004: 240).

In more recent years the study of Inuit perceptions and conceptions of animals has developed considerably, and the development of the field has been well documented by the anthropologists Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten (2015). Laugrand and Oosten have been studying the Inuit since the 1990s, having immersed themselves in Inuit communities, learning their languages, and living alongside them (Laugrand 2019). As they point out, the Inuit deeply resent external attempts to manage wildlife as if they were a limited resource, and the implementation of new governance structures for the management of animal wellbeing is experienced by the Inuit as a further extension of colonialism, eroding their culture and values, according to which animals are essentially prey and gifts from the gods (Laugrand and Oosten 2015: 4). Laugrand and Oosten stay true to the knowledge of Inuit human-animal relations established by Boas and continued by Wenzel. This is a form of knowledge at great variance from the critical anthropology that has taken the posthuman turn. Laugrand and Oosten also cite the work of Robert Brightman, whose research in the 1990s into Cree human-animal relations discovered that animals for the Cree were 'initially human beings who lost their humanity' (Laugrand and Oosten 2015: 8). Drawing a comparison between the two cultures, Laugrand and Oosten argue in blunt but convincing terms, that 'Cree, like Inuit and most other aboriginal peoples, are neither ecologists nor conservationists, but hunters' (2015: 8). Yes, Inuit hunting culture is distinguished importantly by the respect that is shown for prey when it is killed, but it is also clear from their research that Inuit ways of perceiving animals are based upon assumptions concerning the lesser value and indeed 'fallen' nature of hunted animals when compared with the humans who hunt them.

The argument I am making here isn't that all forms of indigenous knowledge are essentially humanist. Obviously, indigenous knowledge is a multiplicity and it would be as wrong to reduce it to humanism as it is to reduce it to posthumanism. However, the evidence of the presence of humanism within indigenous knowledge is sufficient, I argue, to disable the assumptions as to the *inherent* posthumanism of indigenous knowledge. Regarding animal life as having less value to human life is not simply a feature of Western colonial regimes, as has tended to be argued by numerous studies (diNovelli Lang 2013: 141). It is, arguably, a feature of the cultures of peoples who have been not only to be among the worst victims of colonialism, but whose ontologies are said to offer meaningful alternatives to Western ways of life, morally and politically bankrupt as the latter supposedly are. As Deborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro have observed, 'a constant in indigenous mythologies concerning the end of the world is the unthinkability of a world without people, without a humankind of some sort' (2017: 75). In other words, indigenous peoples cannot even conceive a world without the human; 'the destruction of the world is the destruction of humankind and vice versa' (Danowski and de Castro 2017: 75). The world can survive the destruction of any and even every nonhuman kind, according to this account of indigenous

knowledge: what it cannot cope with is the disappearance of humanity.

The errors of critical anthropology in this regard are necessary to expose and address for the sake of a full and accurate understanding of the problems of colonialism and of racism today. We all know by now about the functions of humanism in legitimating the racial ideologies that fuelled colonialism historically. The contemporary attraction of critical anthropology to the knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples is supposed to contribute to a reversal of the long history of colonial denigration of indigenous knowledge and practices (Reid 2018). Historically, colonial powers disparaged indigenous peoples for precisely the same reasons they now seem to revere them. In earlier phases of modernity, the indigenous were seen as degenerate on account of their having too little a sense of their own exceptionality from nature, and too much in common with other nonhuman species. Colonial practices revolved around containing the indigenous and preventing their contact with 'higher cultures' in order to secure the human from its feralisation (Valayden 2016). Today the reverse would seem to be true, but neither the discourse nor practices are any less racialised.

Indigenous peoples have, in effect, shifted from imbuing white humanity with a fear for their potential to 'slip back into and blend with nature', to now inciting desire, longing and admiration on account of that same purported proximity to the natural world (Valayden 2016: 3). This shift testifies not to the end of race in its application to discourses around indigenous peoples, but to the changing nature of racialisation. In a world in which threats to the security of the human species are seen to emerge from a propensity of peoples to see themselves as separate from and transcending nature in ways that end up impacting on fragile environments, so indigenous peoples, in their supposed refusals to distinguish themselves as superior to and different from other species, are seen to promise a new image of perfectibility.

In other words, the posthumanism espoused today by many critical anthropologists has itself to be addressed as an expression of a colonial ideology which is being applied to govern indigenous and non-indigenous human populations alike. At a time when colonial states are governing indigenous peoples by way of posthuman regimes of rationality, it is time for critical anthropology to reevaluate its relationships to human exceptionalism. Posthumanism does not provide the foundation from which to critique colonialism today in the ways its sponsors suppose. Indeed, as Juanita Sundberg has already argued, posthumanism is responsible for the reproduction of precisely 'colonial ways of knowing' and for the continued subordination of other ontologies (Sundberg 2014: 2). If we are to 'provincialise Europe', in the ways that postcolonial and non-Western authors such as Dipesh Chakrabarty have called for, other resources will be necessary (Chakrabarty 2007; Sundberg 2014: 5).

Race and Climate Migration

Public awareness of the hatred for humanity at work in contemporary environmentalism was raised following the killing of fifty Muslims by self-proclaimed 'eco-

fascist', Brendan Tarrant, in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March 2019. Eco-fascism has a long history and describes traditions of thinking and practice in which claims concerning environmental crisis have been deployed to justify racist and xenophobic desires to control and eliminate human populations. As Jordan Dyett and Cassidy Thomas have detailed, it dates back at the very least to nineteenth-century Germany, when such ways of thinking and practice were popularised by a range of natural scientists and environmentalists (Dyett and Thomas 2019: 217). Tarrant is one of those many contemporary far-right activists who have embraced widespread claims and fears concerning impending ecological catastrophe in the belief that it validates their own present proposals for a radical reordering of humanity and, indeed, racial cleansing of those elements of humanity they happen to despise (Wilson 2019). Racism at work in environmentalism is, of course, not a new phenomenon. There are good arguments to say that it has been at work from the very inceptions of environmentalism (Ferry 1995).

Certainly, the idea that changing climates function as checks on population growth, and that the modern and liberal state has a responsibility to govern population growth in accordance with variations in climate, is as old, at least, as Malthus (1973: 59–74). In recent years, critique has been levelled at the policies of liberal states and international regimes seeking to govern climate migration, on account of the racist approaches they often take to those populations seen to be at risk of migrating due to the impact of changing climates (Baldwin 2016; Reid 2014a). The UK government, as well as the environmental charity Greenpeace, has, unwittingly at best, supported sterilisation programs aimed at preventing climate migration of illiterate rural poor populations into the overcrowded cities of India said to be vulnerable to rising tides caused by global warming (Reid 2014a: 199–202). There is a perception that the regimes set up to govern climate migration are designed to prevent the migration of non-white populations into a predominantly white Europe, and that the fears which underpin the architectures of these regimes are basically the same as those which motivate the eco-fascists, such as Brendan Tarrant, to kill as many Muslims as he possibly could, on account of the threat of 'over-population' posed by such migrant communities (Wilson 2019).

Many will argue, of course, that figures like Tarrant and the wider eco-fascist movements are simply manipulating environmental concerns to justify their genocidal racism, and that their violence and killing owes nothing to any real or deep concerns for the protection of the environment itself. Others will point to the troubling realities of the deep ecology movements, which explicitly espouse a love for the biosphere, and a will to defend it, in tandem with a willingness to sacrifice human life. Deep ecologists such as Pentti Linkola have drawn attention for such views and have been linked directly to the motivations of Tarrant (Linkola 2011; Wilson 2019). For Linkola 'what matters... is the preservation of life on Earth until a distant future' and the 'biggest threat to life is too much life' (Linkola 2011: 18–19). The espousal of the desire to protect the biosphere and other species vulnerable to human agency,

at the expense of human life and wellbeing, is however far more widespread than simply a few extreme ecologists and their followers. Despite the fact that eco-fascists such as Linkola explicitly critique neoliberalism, one could argue that the governing ethos of neoliberalism today is essentially that of eco-fascism (Reid 2014b).

Indigenous peoples too, concerned as they manifestly are by the vulnerability of the Earth and the destructive threat posed to life by human practices on it, are only too willing to imagine its future depending on the loss of human populations. The Mbyá-Guaraní people of South America, for example, possess an eschatological knowledge of the imminent 'recreation of the world' that, as Danowski and de Castro describe, will be something like a 'spring cleaning' (2017: 76). In other words, not all of humanity will have to die in order for life itself to be saved. The Mbyá themselves will be recreated 'to populate once again a renewed world' while the whites, whose 'ignorance' is responsible for the earth's plight, will 'vanish for good' with 'no one left of this accursed species to start it all over again' (Danowski and de Castro 2017: 77). How do they know this? As one Guaraní-Kaiowá healer stated, a sure sign was received when she overheard chickens communicating like people (Danowski and de Castro 2017: 78). 'We know that when the world ends, animals will once again be human as they were in mythical times; our dogs, chickens, wild beasts will all speak our language once more' (Danowski and de Castro 2017: 78). Human-animal interchangeability is not some ontological fact of the world, but the surest sign, this one indigenous people believe, of the coming destruction of white peoples and white worlds, as well crucially of the renewal of the world to the benefit of Mbyá sustainability. From the deep ecologists who inspire eco-fascists like Brendan Tarrant to the indigenous peoples of South America, the central idea is the same; some lives will have to be sacrificed in order for life itself to prevail.

Indigenising Climate Migration?

Let us consider the differences in dispositions of governing regimes of climate migration towards human populations when compared with nonhuman populations, and the climate migration, for example, of threatened species such as the polar bear. The polar bear is notoriously at risk on account of global warming and the destruction of its ice-based habitats. Considerable scientific research and investment has been and continues to be made in order to protect it from going extinct (Derocher, Lunn and Sterling 2004). It is easy to see that there is a vast contradiction between, on the one hand, fears over the consequences of the movement of poor human beings caused by changing climates, and the care and concern towards animals species like the polar bear whose existence is threatened by the same causes (Reid 2014a: 202–204). A poor community of human beings moves on account of the ways in which the climate has destroyed its habitat and they are seen to be a threat to the environments into which they move as well as the stability of the entire international system. A polar bear moves on account of the same kind of destruction of habitat and the world fears simply for the existence of the bear.

In 2018, this contradiction was played out in Nunavut, Canada, where the indigenous Inuit living there complained that the southern migration of polar bears was endangering their own communities. In the summer, one Inuit, Aaron Gibbons, was killed defending his children from a bear (CBC News 2018b). The Inuit claim that there are too many polar bears in Nunavut (Weber 2018). This is in contrast to the claims of Western scientists that bear populations are in decline and threatened with extinction. As biologist, Andrew Derocher put it, it is 'plain wrong' to suggest that there are too many bears, because studies of the bodily conditions of the bears and of their rates of reproduction indicate that they are seriously threatened by the warming climates of the Arctic (quoted in Weber 2018). There is a significant clash taking place in Nunavut between Inuit knowledge, which indicates that bear populations are increasing and that climate change poses no threat to their well being and that of Western biological knowledge which argues that the opposite is true.

At stake in this debate and clash of rationalities are significantly different interpretations of the meaning of climate migration. Inuit knowledge interprets the migration of the bears as an indication of the animals' resilience and their adaptability to climate change, while Western biological science interprets their migration as a sign of their vulnerability to a warming planet. In recent years indigenous knowledge has gained increasing recognition for its validity and even superiority to Western systems of knowledge. In the academy, influential theorists such as Donna Haraway laud indigenous knowledge and argue that it provides a new basis for human beings to learn to accept the devastation wrought by climate change, and develop new ways of living on a damaged planet by recognising the co-implication of human and nonhuman living systems (Haraway 2016). The Inuit offer us one example, she argues, of a people for whom 'the idea that disaster will come is not new; disaster, indeed genocide and devastated home places, has already come, decades and centuries ago, and it has not stopped' (Haraway 2016: 86). This is a people defined by the 'refusal to deny irreversible destruction, and refusal to disengage from living and dying well in presents and futures' (Haraway 2016: 86). A people, we are told, who possess the knowledge by which we all might learn 'the arts of living on a damaged planet' as Anna Tsing puts it and as Haraway reiterates (Haraway 2016: 87; Tsing et al. 2017). Is this clash of perspectives on the meaning of climate migration revealing, then, of yet another case of Western biologists failing to 'do their job' as Haraway (2016: 30) claims they have historically?

Biological science stands accused by Haraway of having promoted 'human exceptionalism and bounded individualism, those two saws of Western philosophy' (2016: 30). It is precisely for this reason that Haraway has made her turn to indigenous knowledge as an alternative, in search of a way out of the worlds of 'Western-indebted peoples' whose systems of knowledge are no longer capable of sustaining life on the planet (Haraway 2016: 30). What, then, would she make of this current clash between the indigenous knowledge of the Inuit, which indicates that polar bears are too numerous, and that of the biologists who claim the bears to be vulnerable and in need of protection? The Inuit

argue that polar bears have now 'exceeded the co-existence threshold' and they want to lower bear populations by culling them (Weber 2018). Biologists, on the other hand, argue them to be increasingly vulnerable and desperately in need of conservation (Hamilton and Derocher 2019). Which, then, of these two different regimes of knowledge, is the better resource for developing the 'multispecies partnerships' that Haraway craves? In Nunavut today it is indigenous knowledge that would appear to cling still to an imperative of 'human exceptionalism' while it is Western biology that promotes human and nonhuman partnership, even at the risk of the loss of human life.

Reimagining Climate Migration

Migration itself is also fundamental to Haraway's understanding of the art of living on a damaged planet. The final chapter of her book, *Staying with the Trouble*, ends with a story she wrote at a speculative fiction workshop (2016: xii). Her story tells of an imaginary migration of a people she calls the Children of Compost. The Children of Compost, like many other peoples of the future, as she narrates, 'felt moved to migrate to ruined places and work with human and nonhuman partners to heal these places, building networks, pathways, nodes, and webs of and for a newly habitable world' (2016: 137). A community that migrates in order to heal, the vaguely but not exclusively indigenous Children of Compost understand that their task of learning to live on a damaged planet also involves reducing 'radically the burdens of human numbers across the earth' (2016: 139). Human biological reproduction is to be discouraged, and 'New children must be rare and precious' (2016: 138). This imaginary migrant community of healers embody the imperative with which Haraway ends her book: 'Make Kin Not Babies' (2016: 138).

While biological reproduction is 'discouraged' by the Children of Compost, when it does happen there is an obligation of the person carrying the pregnancy 'to choose an animal symbiont for the new child' (2016: 139). Every newborn comes into being as a symbiont with an animal belonging to another 'actively threatened species' (2016: 139). The animal symbionts themselves are also 'generally members of migratory species' (2016: 140) and the education of the children centres on 'learning how to live in symbiosis so as to nurture the animal symbiont' (2016: 140). Because the animals in question are migratory, that education entails teaching the child how to live in the nodes, pathways and corridors where migrations happen (2016: 140). Haraway narrates the story of Camille, one of the Children of Compost, whose people 'allied themselves with struggling multispecies communities in the rugged mountains and valleys' of the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia (2016: 141). Camille's parent chooses the monarch butterfly to be her animal symbiont, so that she 'would grow in knowledge' of how to sustain the life of this particularly threatened species, which in turn meant learning how to sustain the practices of migration by which the monarch lives, as her contribution to the life of her people, in their work to make multispecies partnerships flourish and build 'a habitable earth in sustained troubled times' (2016: 142–143).

Haraway's fictional story asks us to imagine a people of the future, a people that she, as the theorist, would wish to exist (Chandler and Reid 2019). This is a people attuned to the history of indigenous struggles, unable to imagine that it could inhabit or move to 'empty land', because it is already well versed in the 'destructive fictions of settler colonialism' (Haraway 2016: 138). Her story is a dedicated attempt to put into practice what she calls a 'proindigenous' and 'nonsettler' approach to 'disabling the pretensions of human exceptionalism' (2016: 216). The fictional embodiment of this approach to life and being, the young child Camille dedicates herself to giving the migrations of the butterflies 'a chance to have a future in a time of mass extinction' (2016: 148). The migrations of the nonhuman life in question are the actual objects of Camille's life of dedicated work and care, we are to suppose. Her life's work happens 'almost entirely along the corridors and in the towns, fields, mines, woods, coasts, mountains, deserts, and cities of the great eastern and western monarch migrations' and she sojourns with the insects 'in the winter homes of the western migration of the monarchs' (2016: 152–153). She studies with 'Native American, First Nation, and Métis teachers' so as to do her work in support of the migrations (2016: 153). She is 'well read in decolonial and postcolonial literatures' and yet still struggles with the consequences of her own people's inheritance of practices of conservation from settler colonialism (2016: 154–155).

The image of indigenous peoples and of indigenous knowledge made by this one Western storyteller is, as should be obvious given the current conflict in Nunavut, far removed from the realities of indigenous struggles and perspectives on life and world. This is not to argue that indigenous knowledge is always and everywhere defensive of human interests over and against the interests of other species. By contrast, within the knowledge of indigenous peoples, we can see that recognition of the effects of climate change on other species is advanced, and that concern for these effects, especially in terms of the forced migration of other species, including not just animals, but plants, is prominent. Robin Wall Kimmerer, for example, herself a self-proclaimed member of the Potawatomi indigenous group, and Professor of Environmental and Forest Biology, has described how 'like the displaced farmers of Bangladesh fleeing rising sea levels, maples will become climate refugees. To survive they must migrate northward to find homes at the boreal fringe. Our energy policy is forcing them to leave. They will be exiled from their homelands for the price of cheap gas' (Kimmerer 2013: 173). For Kimmerer, indigenous knowledge offers the possibility of the creation of new forms of solidarity between humans, animals and plants affected by climate change and forced to move, as well as suffering the loss of 'their homelands' (2013: 173). In other words, there are forms of indigenous thought concerning the migration of nonhuman species that connect directly with Haraway's project. The question shouldn't simply be which of these different discourses on indigenous knowledge and migration is correct. Indigenous knowledge is complex and multiple. If we attempt to reduce it to a unity, as so much of the literatures emanating from the Western

academy, like that of Haraway, attempts to do, we tie it into contradictions.

Migration, Resilience and Vulnerability

Inuit knowledge and Inuit ways of being are a case in point. Few peoples have been subjected to greater romanticisation and ‘museification’, as Nikolas Sellheim has demonstrated in his account of how the Inuit are boxed (2017: 111). One particular way in which this romanticisation has been advanced is through the claim that the Inuit, like practically every other indigenous people, are exemplars of what is known as ‘resilience’. Resilience describes the ability to bounce back from setbacks and disasters of any kind, and adapt to their occurrence by changing one’s form, by being malleable to change. It is a capability attributed widely to indigenous peoples in the Arctic region and beyond (Reid 2018). In Canada, especially, the concept of resilience has been used to frame the ‘reconciliation’ of indigenous peoples with the very state that for the previous century sought to eliminate them (Martin 2018). Even before their first encounters with colonisers, as Lee-Ann Martin argues, resilience was central to the knowledge and ways of being of the indigenous peoples of Canada. ‘It defines the long-term adaptability of Indigenous cultures to changing environmental and social landscapes’, she asserts (Martin 2018).

The construction of the resilience of the indigenous peoples of the Canadian Arctic, including the Inuit, contrasts with the assertions as to the vulnerability of the polar bear. Back in the nineteenth century when they were first encountered, the polar bear was constructed as a source of danger by the colonisers of the Arctic, and a threat to human mobility (Schimanski and Spring 2010: 31–32). Today, colonial states are much more benevolent in their disposition. In Canada, a campaign led by a senator of the Conservative government of Stephen Harper, argued that the polar bear should replace the beaver as the national emblem of the country (Mallinder 2011). The beaver, it was argued, dating from the fur-trading days of the early colonial period, was no longer suitable for contemporary postcolonial Canada. For the Inuit, too, the polar bear is said to be an important cultural symbol (Kingston 2015: 74). But it is also important as a source of money and food (Kingston 2015: 74). The Inuit do not believe that the polar bear is itself in any danger. Indeed they argue that Western scientists are wrong when it comes to polar bear vulnerability and that the drive to conserve the bears is endangering the future of the Inuit, literally, in terms of the extent to which the bears now threaten Inuit communities with the risk of violent deaths, but also in terms of the governance of their hunting practices, and thus their culture (Kingston 2015: 74–75). From the perspective of the Inuit, curbing their ability to hunt, coupled with management policies aimed at conserving the bears that ignore their own indigenous knowledge, are extensions of the long history of their colonisation and constitutive of their cultural genocide (Wong et al. 2017; Kingston 2015).

The Inuit of Nunavut are not, as they express very well in their own terms, resilient. (Reid 2018). They are threatened

and unable to cope with the policies aimed at the conservation of ‘vulnerable’ polar bears. Polar bears, they argue, are the true resilient subject of the Arctic regions while they themselves are in all reality ‘the vulnerable’. Meanwhile, the colonial ideology of resilience, in this context finds support from theorists like Haraway and others, who continue to operate on the misleading assumption that indigenous knowledge is seamlessly aligned with their own interests in destroying human exceptionalism and promoting ‘multispecies partnerships’. Perhaps this could be said to be a problem, as Rebecca Johnson and Lori Groft have described, of how settler scholars are still today struggling to develop the methodologies with which to actually hear and understand the ‘stories’ that indigenous knowledge keepers have to tell them; stories that are, as Johnson and Groft note, sometimes difficult to hear, because they are ‘odd, confusing, or unexpected’ (Johnson and Groft 2017: 126). Perhaps it simply requires us to do exactly what Haraway urges her readers to do, which is to ‘stay with trouble’, as she put it. (Johnson and Groft 2017; Haraway 2016).

Rethinking the Human-Animal Distinction

But settler societies continue to privilege their own storytellers when it comes to the plights of indigenous peoples. The Canadian novelist, Margaret Atwood, has won much praise and support for her story of how the indigenous peoples of the Canadian Arctic have been forced ‘to adapt or die through assimilation and genocide’ (Jennings 2019: 9). The third book in her *MaddAddam* trilogy narrates the story of Zeb, a hypermasculine white settler male, who works at an eco-tourist attraction in the Canadian Arctic ‘capitalising on the plight of the polar bears’ (Jennings 2019: 9). Zeb’s concern for the polar bear, however, is entirely false. When forced to kill one of the bears, he eats its heart, and in so doing ‘appropriates a totemic animism’: he wonders if he can now speak the language of the bears, and subsequently claims to receive visions from them. Atwood has won applause with this book and the story of Zeb for her critique of the kind of glib appropriation of indigenous cultural practices which happens when environmental movements adopt neoliberal solutions and subsume indigenous practices and cultures for eco-tourist profit (Jennings 2019: 9). Her story invites us to distinguish between the faux environmentalism of the hypermasculine white settler, grounded philosophically in a violent human exceptionalism, who cynically exploits both polar bear and indigenous peoples alike, from the posthuman and feminist ethics of thinkers like Haraway (Jennings 2019: 10). The latter are embodied in female characters in her trilogy, such as Toby and Ren, who provide us with ‘a different way of seeing and relating to “otherness”’ (Jennings 2019: 11). Toby, in particular, provides Atwood with a way of ‘exploring how humans might cultivate a genuine sense of responsibility for multispecies justice’ (Jennings 2019: 13). In this sense, Atwood is a storyteller who deploys fictions in precisely the ways that Haraway argues are necessary if a ‘proindigenous’ and ‘nonsettler’ world are to be imagined into existence (Haraway 2016: 216).

How do such stories help us make sense of Inuit experiences of cultural colonialism today when we know

as they tell us, directly, without any need for fiction, that the policies and approaches towards polar bears of the colonial state and its scientists are killing them? Where is the storyteller who will narrate the violence and colonialism of multispecies ideology? What will it take to unsettle settler fantasies of indigenous peoples and their knowledges?

Few scholars have posed the question of the real incompatibility of posthumanist thought and indigenous knowledge, although Luba Stephania Kozak has begun this work (Kozak 2019: 74). This is in spite of the obvious fact that Western understandings of interspecies living are, in some cases, clearly at odds with indigenous understandings, such as we have seen in Nunavut. Even thinkers like Kozak, who at least pose the relation between indigeneity and posthumanism in the form of a question nevertheless start with their own insistence on the integral importance of animals to indigenous cultures, identities and spiritualities (Kozak 2019: 69). Indigenous author, Kim Tallbear, has articulated the problem well. As she puts it:

Our [indigenous] traditional stories also portray nonhuman persons in ways that do not adhere to another meaningful modern category, the 'animal.' They feature relationships in which human and nonhuman persons, and nonhuman persons between themselves, harass and trick one another; save one another from injury or death; prey on, kill, and sometimes eat one another; or collaborate with one another. (Tallbear 2015)

Kozak, in tackling this relation between indigeneity and animals, chooses to emphasise the collaborative aspects of their relations with the animal world. She insists on the 'unique' nature of the relations of indigenous cultures to animals and calls for a decolonisation of the category of the animal in order 'to begin a process of reconciliation' (Kozak 2019: 74–75). In other work I have already addressed how indigenous cultures celebrate powers of hunting and trapping, deception and cunning, in ways that connect powerfully with ideas that are also central to the foundations of Western culture (Reid 2019a: 18). It's not clear that indigenous cultures are at all defined by the kind of unique privileging of animals that Western authors are inclined to attribute to them, or that they don't see animals as rivals in a mutual struggle for possession of the world, as can well be argued in the case of many Western cultures too. What is clear is that in prominent indigenous communities, such as the Inuit of Nunavut, there is a clear-cut divide and conflict between the life of their own human community and that of nonhuman animal others such as the polar bears, which, were they not to be hunted and killed, would pose a distinct threat to that life.

This point can be illustrated more broadly. For decades now the Inuit have been punished by the advance of legal regimes surrounding the regulation of the hunting of seals (Sellheim 2018: 54–63). Western cultures, spurred by environmental movements within colonial states, have undergone a dramatic shift over the past few decades, in terms of how they see the welfare of animals. The hunting

of the seal by the Inuit has drawn scorn and vilification, even while Inuit hunters have attempted to defend it as a practice that is central to their culture. New networks have developed to articulate this centrality (Sellheim 2018: 40). Culturally, indigenous peoples such as the Inuit might be said to have more in common today with the Western cultures of old that valued animals like the polar bear as resources first and foremost. Even the mythological function of these animals in indigenous stories can be seen as something that they share with non-indigenous and Western cultures for whom similar mythologies can be found in what Nikolas Sellheim calls 'hunters' folklore' (Sellheim 2018: 4).

In Canada and the United States, wildlife protection and management agencies operate by following the doctrine known as the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation (Eichler and Baumeister 2018). Conservation and hunting policies must follow the principles of this doctrine including the sixth principle, 'Science is the proper tool to discharge wildlife policy' (Eichler and Baumeister 2018: 75). What this means in practice is that while the Inuit are supposed to have 'unrestricted access for harvesting and hunting' in their lands, they remain subject to the power of the Canadian state to intervene and prevent them from doing so wherever the state decides that 'science' dictates there is a need, in the interests of species conservation (Eichler and Baumeister 2018: 81). Driven by an 'ever-increasing public demand' for increased wildlife protection (Hennig 2018: 404), and by a model of science which discounts the scientific value of indigenous knowledge (Eichler and Baumeister 2018: 81), the conservation laws and policies of colonial states, as well as international organisations such as the EU, continue to discriminate against indigenous peoples, subjecting their hunters especially to financial losses, and robbing them of their autonomous capacities to make their own conservation decisions, all supposedly on behalf of the interests of animals.

What we are looking at here in the conflict between the Inuit and the colonial state is a conflict, as Jason Young has described of 'geographical imaginations' (Young 2016: 2). For the Inuit, the Arctic is their home and as such has to be defended from intruders and threats (Young 2016: 2). For many others, including the federal government of Canada, the biological scientists it deploys there, and the academic theorists who write about it without ever having lived there, the Arctic is a 'natural resource' the fragility of which has to be protected against any human activity seen to threaten its environmental stewardship (Young 2016: 2). Indigenous knowledge is situated precariously in this conflict and has been recognised for some time as at risk of being 'reduced such that it fits within the western scientific system' (Young 2016: 3). What is less recognised is the function of critique in legitimising and hastening this reduction. For this is precisely the function of imaginaries such as Haraway's which invite us to believe that indigeneity is reducible to the kind of posthumanism which she champions and which brings her thinking into a general proximity with the eco-fascism of thinkers like Linkola, who argue for similar kinds of policies aimed at human population control (Linkola 2011: 10).

Of course, those who wish to defend Haraway from this critique will point out that she does not advocate a world without humans, and that what she is arguing for is a greater attention to and respect for the radical relationality of the world which makes interspecies life possible; the ineradicable 'involvement' of species in each other's lives which gives life its richness, and which is said by biologists to be the key to sustaining it (Haraway 2016: 68–69). The fact is, however, that precisely the same kinds of arguments for connectivity and relationality can be found in the eco-fascist literatures. Linkola's work is a case in point, as he likewise deplores the modern tendency of humans to have ignored their relations with other animals and the overwrought influence of the human world upon the lives of other species (Linkola 2011: 94). How to safeguard these relations is precisely the problem he, like Haraway, addresses. Of course, when it is counterposed to the zero-sum mindsets of methodological individualism, any emphasis on relationality is going to sound emancipatory and less fascistic, potentially. The fascist, as we are taught to believe, is defined by the love of his or her own power (Evans and Reid 2013: 1). Relationality, however, is also a discourse of power, and indeed of the most powerful states in the world today, of their militaries, and fundamental to their grand strategies (Dillon and Reid 2009: 58–59). Haraway is not simply committed to theorising relationality as such, but to emphasising what she calls 'right relations of the world,' and to protecting that rightness from the 'disorder' that she believes threatens it (Haraway 2016: 91). The 'proper relations' and 'right living' which she proclaims, and which she utilises indigenous cosmologies to advocate, are unimaginable without figuring the improper, wrong and disorderly lives and relations which threaten their properness, rightness and order. And what is to be done about those improper, wrong and disorderly beings that threaten 'world sustaining relations' (Haraway 2016: 91)?

Relationality begets its own outside, and its own enemies, its own strategic problems, and potentially its final solutions. In the eighteenth century, Thomas Paine observed that governing for the living required enabling 'the unceasing circulation of interest' which creates that 'great chain of connection' which invigorates humanity. He also argued that it meant defending the species from those forms of life that exist 'separated from the general stock' and which, in doing so, inhibit the circulatory vigour of the species, threatening it with a 'tendency to degenerate' (Paine 1995: 480–551). For Paine, the Jew and the Aristocrat were the crucial enemies of the relationality that the species needed to protect in order to sustain itself and grow (Paine 1995: 480). Today relationality continues to haunt our politics with the fascism which, from such arguments, was indeed to take genocidal forms in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Rethinking Climate Migration

This is also a conflict, not only over the relative value of the life of bears compared to that of humans, but also migration. Indigenous perspectives on 'movement, place and belonging' in the Anthropocene are now well recognised as having

been marginalised (Suliman et al. 2019: 3). In this context, the vulnerability of indigenous peoples is often discussed in terms of how climate change is forcing them to move and abandon their traditional habitats. Indigenous activism is celebrated in these contexts when it makes its appearance by challenging the state-based international regimes of climate governance, in the manner, for example, of the Inuit's own petition for the 'right to be cold' (Suliman et al. 2019: 4). Western leftists are all too interested in indigenous activism as long as it is thought to offer alternatives to 'destructive capitalism' through opposition to extractivism and demands for the repayment of 'climate debt' (Suliman et al. 2019: 4; Fabricant 2013). But what happens when indigenous peoples such as the Inuit oppose themselves to the migration of other beings, whether human or nonhuman, who have been, like many indigenous peoples themselves, forced to move by climate change? Are they examples of failed indigeneity, or just exceptions to the rule?

It is relatively easy to agree with authors who argue that 'Indigenous peoples and perspectives are poorly represented in global climate politics' (Suliman 2019: 1), but not necessarily for the reasons those authors claim. On the contrary, indigenous peoples are fêted by Western academics when they are seen to offer alternatives to supposedly state-centric approaches to the climate crisis. In May 2019, the United Nations announced the publication of a comprehensive report on biodiversity that is claimed to confirm 'that humanity is "sleep-walking" toward a mass extinction of plants and animals' (Sloat 2019). The report argues, however, that indigenous peoples offer an exception to the rule of extinction as 'nature is generally declining less rapidly in indigenous peoples' lands than in other lands' (Diaz et al. 2019). This exceptionalism owes, the UN report argues, to the conscious efforts of indigenous peoples to conserve nature, plants and animals, by the 'pro-active' deployment of their indigenous knowledge in co-management systems (Diaz et al. 2019: 6). The report, like so many others addressing the climate and extinction crisis, calls for structural and transformative change, and asserts the need to support 'actions by indigenous peoples and local communities at the local level' as the way forward to achieving such change (Diaz et al.: 7). Where then is the support from the United Nations and the scientists who author these reports for the Inuit in their drive to deal with the local impacts of climate change on their localities and communities in Nunavut? Where is the respect and recognition of their knowledge, its validity and superiority even to Western scientific knowledge? Or is that respect and recognition only due when indigenous knowledge serves the interests and expectations of Western scientists and their backers themselves?

Indigenous peoples and their perspectives are indeed poorly represented in debates and approaches to the climate crisis. The representation of these peoples and their perspectives is circumscribed such that we only hear about them in reports on the climate crisis when they can be used to support ecological views as to the need to enhance biodiversity and challenge the fading influence of human-centred perspectives. Colonial states, such as Canada, are only too willing to listen to and cite indigenous

peoples when their perspectives can be seen to coincide with the views of their own government departments and the policies being pursued. When the government of Canada, for example, proposes legislation that would 'put in place better rules to protect our environment, fish and fish habitat and waterways' it is eager to underline the extent that its legislation is 'informed by the cultures, knowledge, practices and expertise of indigenous peoples' (Government of Canada 2019).

Reimagining Indigeneity

In the context of this poverty of representation of indigenous perspectives among colonial states, it is important that we treat the growth of seemingly progressive discourses on indigeneity in the Western academy with the same scepticism that many indigenous scholars already do. We need to approach indigeneity, properly, from the outside of colonial power, cynical about what we are taught to believe about indigenous ways of being by their Western representatives, while open and interested to learn more about the realities of indigenous ways of thinking, living and seeing the world. The requirement to listen is especially important when it comes to the threats and dangers posed to real, existing communities of indigenous peoples, such as the Inuit of Nunavut, rather than attending to the security of the very sources of those threats, such as the polar bear, in the manner which the Canadian state does today. The reality is that indigenous peoples are as committed to subjecting their worlds to their own human needs and interests as settler colonial states have been in the past. Indeed, it is obvious that there is a vast and troubling contradiction between the image of indigeneity as it is projected onto indigenous peoples by colonial states and their 'postcolonial' and 'posthuman' ideologues, and the actual imaginations of indigenous peoples.

Imagination has been integral to the political strategies by which colonial powers have sought control over indigenous populations and the image of their indigeneity as well as to the strategies of radical resistance by indigenous peoples to colonialism historically as much as today (Reid 2019b). The policing of the indigenous imagination and the image of indigeneity it avails to us permeates Western discourses on indigenous peoples as much as it does the reception of the political aesthetics of indigeneity. Were we to examine more closely the actuality of indigenous aesthetics, and the development of indigenous poetics, we would get a very different picture, literally, to that told to us of how indigenous peoples see themselves, by would-be representatives such as Donna Haraway (Reid 2019b). I agree with Danielle DiNovelli-Lang when she argues that it is wrong to believe that humanism is anymore the dominant perspective and that approaches seeking to go beyond the human and embark on the kind of 'multispecies adventure' which Haraway attempts no longer to offer any kind of counter-position to dominant ideologies of the human-animal distinction (diNovelli Lang 2013). If we want to take indigeneity seriously and do justice to indigenous peoples, we need to recognise the gulf between the aims of posthumanist scholars such as Haraway and the lived realities of indigenous conceptions of human-animal relations (diNovelli Lang 2013).

Conclusion

What does this clash of rationalities occurring in Nunavut tell us about the different ways in which human and nonhuman climate migration, security and resilience is constructed today, in Western regimes of climate migration governance and in indigenous knowledge? What happens, this paper has asked, when indigenous knowledge enters into direct conflict with climate migration policy? As we have seen, a colonial state is directly opposed to an indigenous people on the question of the meaning of the climate migration of nonhuman animal species, and so far shows no sign of backing down, reevaluating its policies, or the science on which those policies are based. Indigenous approaches to the climate migration of nonhuman species are, in this context, being ignored. Were Inuit knowledge and perspectives on the climate migration of polar bears to be taken seriously, different policies and different approaches, based on the privileging of the human over and against the interests of the animal would have to prevail.

Within the academy, in the natural sciences, the social sciences and in the humanities, this contradiction of approaches and perspectives on climate migration will most likely continue to be ignored, because it does not fit with their constructed image of indigenous knowledge. Indigenous peoples, their cultures and their knowledge systems are assumed to be ontologically and politically incompatible with human-centred perspectives. Critical anthropology, as this paper has shown, has to take a lot of the blame for the incapacity to see this contradiction, as it continues to contribute to an image of indigeneity that is simplistic and overwrought in its core characteristics. It is time to wake up to the plight of the most vulnerable human communities affected by the climate crisis, and to the dangers which climate migration of nonhuman species can pose to those peoples. The drive to privilege the nonhuman over and against the interests of the human must be seen for what it is: eco-fascism. It is no longer credible to argue that human-centred perspectives are necessary features of colonialism when colonial states like Canada, as well as powerful international organisations like the United Nations are all embracing posthuman approaches to governance. Opposition to colonialism and liberal governance requires a reinvestment in the human and a commitment to human exceptionalism (Chandler and Reid 2019). Such will be as much in the interests of indigenous peoples as it will vulnerable human communities living everywhere.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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