

Chapter 2

Narrating Indigeneity in the Arctic: Scripts of Disaster Resilience Versus the Poetics of Autonomy



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Abstract The capacity to inhabit and cope with living in disastrous environments is what social scientists widely label resilience. It is a capacity that peoples inhabiting the Arctic are especially renowned for, and one that is attributed in particular to indigenous peoples living here. Indeed policy makers, concerned as they currently are with attempting to formulate policies designed to help people cope with the coming era of disasters portended by climate change, are attracted to indigenous peoples of the Arctic on account of their perceived abilities to live in a state of permanent disaster. The ability to adapt to disastrous events is seen to be the key component of the life-worlds of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic, such as the Eurasian Sámi people, which inhabits Arctic Russia, Finland, Sweden, and Norway, and the resilience of the Sámi is said to be a living testimony of their strength. Within the Academy, anthropologists are currently being mobilised to provide ethnographic studies of the practices and forms of knowledge that enable the Sámi to do so. As such the Sámi are held to be a model for the rest of humanity, faced as it is with a coming era of climate disasters and global ecological catastrophe. Rather than join in with the chorus of celebration concerning Sámi resilience in the Arctic, this chapter will critique the strategic and colonial rationalities shaping it. Knowledge around resilience, concerned as it might seem to be with promoting the rights and empowerment of the Sámi, is constitutive of processes for the production and disciplining of their indigeneity, rather than being simply a deep ethnographic description. This disciplining of the Sámi, as well as every other target population in the Arctic, by proponents of resilience, forces them into accepting the necessity of a future laden by disastrous events. As such this chapter urges critical thinkers and practitioners concerned with indigenous politics in the Arctic to be more circumspect when confronting claims about the inherent resilience of indigenous peoples living here. It argues for the

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necessity of examining resilience as an element within a narrative strategy for the scripting of the Arctic and the life-worlds of indigenous peoples inhabiting it, rather than an expression of the agency of indigenous peoples as such.

Keywords Resilience · Indigenous peoples · Sámi · Imaginaries · Agency

2.1 Introduction

Indigenous peoples of the Arctic have long since attracted the interests of anthropologists, biologists, zoologists, ecologists and other proponents of the life sciences. From the beginning these interests were motivated by the colonial desire for conquest and underpinned by racial narratives of white supremacy. In the nineteenth century they entailed objectifying the distinctive features of the skulls, for example, of Sámi populations, comparing them with the skulls of Inuit populations. Even as late as the 1970's, the Oxford professor of biology and physical anthropology, John R. Baker, could be read remarking as to the size of the differences between the skulls of Sámi (still then described as 'Laplanders') and Inuit (described as 'Greenland Eskimos'), such that 'a child of six years, provided with a number of Laplander and Greenland Eskimo skulls of various sizes, could separate them correctly into two groups', he argued, 'without the necessity for any previous instruction' (Baker 1974, p. 195). Today craniology has been widely discredited for its roles in racial science and in perpetuating myths of racial superiority in the Arctic as much as elsewhere (Wolfe 2006), but the interests of the life sciences in indigenous peoples of the Arctic persists, albeit in new and different forms.

Are the interests which the life sciences take today in indigenous peoples of the Arctic any less racial or colonial than they were historically? In this chapter I am interested in the mobilisation of the life sciences to research the 'resilience' of indigenous peoples in the Arctic and the ways in which this apparently new scientific knowledge is shaping how indigenous peoples of the Arctic are today being constructed, in policies aimed supposedly at enhancing their wellbeing. Resilience has already been widely critiqued in International Relations (Chandler and Reid 2016; Evans and Reid 2014) as a concept that does immense harm to people, especially the global poor, but critical work on its implications for the Arctic and for indigenous peoples living there is almost non-existent. Instead what exists is a literature that simply promotes 'indigenous resilience' as if it were a non-contestable benefit (Ulturgasheva et al. 2014; Bals et al. 2011; Forbes et al. 2009; Berkes and Jolly 2002). The abilities of indigenous peoples living in the Arctic to cope with the disasters which have hit them, and recover from experiences of extreme social and cultural change, including 'epidemics, forced relocation, cultural colonization, and genocide' (Wexler 2014, p. 74) is heralded as a source of 'learning' for peoples, both indigenous and non-indigenous, everywhere.

2.2 Arctic Resilience?

One of the chief proponents of this new narrative of indigenous resilience is the Arctic Council itself. The end of 2016 saw the publication of the *Arctic Resilience Report* (Carson and Peterson 2016). The report is the final product of the Arctic Resilience Assessment, a project launched by the Swedish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, which ran from 2011 until 2013, and was preceded by the Arctic Resilience Interim Report of 2013 (Arctic Council 2013). The report is written in response to the large and rapid changes said to be occurring in the Arctic; the environmental, ecological and social changes, caused largely by processes occurring outside of the Arctic itself, especially climate change, but also migration, resource extraction and other human activities, and which are said to portend large impacts upon the Arctic and communities living there, including notably indigenous peoples, whose livelihoods look set to disappear and whose places of abode will become uninhabitable, as these changes occur (Ibid., p. x). Indeed these euphemistically described ‘changes’ represent no less than a catastrophe for many indigenous peoples, given the scales of the devastating losses they are said to be faced with.

Resilience, as the report defines it, and as has become the norm in resilience research worldwide, refers to the capacities of humans, as well as all living systems, to absorb and adapt to the shocks generated by disastrous events, and respond to them by either maintaining or changing one’s form, evolving with them, and potentially growing stronger from their occurrence (Carson and Peterson 2016, p. ix—x). It is a concept which originated largely in ecology during the 1970s and early 1980s to describe the capacities of non-human living systems to evolve in exposure to disasters, and which gradually mutated into social and human sciences as a way to understand the abilities of human beings to absorb shocks and withstand disasters of multiple kinds. In the era of Sustainable Development it became a capacity identified especially with the ‘Global Poor’, given their excessive exposure to events and shocks of a disastrous nature (Reid 2012). And in more recent years it has become a capacity attributed to indigenous peoples (Chandler and Reid 2018; Lindroth and Sinevaara-Niskanen 2016). In fact indigenous peoples are perceived to be particularly exemplary when it comes to resilience. While the approach of practitioners to the Global Poor has been largely about teaching them how to become resilient on account of their supposed ‘ecological ignorance’ (Folke et al. 2002), the approach to the indigenous has been about learning from them on account of their supposed ecological intelligence.

Intriguingly it is some of the same scientists responsible for labelling the global poor ‘ecologically ignorant’ who are now vouching for indigenous ecological intelligence. Fikrit Berkes, whose book, *Sacred Ecology*, is credited with creating the concept of ‘traditional environmental knowledge’ (Grove 2018, p. 216; Berkes 1999), has also carried out influential collaborations with the leading ideologue of resilience, Carl Folke (Berkes and Folke 1998). While these scientists clearly place a high value on the ‘traditional knowledge’ of indigenous peoples they do so because they identify a ‘functional utility’ in that knowledge. This utility derives from a

potential for synthesis with western ways of knowing and deployment in and for the West's own drive towards sustainability (Grove 2018, p. 216–218).

What is happening to indigenous peoples in and of the Arctic, in terms of their subjection to the resilience agenda, has to be understood, therefore, in context of a more or less global strategy being applied to indigenous peoples living everywhere. Policy makers not just in the Arctic but the world over, concerned as they currently are with attempting to formulate policies designed to help people cope with the presumed coming era of disasters portended by climate change, are attracted to indigenous peoples on account of their perceived abilities to live in a state of permanent crisis. Within the Academy, anthropologists are currently being mobilised to provide ethnographic studies of the practices and forms of knowledge that enable indigenous peoples to do so. For example the Oxford-based anthropologist Laura Rival has detailed the ways in which the Makushi, an indigenous people living in the borderlands of northern Brazil and southern Guyana, live with severe drought and flooding as normal conditions of life (Rival 2009, p. 300). This is a people as well adapted to a world of floods as much as it is to extreme drought, and able to cope with whatever the climate throws at them, if we are to believe the anthropology (Ibid., p. 302). As such they are a model for the rest of humanity, faced as it is with an assumed coming era of climate disasters and global ecological catastrophe.

From its origins, as Melinda Hinkson observes, anthropology 'has existed in a state of complex symbiotic dependency with government' as anthropologists 'have been materially and practically dependent on state support to fund research, and the direction anthropological work has taken in any particular period has been crucially influenced by state needs for certain kinds of information with which to govern its Indigenous populace' (Hinkson 2010, p. 5). Never was this observation truer than today in the context of the mobilisation of anthropologists to produce knowledge about indigenous resilience. The arguments and conclusions of anthropologists are mirrored in policy reports such as that published by UNESCO, titled *Weathering Uncertainty* (Nakashima et al. 2012), and which likewise describes how indigenous peoples, on account of their high-exposure sensitivity to extreme weather events, are thought to be especially resilient to climate change (Ibid., p. 1–8). The indigenous are of interest and value to policy-makers because they have a proven track record of 'resourcefulness and response capacity in the face of global climate change' (Ibid., p. 9).

The *Arctic Resilience Report* of 2016, following in the wake of a now burgeoning academic and policy-making literature, likewise extols the virtues and capacities of indigenous peoples, specifically those living in the Arctic. On the one hand it laments their extreme exposure to the effects of climate change, the loss of livelihoods and habitats which are sure to be caused by climate change, while on the other hand celebrating the 'resilience' of these same peoples; a resilience which of course arises from the very exposure and vulnerability it otherwise laments. Sensitivity to change and crisis is seen to be the key component of the life-worlds of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic, such as the Sámi, who inhabit Arctic Russia, Finland, Sweden, and Norway, and the resilience of the Sámi is said to be 'a living testimony of the strength of these societies and the autonomous capacities of their

subsistence economies' (Arctic Council 2013, p. 32). The ability to adapt to pressures is seen to be a fundamental part of the identity of indigenous peoples of the Arctic, such as the Inuit of Greenland, as James Van Alstine and William Davies have observed (2017, p. 99).

'Arcticism' is a term used before to describe the ways in which (in echo of Edward Said's account of the orientalism of the West's representations of its eastern other) patronising images of the indigenous are generated and naturalised in western discourses on the Arctic (Ryall et al. 2010, p. x). The Arctic Council, drawing on the support of anthropological knowledge and discourse, is itself a key resource for the deployment of the particular Arcticism surrounding resilience.

2.3 Race in the Arctic

In one sense the attraction to and focus on the knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples might seem to represent a reversal of the long history of colonial denigration of indigenous knowledge and practices. Historically, colonial powers disparaged indigenous peoples for precisely the same reasons they now seem to revere them. In earlier phases of modernity indigenous peoples 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 non-human 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. The indigenous have in effect shifted, from being a figure that imbues 'white' humanity with a fear at its potential to 'slip back into and blend with nature' (Valayden 2016, p. 3), to now inciting desire, longing and admiration on account of that same purported proximity to the natural world. 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 transcendent of nature, in ways that end up impacting on fragile environments, so indigenous peoples, in their supposed contentment with mere survival, are seen to promise a new image of perfectibility.

A recent article in the journal *Science* reported the findings of the research of a group of geneticists into the genetic adaptations of Greenlandic Inuit to the coldness of the climate of Greenland. How does a people such as the Inuit of Greenland learn to cope with the 'challenging environmental conditions of the Arctic' (Fumagalli et al. 2015, p. 1346), it asked? The consequences of inhabiting the 'challenging environment' of the Arctic are testified to, the authors of the article conclude, in the genetic make-up of Greenlandic Inuit, which demonstrate 'evolutionary consequences' including for both their height and weight (Ibid., p. 1343). The Inuit of Greenland, within this geneticist discourse, are transformed from being represented as the degen-

erate other of the white European race of nineteenth century biology and anthropology into the super-adaptive and resilient exemplars of the twenty-first century.

In his celebrated lecture series, *Society Must Be Defended*, Michel Foucault demonstrated the ways in which racism emanated from the biopoliticisation of power relations that accompanied the birth of modernity in Europe and beyond (Foucault 2003). Biological thought impacted upon political practices by producing the idea of a new type of enemy and threat; one which does not simply make designs on your territory, resources or people, but which threatens the degeneration of the species as a whole on account of its genetic inferiority. Up until 1945 the idea that some racial groups could claim superiority to others and that the future of the species as a whole would be improved were inferior races to be destroyed was dominant, and applied not just by the Nazis but by liberal regimes driven by the desire to ‘make life live’ practically everywhere, both within their own social boundaries as well as externally in their colonising missions (Dillon and Reid 2009, p. 48–52). The historical destruction of indigenous peoples was but one expression of such racism. After 1945, and the reckoning with the Holocaust amid the collapse of European empires, liberal biopolitics has taken new forms, in order to avoid the charge of favouring some races over others. However it is difficult to make life live in ways that don’t favour some life forms over others, and thus fall back into similar racist traps. When geneticists espouse the superior adaptivity and resilience of indigenous peoples, as much as when anthropologists claim to observe it in their ethnographies, or when governmental regimes celebrate it in their reports, they do so in ways that are consistent with the discourse of racial struggle which Foucault unearthed the origins of. Through these origins certain races are entitled to define the prevailing norms on which society is organised, and in contrast with whom other racial groups are seen to deviate (Ibid., p. 61). Resilience is the calling card of the new biopolitical racism.

2.4 Governing by Cliché in the Arctic

Many are those who interpret this reversal in attitudes of the West towards the indigenous as a step forwards in the decolonisation of relations between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, and as an expression of the power of indigenous counter-discourses, ‘answering back’, as it were, ‘from the Arctic’ (Ryall et al. 2010, p. xi). For it challenges the West’s teleological sense of its own superiority, debunking it even, and placing the indigenous on a pedestal once reserved for the western subject of modernist tradition (Lea 2012, p. 196). What such enthusiasts seemingly don’t recognise is the problematic nature of the entanglement of this reversal with white Western strategies of power. The ascriptions of resilience and ecological intelligence to the indigenous is not something being achieved simply by anthropologists working to the left of Western states or other colonial institutions. It is a mantra being repeated by colonial states and deeply powerful Western actors worldwide. Such that the representation of the indigenous as possessing exceptional capacities to care for their natural environments, to adapt to climate change, and deal with

extreme weather events has become a governing cliché of white and Western neo-liberal governance.

It is a powerful and dangerous cliché. For the indigenous functions within these international discourses as an exemplar of a neoliberal subject. A subject defined by its capacities to adapt to the dangers of the world in living a life of ongoing survival and exposure to endemic disaster (Chandler and Reid 2018; Chandler and Reid 2016; Evans and Reid 2014; Reid 2012). This cliché is powerful and dangerous in so far as it functions to discipline the indigenous themselves into performing their own resilience. What happens to indigenous peoples, both individually and collectively, when for whatever reason, they don't show resilience? Are they somehow to be deemed less indigenous? Or are they examples of failed indigeneity? Are they less ecologically intelligent than other indigenous peoples? The answer to these questions lies in the reality that performing resilience is practically a condition of existence for being indigenous in today's world of neoliberal governance. Knowledge around resilience, concerned as it might seem to be with promoting the rights and empowerment of indigenous peoples, is constitutive of processes for the production and disciplining of indigeneity, rather than being simply a deep ethnographic description. This disciplining of the indigenous, as well as the 'Global Poor', and every other target population of the resilience agenda, is integral to the containment strategy for dealing with surplus humanity, forcing peoples into adjusting their expectations and accepting the necessity to be self-reliant.

There are few clearer examples of this reality than the *Arctic Resilience Report*. The report assesses the resilience of different indigenous peoples located in the Arctic and categorises them in terms of their relative capacities for resilience. Some, such as that of the Yamal-Nenets, a reindeer herding community of Western Siberia, it regards as success stories of resilience. Others such as the reindeer herders of Teriberka, it regards as failures (Carson and Peterson 2016, p. 100–101). Successful resilience it diagnoses as arising from the abilities of peoples to “self-organize, experiment, learn and adapt” and failed resilience from the absence of these abilities (Ibid.).

Of all the case studies on which the report is based, one stands out — seemingly an example for Arctic triumph. It is that of the Inuit of Cape Dorset, Nunavut who have, according to the report, reinvented themselves, in the face of the loss of their traditional livelihoods, as ‘international art sensations’ (Carson and Peterson 2016, p. 109). The artworks of Inuit living in Cape Dorset are offered for sale, largely on the Internet, by urban gallerists, often for as little as a few hundred Canadian dollars. How much of a cut the gallerists take, and how much of the fee for which Inuit art is sold reaches the Inuit themselves, can only be speculated upon. Inuit artists themselves describe the desperate circumstances that have forced them to turn to art as a way of making a living. ‘There are no jobs’, explains one Inuit artist, Manasie Maniapik (quoted in Rathwell and Armitage 2016, no pagination). ‘We don't have jobs, it's the only way to make money’ explains another, Oqituq Ashoona (Ibid.). Another of these ‘international art sensations’, Madaline Oumauataq, explains how the making of the art helps her to deal with the trauma of the ‘heavy changes’ which the Inuit of Cape Dorset have gone through in the last few decades (Ibid.). Therapeutically, the production of the art, often depicting the effects of climate

change upon landscapes and livelihoods, enables the Inuit to cope with the devastations of the losses entailed. More importantly, it enables them to survive economically in the context of the disappearance of their traditional livelihoods. None of this suffering and desperation is conveyed in the *Arctic Resilience Report's* celebration of them as 'international art sensations' and exemplars of 'resilience' and 'transformation'. No consideration is given either to the colonial relations of exploitation which continue to mediate the abilities of these Inuit to survive, given their dependence on the commodification and sale of their art, by urban gallerists. Western theorists, such as Kaitleen Rathwell and Derek Armitage, who argue that the enabling of the Inuit to make art enhances their resilience fail to recognise any of the extent to which these practices represent the wholesale neoliberalisation of the communities in question, the debasement of their traditions and livelihoods, the commodification of the catastrophes they have suffered, and their subjection to western economic reason (Ibid.).

Resilience is advancing in the Arctic, as well as across the world, as a major discourse for the development and implementation of neoliberal governance and subjectification. Indigenous peoples are but one target population of strategies for the making of resilient subjects in the Arctic as elsewhere. Nevertheless they are a crucial one, given the nature of the arguments being made for their exemplary status. This chapter urges critical thinkers and practitioners concerned with indigenous politics in the Arctic to be more circumspect when confronting claims about the inherent resilience of indigenous peoples living there. For the risks in accepting such clichéd and politically loaded representations of the indigenous are, as I have suggested here, vast, and ultimately complicit with colonial power and neoliberal exploitation. We know much by now about the long history of colonial violence that arose from the western desire to destroy indigenous peoples on account of their perceived inferiority. We recognise and understand much less of the violence which arises from the apparent desire to protect indigenous peoples and 'the ontological alterity they purportedly embody (Bessire 2014, p. xi). Yet that is a form which colonial violence now takes. From the Amazon to the Arctic, indigenous peoples must resist the violence embedded in neoliberal strategies of resilience, while the anthropologists who study them must beware being drawn into the latest ideologically driven project to govern the lives of indigenous peoples (Hinkson 2010, p. 3).

2.5 Indigenous Imaginaries in the Arctic

What this calls for, then, is a suspicion towards this new discourse, and a political intelligence capable of avoiding the fall into the traps now being set for indigenous peoples in the Arctic by powers seeking to govern them and the whole region with a strategy of resilience. In the Northern Sámi language the word for trap (*giela*) is the same as the word for language (*giela*) itself (Gaski 1997, p. 11)). Possibly the foremost Sámi poet of all time, Paulus Utsi, penned a collection titled *Giela giela* which translates as 'Ensnare the Language' (Ibid.). It was language itself which Utsi

urged his fellow Sámi to hunt and trap. Never was that injunction of Utsi more urgent than it is today.

Another widely regarded Sámi poet, Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, himself a relative of Utsi, once condemned ‘the self-righteous grandeur’ of the colonisers of the Arctic tundra, and sought to give counter-representation to ‘indigenous peoples’ values and philosophy’, those of the Sámi, but also of all other indigenous peoples with whom Valkeapää identified (Gaski 2010, pp. 301–305). What would Valkeapää say today, were he still alive, in observation of the importance now given to indigenous knowledge, by the Arctic Council that governs his own land, Sápmi, as well as by so many other states and powers?

Poetry itself can be a powerful resource for equipping peoples with the intelligence and necessary cynicism with which to avoid discursive traps and make language and concepts work for and not against peoples. Not least because poetry incites the imaginations of peoples by deploying images in ways that open up the possibility of new worlds, rather than simply governing worlds in the ways that states and international institutions seek to (Chandler and Reid 2016).

The poetry of Valkeapää contains many different ideas, images and thoughts, but is well known for the importance and beauty it attaches to the image of reindeer. The reindeer herd is a central motif in many of Valkeapää’s works (Gaski 2010, p. 312). On the one hand this motif might seem simply to embody the poet’s defence of Sámi traditions and non-human nature over and against the hubristic humanism of the coloniser (Ibid., pp. 306–307). On the other hand, however, within the poetics through which Valkeapää constructs his images of reindeer the reader can encounter ideas that speak to the interests of indigenous peoples, including the Sámi, in maintaining their autonomy from western powers. In *The Sun, My Father*, for example, the first reindeer Valkeapää poeticises is described as *Menodahkes* (Gaski 2010, p. 320). *Menodahkes* represents not just any reindeer but the reindeer who ‘thrives best by itself’, and which ‘is in the habit of trying to avoid being taken hold of’ and ‘prefers to keep to itself’ (Ibid.). It relates to the verb, *eaidat*, ‘to become a stranger to something or someone, to keep apart by itself, without having anything to do with others’ (Ibid.).

Becoming a stranger, maintaining distance, avoiding being taken hold of; these are fundamentally political practices the poetics of which are integral to Valkeapää’s work and ethics, and to Sámi poetics and practices as a whole. Elsewhere I have written of the importance of concepts of autonomy and self-mastery to indigenous thought and practice (Reid 2018). The Yaqui shaman, Don Juan, whose life and teachings are notoriously documented in the anthropology of Carlos Castaneda, described a set of practices that come close to *eaidat*, and a way of being *Menodahkes* as it were. Like Valkeapää, Don Juan taught respect for the Earth and for species of life other than humans, while at the same time being immensely concerned with the arts by which we humans can best live (Ibid.). He taught the arts by which the indigenous subject can ‘build a fog’ around itself and cultivate the ‘ultimate freedom of being unknown’ (Castaneda 1972, p. 31). Don Juan emphasised the importance of disconnection as life practice and as the basis of ethics. ‘Your friends, those who

have known you for a long time, you must leave them quickly,' he advised Castaneda (Ibid., p. 42).

In her analysis, Kathleen Osgood Dana has argued that Valkeapää is best understood as a 'shaman-poet' whose vision penetrates time itself, employing poetry as a power to look into the past, future and reality itself (Dana 2004, p. 9). *The Sun, My Father* is itself, she argues, a kind of shamanic drum, 'capable of seeing into other worlds, into the past, and into the future' (Ibid., p. 9). Like Don Juan, what Valkeapää is really concerned with is truth: the search for it, and the ability of the subject to align itself with its own truths, to act without doubt or remorse. 'I have no doubts or remorse,' Don Juan says, 'everything I do is my decision and my responsibility,' because in this world 'there is no time for regrets or doubts. There is only time for decisions' (Castaneda 1972, p. 56). Don Juan seeks to free the self from doubt and attain the power of decision that is the hallmark of sovereign subjectivity.

In much of the literature on indigeneity today we encounter the claim that indigenous subjectivity is defined by a sense of the interconnectedness of the self to others. The life histories of indigenous peoples are said to show a moral ordering of sociality that emphasises mutual support and concern' (Moreton-Robinson 2015, p. 15). Doubtless these are aspects of indigenous cultures and life practices that are important for their full understanding. Indigenous cultures, however, are also mines of ideas about how the self cannot just support but achieve power over others, hunt and trap, deceive, and outwit the other.

In the West the power to deceive, hunt and trap the other has, since Plato at least, been understood to owe to the power which some humans hold over the imaginations of other humans, the ability to deploy images, and make the illusory appear true (Reid 2017). In the Western tradition it has been seen to be at the root of many human problems, from madness to political fanaticism to illegitimate government. In indigenous cultures too, though, we can encounter the same ideas, involving power and imagination, but in a more affirmative way. Valkeapää writes, in *The Sun, My Father*, much of images, employing the Sámi words *govva*, to evoke a world which, in Osgood Dana's descriptions of it, is itself *govvás máilbmi*, a 'world full of images', or world-as-image (Dana 2004, p. 9). The word *govva* evokes, in Northern Sámi language as much as in its Finnish language equivalent *kuva* (picture/image), Osgood Dana also argues, the particular image of a drum, and the drum of the shaman himself especially, an instrument for the making of images (Ibid.). At the same time, it also evokes the power of the hunter, for both *govva* in Northern Sámi and *kuva* in Finnish were originally terms for decoys used by hunters to lure birds (Dana 2004, p. 9). The image, in Valkeapää's poetry is unambiguously powerful, as a means with which to hunt and trap, empower the self, and live more. As Dana expresses it, images are, for Valkeapää, 'potent emblems of life itself, written both on the drum and on the land' (Dana 2004, p. 13).

The suppression of Sámi culture in the Arctic proceeded through the confiscation and destruction of Sámi drums; the *govadasat*, with which they conjured images (Ibid., p. 19). The war on indigenous peoples in the Arctic, as conducted more or less worldwide by Western colonial regimes, was a war upon their image-making powers, a war to either extinguish or control their imaginations. As it was for those

indigenous peoples unfortunate enough to have encountered the Jesuits who colonised their imaginations, not just by placing pictures before their eyes but by imprinting pictures upon the bodies of natives, ‘so that they would take possession of their viewers’ imaginations and dreams’ (Belting 2011, p. 40). The emancipation, empowerment and eventual triumph of indigenous peoples, including all those living in the Arctic, can only happen through the restitution of those same powers of imagination.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has questioned the rationalities shaping discourses of indigenous resilience in the Arctic. The spread of this discourse has been enabled by sciences with problematic histories of involvement in the colonisation of indigenous peoples and racial depictions of indigenous peoples as inferior. It is also shaped and spread by the Arctic Council, which has made resilience the foundation of its strategy for governing the region and its peoples. There is very little indigenous to the discourse itself, in spite of attempts to indigenise resilience as if it were a concept integral to indigenous cultures. The fact is that resilience does not even have a place in the languages of many indigenous peoples living in the Arctic (Kelman 2018, p. 2) and is difficult to translate. Much more integral to indigenous cultures and languages, in the Arctic as much as elsewhere, is the concept of imagination. If the indigenous peoples of the Arctic are to triumph and enjoy a future free from colonialism it will be because they have employed a power fundamental to political subjectivity, that of imagination itself. The words, images, and poetry of indigenous peoples will be a much more beneficent resource in their struggle for emancipation than the discourses of colonial states and their sciences.

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