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Cama'i America: Alaska Natives, Narrative, and the Spaces of Empire

By

Thomas Michael Swensen

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Of the

University of California, Berkeley

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Cama'i America: Alaska Natives, Narrative, and the Spaces of Empire

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Abstract

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The word “cama’i” in the title, pronounced cha-my, is the Alutiiq word for “hello.” Given that in the nineteenth-century Alutiiqs, working in California, passed the word on to Kashaya speaking Pomo whom still presently use the greeting in their language today, I use the term to underscore global geopolitical articulations in the field of Native American and Indigenous studies. The first chapter, “Cama’i America,” examines oral narratives by conscripted Alaska Natives and colonized Kashaya Indians at the village of Metini, California during the Fort Ross trading period in the early nineteenth-century. The second chapter, “Citizens/Subjects in the Last Frontier,” analyzes Alaska Native citizenship during the movement that resulted in statehood in 1959. This chapter focuses on the textuality of the Alaska flag, adopted in 1927, and how images and representations of Jon “Benny” Benson, the flag’s Alutiiq designer, and the children of Athabascan Chief Luke, relate to the perceived incorporation of the region’s indigenous people into the nation’s racial culture and gender hierarchy. The third chapter, “Impossible Sovereignty,” reads the indigenously-produced films *Our Aleut History: Alaska Natives in Progress* (1986) and *Aleut Story* (2005) as indigenous heritage recovery projects with contrasting goals, covering twentieth-century enslavement, World War II internment, and United States citizenship. Chapter four, “Of Displacement and Domestication,” turns to the play *River Woman* as Tlingit writer and Alaska politician Diane E. Benson’s dramaturgical response to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. The final chapter, “The Ends of Imperialism,” articulates the Bering region as an indigenous cultural center reading the Cold War-era politics of transcontinental Yupik culture through the work of “American” and “Russian” Bering Strait Yupik women writers.

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Chapter One: Cama'i America

Let us start with a workable definition of empire: the use and abuse, and ignoring, of other people for one's own welfare and convenience. Now in truth, America was born and bred of empire.

William Appleman Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life*

This introductory chapter explores the oral narratives and historical accounts of North American indigenous people, now referred to as Alaska Natives and California Indians, who were involved with the North American Russian empire during the nineteenth-century. Alaska Natives, as subjects of the Russian Crown, worked for the Russian American Company throughout the Pacific and Bering region, while the Southern Pomo, California Indians, hosted the Russian enterprise, known as Fort Ross, in the village of Metini on the Sonoma coast of Northern California. Through an examination of indigenous oral narrative and historical accounts, this chapter links indigenous people to imperial structure by inquiring into how they create and maintain cultural space within the coercive landscapes empire manifests. After the Russian and Spanish territoriality of their regions, both Alaska Natives and California Indians would of course find their lands occupied by the United States, another imperial project, from the mid-nineteenth-century to the present. Covering pre-United States occupation of Alaska and California, this chapter recognizes a transitional link between Russian and United States activities in North America through indigenous narrative in the consideration of my project's broader inquiry of Indigenous people and "American" empire.

In the essay "Empire as a Way of Life" Williams speaks to the United States' rise as a global power by defining the nation as an empire "born and bred" from the "use and abuse" of others. In turn, he views the nation's history as embodying a set of sinister deeds committed against other nations. Published in 1980 in the wake of the Vietnam War, "Empire as a Way of Life" is interested in constructing a genealogy to account for contemporary United States imperial formation. His views on national empire have clearly become the basis for a critical understanding of American history bringing into focus both those who benefitted, and those who were victimized in the rise of the nation as a global power. But what of the latter, those whose "welfare and convenience" empire has worked against? Does William's important work hold true for the , national subaltern? And how has empire put them to use against their own interests in the service of empire's beneficiaries?

The term "America," of course encompasses more than a single nation-state; it is a designation for two continents colonized by Eurasian empires 500 years ago, and perhaps should include US overseas possessions and spheres of influence, that are certainly part of the American empire. Since the original European entry, an imperial system has conscripted the labor of colonized people for resource extraction, transportation, and commerce in the "New World" and abroad, and incorporated territory for the colonial settlement of European populations. The "America[n]" nation, of which Williams writes, is part of a global system of neocolonial states. Perhaps to emphasize the global nature of this imperial system, Williams establishes an uncomplicated spatial demarcation between those benefiting from empire inside the United States, and those subordinate, external to the nation, whom embody the subaltern. This composes a common enough understanding of empire. Articulating Williams' "workable definition," and speaking to the spatial organization of empire, geographer Ronald Johnston

describes empire as “the creation and maintenance of an unequal economic, cultural and territorial” project, primarily “based on domination and subordination” of one territorially-based people upon another (375).

But does empire’s imagined geography not require a deeper analysis? What of those who were “born and bred” in empire—within its metropolitan “home”—who have been “use[d] and abuse[d]” themselves, in ways akin to empire’s overseas victims? Are not the *internal* imperial subaltern just as much a part of America as those in the position of “domination?” Care should be exercised in one presuming a clear territorial division between those who benefit and those who pay for global inequality, as in such equations as “the global north” vs. “the global south.” In the case of the Cherokee (indigenous to Southeastern North America), for example, Williams notes that an expanding United States “[m]ove[d] them out and force[d] them to adapt to surplus space,” overlooking how integral the Cherokee have been to the United State’s rise as a global power. The impulse to posit a discrete spatial border, national or otherwise, between power and powerlessness simplifies the complex spatial organization of empire, understates the destructive impact of empire upon its subject peoples, and ignores the role—a coerced role—of subject peoples in the construction of empire’s wealth and “modernity.” Consider for example Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s identification of empire being distinguished “by a lack of boundaries...,” in which, “[e]mpire’s rule,” they argue, “has no limits...[through] a regime that effectively encompasses the spatial totality.” Those inhabiting empire, suggest Hardt and Ngeri, experience it “not as a historical regime originating in conquest,” they write, “but rather as an order that effectively suspends history and thereby fixes existing state affairs for [a time seeming like] eternity.” This order manages both culture and territory through the creation of “the very world it inhabits” (xiv). Building such a boundless environment requires significant effort that becomes intrinsic to the imperial regime. In empire, various interpellated subjects seamlessly work, argue Hart and Negri, toward fixing the “existing state affairs” (xiv). This would suggest the impossibility of perceiving the spaces beyond empire by those facing either “domination” [or] “subordination” due to their subjectivity becoming manufactured or at the least influenced through a regime they have taken part in building. While Hardt and Negri’s work looks to account for the mobilization of political subjects of empire in a largely post-World War II era of late-capitalism, their conception of empire as illimitable serves to assist in uncovering how indigenous subjects inhabit imperial structures.

The vast scope of imperial practice implies a range of actors situated in profoundly different situations of power engaged in the articulation of empire as a way of life. In an attempt to decipher this very complex reality, Mary Louis Pratt emphasizes the importance of recognizing historical and cultural *linkages* and *entanglements* between those directing empire and those subjected to its rule. Building upon Edward Said’s insights in *Culture and Imperialism* on the imbrication of the histories of the colonized and the colonizers, she writes

If [Said’s] ideas of counterpoint, intertwining, and integration have anything more to them than a blandly uplifting suggestion for catholicity of vision, it is that they reaffirm the historical experience of imperialism as a matter first of interdependent histories, overlapping domains, second of something requiring intellectual and political choices. If, for example, French and Algerian or Vietnamese history, Caribbean or African or Indian and British history are studied separately rather than together, then the experience of domination and being

dominated remain artificially, and falsely, separated. (257)

The study of history and culture, insists Pratt, requires one to understand empire as a set of mutually constrained experiences combined with a series of political and intellectual situations binding all players. To work with modern sub-continental “Indian” history, for example, while bypassing British history would, in this view, “artificially” separate a comprehensive understanding of empire’s global scope. Viewing inequalities produced through imperial and colonial practice as historically unconnected would be in the end a failure to comprehend empire at all. In the influential *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith understands empire as a “complex ideology,” linking together Europe’s global activities since the time of the Enlightenment (39). For Smith, the examination of Indigenous writing and historical accounts are paramount for understanding both colonialism and empire since empire necessarily relies heavily upon indigenous people in constructing and maintaining such a system. In this sense, the exploitation of indigenous people is both denied and continuously reproduced through empire’s “complex ideology.” Due to this development, Indigenous cultures are intermeshed with settler cultures in inseparable ways.

Arguments advocating indigenous cultural absolutism within imperial structure may also be artificially, and distortingly, fragmenting the unified history and culture intrinsic to empire. If empire and the experiences of Native people are inherently bound together, should scholarship on Native perspectives necessarily concern itself with empire as an inescapable way of life? Emphasizing the presence of imperialism even in scholarship about aboriginal peoples, Smith argues, helps to illuminate the fundamental ways in which imperialism has fragmented indigenous communities, and persists to this day to lock indigenous communities in deeply hierarchal political and cultural relationships. In *Empire as a Way of Life*, William Appleman Williams insists that the “only way we can come to terms with those matters is to look our imperial history in the eye without blinking, flinching, or walking away.” If the nation “was born and bred of empire,” is it possible to consider indigenous people, subjects of a nation held unequally, as structurally integral to an imperial way of life? If so, to what extent may peering into indigenous culture as part of imperial history without flinching, or walking away, assist in the strengthening of indigenous cultures globally?

Nineteenth-century Russian American Empire and Native Conscription

In the essay “Fort Ross Meditation,” James Clifford, visiting the Fort Ross California State Park, north of San Francisco, considers the global intersections of Russian imperial history in North America. Clifford delves into the role indigenous people from throughout Imperial Russia (including the Pacific coast from what is now Alaska to California) played in the operations of a nineteenth-century California colony, known in the Russian language, as Fort Rossia. Touring the grounds of the park where the Fort Rossia stood, he identifies the trajectory of the nineteenth-century Russian functionaries “arriv[ing] in the wrong direction,” in terms of the mainstream imaginary of Western imperialism. The Russian American Company, chartered by the Russian state, traveled from the eastern side of the Eurasian continent through Siberia, the North Pacific, and Bering regions down the waters off the North America’s Northwest Coast, and eventually Hawai’i. Instead of coming west across North America as did Western European settlers decades later, the Russian journey constitutes a markedly untold story of empire. Clifford

“finds it odd to recognize that when its [Fort Rossia] builders gazed at the Pacific horizon, they were looking back, not out” into future possible colonies (303). For the Russian and indigenous workers, brought to Fort Ross from Alaska and Siberia, California represented the most eastern colony of the Russian expansion. The United States movement across the plains of North America to California had yet to commence, and New Spain, holding few missions north of San Francisco, interacted sparingly with the indigenous people of the area. Yet, within this nineteenth-century imperial geography, indigenous people working under Russian management traveled between St. Petersburg and San Francisco as the project centered activities in the southern Alaska colonies of Kodiak and Archangel (now called Sitka).

Clifford’s observations compels the recognition that one must possess a geographical reorientation toward an indigenous cultural history when bearing in mind the Russian colonial past. He considers the colony’s global significance in relation to United States conceptions of California history:

The North Pacific is a geopolitical space, whose transformation by capital and empire is no more than two centuries old. Is it possible, as one contemplates the area’s “Russian period,” to feel, for a crucial instant, that nothing has been settled? That the historical processes unleashed then—the power of markets over vast spaces, the marking and unmaking of political borders, the decimations and movements of people—are incomplete? The “West Coast,” the “United States” . . . Such things did not exist here a century and a half ago. Will they be here a century hence? (343).

For Clifford, the “decimations and movements” represented at Fort Ross make the current political borders and perhaps the cultural logics of Western expansion appear to be part of an “incomplete” or unsettled process of a broader expansive change. Importantly, the “making and unmaking of political borders,” he observes at the park, is not a permanent accomplishment but constantly in formation. The geopolitical space of Fort Ross in Metini (the Pomo word for the place), over 200 years old, embodies an unsettled global process even though Russian presence disappeared from the area in 1841. The Kashaya-speaking Southern Pomo still live in the region, even after a three-fold change in territoriality (Spanish, Russian, and American) over last two hundred years.

Clifford also contends that indigenous accounts of Fort Ross history present an intersection between the overarching narrative of Western expansion and indigenous global culture. The stories told by Native people about Fort Ross, he writes, “should not be considered inferior to written records” (311). “Kashaya oral histories” produced by the Southern Pomo of the region, he writes, “offer more concrete and detailed accounts of the event than do the journals of the expedition leaders” (312). The critical reading of Southern Pomo accounts of the Fort Rossia colony provides a cultural context for its history, something beyond a narrative simply built with the formal state versions one may discover in the exploration of imperial documents. For example, Clifford reads the Kashaya narrative to recognize that “active staying meant keeping ‘Metini’ (a Kashaya center) from becoming ‘Fort Ross’ (an outpost of a foreign empire)” (“Fort Ross Meditations” 319). In other words, the village of Metini through narrative remained a Pomo space during Russian occupation. Indigenous historical narratives, Clifford argues, may bring to light critical detail concerning the spaces of empire than do the narratives

produced by the colonial functionaries arriving in California with indigenous workers collected from colonies elsewhere.

Two hundred years ago, where presently stands the Fort Ross State Park in Sonoma County, California (the named geographical places are important for my argument), Lukaria, and fellow residents of Metini village watched a ship in the Pacific Ocean approach the shoreline near them. “[M]y grandmother [Lukaria] told me,” Herman James, in the oral narrative “Tales of Fort Ross,” explained to scholar James Oswald during a linguistic study of the Kashaya language in 1958. She “really saw this herself” James told Oswald (276). At first, Lukaria and the other villagers, believed that the vessel was emerging from the sea but her grandson James admits that the approaching craft, “later proved to be a boat,” he said, “but they didn’t know what it was—the Indians hadn’t seen anything like that before” (Oswald 276). This ship, christened the *Kodiak*, carried the first Russian imperial functionaries and their conscripted indigenous workers, the majority shipped from the Kodiak Island archipelago. This exploratory hunting party would later return to Metini and establish a trading post known to Russians as Fort Rossia (Haycox 106).

“Tales of Fort Ross,” as told by Herman James to linguist Robert Oswald in *Kashaya Texts*, allows the reader to experience imperialism from the point of view of an indigenous people living with the Russian American Company in their village, Metini located 70 miles north of San Francisco. The Russian American Company began as a chartered venture of the Russian government in the Americas, and it formed a partnership with merchants in New England to sell sea otter pelts in Chinese markets. At that time, the Metini village became host to a colony of the Russian government. The Russians in turn imported conscripted people from elsewhere in Russian America and Siberia. These various global migrants together took part in the formation of the Russian empire in the Americas, all possessing various categories of Russian citizenship status. “Tales of Fort Ross” recounts this colonial project’s insertion into an indigenous cultural geography in California, becoming at once part of Russian imperial history and part of indigenous cultural experience. The narrative maps the encounter, and the changes, brought on by Russian presence in the Metini village and in doing so illuminates an indigenous cultural space at once relatively autonomous from and deeply a part of Russian imperialism. The *Kodiak* landed in their territory, the Southern Pomo of the Metini village became enmeshed in an international venture that relied upon the labor of a diverse crew of indigenous workers gathered previously from locations throughout the world, all under impressments of service to the Russian state.

Following in this line of inquiry this chapter explores how indigenous narrative maintains indigenous space within the structure of empire. This is done by examining Southern Pomo narratives in *Kashaya Texts*, such as “Tales of Fort Ross,” “The Suicide of a Wife,” and “The Wife Beater,” as told by Herman James to James Oswald, to read indigenous experience within Russian empire. Clifford’s reading of Fort Ross and its history proves important in positioning indigenous perspectives as central to the Russian American project. The chapter additionally examines the nineteenth-century Dena’ina verse “Qadanalchen’s Song,” as written in Dena’ina and translated into English by the Dena’ina author Peter Kalifornsky, of the Alaska Kenai peninsula. Both the Southern Pomo and Dena’ina narratives constitute indigenous voices on connections within empire that endured after the Russian presence in North America, revealing inter-indigenous cultural exchanges. In addition, as it examines the relationships described in the narratives, this chapter also sketches out the *alternative territories* implied by or imagined by the cultural production which these texts exemplify. For as the Russian state expanded with the

conscripted Native workers, the workers themselves formed and maintained indigenous spaces fastening cultural geographies within the imperial machinery of the time. Indigenous literary culture surrounding Fort Rossia proves a unique opportunity to engage with Native cultural production from the point of view of those indigenous to Metini, whose village became a colony. After reading these perspectives, the chapter then turns to the standpoint of a conscripted Native worker from Alaska, forcibly relocated thousands of miles away from home, whose labor helped maintain the colony in the company of Russian keepers and the Pomo locals.

Indigenous Connections

The *Kodiak*, a Russian imperial vessel, arrived on the shores of Metini after sailing south down the Pacific Coast from the Russian fort at Archangel in 1803 (now the city of Sitka, Alaska). The Pomo villagers quickly became acquainted with the members of the Russian American Company and had daily interactions. The Russian American managers on board consisted of Russian nationals from Siberia known as the *Promyshlenniki*. They were mostly entrepreneurial Russian-Siberian hunters, traders, and artisans who decades earlier had “flocked to Siberia during Russian conquest and settlement” of far eastern Eurasia and later followed the imperial project further east into the Americas (Wood, xiii). The *Promyshlenniki*’s role in the Russian American project was to oversee the larger population of indigenous peoples the company brought from Siberia and other territories claimed by the Russian empire in Alaska and the islands in between the continents (Clifford, “Fort Ross Meditations” 309).

The indigenous people involved with the company at Metini from outside of California consisted of Natives from the then Alaska territory of Russian America. In fact, numerous indigenous villages at the time hosted colonies of the Russian Empire in both Alaska and Siberia, and the Russian colonists put these people to work. According to historians, they worked under a range of severe conditions. Though the Aleut from the North Pacific Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea held the responsibility of hunting sea otter in the *quaqs*, a sea craft they commanded so dexterously, other workers maintained the grounds, cultivated crops, and performed general service duties for their Russian American Company managers.

The colonial activities at Metini in the early nineteenth-century produced a kind of space Mary Louise Pratt refers to as a *contact zone*. Within the village, the Russians created a society where disparate populations assembled in “highly asymmetrical relationships of domination and subordination” (Pratt 4). The Russian American Company conscripted and employed Aleut labor for their skills in hunting sea otters and harvesting their pelts, which the company sold for high prices on the Chinese marketplace through a network of New England merchants (Black, 163-164). There are account of Kanaka Maoli, from the kingdom of Hawai’i, visiting the colony, but at any given time the Aleut represented the largest proportion of the settlement population there (Clifford, Fort Ross Meditations 309 ; Mills 11). The term *Aleut* in this chapter covers communities of people living in what are now considered the state of Alaska and the Russian territory of Kamchatka Krai in Siberia. Russian nationals derived the term “Aleut” from a Siberian Indigenous word meaning “coastal dweller.” Furthest east, the Alutiiq, or Supiac, are at home on the southern coast of the Alaska Peninsula and the Kodiak Island archipelago. The Unangan, also labeled Aleut, reside on the islands forming the Aleutian chain, stretching across the International Date Line, and on the islands of St. Paul and St. George in the Bering Sea. The Russians also considered the Sasignan people to be Aleut. They are indigenous to the Bering and

the Commander Islands in the Russian territory of Siberia (Svarny Carlson, 211-214). These Aleut workers settled alongside the Southern Pomo as Fort Rossia grew into a structured colony within the village. Marriages between Pomo, Northern Indigenous peoples, from the Pacific and Bering regions, and Russian imperial managers proved common, though distinct Metini “neighborhoods” separated the Kashaya from the aboriginal settlers (Lightfoot 161).

The intricate nature of colonial relations between the managers and the aboriginal laborers changed over time with the alteration of Russian governmental policies. In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the administrator of the Russian American Company Alexander Andreyevich Baranov would, in extreme cases, brutally punish indigenous people. Natives, under the colonial authority, became subjects bound to Russian imperial law upon the claim that Alaska was Russian territory. This enabled the government to call Alaska aboriginals to serve in duty to the empire. The service provided by Aleut workers was part of a mandatory conscription system through which Russian functionaries “paid” unfree workers by allowing them to keep a proportion of the furs. Historian Lydia Black describes that when an indigenous person voiced “refusal to join long-distance hunting (and raiding parties)” such as the Fort Rossia project, the disagreements were “settled by the lash” (133). Public flogging, Black asserts, was used by company managers to force workers into accepting Russian duties.

The Russian state employed a conscription system termed *iasak* for North Pacific and Bering Sea aboriginal people. As described by historian John F. Richards, the *iasak* system exacted an oath of allegiance to the Tsar from aboriginal subjects, who promised the payment of tribute. The company insured that conscripted hunters kept their promises while away from the village workers by using hostages from their villages (531). The system began with Russian colonialism in Siberia and amounted to aboriginals being forcibly made to pay tribute in the form of furs, or other valuable natural resources, under brutal tactics in which particular liberties or even in many cases the very safety of the loved ones were exchanged for fulfillment of the hunter’s duty to the Tsar. Russian functionaries often detained a worker’s family members in order to ensure the worker would remain in service to the company. In providing for the safety of their families, hunters gave a portion of their catch to the company. Historian Gwen Miller argues that the extremes to which the Russian functionaries inflicted “intimate violence” upon entire Native families took on numerous forms “from hunger and starvation to fear of physical aggression” (Miller, 304). Lydia Black however contends that, by the late eighteenth century, the Russian American Company employed a less arbitrary and more “modern” form of colonialism by incorporating Natives into the Russian state as citizens of the Russian empire, though they did remain subject to state exactions, just like all non-noble Russians (Black 127). The specific treatment received by conscripted indigenous workers from the Russian managers resulted in an understandable indigenous-Russian division onboard to which the Kashaya interestingly failed to notice or note when the *Kodiak* landed in their territory. The relations between the Southern Pomo and the Russian American Company formed differently due in part to the Spanish presence in California at the time. The Russians, as detailed later in the chapter, negotiated a land use agreement in Metini making the Kashaya formal “partners” while maintaining other aboriginals as imperial subjects.

Pomo perspectives on the Fort Rossia colony related in “Tales of Fort Ross,” by Herman James, viewed the managers of the Russian American Company and the conscripted workers as *one foreign people*. While the crew of the *Kodiak* consisted of many different peoples, the Metini villagers lumped the entire Russian American Company together because of their

astonishing arrival at Metini. “[T]hey turned out to be the [U]ndersea people,” Herman James says; “we Indians named those people that” (Oswald 276). Though the Kashaya viewed the settlers as one, the divisions among the Undersea people, between the aboriginal workers and the Promyshlenniki, played out in a social configuration by which the aboriginals worked for the company manager’s benefit. The complex cultural space, between the Kashaya, the functionaries, and the conscripted workers spun by the narrative “Tales of Fort Ross” demonstrates that cultural geographies at Metini during the time of Fort Rossia belong, not solely to the creators of the imperial project and the people whom charted them, but also to the Kashaya villagers.

The Company pursued multiple revenue streams throughout the duration of their residence at Fort Rossia. Sea otter hunting was the most lucrative of the Company’s ventures, but after they depleted the otter population their efforts turned to agriculture. In “Hunting Sea Otter and Farming” Herman James details this evolution. James describes a Russian American journey to and from Alaska, “when they first came to Metini.” However, he explains, “[a]fter a while, it turned out that they had sailed out and found a land up North” (261). Oswald notes at this point in the narrative that James, in this story, “was under the impression that the undersea people came to Fort Ross first and then discovered Alaska” as they sailed away in a hunting party (261). The story “Hunting Sea Otter and Farming” narrates an indigenous history of world affairs, indeed, an indigenous planetary, before to United States annexation of the area. Herman James narrates this occurrence, noting the length of the journey,

[t]hen they sailed up to that place. That land in the north was a cold place. We Indians called it Ice County. After staying a while, they sailed southward. They were transporting south many skins—many otter skins. They said it was six months before they showed up. (261)

As Oswald notes, the historical direction of travel fails to align with historical fact. But James Clifford discusses this “error” in the narrative as less of a matter of chronological history and more an accurate account of the “basic economics of the sea-otter trade and the transition at Fort Ross from the exclusive reliance on commercial hunting to agricultural production” (316). As Herman James details the numerous dangers about failed hunting parties, the narrative transitions to one concerning agricultural practices. James Clifford reads the tale as follows:

The Ice Country, with its intense cold, dangerous floating mountains, and constant threat of starvation, is anything but inviting. Why would anyone go there? These stories take a dim view of the only conceivable reason: Hunting otters for sale and profit. The hunters, driven by this aim, always end up starving or lost at sea. “They didn’t listen [profit from their mistakes],”...The story approves the fact that the Underseas people eventually turn away from sea-otter hunting to agricultural, away from selling skins for coats that people can’t afford and toward making their own coats....The sea otter trade, dangerous like the shifting northern ice, brings famine when things go wrong. (318)

Clifford urges for the consideration of understanding the tale not as a misremembered history but as an allegory for the failures of global trade and the particular tragedies suffered by

the “[U]ndersea” people when the market for sea otter pelts collapsed during their tenure at Metini. While recognizing the dangerous aspects of specialization in a global market for sea otter pelts, this narrative establishes the important fact that indigenous people became involved in and understood an intricate global trade system in which the waters off the coast of their village were among the primary production zones for pelts in the early half of the nineteenth-century. As Clifford makes clear, in this text the area remains Metini, not the Fort Rossia colony, yet Metini is understood in terms of global linkages.

Interpreting the activities of Fort Rossia from the perspective of aboriginal texts, such as “Tales of Fort Ross,” or “Hunting Sea Otter and Farming,” present the colonial project of Fort Rossia as part of a robust indigenous cultural landscape in conjunction with Russian empire. Historian Peter R. Mills asserts that understanding the indigenous connections at Metini, during this time period, can supply fresh insight into the role of aboriginal peoples as actors in global economic expansion (11). The reading of indigenous narratives around the establishment and maintenance of Fort Ross then unveils a series of historical relationships and exchanges between the Pomo and those of the Russian American Company that maintains a unique perspective on aboriginality in the colonization of the Americas. For they promote a Pomo-centered planetary understanding, one that suggests “contingency and movement,” writes Paul Gilroy, “at a smaller scale than the global,” that endures through both Russian and the United States imperial projects in Northern California (xv 2005).

As the Russian American Company colony grew within the place called Metini, the various groups became familiar with one another. “Tales of Fort Ross” spells out the close relationships the Pomo formed with those in the service of the Russian American company. Herman James says of the Underseas people that, “having landed, they built their houses close to where the Indians were,” becoming a subdivision in the village (Oswald, 276). The Russian American Company did in fact promptly build a complex of structures in the Metini village, with aboriginal labor, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. From 1807 to 1841 the Underseas people lived amongst the Kashaya in this southern most Russian outpost in the Americas known as Fort Rossia.

Sometime after the *Kodiak* arrived at the shores of Metini, the managers of the Russian American Company negotiated a land use contract with the area’s Pomo leaders. The formal agreement acts as the founding document of the Fort Rossia colony. Declared on September 22, 1807, the treaty secured the rights of the company to use the village as a base of operations. Ivan Kuskov, administrator of the Russian American Company in California, negotiated with indigenous leaders from the local Kashaya in order to ensure peaceful relations between the two. Written by the Russians the treaty quotes Kashaya leader *Amattan* proclaiming, “we are very satisfied with the occupation of this place by the Russians, because we now live in safety from other Indians, who formerly would attack us and this security began only from the time of [the Russian] settlement” (“A Treaty”). Once the Kashaya people had departed from the negotiations, Kuskov ordered his managers to give a gun-salute to their new landlords, after they had also bequeathed medallions of appreciation upon them. The Kashaya, by granting possessory rights of use for the Russian American company, never formally ceded ownership of the land to the Russian American Company. The establishment of Fort Rossia, grafted onto Metini as part of village, as the treaty suggests, instilled more security to the Kashaya.

The accord between the Underseas people and the Pomo was in effect across the early decades of the nineteenth-century until 1841. At that time, Russian imperialism receded

throughout the world under the realm of Nicholas I, and the Russian American Company retreated from California for locations in Russian America, such as Sitka and Kodiak, as well as the Russian mainland. After over-harvesting the sea otter population off the shores of Northern California, and receiving only a meager return on its agricultural business, the company withdrew the settlement from the Metini village site. They left the remains of the fort in the custody of California gold rush tycoon, John Sutter, who purchased the structures for the nominal amount of seven thousand dollars (Black 201). While the Russians did not possess the right to sell the land to Sutter, United States citizens settling in Sonoma County eventually denied the right of the Pomo to live on the land as they had done previous to, and concurrent with, Russian settlement.

Herman James, through the narrative, describes the Kashaya watching the Russian American Company leave the village for the final time: “They lived there quite a while; having lived there thirty years,” he explains, “they returned home” (276). Here James places the Pomo at the center of a tale about, multiple colonialisms: Russian, Spanish, and American. Moreover, the narrative contrasts the treatment the Pomo villagers received from the Russian American settlement with the treatment they received from Americans, following Russian departure. Herman James details how after the Undersea people left Metini “[t]hen the white people arrived, took over the land where the Indians had been living. But the Indians stayed. Then they put them [the Indians] to work” (277). (Obviously, nineteenth-century Pomo conceptions of whiteness differed greatly from contemporary US racial culture since those of Russian descent are considered in the states as normatively White.) Under the settler society later known as the California Republic, the Kashaya become colonial subjects much as the Aleuts had become Russian imperial subjects of a previous colonial project in the Aleutians: Pomo labor was subject to colonial conscription upon the very land they knew as home. The United States forced all Kashaya regardless of gender into the settler work force. Herman James contends, “[t]he womenfolk, too, worked for the wives of the white men” (277). This segment of the “Tales of Fort Ross” narrative suggests that American immigrants to California treated the Pomo very differently indeed than did those working for the Russian American Company. The Russian American Company recognized Kashaya aboriginal title to the spaces of Metini, while American settlers displaced the community and forced the villagers into low wage labor systems as a perceived “landless” people (279).

Anthropologist Kent Lightfoot sees the differences in treatment as due in part to the change in the colonial politics in North America during the mid-nineteenth-century. The Russian American Company agents, Lightfoot argues, understood the “geopolitics of colonial California” by supplying “economic incentives” and “guarantees of protection” to the Kashaya from the Spanish settlers to the south as well as from other nearby Native communities (156-157). When American migrants came to Northern California, Spanish rule conceded to them at the outset of the Mexican-American War and the California Republic was established in 1846. While the Russian American Company provided a level of security to the Pomo from the Spanish in California and other indigenous groups, the Americans, referred to as the “Whites” by the Kashaya, disregarded the villagers as sovereign peoples with an inherent right to the lands. Nevertheless, in “Tales of Fort Ross,” Metini remains a Pomo place even after American settlers dispossessed the people of their homes and turned them into a landless people in a geography they had inhabited for thousands of years.

None of this is to imply that the presence of the Russian American Company came without colonial tensions and grave outcomes for the Kashaya. In the narratives “The Wife Beater” and “Suicide of a Wife,” Herman James recounts the unequal and brutal domestic relations commonplace throughout Russian America. “The Wife Beater” relates an incident of gendered violence committed within the domestic sphere of a home in Metini. Herman James tells of a non-Pomo living with a Pomo woman:

One time there was a man and an Indian woman living there together. Once, early in the morning, he arose cranky. He growled at his wife. He got meaner and meaner, and suddenly grabbing an axe he cut her head with it. At that time, the undersea people already lived there. They already had a sheriff then, and when they told him, he led him [the husband] away. He was shut up at a place where a little house was standing. They locked him up for about one week. (268)

This depiction of colonial domestic terror and “state” punishment for violence against Native women highlights the degree in which indigeneity and gender relations often emerge as critical points of “contact” in the politics of colonialism (Stoler, 7). Marriages between indigenous women, in Alaska and California, and Russian Company men, as described in the narratives, were in fact common enough that Herman James recounts more than one oral tale depicting such domination. “Indian” women as figures of domestic space within the colonized village, confronted abusive relations with husbands not just in “The Wife Beater,” but also in the story “Suicide of a Wife.” In this tale, James details how an “Indian woman was married to an undersea man,” ended in abject violence and stresses the hardship of colonial life. The Underseas man is described as leaving the house in the morning to “go to work” and returning later in the day, suggesting that the man worked for the Company and was not a hunter, who would leave normally for days at a time to collect pelts for the company. Since there is no mention of the man having been a northern aboriginal, which we would expect in the James text if that were the case, it is reasonable to surmise that the man was a Russian functionary. He narrates the following:

...“They had been quarreling with each other. The man walked out saying, “If I find you here when I get home, I will kill you.” Then he left to go to work. When she had finished eating, she gave her food to her children went into the bedroom and put on her good, new clothes...“Where are you going, Mother?” said her oldest daughter. (271)

The mother, not answering the child’s call, walks to the edge of the shoreline trailed by her daughter where, she takes her own life. The Russian sheriff of Fort Rossia immediately arrests and whips the husband to death. Both these tales illustrate the gravity of colonial tensions and gender relationships at Fort Rossia in that they produced situations leading to violence on the indigenous women in both stories.

The narratives supplied by Herman James are not the only indigenous accounts of colonial tensions at Metini. Native people who came with the Russian American company from elsewhere in the empire have also documented the unequal relations between the indigenous and the Russian functionaries. For example, a Dena’ina worker from the Kenai Peninsula in south

central Alaska also reported on the strains indigenous people felt at Fort Ross. Qadanalchen, through a narrative verse, illustrates the constraints of imperial conscription aboriginals faced at Fort Rossia during his tenure as a subject of Russian empire. Qadanalchen, who worked for the Company, composed a piece now titled by his great-great-grandson, Peter Kalifornsky, “Qadanalchen K’elik’a, or Qadanalchen’s Song.” The worker composed the stanza in residence at Fort Rossia at an unknown date in the early nineteenth-century. The song sets an aboriginal speaker outside the perimeter of Fort Rossia’s tall wooden fences, where many aboriginal people made their homes upon a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The piece, translated into English from Dena’ina by Kalifornsky, consists of four lines placing the reader at Metini on the bluff above the Pacific Ocean, effectively constructing and maintaining aboriginal space in spite of conscription into service for the Company and Russian imperialism. Qadanalchen expresses aspirations to return home, but contained by his obligations to service the company.

Another dark night has come over me.
We may never be able to return home.
But do your best in life.
That is what I do. (1-4, 303)

Knowing the company’s imminent threat of violence towards derelict indigenous workers, the narrator in turn is aware whether he works or not, he may never return home. Yet, it is his efforts at the colony that sustains the presence of the company at Metini. In a footnote to the verse, Qadanalchen’s great-great-grandson explains that Qadanalchen sang these four lines describing the harsh reality of conscription, as the dark waves crashed upon rocky cliffs and sparse beaches along that coastline. The first line, “Another dark night has come over me,” refers not only to the foggy sky above the speaker’s head, but surely also to the wretched time Qadanalchen endured in pressed service at Metini under the Russian American Company. That is, the line reflects the emotional darkness felt due to his separation from a home and family on the distant Kenai Peninsula. Another annotation to the poem by Peter Kalifornsky explains that Qadanalchen carried with him a small bag of soil from his home on the Kenai Peninsula. When he sang the verse he also rubbed the imported earth on his feet (Kalifornsky 301). While interpellated as a victim and forced participant in global imperialism, Qadanalchen literally exercised a relationship with the *terroir* of Alaska in California by pressing his homelands’s soil to his body as he sang the verse. *Terroir*, a term typically associated with agriculture, here is meant to emphasize the application of homeland soil in conjunction with a recitation that celebrates the practice of culture embedded in a specific place. The song and the recitation form a cultural space connecting Qadanalchen with his faraway village. For him, the activity joined Metini with his homeland to the North, incorporating the region into his native cultural geography.

The second line of “Qadanalchen’s song,” “we may never be able to return home,” suggests the degree of tension among the entire population of workers, like himself, separated from their home and family, the latter often forcibly held in their respective villages in Alaska by functionaries of the Company. The song and the soil come to represent both the physical landscape Qadanalchen longed to return to and the plight of all indigenous peoples under the dominance of the Russian empire. The exercise for Qadanalchen becomes a method to attach the lived reality of his conscription to the larger cultural and imperial landscape. The Fort Rossia colony at Metini unites to the Dena’ina landscape of culture through the verse of “Qadanalchen’s

song.” While he did return to his village after enduring his tenure of servitude for an unknown length of time, his memory of his sojourn lived on upon his return to Kenai. California Indigenous language specialist Leanne Hinton traces Qadanalchen’s journey home and how the experience accompanied him home:

A Tanaina man from the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska worked at Fort Ross from about 1812 to 1821, and took the surname Kalifornsky (the Californian”). Upon his return to Alaska, Nikolai Kalifornsky founded a village and gave it the Russian name Kalifonskoe selenie, “the Californian settlement.” The village still bears the name “Kalifornsky” (although it was misspelled form many years on official government documents and maps as “Kalifornsky”). (Flutes of Fire 105)

It is worth examining how Kalifornsky in Alaska came to be established by Qadanalchen as he completed moving through the imperial cycle. His great-great-grandson writes that, “[w]hen he returned from Fort Ross, California, his father, who had been chief, had just died.” The villagers responded to the chiefs’ passage by electing Qadanalchen the new leader of the community. “You next. You be in his place,” the villagers commanded of him. The long journey from indentured service to freedom in his village propelled him to a position of leadership in the village, taking on the role after the passage of his father. Nevertheless, Qadanalchen refused the appointment and his fellow villagers cast him from the community (301). Accompanied by his close relatives, Nikolai walked a few miles from his former home and established another village at an area in the Kenai Peninsula known as *Last Creek Down*. The new village was named *Kalifornsky*, indicating the importance of Qadanalchen’s experience in Northern California and connecting Native Alaska history with that of Metini. Peter Kalifornsky, the writer who set down “Qadanalchen’s Song” on paper, draws his own name from these geographical textualities formed between Metini and the Russian American Company. Similar to the recitation of “Qadanalchen’s Song” the naming of the village Kalifornsky testifies to the ties between the cultural space and the power of language. Moreover, the story of Qadanalchen’s subsequent name change to designate his travels to California thus illuminates the deep personal and cultural effects of Alaska Native involvement in the history of Fort Rossia as a colonial outpost. The new village of *Kalifornsky* forever culturally tied Dena’ina formations of space on the Kenai Peninsula with that of the village of Metini in Northern California.

Cama’i America

Indigenous connections with empire, like the one between Alaska Natives and Russian empire illuminated through “Qadanalchen’s Song,” are also found within the Kashaya Pomo language. Besides his work with Herman James documenting oral narratives, Robert Oswalt draws together the historical bonds between California Indians in Kashaya territory and the influence of Alaska Natives on indigenous California by tracking indigenous loan words in the languages spoken in the Fort Rossia colony. He finds the presence of loan “words in Kashaya which have no origin in Russian, but come straight from one of the Alaska Languages.” He suggests for example the word “Chamay ‘hello’ from the central Yupik” found its way into the Kashaya language (102). This greeting in Yupik is the same as ‘Cama’i,’ pronounced *Cha-my*, in the Supiac language spoken by the Alutiiq of Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula. (It is

important to note that linguists at times refer to Alutiiq people as the Pacific Yupik.) In the nineteenth-century, the word *cama'i*, or *chamay*, moved beyond the homelands of Alaska aboriginal languages into Kashaya territory in Northern California. Kashaya Indians adopted this greeting at Fort Ross in the nineteenth-century, from their northern aboriginal visitors, and therefore brought the word into their own language.

For these groups to exchange a friendly greeting more than suggests a connection between indigenous groups wrought by, but also outside the supervision of, the Russian American Company. The uptake of the word *cama'i* represents a cultural space also reflected in “Tales of Fort Ross” narratives and “Qadanalchen’s Song.” This was a concrete cultural space of indigenous association and kinship-making between Alaska Natives and Californian Indians, and both the shared greeting and the narratives are merely traces of a deeper, mutual indigenous entanglement. The greeting forces us to recognize the complexity of indigenous personal and cultural bonds fashioned in a time of brutal imperial conscription and fear. *Cama'i*, a greeting word intoned with the best intentions and goodwill, offered those who uttered it or to whom it was uttered the possibility of a cultural formation between them. It was not cultural formation utterly outside Russian empire because the bond was formed within the imperial space. Nonetheless, the exchange depicts the limits of Russian subjection upon the indigenous in the Fort Ross colonial project. The word also suggests that while the workers and the Kashaya held distinct relationships with the Russians, they also created and lived relations with one another, unmediated by the Russian authorities to a degree that must be taken note of.

Taken together the examples of Herman James tales of Fort Ross, “Qadanalchen K’elik’a, or Qadanalchen’s Song,” and the greeting *cama'i* imply a geography grounding a planetary indigenous cultural narrative of within an European empire. They hint at a cultural space linking aboriginal textuality through the identifications forged between Native people and their involvement as subjects of colonialism and conscripted actors in imperialism. These narratives told from the point of view of indigenous people caught within the expansion of Russian America, those held within it, mark the aboriginal boundaries colonial acts are unable to penetrate fully. The seemingly boundless reaches of empire descend into the past amidst a transcolonial indigenous geography. Language and narrative, in this instance, build a project inseparable from colonialism and exploitation that manifest indigenous cultural spaces. The narratives of Herman James and the writings of Kalifornsky present spaces constructed within the imperial project, yet they also extend cultural reaches beyond the rule of the Russian American Company.

This dissertation project now moves on to further explore Alaska Native presence in United States empire. Chapter Two, “Citizens/Subjects in the Last Frontier,” begins in 1927 sixty years after the United States purchased Alaska from Russia, analyzing Alaska Native citizenship in a movement resulting in 1959 in statehood. This essay focuses on the textuality of the Alaska flag, designed and adopted in 1927, and how images and representations of Jon “Benny” Benson, the flag’s Alutiiq designer, and the children of Yukon Athabascan Chief Luke, relate to the perceived incorporation of the region’s indigenous people into the racial culture and gender hierarchy in the United States.

Chapter three, “Impossible Sovereignty,” reads the indigenously-produced films *Our Aleut History: Alaska Natives in Progress* (1986) and *Aleut Story* (2005) as indigenous heritage recovery projects with contrasting goals, though each covers understudied aspects of Aleut/Alutiiq history such as twentieth century enslavement, World War II internment, and

United States citizenship. Typically thought of in terms of national formations and legal rights, the indigenous sovereignty explored in this chapter entails the difficulty faced by Native American people in the United States in articulating transcolonial histories. The film *Aleut Story* follows the case of American Aleut reparation for World War II internment, arguing the nation unfairly incarcerated American Aleut national citizens amid the chaos of war. Interviews with former captives, however, reveal the post-war release was the first time in centuries they possessed a reasonable degree of freedom from harsh colonial rule. *Our Aleut History: Alaska Natives in Progress*, a film made by Judy Peterson, an Alutiiq Kodiak Islander, in 1986 for a BA in Community Studies at University of California, Santa Cruz, historically reconstructs the transcolonial Aleut/Alutiiq history of enslavement under Russian and United States empires. Peterson traces her childhood journey from a village on the south end of Kodiak Island to Santa Cruz, California, in the wake of the Tsunami created by the Good Friday Earthquake of 1964. The ties between those who traveled under Russian authority to Fort Ross and Peterson's contemporary expedition are so related that the last name Peterson directly connects her to another Kodiak Native, St. Peter the Aleut, who ventured to California. In the nineteenth-century, the Russian Orthodox St. Peter the Aleut was allegedly disemboweled when the Spanish in California captured his hunting party and he refused to convert to Catholicism. The presentation of American Aleuts as maltreated citizens with a transcolonial history, or the personal journey through the legacies of transcoloniality, as in *Our Aleut History: Alaska Natives in Progress*, illustrates the difficulties of making indigenous claims to sovereignty beyond the familiar contests of nationhood. *Aleut Story* argues for their inclusion in an indigenous critique of the imperial project and *Our Aleut History* attempts to reconcile Aleutian histories with both Russian and United States histories.

Chapter Four, "Of Displacement and Domestication," turns to the contemporary play *River Woman*, in which Tlingit writer and Alaska politician Diane E. Benson's (no relation to Jon "Benny" Benson) responds to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (43 USC. 1601-1624), a public law extinguishing aboriginal title to Alaska lands. The issue of aboriginal title remained unrecognized from the time of the nation's purchase of Alaska until Tlingit attorney William Paul argued in defense of indigenous land rights to the Supreme Court in *Tee-Hit-Ton Indians v. United States*, 348 U.S. 272 (1955). The court held that indigenous ownership of Alaska land was not possible because the United States Congress had never recognized any ownership. In fact, the ruling made it clear that only recognition by Congress could guarantee aboriginal title to any land in the US. Nevertheless, in the years following *Tee-Hit-Ton*, Alaska Native activist groups worked to press numerous land claims with the federal government, which responded with passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. The play *River Woman*, charts the dispossession of a family and the state's forcible removal of the children in to state-wardship, as the settlement manufactured an unclaimed "wilderness" for settler domestication. Chapter Five, "The Ends of Imperialism," examines the Cold War-era politics of transcontinental Yupik culture in the Bering Region as well as the legacies of colonialism that have transformed villages and uprooted entire communities on either side of the international dateline. The writings of "American" Siberian Yupik Susie Silook and "Russian" Siberian Yupik Zoya Nemlyumkina contribute to a greater understanding of transcolonial indigenous culture.

Reading through an archive of cultural materials this project continues to frame indigenous culture in the complex spaces of modern empire. While Chapter One looked at the experiences of separate groups within the Russian empire, Chapter Two examines how Alaska

Natives were rendered into US contemporary culture as the region became a state. Chapter Three reads how Indigenous groups cope with the legacy of one empire whilst bound in another. Chapter Four considers Indigenous reactions the land settlement between the Alaska Natives and the United States. The last chapter peers into how the International Date Line and national borders separates a transcontinental indigenous group but that an indigenous cultural imagination extending across the continents.

Chapter Two: *Citizens/Subjects in the Last Frontier*

This chapter examines twentieth-century representations of Alaska Natives inhabiting a cultural space imbricated with the history of United States national expansion into the Alaska territory. The timeframe stretches from the period when Alaska was a US territory in the early part of the century through the proclamation of statehood in 1959. The history will be approached through images of Jon “Benny” Benson, an Alutiiq man from the Alaska Native Village of Chignik. These images will serve as keys to unlock the story of how the United States came to consider Alaska Natives as part of the nation. Throughout the present day State of Alaska, streets and institutions bear either the name or likeness of Jon “Benny” Benson, more so than any other person from the region’s political history. Unlike historical indigenous figures in the contiguous United States, however, Benson’s fame derives not from his armed resistance to an expanding settler nation, nor from his involvement as a signatory of treaties. Rather, at the age of 13 Benson designed the Alaska flag, a symbol of a meeting point between indigenous people and the United States in Alaska.

The first public image of Benson to circulate consisted of a photograph attached to his design submission in the Alaska territorial flag contest in 1927 [Figure 1]. This contest took place two years after the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act (43 U.S. Stats. At Large, Ch. 233, p. 253 [1924]) which granted full citizenship rights to indigenous people in the states and US territories. Alaska school children throughout the territory participated in the competition with the aspirations of winning a new wristwatch and one thousand dollars from the American Legion, which sponsored the competition. A black-and-white photograph of a 13-year-old Benson adheres to a sheet of velum on which he sketched his flag design for his submission. In fact, all submissions included photographs of the entrants, allowing the judges to view images of the young indigenous designers as they reviewed all the 141 contest entries. Benson’s photograph presents a cheerful young Benny, seated with his hands clasped over one knee, smiling for the camera. Beneath the image reads a brief narrative in his handwriting that details the concept behind the design: “The blue field is for the Alaska sky and the forget-me-not, an Alaskan flower.” Benson further expounds on the ideas behind the flag’s design: “The North Star” represented on the upper right “is for the future state of Alaska the most northerly in the union [sic]” (Figure 1). (Alaska would not actually become a “state in the union” for another thirty years.) The North Star, or the Polaris, also referenced in the passage, is a universal datum sailors use to navigate the world’s oceans, but also relates directly to Aleut/Alutiiq culture, renowned for its seamanship throughout the Pacific and Bering regions. In Benson’s pattern, the North Star, assuming dominance as the largest gold emblem on the flag, evidences the young man’s understanding that the territory was destined to become a state in the Union. For the young Benson at the Jesse Lee Home Mission School in Sitka, Alaska, the incorporation of the Alaska territory fully into the United States is a destiny written literally in the stars. Many children at the Jesse Lee Mission School came from throughout the vast territory of Alaska.¹ Though located in Alaska’s southeast panhandle, in what anthropologists call the Northwest Coast culture area, the Mission became home for many Aleut and Eskimo (the ethnic terms used at the time) children, whose homelands with cultures and languages distinct from those of Northwest Coast Indians lay hundreds of miles away.

From reading Benson’s description, one can see the extent to which he drew from his own Alutiiq indigenous heritage for the design of the flag. For example, he writes “[t]he Dipper,”

represented by the seven gold stars in the middle of the flag, “is for the Great Bear—symbolizing strength” (Figure 1). The constellation of the Dipper, an asterism of the seven brightest stars of Ursa Major, is also known in Sub-Arctic indigenous cultures, such as Benson’s own Alutiiq in South-central Alaska, as the Great Bear (Bastian 110-111). Benson would spend his adult life living beside real Kodiak bears on Kodiak Island across the Shelikof Strait from his birth home, in the Native Village of Chignik. The Kodiak bear, or *Taquka’asinaq* (literally the “Great Bear”) in the Alutiiq Supiac language spoken on Kodiak, is the largest brown bear in North America and is a symbol of resources and culture—understood as intimately linked—to the Alutiiq. In the flag design, the universal meaning (the sailor’s datum) of the stellar formation as the Dipper—understood well by non-Native Alaskans and other Americans—combines with the specific Sub-Arctic Alutiiq meaning of the Great Bear. This double connotation in symbolizing the Dipper and the Great Bear expresses Benson’s aspirations for Alaska as a state-in-the-making with origins in the indigenous presence, but also with “universal” rights and inclusion for all Alaskans in the larger nation-state. The flag represents a meeting point for both a national and an indigenous future.

Images of Jon “Benny” Benson as a child and as an adult alongside the flag circulated in newspapers throughout Alaska and the lower forty-eight states as the territory moved toward statehood, at the celebration of statehood, and even after Benson’s passing in 1972. These photographs and illustrations are helpful in understanding how American culture has interpellated Alaska Natives as citizens of the American polity. The representations of Benson along with images of other Alaska Natives appear in this essay as a starting point for analysis of the variegated cultural spaces indigenous people inhabit amid imperialist expansions. After examining a series of representations of Alaska Natives, this chapter proposes that the Alaska flag as designed by Benson serves as a symbol for how Alaska Natives are bound as citizens and subjects of the United States. Similarly, the double meaning of the constellation as the Dipper and the Great Bear conveys the doubleness of the citizen/subject, where on one hand Alaska’s indigenous people are voting citizens, but on the other they are sovereign entities whose indigenous cultures predated the durable national project. This double-bound circumstance is clear in various cultural productions that articulate the complex spaces of Native political culture, spaces that transcend dominant contemporary ideas about indigenous peoples as entirely separate nations, or as wholly “assimilated” into the United States and American cultures. Ultimately, this chapter argues that the Alaska flag, an indigenous cultural product, weaves together the unique cultural and political experiences Alaska Natives endure in an ongoing colonial relationship with the government of the United States and “American” empire.

American cultural imagination has long viewed Alaska as an untamed and “sparsely” populated—or even unpopulated—wilderness, to the effect of denying the complexity of Native cultures in the region as societies with their own pasts and ongoing associations often stretching beyond the Americas. This view proves vital to understanding how American culture propelled political policy in Alaska. When the nation purchased the Alaska region from Russia in 1867, many in the contiguous United States believed the acquisition of the territory to be a national error. Critics of the purchase labeled the territory “Seward’s Folly,” scorning William Seward, the Secretary of State who arranged the acquisition. The public’s opinion of Alaska as a poor investment for the nation changed with the beginning of the Yukon Gold Rush. A fishing party of Tagist First Nations people unearthed gold along the Canadian banks of the Yukon River in August 1896 (Ducker, 207). In the Yukon, the incitement of gold fever followed in the aftermath

of the California Gold Rush in 1855. From that time, the public conception of Alaska developed into an image of a cornucopia of wealth and industry, encouraging prospectors from afar to settle in the Alaskan-Canadian Yukon with hopes of gaining riches. The draw to Alaska in American popular culture was so strong that it caused many to look toward the territory as a vast new land of national possibilities.

Such representations of Alaska as a bountiful land were disseminated throughout the states from the time of the Yukon Gold Rush of the late nineteenth-century. This caused many in the United States to imagine the region as a newly opened wilderness just beyond the newly closed frontier of the American west. “Widely regarded as the Last Frontier,” Susan Kollin writes, the notions that compose Alaska as the Last Frontier are “encoded to the nation’s future serving to reopen the Western American frontier that Fredrick Jackson Turner closed in the 1890s” (Kollin 5). However, even after one-hundred and forty-one years of United States territoriality, most US citizens have yet to venture to Alaska, leaving the images of Alaska held by those in the contiguous “Lower-48” almost entirely in the cultural imagination.

American business interests and their political allies came to perceive Alaska as a potential source of national wealth, and the challenge became the practical extraction of natural resources and transport to marketplaces elsewhere in the world. In the early twentieth-century gold, fish, and even ice left the shores of Alaska to markets worldwide. For example, Woody Island, a mile from the shores of Kodiak, was turned from a village of ship-makers into a work colony, where Native labor harvested ice from lake Olga. At that same time, however, progressive era conservationists started to complicate the notion of Alaska as solely an extractive colony as they made the case that the region’s resources should be conserved in perpetuity. They believed the Alaska territory necessitated being kept a region perceived an unadulterated wilderness (Kollin 7). These two conceptions of Alaska, as both a land of extractable wealth and as a wilderness to be conserved, may ideologically contradict one another, but in the United States they functioned to inform the image of Alaska as a remote territory somehow rightly governed and secured by the United States.

Like few other places in the Americas, Alaska as the Last Frontier necessarily implies potent conceptions of masculinity if only because the very theme of the frontier requires an appropriately heroic conception of manhood. In the nineteenth-century during the United States expansion West toward the Pacific Ocean the concept of the frontier became defined very much through gender. Scholar Daniel Worden has pointed out that by “the influence of Andrew Jackson and Theodore Roosevelt,” the frontier, a space of expanding empire, defined conceptions of manhood of the day (36). Wealth extraction and the lure of the frontier, contributed to the perception of Alaska as the proving ground of this frontier masculinity. This ideal Alaska as a masculine geography, however, was constructed not only by nation-state colonial projects, but also by Western scientists coming to define the Arctic by linking notions of patriarchy to the northern regions of the world on their scientific journeys northward. Scholar Lisa Bloom also notes that Robert Peary’s Arctic adventure to the North Pole in 1909, a continual site of imperial interest, reinforced and promoted a “particularly powerful masculinist and nationalist discourse in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth-century” (17). The trope of the Arctic as a masculine space proved influential in further developing gendered notions of geography later to inform American culture on Alaska. Artists such as Jack London, in the *Call of the Wild* (1903), and more recently the John Sayles film, *Limbo* (1999), represent

Alaska and the Yukon as a land where rugged men define themselves against a harsh and dangerous environment.

These cultural productions of Alaska as masculine space, in turn, shaped how the nation perceived Alaska Natives during the initial United States colonial period in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, the photograph entitled *The Five Luke Children* from the *Lawyer and Cora Rivenburg Photograph Collection, 1910-1912* spells out the elaborate manner in which representational colonialism presents indigenous people as civilizable subjects of an expanding United States empire [Figure 2]. The image of the Athabascan children as a family posed in front of an American flag foreground their resemblance to white, middle-class, male-dominated families in the contiguous United States. The children of the Athabascan Luke family, kin of Chief Luke, a representative of Tetlin village in the Yukon, attended an Indian boarding school in Stevens Village nearby in the interior Alaska-Yukon area. The photograph was taken by Cora and Lawyer Rivenburg while they both traveled throughout Alaska working as teachers in government-funded Native boarding schools. Their photographic collection served as both a personal travel narrative as well as a document of the “progress” made by the children on the basis of their teachings. The photograph succeeds in making clear that indigenous peoples could transform from savages into civilized subjects—under patriarchal male authority, of course—through the Rivenburg’s kind teachings and gentle care. The young man standing above four seated women is the visually dominant authority figure in the household. This representation of male dominance within the family configuration resonates with the American flag draped in the background. The scene clearly implies that those in the photograph acquiesce to the authority of a national government centered thousands of miles away in Washington, DC. The composition of the photograph suggests, even insists, that Alaska Indians may have a place within the larger “family” of American national patriarchy as male authority and national authority fuse together.

While images such as these may seem harmless to a casual viewer, scholar Terry Smith asserts that colonial projects can effectively rule over a subjugated people through precisely this kind of visual representation. Smith calls these measures of rule “practices of calibration, obliteration, and symbolization (specifically, aestheticization),” all of which can serve to subdue and pacify colonized communities (434). “These components could be hidden by their apparent naturalness, or laid bare in the brash instrumentalism,” Smith asserts, “while at other times they seemed so distinct as to constitute a prevailing visual order” (434). Within these instrumentalities, the method of *calibration* “initiate[s] processes of continuous refinement, of exacting control, [and] of maintaining order,” so much so that Smith argues they create “the self-replicating conditions of a steady state control” over a given population. Calibration methodologies manipulate what a subject’s image or representation ultimately conveys to a viewer, including similarly-situated viewers (in this case, indigenous viewers, as well as the individual subjects of the photograph themselves). *Calibrational* forces at play in Alaska during the twentieth-century, for example, imposed continual refinement upon their subjects like those pictured in *The Five Luke Children* photograph, representing them amiably to onlookers. The subjects are calibrated so as to be prudently included, but only in their reformulated colonized condition, in the expanding nation.

The photograph, *The Five Luke Children*, works also to present Alaska Indians, and by extension all Alaska Natives, as *civilized* indigenous subjects. Playing on the absent presence of presumed Native savagery, the photograph relies on deeply held conceptions of indigenous

wildness in order to suggest that those pictured, dressed in contemporary fashion popular in the “lower 48,” possess the ability to move beyond savagery, if they have not done so already. The young women in the photograph sit carefully posed, hair combed, and dressed in fashionable styles. The young man’s suit-coat marks his distance from either the bloodthirsty savage or the noble Indian savage that Americans variously imagined during the Westward march of the frontier to the Pacific coast. In doing so, the photograph visually demonstrates that the subjects are members of a civilized modern people. The image of the Luke children presents a demarcation in the way Alaska and Yukon peoples were to be framed in relation to American Indians in the contiguous United States.

In *Displaying Filipinos*, scholar Benito Vergara, explores the way visual framing of Natives in the Philippines as exotic and savage peoples also reveals the beliefs held by those sponsoring the colonial project in forming these representations, more than it reveals anything about the Natives themselves. Similarly, the *calibration* of those pictured in the photograph, *The Five Luke Children*, as civilized subjects in Alaska ultimately makes it seem natural that the United States government should extend full authority over the Natives, just as it does over other residents of territories held by the states (even though, in fact, the US government extended—and continues to extend—additional, colonial, authority over Native peoples within the US under the Supreme Court’s holding that Congress has “plenary power” over Indians and Alaska Natives). Since, as Vergara asserts, “photographs are not mere illustrations in a travel book but bearers of colonial ideology,” images like *The Five Luke Children* emit explicit meanings, but also carry tacit messages rooted in the ideologies behind the calibrational mechanics of colonial discourse (14).

Typically, photographs of colonized people focus on aspects other than the violence being committed against them at the time; the images seek to please the imperial viewer with exotic representations of the subject’s otherness, but also her/his family resemblance to the non-indigenous viewer. *The Five Luke Children* image portrays an uncanny representational situation in the sense that it stages Alaska Native domestic structure as a direct reflection of that of the West. The viewer can hone in on the familiar, surprisingly civilized aspects of those pictured, while ignoring the fact that Alaska was a colony and that the children, as federal boarding school students (meant to “civilize” Natives while stamping out Native culture and languages), were subjects of a distant colonial authority. Scholar Laura Wexler argues that Victorian-age women photographers, like Cora Rivenburg, took pictures with an *averted eye* so as to avoid seeing and documenting colonial and racist social conditions (68-73). In turn, the viewer of these photographs in the early twentieth-century also would have invariably used an *averted eye* to read these images and to avoid focusing on the disturbing (even by mainstream American standards of fair play and equality) situations they depict. Wexler defines this refusal to see unjust realities as a “photographic anekphrasis” involving an “active and selective refusal to read photography—its graphic labor, its social spaces—even while, at the same time,” she writes, “one is busy textualizing and contextualizing all other kinds of cultural documents” (58). The images of colonized people become further decontextualized through anekphrasis, as messages that implicate the traumas of colonial practice are overlooked, and only messages flattering to empire are in conveyance. Thus, the photograph, *The Five Luke Children*, for the averted eye, presents would-be citizens (the photograph was taken before American Indians and Alaska Natives became legally US citizens,) rather than oppressed subjects of United States empire.

The dominant representation of Native Americans within American culture often invokes the discourse of savage American Indians and their tenuous relationship to the nation. If these imagined representations of Natives are regarded as actual, then the reality, or even possibility, of Natives, as fully formed modern peoples disappears from popular national culture. Moreover, within the economies of American ideology the creation of American Indian stereotypes, Philip Deloria notes, served to control ideas about the vast diversity of Native peoples and deny their very concrete contributions to and involvement in American modernity as a whole. In *Indians in Unexpected Places*, Deloria connects degrading representations of American Indians to the policies that attempted to condense American Indian diversity and multiplicity into a marginalizable category. “Consider, for example, a familiar analysis of stereotyping in relation to nineteenth-century Indian policy,” he writes, “If all Indians were alike in a certain way (heathen savages, e.g., as portrayed in countless representations), then one could see clearly what was to be done (convert them).” The calibrational forces of an expanding nation created a solution for a complex “Indian” problem through channeling ideas about Indians into reductive stereotypes. For Deloria, the “image, text, and event” of Indian savagery enabled “white Americans to exercise multiple kinds of power over multiple kinds of Indians” (8-9). Depending on immediate policy objectives, Indians could be represented as noble savages or bloodthirsty heathens. Through this type of representational calibration, Deloria claims, the United States would justify expansion, genocide, and the ongoing oppression of American Indians.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries however, Alaska Natives experienced American expansion in ways distinct from the pattern of colonial settlement experienced by the indigenous people in the contiguous United States. This historical disjuncture was in part a product of the previous Russian authority over the region, beginning in the eighteenth century, when conscripted and employed Native labor became deployed in extractive enterprises. Thus, the United States, needing workers for its industrial and imperial complex, continued the utilization of indigenous labor in the absence of a large settler population—something that was much less the case in the “Lower-48” where the primary mode of the settler colonist’s quest for territory, not the classic colonist’s quest for labor. The calibrated images of Alaska Natives, like those of Jon “Benny” Benson, or those pictured in *The Five Luke Children* image, thus reflect the colonial project to imagine the Alaska Native population as a constituent part of the larger national culture, civilizable yet still inherently inferior.

This conception of Alaska Natives as possible (substandard) citizens also drew upon the previous established conceptions of Arctic people formed during the European explorations of the Arctic. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, audiences in Europe and the United States initially became interested in Inuit people as scientific specimens before they looked to those of the north for their labor.ⁱⁱ When European-led ethnographic explorations of the North American Arctic brought Inuit peoples to the attention of a global audience they represented the Arctic as a male-centered geography. Anthropologist Franz Boas mapped the northern region of the world as masculine—where the primary producer was a man—similar to Andrew Jackson’s authority in characterizing the nation’s Western frontier as a masculine space. Under this “scientific” image of a familiar gendered landscape, those in the United States imagined Eskimos as primitive whites who resembled them physically in appearance, but lacked the evolutionary cultural developments advanced whites possessed. Shari M. Huhndorf describes in *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination*, how in the early twentieth-century colonial imaginings of

Arctic people were transformed due to the perceived effects of industrial modernity on Westerners themselves. She writes that,

Americans' renewed fascination with the [Arctic] region drew upon preexisting and emerging stereotypes to construct Eskimo as the embodiments of Western ideals and the Arctic as a place that could cleanse and even redeem a fallen, "over civilized" European world. (100)

Inuit people of the far North American tundra and Greenland served as fantasies of Eskimos personifying the rugged and gendered traits those in the United States admired and imagined they once possessed in themselves previous to the industrial age. This type of representation differs from that of the *Noble Savage* portrayals of American Indians in that the Inuit were at times defined as being close relatives of modern whites, not as an altogether separate and primitive race. For example, the portrayal of rugged individualism and patriarchal culture in the 1922 film *Nanook of the North* assured those in North America and Europe that Inuit lived very similarly to whites. Huhndorf notes that this "[r]acial indeterminacy also contributed to Westerners' idealization of Eskimo. Unlike Africans or American Indians, Eskimo were assigned no clear racial space" (100). In the eyes of Westerners, the Inuit/Eskimo proved a subject malleable to the nation's ever swaying trends in race-culture.

However, as the United States grew more interested in expanding to the Last Frontier, the national visions of Natives in Alaska challenged some thoughts previously held by Americans about Arctic people in order to justify the control of their land and resources (Huhndorf 2000 100). To better understand how images of Alaska Natives intended for the distant public were transformed one must consider the development of the United States' colonial gaze in the role of manipulating imagery of indigenous people during United States expansion to islands in the Pacific Ocean with what scholar Adria Imada refers to as an *imagined intimacy*. The gaze, masculine and extractive, in the instance of framing indigenous peoples, serves as a form of control since the means of representation are in the hands of empire. With the control over the visibility of Natives in the public eye the colonial picks and chooses what Natives are seen and which are not. By the middle of the twentieth-century, these previous representations and racialized geographies of the North coincided with United States' representations of peoples of the South Pacific in Hawai'i.

The United States incorporated the Hawaiian Islands into its national territory, leading to Hawaiian statehood after Alaska in 1959. Hawaiian statehood introduced the American public to indigenous people and Asian settler- descendants living on the islands as welcoming and desirous of national inclusion in the United States. Images of dancers involved in 'hula circuits,' dancing tours that traveled through the continental United States in the 1930s and 40s, gave Americans a view of Hawaii as exotic but nonthreatening. These gendered images, of young women baring their skin, also seemed comfortably familiar to viewers on the United States mainland, while they sexualized the geography of the South Pacific as a relaxing feminized paradise, a retreat from the stressful national mainland. Scholar Adria Imada argues that these entertainers in indigenous Hawaiian dress helped the United States forge a lasting imaginative bond with its South Pacific colony:

These performances produced what I call an “imagined intimacy” between Hawai‘i and Americans: an imagined relationship in which Hawai‘i and the United States were inseparable and dependent on each other. By consuming these shows, Americans came to possess Hawai‘i in their dreams and imaginations. The vast majority of Americans never were to visit the islands directly, yet a powerful fantasy of Hawai‘i—as America’s exquisite escape and untouched playground—came into being through these intimate encounters. (135)

For Imada, the culture of the United States required this imagined relationship because most could never afford or possess the vacation time to visit the islands. Imada explains how the imagined relationship manufactured a certain image of Hawaii in American culture:

This [imagined] Hawai‘i was not so much an antithesis of America, but a better version of it—a respite from the harshness of urban life and industrial capitalism, yet not too foreign and different. By association with their colony, Americans could believe that they belonged to an optimistic, playful, and tolerant nation. (135)

The utopian colony represented in the Hawaiian islands and its indigenous people directly corresponds to the cultural vision of the Arctic and the people of the North—as its binary opposite. The islands embodied a “respite from the harshness of urban life and industrial capitalism” and attracted millions of visitors from the states and abroad for pleasurable vacations. In many cases settlers from the mainland started new lives and established homes for themselves. Alaska also served as a reprieve from urban, over-civilized life, yet the region was an embodiment of the more rugged, masculine, and competitive side of American cultural self-perception.

The states of Alaska and Hawaii in this regard share a mutual condition in that they exist in the United States cultural imagination as gendered territories. Hawaii embodies the feminized and sexually-objectified, while Alaska embodies the spirit of rugged individualism and male potency the national citizenry was anxious it had lost during industrial modernization after the closing of the Western North American frontier. Through photographs of Alaska Natives, much like the imagery of hula dancers from Hawai‘i, the United States citizens formed an *imagined intimacy*, an unreal relationship of inseparability and dependence on one another (Imada 135). These representations related to those in the “Lower-48” that deserving and rescuable Alaska Natives would benefit from American statehood.

Thus, the contextualization of Jon “Benny” Benson clutching the winning flag on the stairs of the Jesse Lee Home Mission School in 1927 justifies to the nation a liberal imperial project of indigenous incorporation. There is an illustration by W. T. Mars first edition of the children’s book *Benny’s Flag*, for example, above author Phyllis Krasilovsky’s *averted eye* narrative, depicting Benny as “happy in his mission home” in Sitka, separated from the Aleut/Alutiiq community of his birth in south central Alaska (Krasilovsky 5). This averted description of Benson ignores the fact that a Native child was taken over 870 miles away from his Alutiiq community and placed under the authority of a Baptist mission school. The presentation of Benson as an ‘orphan’ also metaphorically signifies Alaska as an parentless region in need of national adoption. He becomes part of the national family of the United States,

(as does the territory) no longer an orphan, literally be being born of the region (referring to the Greek word 'natio'). This family trope of national belonging instills, as Ann McClintock suggests, an "organic unity" of interests perceived on part of the United States in national projects of expansion (1997 91). Natives portrayed as orphans, in this view, require the United States to bring them into the national family to which they seem to rightfully belong and are ever so dependent upon for their welfare.

Representations of Arctic aboriginals in Alaska and abroad as dependent members of the nation came to mirror "popular representations of African Americans during slavery," asserts Huhndorf. She writes, "many Europeans found comfort in images depicting [Eskimos as] happy and contented subjects" (*Going Native* 102). The representations of contented subjects, then, helped lay a foundation on which to build political images of Alaska Natives by the territorial government. Additionally, these representations of Alaska Natives silenced the brutal history of Russian and United States colonization in the region, and attributed indigenous "progress" to a well-meaning government and generous citizenry. Also overlooked was the fact that numerous Native communities in Alaska held histories of travel and global interactions long before the United States' purchased of the region (see Chapter One).

This is all clear in the images of "Benny" Benson. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, as a child Benson became a subject of an imperial gaze that followed him throughout his lifetime. This gaze consistently sought to describe him as a natural part of the national polity. For example, *Benny's Flag*, by Phyllis Krasilovsky with illustrations by W. T. Mars (1960), repeatedly asserts that Alaska Natives are eager subjects awaiting American statehood. With the eye averted from the realities of colonialism, the narrative conceals the violence that the United States inflicted upon the indigenous people at the time. The averted eye worked as part of what Donald Pease calls a "structure of disavowal" through which the United States denied its imperial history and present actions (19). *Benny's Flag* tells a patriotic story that infantilizes both Benny and Alaska Natives, more generally, who become described as welcoming of US settlement. In this sense, *Benny's Flag* works as a culturally imperial instrument naturalizing the United States' territorial incorporation of Alaska by depicting Alaska Natives as amiable subjects of American governance. *Benny's Flag* begins, as follows, beneath a pen-and-ink drawing of the youth:

Benny was an Indian boy who lived in Alaska many years before it became a state. He had straight black hair and bright black eyes, but best of all he had the whitest teeth and a happy, friendly smile. Everyone liked Benny, for he liked everyone. (1-2)

The orphaned lad with impossibly "bright black eyes," as an imperial subject proves so properly raised that "everyone" likes him. The portrayal of Benny's amiable character follows the familiar colonial trope of paternalistic benevolence—consistent with a ward-guardian relationship--known more universally as the *White Man's Burden*. This trope implies the legitimacy of an overriding United States' claim to a rightful sovereign relationship with the indigenous peoples of its territorial possessions. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Alaska mission schools throughout the region indoctrinated children with American educations and Western religions. These disciplinary systems implanted paternalistic discourses that had the effect of interpellating indigenous children throughout colonies, so that they accepted imperial ideologies

and were discouraged from contemplating their status as previously sovereign peoples. In other words, these institutions served in “transforming domesticity rooted in European gender and class roles into domesticity as controlling a colonized people” (McClintock 1997 34). Representations of Benson as the child designer of the Alaska flag thus epitomized the aspirations of the civilizing project on the indigenous peoples in the territory and to the infantilization of all indigenous Alaskans.

A closer examination of these images reveals the variegated inclusion of Natives into the national project and complicates the previous relationships developed between Native North America and the United States. In *Benny’s Flag*, as the child anticipates the formation of the state, one’s averted eye must overlook the colonial reality confronting him at the time and focus on the story’s central message that indigenous people accept United States governance of Alaska. In this sense, Benson (described in the narrative as an “Indian,” though he is Aleutⁱⁱⁱ) in no way resembles the *Savage Indian* imagined in the nineteenth-century national expansion westward to the Pacific Ocean. The image does succeed in realizing him as the friendly, grateful child-like Native of imperialist imagination. In fact, the story details through the design of the flag that Benson is no threat to the nation or its settler-citizens, but instead welcomes incorporation signified through this humble flag.

These messages of indigenous acceptance of national inclusion perform an important role in the construction and maintenance of US empire in Alaska. For tools used for representational purposes like photography or illustration “embod[y] the panoptic power of collection,” writes Anne McClintock, in “No Longer a Future Heaven,” contending that these tools possess the power to “display and discipline” colonial subjects (123). The representation of Benson through this power seeks to assert a cultural authority over him for the wishfully panoptical eye of the colonial viewer. Calibrated through representation, Benson becomes a subject of “both a technology of representation and a technology of power” that disciplines and displays him as a happy participant of a developing settler-state (126). Moreover, if Alaska Natives were willing subjects of the colonial project in Alaska, as the narrative contends, then United States culture could imagine a “Last Frontier” without the hardships of Indian wars. In this respect, the Alaska enterprise, illuminated in the Benson image, promises a frontier free of Indian conflict. As Amy Kaplan suggests, frontier enterprises, like Alaska, promised positive “contacts, encounters, and collisions that produce new hybrid cultures,” but Alaska would do so without the horrific bloodshed the nation of nineteenth-century westward expansion (“Left Alone in America” 1993). The United States’ great adversary in Alaska was not to be the Natives, but a natural environment that they were to either exploit or contain through a policy of extraction for the landscape and paternalism for the population. The presentation of indigenous subjects as participants in this national metanarrative presents the Last Frontier as a domesticable, but intrinsically wild, space, the kind that Amy Kaplan suggests the nation would use to “negotiate the borders of the empire” with assistance from the indigenous wards to do the hard labor (Kaplan 2005 17).

Alaska Native people in the mid-twentieth-century, of whom Benson is representationally exemplary, are frequently pictured as welcoming an asymmetrical political system, trading their homeland for the benefits of American citizenship. Reading the images for their colonial meanings, Natives stand as part of a broad imperial discourse at work amid United States territorialization in Alaska. Scholar Laura Wexler describes this form of imperial discourse as a “historically specific, coordinated sets of meanings ... that are expressed through beliefs, habits,

vocabularies, representations, and institutional practices” (53). Set within a confluence of meanings and practices, this discourse normalizes colonized indigenous peoples into the spaces of empire through marginalized positionings. The photograph of a village celebration over statehood called *Jumping for Joy*, from the Ernest H. Gruening Papers, a collection of personal writings and photographs archived by the former Alaska governor, serves as another example of this portrayal. The passage below the photo reads, when “the news of statehood reached the arctic village of Kotzebue, the town started jumping” (Figure 3). In the image, behind four Yupik men playing drums, a village partakes in a blanket toss where one villager, Laura May Beltz, displays “[an American] flag that will soon have a star for her [N]ative land” (Figure 3). Beltz, in the photograph, represents the welcoming subject while the coordinated sets of meanings associated with the tradition of the blanket toss, an activity used by Alaska Yupik for purposes of hunting. The display of the American flag, naturalizes for American culture the nation’s expansion into the North through the meshing of indigenous cultural practices with the flag. To the imperial eye, the drummers appear to be offering Beltz, like Benson with his flag, admission into the national hetero-patriarchy.

This narrative of national inclusion possessed such strength that some historians have even placed the burden of colonialism on the Alaska Natives themselves. Historian Claus Naske correlates this presumed Native willingness with what he perceives as their inability to value their multiple indigenous sovereign autonomies. “Unlike other colonial areas,” Naske writes, “Alaska was not inhabited by a large Native population, militantly conscious of its cultural heritage and capable of developing a movement for freedom from colonialism” (70). In Naske’s view, the inevitability of Americanization is the result of indigenous peoples’ inability to prefer and value their own systems of government to that of the United States democracy. The ward-guardian trope of the White Man’s burden, apparent in Naske’s explanation, casts Alaska’s people as innocents who are incapable of forming active political responses to annexation by the United States.

Contrary to Naske’s view of the historical record, the establishment of formal Native political groups, such as the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Alaska Native Sisterhood founded in 1912, marked a distinct indigenous determination to maintain autonomy, or at least retain some degree of Native voice and Native control in the process of colonizing Alaska. Yet, many accounts of Alaska history written by non-Natives have chosen to disregard the roles Native actors have had in Alaskan affairs. Alaska Native history with the United States is important to readings of the Alaska flag because Alaska indigenous peoples established dissimilar relations with the United States than did the indigenous peoples of the contiguous part of the nation. This modern history then proves imperative to understanding Benson’s narrative of national belonging. The movement for statehood led by local non-Native political leaders began early in the twentieth-century, but it met with strong opposition from senate and congressional actors at the national level. Critics of statehood noted the sparse population in the territory and questioned the appropriateness of Alaska as a state in the American Union. Members of Alaska’s non-Native population thought that counting Natives as part of the citizen population, leading to greater numbers, would help transform the territory into a state. While the United States bestowed citizenship upon all indigenous peoples in its territory in 1924, yet some national spokespersons believed Alaska Natives incapable of acting as functioning citizens.

Local Alaska territorial leaders contested this and insisted on including Natives in the population count and in the political body. “In order to foster at an early date a homogeneous

State,” said Carl J. Floss, prominent local Alaskan politician in the 1950s, “the Indian Bureau should be eliminated and the natives assimilated into the citizenry” (Gruening 61 Naske 97). While many thought that the presentation of Natives as civilized would justify eventual statehood, opponents in the “Lower-48” threatened to disregard aboriginals in counting the territorial population. Former Governor Ernest Gruening claimed that “[o]ne Senator, who was unalterably opposed [to statehood], would analyze our population based ... on the 1950 Census, [and] throw out the “[N]ative” as not being civilized” (102). Thus, representations of civilized Natives as willing subjects of national interests became vital for the territorial government in the development of a statehood platform.

In the decades following Alaska’s adoption of Benson’s flag, his celebrity spread well beyond the rapidly growing village of Kodiak, his adult home, and even beyond the then territory and eventual state of Alaska. There are photographs of Benny at various political functions, standing beside or holding his flag with local and national political leaders [Figure 5]. In one image, Benson hands a copy of *Benny’s Flag* to a Miss Seafair contestant at the Seafair community festival in Seattle, Washington, in the 1960s [Figure 6]. While the two figures on the right, adorned in fur coats, embody the rugged image of the American Northwest, Benson, the indigenous *citizen*, wears a two-button sport jacket.

Another image of Benson and the Alaska flag articulates Alaska Natives’ position in the racial culture and gender hierarchy of United States empire [Figure 7]. This image focuses on Alaska and the Pacific, weighing the status of Northern American aboriginals against that of a South Pacific Islander working in Seattle. The passage accompanying the photograph reads “Kodiak would like to claim one of her citizens as her very own, but Benny Benson really belongs to all of Alaska,” writes Yule M. Chaffin in *Koniag to King Crab*. The picture displays a mature Benson presenting “one of his flags to a pretty Seattle nurse,” not in Alaska but in the state of Washington (161). Benson in the image, dons the sports jacket seen in the previous image and a trimmed mustache, smiles for the camera, while holding one-side of a creased Alaska state flag. The young nurse, perhaps Filipina, holds the other side of the flag, also smiling for the camera. Both are presented as domesticated subjects. Benny enjoys the fruits of Alaska’s ‘Americanization’ by being served by a racialized and gendered representative of US national empire in the Pacific. This clearly identifies Alaska Natives as more civilized—and deserving of statehood—than those indigenous from colonies elsewhere. According to historian Catherine Ceniza Choy, “a culture of U.S. imperialism...created racialized hierarchies, with Americans on top and Filipinos below” during the United States colonial period in the Philippines (5). The nurse going unnamed in the photograph and narrative, reveals how a United States racial hierarchy is imposed on indigenous people at a global reach as they incorporate in to US racial culture. Asserting the claim of the civilized Alaska Native, Chaffin notes that when Benny designed the flag “he predicted that Alaska would become a state,” reasserting the just United States presence in the region and the Native right to citizenship (161). This graphic image brilliantly links the indigenous subjects of United States expansion in the North and South Pacific, placing them within a graduated hierarchical cultural framework. Benson, the proud indigenous citizen who “predicated” Alaska’s rise to statehood is situated by race and gender above the nurse pursuing the American Dream by actively fulfilling a national need for healthcare workers (assisted through the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, also known as the Hart-Celler Act, INS, Act of 1965, Pub. L. 89-236). Both of these variegatedly ‘civilized’ subjects, Benson and the unnamed nurse, reflect the gendered imaginations of empire as well as

the coercive culture of the ward-guardian relationship. The Pacific is represented in the female gendered role of the caregiver, while Benson conversely embodies the masculine spaces of the frozen North. The image exemplifies the preconception of Alaska as a gendered space, and Arctic people as racially inferior to white, but superior to Asian-Pacific people, and capable of achieving civilization and perhaps even as fleeting honorary whites, entitled to be served by other racialized subjects.

Similarly in the reading of a postcard from the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition of 1909, Shari M. Huhndorf describes the colonial gaze in an image that articulates the “infantilization of Igorots and Eskimos” as “subservient and suggests the impossibility of their independence” (2010 59). Similarly, the image of Benson and the nurse replay this intended patriarchal iconography of the postcard through the assertion that Alaska Natives, while subservient to White Americans, are “more racially advanced and altogether unthreatening” compared to their fellow subjects of empire to the South (61). These imaginings carry over to the image of Benson and the unnamed nurse by championing United States’ notions of patriarchy inherent in the proposition that Alaska became a state because the indigenous population, unlike those in other national colonies, was inherently assimilable to the gendered nationalism of Western imperialism. The masculine imagery of Alaska assisted in the grafting the territory to the nation, and concomitantly justified Alaska Native inclusion as citizens. The narrative of Benson and his flag becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy at this point, where both a rugged young Native boy and a harsh land grow together to become civilized and rightfully ‘American.’ Differing from images of the American West, where the United States fought Indian tribes with savage or sage leaders, the image of Benny and the nurse convey the success of American colonization, a softer relationship between the United States and Northern indigenous peoples [Fig. 7].

This yielding standpoint of the Native, in colonial representation, is clear in written narrative and image at the end of Phyllis Krasilovsky’s book, *Benny’s Flag*. After winning the contest, Benny assumes a lead position in a parade down the street celebrating the Fourth of July in Sitka, Alaska [Figure 4]. Krasilovsky writes, “Everyone came to see the parade....But the very first thing they saw was Benny” waving the new territorial flag as the region’s standard bearer (34) Alas, the narrative naturalizes colonization through a child’s story with Benny marches in the lead position of the parade, as Krasilovsky notes he was, “carrying the flag he had made for the fishing boat he would have, carrying the flag he had made for Alaska” (35). The illustration above the narration depicts a young man with a determined facial expression marching into a proper and civil future for himself and for Alaska. The “fishing boat he would have” makes it clear that the boy planned a civilized occupation in a modern economy (34). Alaska Natives, unlike American Indians, could become financially independent and work for the good of the nation by dutifully enacting civilization in the North.

A great deal of Alaska Native history is very precisely elided in these images [Figure 8]. There is no hint of the harsh disruptions or social and environmental transformations brought on by Americanization. Rather, what is offered is the suggestion of a flawless merging of the North with the United States. Moreover, Benson’s participation in statehood is limited to acting as the territory’s standard barer, missing is the century long legal battles between the United States and Alaska Natives. Even in the many pictures of Benny as an adult, he poses with political leaders not because of his political activity with them, but because he designed the flag as a child artist. These images, depoliticized of indigenous concerns, position him as subject to American governance, not as a political subject of his own authorship.

This line of inquiry around the Alaska flag raises general questions about the very nature of flags themselves as cultural symbols. As a text, flags perform similarly to a work of prose or film in that a flag imposes a shared ideology with intended and unintended messages. As for the emerging American settler state, the flag also represents the ultimate sign of American governance over the territory. The Alaska flag also stitches a meeting point between the settler and Alaska indigenous communities. In the creation of Alaska as a state, the symbolism forged by Benson in the double meaning of the Dipper and the Great Bear constellation ties the numerous Aleut/Alutiiq, Alaska Indians, and Alaska Inuit/Eskimo groups into one coherent political collective known in American culture as “Alaska Natives.”

In this regard, the flag emerges as an emblem for a double-bound situation of indigenous peoples of the Alaska region. Can Alaska Natives in fact, as citizens and subjects, be living in a form of Du Boisian “double consciousness?” Positioned as marginalized state citizenry, whose sovereign indigenous collective rights, as covered in chapter four, are continually disregarded by the nation and state, can the concept of a doubled sight, prove helpful in understanding Alaska Native cultural polity? Chapter one detailed Native cultural space formed within the spaces of the Russian empire. Likewise, United States incorporation of Alaska Natives brings in the indigenous population through Alaska statehood in exchange for certain freedoms under American law. This exchange marks the cost of colonization in Alaska for the United States and represents an indigenous political space that is part of, but also beyond the confines of, the nation.

Du Bois described the condition of double consciousness for African Americans in the United States as the “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (2). Does the Alaska flag embody the politics of an indigenous culture coercively brought into perform the maintenance of an ongoing empire? The flag as an indigenous text draws the distinct space of Alaska Natives charting the nation’s future with their own. That is, they are, without choice, part of the imperial project by not entirely of it. Native American scholar Kathryn Shanley asserts that “colonialism and racism produce a double consciousness in the oppressed, Indian people” of North America akin to that of African Americans but based on indigenous connections to land which the settler-state occupies (46). Just as Du Bois asserts doubleness as a condition based on embodying the two “warring ideals” of “an American” and “a Negro” within “one dark body,” indigenous peoples of Alaska face an analogous situation based upon relationships to geography and membership in the nation (5). This double vision, referred to at times in African American studies as “the caul,” originates in the case of Natives transformed into either an “Indian,” “Eskimo,” or “Aleut” (racialized) citizens in the United States, while at the same time possessing membership (or, better, citizenship) in an indigenous collective formed through a cultural ground tied to regional geography and an ongoing pre-settler-national heritage.

Correspondingly, the Black Diaspora, Paul Gilroy asserts, finds roots in “a preoccupation with a striking doubleness results from this unique position in an expanded West but not completely of it;” this, he suggests, “is a definitive characteristic of the intellectual history of the Black Atlantic” (1993 58). The condition of indigenous Doubleness originates in membership in the settler state, while being culturally and politically beyond it, and is a preoccupation of the indigenous situation in Alaska. “Double consciousness occurs,” First Nations indigenous legal and cultural scholar James Sakej Youngblood Henderson explains, “when the colonized assert that they are human but the dominators reject the assertion and impose their standards as

universal and normal” (64). The Alaska flag illustrates the unification of Alaska Natives with the state, while depicting the humanness of indigenous culture within the coercive spaces of imperial governance. indigenous cultural geographies, however, transcend what seem to others as impenetrable boundaries codified through and implemented with ongoing subjugation of Native culture. In 1927, shortly after Benson’s design won the contest, Tlingit civil rights leader William Paul, the sole Alaska Native in the territorial legislature, proposed the law designating the flag as of the official flag of Alaska. Paul’s description of the flag and its importance to the region, became the inspiration for the song “Alaska’s Flag” by non-Native Marie Drake [Figure 8]. The significant aspect of “Alaska’s Flag” is that the lyrics do not mention Jon “Benny” Benson. Paul’s action to recognize the flag as the state positions indigeneity in Alaska as non-oppositional to a formalized settler government. Yet, the lyrics of the song deny Native participation in the activities of the state.

In 1987, Carol Beery Davis a non-indigenous musician, who had moved to Alaska in 1920, proposed a second verse to the song in an attempt to recognize Benson and Native culture’s role in the state. The verse, submitted to the state legislature every year since 1987, seeks to include Native cultures in the state polity:

A native lad chose our Dipper's stars
for Alaska's flag that there be no bars
among our cultures. Be it known
through years our natives' past has grown
to share our treasures, hand in hand,
to keep Alaska our Great Land.
We love the northern midnight sky,
our mountains, lakes and the streams nearby;
Our Great North Star with its steady light
will guide our cultures clear and bright
with Nature's flag to Alaskans dear -
The simple flag of a last Frontier. (27th Legislature (2011-2012) Bill Text 27th
Legislature 7-18)

While Davis’ verse seeks to include Jon “Benny” Benson and the region’s indigenous people more broadly, in doing so the piece overlooks the colonial aspect of the state when she refers to Alaska as the “Last Frontier.” This is because for the indigenous cultures she seeks to recognize, Alaska proves less a frontier than a homeland. The verse then fails to note Benson’s or Sen. Paul efforts to publicly express their doubled position. Over the last 2 decades, the state legislator, however, has repeatedly denied adding the verse to the official record. Alaska Native State Sen. Albert Kookesh testified to the senate that historically all legislation mention the word Native has “never been passed” (Lavrakas 6). He has pointed out to his fellow lawmakers that

If you adopt something like this, it doesn't give the Alaska Native any kind of advantage in the state, it doesn't make us sovereign, it doesn't give us a heads up or a leg up on business abilities in the state, it doesn't make us any stronger. But it helps us lift our face just a little bit. In our culture people tell us when you do good things you lift the face of your people. (Lavrakas 3)

Kookesh's statements emphasize the importance of recognizing the Native of the state and thereby openly discuss the doubleness they face in formal state politics as indigenous peoples. That is, as he suggests the "the state emblem does not depict any images of Native Alaskans, who have been here for 10,000 years," but who have always composed a part of the Alaskan state polity since the state's conception (Lavrakas 7).

Impossible Sovereignty: Suturing Aleut/Alutiiq Cultural Space in the Films Our Aleut History: Alaska Natives in Progress and Aleut Story

We still need to understand why some categories of people fall out of history and back into scarcity more easily than others. Paul Gilroy

This chapter “Impossible Sovereignty” reads the films *Aleut Story* (2005) and *Our Aleut History: Alaska Natives in Progress* (1986) as indigenous heritage projects with contrasting goals. They both cover twentieth-century enslavement, World War II internment, and United States citizenship, they do so contrastingly. *Aleut Story* focuses on Aleut people as wrongly treated American citizens and *Our Aleut History: Alaska Natives in Progress* looks broadly at Aleut/Alutiiq transcolonial history. The chapter comes in response to recent scholarly interest in Aleut and Alutiiq peoples, their history, and their national belonging to the United States. These films assert an intricate space that centers Aleut/Alutiiq culture amid both Russian and United States imperial projects.

An example of this cultural landscape can be seen in the very first shot of the film *Our Aleut History: Alaska Natives in Progress* (1986). The film opens with the presentation of a domestic scene inside the home of an indigenous family on Kodiak Island, Alaska. An adult woman, Judy Michener, flattens a medium size cardboard box in the kitchen-dining area of the small home’s main room. She is dressed in a black cotton tee shirt, which reads “Bobby’s Property” along the top front and “registered voter” along the bottom front. A man, who appears to be Judy’s husband, “Bobby,” flirts with her as he discusses the money required to repair a fishing boat. The camera then turns from the couple and pans the living room, focusing on two other women and two children playing on a sofa. The television in front of the children blares loudly through the house and the rousing din of multiple conversations between the adults and children foreshadows the polyvocal quality of the film. At first glance, *Our Aleut History: Alaska Natives in Progress* appears to be a film concerning domestic relationships in Native American culture, but as this scene ends the film turns to the complicated articulations of indigenous cultural sovereignty in contemporary Southern Alaska.

As the camera cuts from the living-room, the scene ends with a close-up of Judy Michener, who stares straight into the camera, speaking hesitantly. “What does it mean to be an Aleut,” she asks into the camera, perhaps repeating the question to herself after hearing it from the interviewer, Judy Peterson. Looking into the camera, Michener pauses a moment and then replies, “I never really gave it any thought. Perhaps surprised by the nature of the question or that it had yet to cross her mind anytime before being asked during the making of the film, she responds, “I mean, a person is a person regardless of their nationality. I never really thought about what it means to be an Aleut.” She pauses, smiles, and in an affirming manner says, “that is something to think about.” For Michener, Aleut nationality, expressed in her response to the question, and her American nationality, inferred by the viewer through the “registered voter” t-shirt, exemplifies the complexity of indigenous politics and culture. “Tribal governments” based on the “lower 48” model of the Indian Reorganization Act had yet to be formed in Alaska and the film’s presentation of Michener’s perceived dual nationality, that of being both an “Aleut” and an “American,” conveys the complexity of indigenous space where political boundaries and aboriginal culture come together seemingly without contradiction.

Judy Peterson produced and directed *Our Aleut History* as a thesis project for a Bachelor

of Arts degree in Community Studies at University of California, Santa Cruz in 1986. Then and now, the film proves a rare glimpse into contemporary Aleut/Alutiiq culture. Since that time, other studies have been produced, some by Native people, documenting Aleut/Alutiiq perspectives, though they are still few in number. A notable project, entitled *Looking Both Ways: Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People of Southern Alaska* is both an exhibit and a collaborative catalog produced by members of the Alutiiq community. The catalog, published in 2001 by the University of British Columbia Press, enunciates contemporary Alutiiq polity and culture as a montage of practices and intersecting historical circumstances based in Southern Alaska (3). Providing a broad overview of this understudied community, *Looking Both Ways* blends contemporary accounts of daily life written by Alutiiq people and photographs of cultural artifacts from Southern Alaska and the Kodiak Island region. For example, the book's introduction, written by scholar, Alutiiq leader, and University of Alaska professor Gordon Pullar, PhD, discusses the meaning of the name *Alutiiq*. He explains Alutiiq¹ as an inclusive designation illuminating the intricate histories of a people who have openly accepted the "legacy of Western contact," as is apparent in their culture and ancestry (4). The name Alutiiq is noteworthy in being a direct translation of the Russian term Aleut into the Supiaq language of the South Central Alaskan area. In turn, the term "Aleut" stems from the eighteenth century and was used by Russian functionaries to cover many culturally distinct aboriginal groups in Southwest Alaska and the Bering-Siberian region. Originally, Russian functions learned the term from indigenous people when they settled Siberia, where the word originally meant "coastal dweller." *Looking Both Ways* explains that Alutiiq people chose to name as to differentiate themselves from the Unangan, who are also historically referred to as Aleut, and live in villages located on islands further down the Aleutian chain. Today, depending on one's personal preference, Pullar explains, the term Aleut, Alutiiq, or Supiaq can at times be used interchangeably. The name Alutiiq, the Supiaq language pronunciation of the Russian word 'Aleut,' connects the Russian colonial history of the Alutiiq with their present day experience with US culture.

It is important to recognize that Native use of this term implies an indigenous recognition of the role of colonialism and "contact" in producing the group called Alutiiq. As James Clifford puts it, the term Alutiiq signals the continuity of a group that is "rearticulated in new circumstances, [within] a historical process of emergence" (16). This 'emergence,' for Clifford, speaks directly to the complicated set of circumstances composing Alutiiq culture, though his analysis bypasses a detailed history of the transcolonial subjections faced by the Alutiiq since 1740. Nonetheless, Clifford's insightful identification of the cultural 'rearticulation' of Alutiiq polity, as expressed in the *Looking Both Ways* project, covers a complex range of experiences—what Gordon Pullar describes, akin to Edward Said's ideas on contrapuntality, as a matrix of 'historical events and overlapping criteria.' The complex and diverse origins of Alutiiq culture cannot be easily homogenized by overarching narratives of either the indigenous or anthropological kind (95 2001). While the term Alutiiq resonates for this Alaska Native people in giving voice to the complexity and diversity of a group formation and emphasizes the long entanglements of this "people" with colonial and other forms of Western "contact," the term has grated against current notions about race and indigeneity in the United States which exhibits a marked preference for indigenous peoples to downplay their colonial heritages, as well as their globally connected ancestries.

In fact, the presentation of Alutiiq culture as a product of 'Western contact' has attracted the attention of scholars other than Clifford. In a critique of Clifford's reading of the *Looking*

Both Ways project and of Aleut/Alutiiq cultural heritage more generally, anthropologists Nelson H. H. Graburn and Naomi Leite-Goldberg claim that the Alutiit as an aboriginal community is essentially disingenuous. They argue that the Alutiiq are a “scattered people of mixed Sugpiaq, Russian, Scandinavian, and other European ancestry,” “most of whom until recently thought of themselves as ‘Americans’” (25). (This, of course, contradicts the evidence presented in the Michener interview conducted years earlier when she spoke on film about being both “Aleut” and “American” without contradiction.) For Graburn and Leite-Goldberg, Alutiiq claims to an aboriginal culture are dubious because of an impurely aboriginal bloodline; they are rather a product of Russian, European, and United States colonialism. Additionally, they claim the Alutiiq willingly accepted citizenship and American nationality in 1924 without protest. (Graburn and Leite-Goldberg however fail to mention the Alaska Indian, Asian, and indigenous Eastern Eurasian ancestral heritage of many Alutiiq people.) The “legacy of Western contact,” for Graburn and Leite-Goldberg, leaves the Alutiiq community represented in *Looking Both Ways* with insufficient grounds for a rightful claim to an indigenous culture or peoplehood.

Clifford had earlier described nineteenth-century Aleut/Alutiiq involvement in the Russian American company at the Metini village, the site of Fort Rossia in what is now California (see Chapter One). Clifford here made clear the supra-local, travelling, and networked nature of Alutiiq society and culture. His reading of this history, noting the majority of Fort Ross’ residents were Aleut, demonstrates the deep involvement of indigenous people from Southern Alaska in building “geopolitical space”—a space centered in St. Petersburg and predating the United States in California (1997 343). It comes as no surprise, then, that the “legacies of Western contact” are apparent in Aleut/Alutiiq culture and to Aleut/Alutiiq people themselves. Aleut/Alutiiq accounts are profoundly inconsistent with Graburn and Leite-Goldberg’s renderings of their history.

Clifford does not argue that the Alutiiq have been a “tribe” or some other familiar (in US federal Indian law and politics) kind of an IRA-based government. In fact, in “Looking Several Ways,” Clifford understands the category Alutiiq as a post-Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (1971) product. But the point of his observations is that he sees the indigenous roots of this “modern” Alaska Native group, “mixed” as it is with heritages from non-indigenous peoples, as no less “authentic” (he avoids that criterion in speaking of indigenous peoples) because of change, mixture, and, as he describes it, perpetual *rearticulation*. Clifford’s earlier ‘Fort Ross Meditations’ essay connects Alutiiq culture and history to Russian colonialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and to American incorporation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. “Fort Ross Mediations,” written well before “Looking Several Ways,” shows Graburn and Leite-Goldberg’s assertion of Alutiiq culture as “an anchoring identity for people who previously lacked a sense of belonging to a coherent group” to be curiously at odds with historical fact. By documenting the Russian colonial history in the Americas in which Aleut/Alutiiq people faced enslavement, internment, arranged marriages, and compulsory incorporation in to the Russian imperial state over 250 years ago, Clifford gives us a very different understanding (one consistent with the thinking of contemporary Alutiiq people themselves) of the historical depth of this modern Alaska Native community (2004 25).

Graburn and Leite-Goldberg’s argument that the Aleut/Alutiiq are rooted in a “scattered,” incoherent population who in previous allegedly considered themselves as “Americans,” not Natives, raises the question of why global histories tied with indigenusness undermine Native claims in the United States (Biolsi 240). This problem relates to the broader question of why the

familiar and imposed trope of indigenous hybridity in the modern-state resonates among scholars with such a degree of popularity? This is perhaps due to the birth of the New Racist era in the late 1960s, which drove many scholars, writers, and activists toward exploring issues of identity and away from straight forward political practices. To his dismay, Vine Deloria, Jr. found interests in this subject “completely counter productive” to the enunciation of indigenous sovereignty (Philip Deloria 2007). So why do ahistoric conversations about indigenous hybridity circulate in the academy and why have Graburn and Leite-Goldberg chose to level such an argument on the indigenous people the nation’s 49th state? To begin to sketch out an answer to that question one must consider the desire of a non-indigenous population to isolate indigenous people into a variegated form of national cultural citizenship, in which non-indigenous settlers claim responsibility for the construction and maintenance of the nation in hopes of denying historical Native participation. The nation’s progress can be attributed as solely a non-indigenous triumph.

However, the obligatory inclusion of Alaska Natives into the United States polity; the reality of Native sovereignty in Alaska (and elsewhere in the US) is its embeddedness in an inescapable settler colonialism (see Chapter Two). By necessity, Alutiiq forms of belonging must coexist with settler forms of belonging and for scholars to deny indigenous roots and indigeneity to the Alutiiq because they interacted with settlers is profoundly unobservant of the lived realities of indigenous people over the past 500 years. The two films examined in this chapter, *Our Aleut History: Alaska Natives in Progress* by Kodiak Native filmmaker Judy Peterson (1986) and *Aleut Story* (2005), written and directed by Marla Williams and in part funded by Alaska Natives, contend with the issues surrounding the problems aboriginal people face as oppressed sovereign peoples with intact cultures and as marginalized citizens of settler states.

This chapter, responds to both Clifford’s claim about Aleut/Alutiiq cultural ‘rearticulation’ and Graburn and Leite-Goldberg’s dismissal of Alutiiq claims of indigeneity by connecting Russian colonial history and United States internment of Natives during World War II to present day Aleut/Alutiiq society and culture while arguing for a legitimate, although complex, Alutiiq indigeneity. The aim is to recognize a distinctly indigenous Aleut/Alutiiq cultural experience within the histories of both Russian and United States governance and occupation. *Our Aleut History*, for example, connects present day Aleut/Alutiiq cultural space with nineteenth-century Aleut/Alutiiq history in California. The Aleut/Alutiiq willingness to recognize culturally the legacy of contact in present day public life complicates familiar notions of indigenous sovereignty as a matter of socially- and culturally-closed and bounded groups, incarcerated (as Trinh Minh-ha would say) on their “reservation” or “homeland.” As these films show, indigenous people have always been deeply involved in the affairs of the world, however coerced that involvement has been. The *Looking Both Ways* project becomes a contestation of the averted eye by allowing non-Alutiiq people to read into their Duboisian second sight.

This chapter explores Clifford’s notion of Alutiiq cultural “rearticulation” in order to shed light on the meaning of culture itself and how it is that Alutiiq people are viewed as indeed “rearticulating” a culture in a unique way. Importantly, the term ‘culture’ denotes a host of meanings all of which vie to explain Alutiiq “emergence.” For example, Matthew Arnold, in *Culture and Anarchy*, relates culture to an “inward operation” producing “the best which has been thought and said” (Arnold 6). This way of understanding ‘culture’ functions similarly to Edward Said’s use of the term as both “a concept that includes a refining element” entailing the paramount artistic achievements of a community, and “a sort of theater where various political

and ideological causes engage one another” (Said xiii). Said’s understanding of culture departs slightly from Arnold’s view, and suggests that culture may be an “elevated area of activity in which [the people] ‘truly’ belong and in which [the people] did their really important work” (Said xiv). In the case of Aleut/Alutiiq in the twentieth-century, an appropriate concept of culture must avoid being, as Said suggests, “antiseptically quarantined from its worldly affiliations” (Said xiv).

If culture possesses ‘worldly affiliations’ inherently, then every culture, even indigenous ones, must have interactions with the outside world. Understanding the fluid nature of cultures, Renato Rosaldo, in *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*, proposes a processual definition in which “culture lends significance to human experience by selecting from and organizing it,” so that culture consists in “the forms through which people make sense of their lives...” (Rosaldo 26). In other words, Rosaldo suggests that culture is a process through which communities organize their understanding of themselves concrete historical situations. In a related theory of culture, Arjun Appadurai, in *Modernity at Large*, understands culture as a naturalization of “differences that have been mobilized to articulate a group identity” (Appadurai 15). Articulated difference, however, can only be established through *connections with that which is outside the imagined boundaries of the given culture*. The problem in reading articulated difference, in this sense, becomes knowing where to draw the lines that distinguish one “group formation” from another. Indigenous communities, targets of oppression, genocide, and displacement, have hardly been in the position to construct forms of identity that exclude the colonizers. It is precisely their forced inclusion in colonialism and empire that is the common experience of indigenous peoples, and any theory of indigeneity that does not recognize this forced entanglement is hopelessly ideological and non-empirical.

This chapter argues that examining Aleut/Alutiiq culture will contribute to a broader understanding of indigenous sovereignty as it exists in reality-independent of dominant ideological, political, and legal models in the US. Although it may seem counterintuitive for an indigenous group to foreground and articulate its colonial history, it is a powerful assertion of indigenous sovereignty, of indigenous self-determination. As political theorist Taiiiake Alfred writes, many “discussions of indigenous sovereignty are founded on a particular reading of history that serves to undergrid internal colonization;” indigenous nations, because of the ongoing colonial situation, are prone to engage in a certain degree of mutually exclusive boundary-marking, analogous to the mutually exclusive space of nation-states as set in place by the settler-states (33). The Aleut/Alutiiq use of cultural history faces these internal colonial structures by proclaiming a more complex, worldly space beyond the pure grouping of mutually-exclusive categories of nation and tribe. The Aleut/Alutiiq are simultaneously part of the United States political body and indigenous sovereigns. To see Aleut/Alutiiq history as that of a “scattered” group of people without a shared history is to miss the significance of their historical assertions for our understanding of indigeneity in general. The film *Our Aleut History*, for instance, tracks Aleut/Alutiiq presence across the Pacific Rim, in the legacies of Russian and United States empires. Similarly, *Aleut Story* locates aboriginality in American Aleut internment, and the tensions of belonging in the United States, during World War II, both globally engaged activities.

From depicting Judy Michener’s thoughts about Aleut nationality (discussed at the beginning of this chapter), *Our Aleut History* goes on to investigate Aleut notions of belonging and cultural history through the “legacies of Western contact” in Russian colonialism and United

States expansion. As expressed in Chapter One, parallel to James Clifford's description of Aleut engagement in California in "Fort Ross Mediation," *Our Aleut History* uncovers a similar past through personal interviews with Aleut/Alutiiq people in both present day California and Alaska. The film traverses the North American section of the Pacific Rim, revisiting an Aleut/Alutiiq cultural geography formed before United States presence in the North Pacific and the Gulf of Alaska. Filmmaker Judy Peterson provides a voice-over narration guiding the viewer from her present home in Watsonville near Santa Cruz, California, to her childhood home in Alitak, a small fish camp along the shores of Moser Bay on the south end of Kodiak Island. As she recounts her family's travels throughout the Pacific Rim, the film affirms an expansive Aleut/Alutiiq cultural history created in the nineteenth-century. In fact, the twentieth-century journey through American empire, from the Kodiak archipelago to California, mirrors in many ways that of the nineteenth-century Aleut/Alutiiq experiences during conscription for the Russian American Company.

An Impossible Sovereignty

The film *Aleut Story* (2005), written and directed by Marla Williams and produced by multiple Alaska Native agencies, situates Aleut/Alutiiq history within a montage of interviews with Native people about the recent past. *Aleut Story* deals specifically with the history of Aleut internment by the United States government during World War II. As *Aleut Story* explores this unjust treatment, it unravels an expansive history of oppression taking place before the wartime American-Aleut removal from villages and subsequent internment along the 'panhandle' of southeastern Alaska, near the Jesse Lee Home mission school where John "Benny" Benson designed the flag two decades earlier. As the film honors the victims' struggles and argues for reparations, it also details the history of Aleut enslavement during the Russian period in the 1700s. Aleut enslavement continued for nearly eighty years after the United States' purchase of Alaska in 1867. The films read in this chapter offers an Aleut/Alutiiq commentary on the cultural challenges of the transition from Russian to United States rule.

Both *Our Aleut History* and *Aleut Story* offer unique narratives about Aleut American experience in the context of Russian and United States activities in the Bering and North Pacific Rim regions. *Our Aleut History* provides an intimate overview of American and Russian colonial history through the perspective of the filmmaker's journey. The filmmaker uses interviews with her relatives and friends to corroborate her experiences as an Alutiiq person. *Aleut Story* argues that Aleut people are unequivocally part of the American national citizenry unjustly interned by their government, as well as ancient immigrants to the Americas. In the portrayal of wrongful confinement, those interviewed for the film recount generations of mistreatment at the hands of both Russian and United States governments. *Our Aleut History* allows for the expansion of notions of belonging to global histories, like *Aleut Story*, through an intimate view of the complications brought about by Russian and US imperial projects.

Despite their differences, both *Aleut Story* and *Our Aleut History* focus on the relationship Native Alaskans have with the United States, and yet depict the historical processes of colonialism in divergent ways. Though the films present national citizenship and colonial subjectivity as inseparable aspects of the aboriginal mosaic of Aleut/Alutiiq culture, they do so distinctly. *Aleut Story* narrates the internment as central to American Aleut subjectivities, not as simply a moment in a longer colonial history. *Our Aleut History*, opening upon a candid moment

for an extended family in their home, locates the legacy of Western contact in personal and community histories. *Aleut Story*, conversely, focuses on internment confinement during the war as a commanding experience in Aleut/Alutiiq culture.

Moreover, *Aleut Story* uses interviews with Aleut internees as a starting point for an examination of citizenship and wartime internment. Where *Our Aleut History* turns to personal experience to distill broader histories in order to construct a broad Aleut cultural sovereignty, *Aleut Story* looks directly at the internment as a national travesty. Moreover, the title *Aleut Story* suggests the film composes a totalized account of Aleut history. By emphasizing their status as part of American history and society the film explains how the federal government violated the US citizenship rights of Aleuts during the war by razing their villages and forcibly removing them from their community.

From the onset, there is a depiction of Aleut people as United States citizens, a claim initially made by narrator Martin Sheen (Cuban-American), remarking in the film's beginning that "the Aleuts of Alaska would experience [World War II] as few other Americans." The greatest threat to Aleut survival, the film claims, was not "invading Japanese forces" in the North Pacific and the Aleutian Islands, but "the country Aleuts pledged allegiance to: the United States of America." Interestingly, the "few" other Americans citizens who experienced World War II like Aleut people were, in fact, Japanese and Japanese Americans living in the United States. At the time, the federal government agency called the War Relocation Authority (WRA) also removed people from their homes and forcibly interned entire communities from a coastal "military exclusion zone" because the government saw them as a potential threat to national security during the war.

Aleut Story draws a clear distinction between Aleut people and Japanese nationals by comparing the "invading" Japanese, including people of Japanese descent in the United States at the time, as national enemies, but Aleut people as wrongly-treated US citizens. The Aleut, under the control of the United States territorial authority in Alaska, had not deliberately chosen to become members in the United States, but instead the nation extended territorial borders over their communities and they were declared to be citizens in 1924 by the Indian Citizenship Act (43 U.S. Stats. At Large, Ch. 233, p. 253 [1924]). Japanese and Japanese-Americans in the United States, on the other hand, faced the experience of oppression in the contiguous United States during World War II because of an ancestral tie to Japan. Historian Mae Ngai in *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, discusses the concept of an "impossible subject" when referring to the experience of the interned Japanese and Japanese Americans during the war. An "impossible subject," Ngai writes, is a "person who cannot be" included in the American political body because they are seen as a "problem that cannot be solved" regarding the national culture in which they reside (5). The impossible status of Japanese and Japanese-American national subjects in the war may have seemed a tractable one to many in the US. Ngai discusses how American photographer Ansel Adams toured the Manzanar Relocation Center, an internment camp, populated by Japanese legal residents and Japanese American internees, capturing their likenesses on camera. While photographing internees as he toured a camp, Adams announced the incarceration as "only a detour on the road to American citizenship," for the individuals held against their will by the United States (Ngai 178-79). Did Adams understand that the impossibility presented by the Japanese and Japanese Americans could be managed only through forced internment and relocation, or that the release from the camp and integration into US culture were inevitable despite the internment? Regardless, Aleut

people, like the Japanese-Americans in the camps, held full legal citizenship rights before their wartime confinement.

The story of Aleut American internment explicates notions of national citizenship, but it also complicates the understandings of Aleut aboriginality in relationship to the United States. The incorporation of Alaska Natives, the Alaska Indian, Aleut, and North American Eskimo and Inuit, into the national polity in 1924 produced a perceived impossible sovereignty in that Alaska Natives retained aboriginal cultures (and arguably, aboriginal polities) predating the nation, but they also became national citizens under law. While, in the view of the United States government during the war, Japanese and Japanese-Americans living in the Western United States could be confined because of their perceived ancestral heritage, the government confined Aleut Americans both because of their ancestral otherness and also because of the ward-guardian relationship the government imposed upon aboriginal communities. Unlike Japanese Americans, Aleut Americans have their homelands held “in trust” by the United States because of this ward-guardian relationship.

The citizenship imposed on Aleut, impaired though it is by the ward-guardian relationship, signifies the limits of Aleut aboriginal autonomy and their obligatory national belonging in the US—particularly during the first three-quarters of the twentieth-century. But this “citizenship” was not the same kind of citizenship enjoyed by white citizens, as the primary goal of extending citizenship to Native Alaskans was incorporation, not equality. While Native Alaskans may have thought of themselves as citizens, the actions of a wartime government proved their citizenship to be tenuous. The Navy relocated the Aleut residents of villages to abandoned buildings along the Alaska panhandle. Without the means to support themselves and without proper survival equipment, such as blankets and cookware, the suffering was significant. In fact, the German soldiers held as prisoners of war nearby received far better treatment than the incarcerated Aleut “citizens.” *Aleut Story* recalls the “700 Nazi prisoners of war,” less than one hundred miles away, who “were eating regular meals, sleeping in warm beds and receiving regular medical care. The United States interned American Aleut citizens because of their aboriginality, while German soldiers who fought against the nation fared more comfortably in Prisoner of war camps, even though they presented an actual and direct threat to the nation, unlike Japanese Americans and American Aleuts.

Not only are there similarities between the nation’s treatment of American Aleut, Japanese legal residents, and Japanese-American citizens, the Aleut interment follows a long history of national subjugation of the region’s indigenous peoples. The forced evacuation of the Choctaw and Cherokee from their homelands (1831) and the Long Walk of the Navajo (1864) are two such examples of earlier removals the United States forced upon American Indian communities. Though the previous forced American Indian removals are typically thought of as movements of “national” peoples from a homeland, the internment of the American Aleut, as depicted in *Aleut Story*, is a tale of an imprisonment of fellow United States citizens, not of a national other embodying a timely threat to national security. Yet, at the time, the United States found the rights and liberties of American Aleut citizenship *impossible* due to their status as an indigenous cultural group.

Aleut Story describes the racial dividing practice the United States implemented on the indigenous community when deciding who would be placed in the camps. Gert Hope Svorny, who was a child at the time she was taken to the Burnett Inlet Duration Camp, describes how she and her mother “were evacuated out of [their village]” and how her “father couldn’t go because

he was white” (*Aleut Story*). Sheen narrates, “Aleuts had intermarried with Caucasians for nearly two centuries[,] but officials adopted a blood-quantum rule: Anyone of 1/8th or more native blood was compelled to ship out immediately.” At the moment of internment, the authorities examined the individual’s genealogy and applied the method of blood quantum to determine who would go to the distant detention camps. Leaving Svarny’s father to be evacuated to the contiguous United States, she and her mother forever lost contact with him the moment they boarded the navy ship, relocating them to the camp.

The reason the United States evacuated the Aleuts from their villages involved the nation’s activities in the Pacific Theater of World War II. On June 3 1942, the Japanese Air Force bombed the town of Dutch Harbor on Amaknak Island, causing 78 “American” deaths, damaging the harbor, and capturing three hostages. Because of this, the United States began debating whether or not to evacuate Aleuts for their own safety from their Aleutian Island villages, since the Japanese had previously taken 42 prisoners from Attu during their occupation. According to historian Ryan Madden, the evacuation of the Aleut occurred before government officials would adequately confer with the residents of the many villages. Madden also notes that after a thorough investigation, the United States believed no racism was exercised in the decision to relocate the people. However, villager Alice Petravilli, appearing in both films discussed in this chapter, disagreed with the United States’ official findings (Her appearance in both films, having been made twenty years apart, signify her importance as a cultural leader). She remembers that she was ordered to raze her village, except for three house that the Navy ordered 80 people to occupy together (60). For her, this action is proof to the nation’s “racist” intent toward the Aleut.

Once the over 800 people had been removed from their respective villages on the many islands, they were placed in unprepared and mostly dilapidated facilities located in Southeastern Alaska. The evacuation and relocation is commonly referred to as an “internment” due to the lack of preparation on the part of the United States, but it can also be seen as a mass removal of a people without their welfare in mind. At the camps they were housed in were located 18 wilderness miles away from the town of Juneau. Those at the camp possessed no orientation of their whereabouts or any transportation to relocate to a populated area. In time, the government allowed many Aleuts to live and work in nearby towns like Juneau by providing transportation and by arranging employment opportunities.

While some internees made new homes in Southeastern Alaska, the nation returned other villagers to the razed villages due the economics of the sea otter pelt trade. Since the purchase of Alaska, US business interests had relied on unpaid Aleut labor to harvest pelts, continuing the nineteenth-century Russian American Company’s practice of Aleut conscription. The workers were falsely told that the pelts were going to assist American troops when they were, of course, being sold on the open market.

Impossible Interrelations

Far from being considered a mixed group, as Graburn and Leite-Goldberg argue, in 1942 the Aleut/Alutiiq were inescapably Native. That was the reason that they, but not their white relatives, were removed from the villages. *Aleut Story* recounts how at the time of internment the United States applied a racial system guided by theories of hypodescent in order to divide the Aleut community. Those who seem to Graburn and Leite-Goldberge to be composed of a

scattered group of people in the present, during the war found themselves targets of oppressive systems due to their very lineage, even with almost negligible Native “blood quanta.” Now sixty years after the internment, the present day racial culture of hyperdescent for determining indigeneity contrasts directly with the employment of hypodescent in defining who was Aleut during World War II. As a result of this policy for identifying Aleuts, Mrs. Svarny’s “family was never again together, never again” (*Aleut Story*). Thus, *Aleut Story* reveals how the United States formulated an Aleut racial subject through an evacuation policy. Their American “citizenship” was brushed aside on the basis of their inherent aboriginality, a common indigenous experience seemingly impossible for Graburn and Leite-Goldberge to grasp. This showed how the government was, of course, aware that Aleuts identified themselves on the basis of extended family membership—thus non-Natives who were married to Aleuts were unproblematically Aleut. But the US overrode this “sovereign” definition of the Aleut by enforcing a blood quantum criterion, forcibly breaking up families and the Aleut community itself. This was a chance for the US to work toward extinguishing indigenous ties altogether by breaking up Aleut families, since these extended families were constituent parts of a cultural unit and polity. In this regard, biopolitical regulation through imposed racial categories upon Aleut people becomes increasingly important to the telling of *Aleut Story*. A person’s “biological” indigenous heritage became an important concern to the nation. The indigenous culture, its relation to the state and its domestic structure, became a focal point in the continued oppression of Aleut, regardless of their US “citizenship.” Foucault, in regard to state interests in the familial as the US did in this removal, argues: “the point is to register how those who ran a racialized state and their reformist institutions understood their relation between family and polity, affect and politics” (Foucault, 894). The Aleut family structure in wartime, for the film, embodies a form of Aleut culture itself and thus the imposition of blood quantum sought to eliminate the indigenous connections for the purpose of ending the indigenous presence of American Aleut people on the islands.

Aleut/Alutiiq peoples previously experienced biopolitical regulation in the Russian empire, where children of Russian functionaries and indigenous women were termed “Kreol” (Miller 312), reflecting a Russian racial culture, rather than some indigenous understanding of ‘mixture.’

In contrast Japanese and Japanese-Americans became targets of racial oppression by the United States using blood quantum to measure the degree of ancestry connected to an enemy nation at war with the United States. While Japanese and Japanese-Americans continue to suffer racial oppression in the United States long after the war ended, having their claims of unjust treatment reparated by Congress, their impossible citizenship has continued into the present. Similarly, an Aleut/Alutiiq sovereignty continues to challenge settler colonialism into the twenty-first century. For example, the litigation between Leisnoi, Inc. an incorporated (under the provisions of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act [ANCSA], 1971, Public Law 92-203) Alutiiq village, on Woody Island, across from Kodiak Island and non-Native rancher and schoolteacher Omar Stratman have lasted 33 years. Woody Island, a mile away from Kodiak, was the arguing that allocating the land to the Leisnoi Corporation, to which both Gordon Pullar and I are shareholders in, through the ANCSA infringed on his right of access to public land, Stratman sought to decertify Leisnoi as an ANCSA village corporation altogether. Stratman’s quest led to the Supreme Court who refused to hear the case (Stratman, Omar V. Salazar) in 2009. Seeking to decertify Leisnoi as an ANCSA corporation, Stratman’s quest lead to the Supreme Court, which refused to hear the case *Stratman, Omar V. Salazar* in 2009. The Appeals Court decision stands, upholding the right of the village to exist as an ANCSA corporation in the

face of longstanding local opposition to Alutiiq claims to aboriginality.

Interestingly, the fates of resident Japanese and Japanese Americans, on the one hand, and that of Native Americans, on the other, would cross again in the wake of World War II. Dillon Myer, a “former bureaucrat from the department of agriculture” who had served as the administrator in charge of the War Relocation Authority (the organization implementing the Japanese internment and relocation), was subsequently appointed as head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Ng 38). In this new position, offered by President Truman, Myer put into effect a relocation program for American Indians that had certain noteworthy parallels with on the relocation of resident Japanese and Japanese Americans during the War (Philp 38). Myer and Utah Senator Arthur Watkins championed policies that fostered the “termination” of tribes by ending their federal recognition as sovereign entities and ending federal trust responsibilities for Indians and tribes. Historian Kenneth Philp describes Meyer as discouraging any Japanese cultural activities in the interment camps. Later when he administered the Bureau of Indian Affairs he avoided meeting with American Indian people (48). Philp writes that “Myer increasingly isolated himself from Indians because he disliked criticism and lacked the ability to carefully consider differences in view point. He also wanted to work on long-range termination programming without interruption” (12). It was just this type of exclusion of Native people from participation in policy formulation, Philp argues, that eventually led to the failure of the termination policy. “By refusing to bring tribal leaders into policy making,” Philp writes, “both President Truman and Commissioner Myer lost a historic opportunity to advance the cause of self-determination” (13). In other words, by isolating himself from American Indians, Myer failed to understand the actual needs of the nation’s indigenous peoples.

By framing American-Aleuts as part of the nation, *Aleut Story* compels the recognition of the similarities of the experiences between American-Aleut and Japanese-Americans during World War II. Just as Japanese American were impossible subjects, in Ngai’s terms, the Aleut collectively lived in impossible sovereignty. Neither the US citizenship of Japanese Americans nor the aboriginal sovereignty of the Aleut could be reconciled with an American nationalism and its inherent white superiority. *Aleut Story* also forces us to take seriously the parallels between Germany’s Holocaust and US internment of citizens on the basis of differences in race, national origin, and aboriginality. Although Germany’s genocide of targeted groups was far more violent than the US internment of its own citizens, both rely on faulty cultural notions of race and biological origin.

Suturing Sovereign Spaces

Aleut/Alutiiq people have historically experienced empire from both the East and the West and in doing so have found themselves adorned with various monikers. The very title of the film *Our Aleut History: Alaska Natives in Progress* emphasizes the merging of aboriginal subjectivity (*Our Aleut*) with the legal United States label “Alaska Native,” a general umbrella term for Alaska Eskimo, Alaska Indian, and American-Aleut, formally instituted with ANCSA in 1971. As announced in the first phrase of the title, “Our Aleut History,” the film includes pre-United States Aleut experiences, while the second phrase of the title, “Alaska Natives in Progress,” points to the modern experience of Alaska Natives in the United States. The film links the histories of Russian and American colonialisms with contemporary Aleut/Alutiiq native culture in villages in the Kodiak area and other sites in the Aleutian chain. The film thus focuses

on what could be called an equilibrium of power relations, albeit inherently hierarchal, between Natives and the West (5). This fraught relationship maintains indigenous subjectivities in a “narrative of imagined Native geographies” that enunciate a form of sovereignty beyond full inclusion in the American national form, but that includes colonial heritages and histories of displacement (Biolsi 359). Through the combination of “Aleut history” with the development of “Alaska Natives” during United States expansion, the filmmaker Peterson sutures the wound of colonialism by undoing the erasure of Aleut/Alutiiq history.

After the Michener segment, the film cuts to an interview with Irene Coyle, Kodiak Native and mother of five children, sitting at a light colored, wooden kitchen table in front of an electric range and a small kitchen window in the town of Kodiak’s Aleutian Homes development. Coyle, darting her eyes as she talks, says, “[i]f I saw an Aleut object, I don't think I could identify it. That's how lost we are.” The film then moves to a scene of Martha Olympic walking through a neighborhood in the village of Igiugig, located in Southwestern Alaska. The scene is accompanied by a voiceover by Olympic confessing, “I never did know much from my mother...she didn’t really ever tell us anything, she only told us ‘The strong will survive for the Aleut.’” For Irene Coyle finds the Aleut cultural past unidentifiable, and for Martha Olympic Aleut heritage exists in having the strength to survive Russian and American colonialism. In other words, sharing a history of colonial subjection proves an imperative aspect of contemporary Aleut culture. In fact, this sequence of the film illuminates an aspect of Aleut/Alutiiq culture denied in the colonial imaginary—such as Graburn and Leite-Goldberge’s insistence upon an authentic criterion for identifying who is Native and who is not—but that is a concrete and shared part of actual Aleut/Alutiiq lived subjectivity. The individual reconciliation of this double subjectivity is never guaranteed, of course. Thus, Judy Michener locates no contradiction between being a registered American voter and being an Aleut in terms of “nationality,” while Irene Coyle sees Kodiak Island Natives as unable to identify an Aleut cultural object upon presentation. These seemingly divergent personal experiences form a larger Aleut/Alutiiq culture the film seeks to convey to the viewer.

After the brief Martha Olympic segment, the film moves to a montage of discolored and grainy photographs over which the filmmaker Judy Peterson reads a poem about her grandmother Matrona. “Grandma Matrona, wife of an Aleut Chief, had hair as black as ash,” she reads, “skin as soft as duck feathers and a heart as tender as spring rains;” she reads as the camera steadies on a black and white photo of a woman, presumably Grandma Matrona, in a seated position turned toward the camera. Cutting from the photograph, the camera then focuses on a contemporary topographic map of Alaska. Peterson reads, “Only small planes and boats could carry us to her home on the Island of Kodiak Bears to the small fishing village of Alitak.” As Peterson continues to read the poem, a drawing of a Kodiak Bear imposed over a map of Kodiak Island changes into a series of photographs of Peterson as a child with her family. These images are followed by historical drawings of Kodiak islanders, and finally a page of small technical photographs, presumably of Native faces with a letter beneath each photograph. The poetic narration reads as follows:

I was born and raised on Kodiak Island, Alaska
Until I was 12
And no one ever told me about my Aleut ancestors
Who lived for 8000 years

On the 900 mile long Aleutian chain
No one told me that at one time there were 20,000 Aleuts
The tradition of basket weaving
Hunting from biadarka
Dressing in seal gut parkas
Of wearing tattoos
And bone ornaments and beautiful hats
And I wonder why none told me about my Aleut ancestors
And why grandma Matrona went to sleep and never woke up.

Peterson's narration over the series of photos binds the previous two interviews together when she poses the question, "I wonder why no one ever told me about my Aleut ancestors." Each person interviewed before the poem revealed the cultural experience of Kodiak Natives in relation to imperial history by unraveling the discontinuities with the indigenous past introduced by colonialism. The gendered narratives (all subjects are women up to this point) weave the politics of indigeneity within the frame of United States and Russian history. Peterson asks, "why grandma Matrona went to sleep and never woke up," an image that embodies the loss of personal and collective history among contemporary Aleut/Alutiiq.

Our Aleut History uses the historical linkages of multiple colonial projects to map a grand cultural space, traveling through Aleut experience prior and subsequent to the United States presence. Beginning with a description of her family's twentieth-century move from Kodiak, Alaska, to Santa Cruz, California, the filmmaker links historical Aleut cultural space to US contemporary culture. Peterson finds herself only one hundred and fifty miles south of the site of present day Fort Ross State Park in Sonoma County, California, where her ancestors worked under the rule of the Russian American company. "We left Alaska," she narrates, "because my mom was drinking herself to death," as the film displays a photograph of her mother holding a guitar, with Judy and her brother Tom as children in the background. The film cuts to an interview with Peterson's mother, Vonnie Canavarro, who sits beside a collection of dolls on one side and a round table on the other. "I started drinking in 1964, after the big Alaska earthquake and tidal wave," Canavarro explains, "because when there were tremors, I'd get really nervous;" alcohol addiction had spread throughout the communities on Kodiak Island and taken the lives of her friends. The film asserts that the Black Friday Earthquake of 1964 became a stressor for the legacies of colonialism on the island. Sociologist Teresa Evans Campbell notes that aboriginal communities who have endured a succession of devastating events can relive these histories in seemingly unrelated ways; *stressors* can trigger emotional responses to histories of colonial trauma (318). For many villagers, the horrific experience of living through the tidal wave reopened wounds of the unresolved trauma associated with Russian and United States colonial entanglement.

Our Aleut History then turns from the connections between alcohol and the devastation of the earthquake to a scene with the camera hovering over a map of Kodiak that highlights the villages on the island. Peterson says, "We left Kodiak Island in 1968," and arrived in Santa Cruz California to find an unfamiliar life. But she surprisingly discovers that her ancestors, inhabited Northern California over a century before her presence in California, and comes to understand Aleut/Alutiiq geography in a way completely different from the way she understood it in Kodiak. "I had learned later," she says as the film displays a drawing of Fort Ross in the former

Metini village in the nineteenth-century, overlooking the Pacific Ocean, “that the Russians had taken some Aleuts to California to build a settlement at Fort Ross.” She uncovers her own family diaspora by following previous Islander travels to Northern California under Russian authority.

In fact, Judy Peterson’s journey parallels a tale of one particular worker from Kodiak employed by the Russian American company in California in the nineteenth-century. A man canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church as St Peter the Aleut was possibly a distant relative of Peterson herself. This young man from Kodiak, born with the name Chunagnaq, meaning the color *purple* in Alutiiq, was baptized as Peter in the Orthodox Church after being captured by the Spanish in California in 1815. An account given by Simeon Yanovsky, a former priest living on Spruce Island near Kodiak at the time and author of *The Life of Saint Herman of Alaska*, provides documentary confirmation of the events leading to the Martyrdom of St. Peter, the Aleut. “On another occasion I was relating to him [Father Herman] how the Spanish in California had imprisoned fourteen Aleuts, and how the Jesuits,” he writes, “were forcing all of them to accept the Catholic Faith” (88). The captured hunters refused to convert to Catholicism, which caused the Spanish to condemn the Natives to death by torture. The Spanish soldiers allegedly mutilated Peter, but Yanovsky attests that the young man “endured all and firmly repeated one thing: ‘I am a Christian,’ eventually passing away from a loss of blood” (89). Allegedly, the Spanish soldiers planned to inflict the same treatment upon Peter’s friend Kykhklai Ivan, another Kodiak Islander, but set the man free after they were ordered to stop the interrogation of their Aleut prisoners (Bucko 33). Yanovsky writes that Father Herman, on Spruce Island, upon hearing the tale of Peter the Aleut, “reverently before an icon, made the Sign of the Cross,” and said, “Holy New Martyr Peter, pray to God for us” (89). Hubert Howe Bancroft reported a similar event in the *History of California Vol. II 1801-1824*, mentioning an Aleutian prisoner dying from “ill-treatment received from the Padre at San Francisco,” but explains that the men were captured because they were involved in poaching sea otters near Santa Barbara. When questioned about their activities, the Aleuts, according to Bancroft, “suddenly became ignorant of every language but the simplest [sic] Russian” (308). Thus was St. Peter, the Aleut, put to death by Spanish colonists.

Judy Peterson's travels from Kodiak to California, like that of the tale of St. Peter, describes a Native geography much larger than an Alaskan homeland, and by Peterson’s time, nearly two centuries old—much older than United States possession of either Alaska or California. Extending this Aleut/Alutiiq cultural geography across time, *Our Aleut History* articulates a distinctly translocal Native presence within the Russian and United States empires. St. Peter’s travel to California was under the force of the Russian Empire, while Peterson’s originated in the trauma reopened by the tidal wave. In 1982, the Russian Orthodox Church declared St. Peter, the Aleut, the Martyr of San Francisco, and throughout the United States there are churches bearing the name St. Peter, the Aleut. Peterson’s contemporary filmic expedition, remapping the spaces traveled by St. Peter and his fellow conscripted workers in California, sutures the wounds created by Russian and American colonialism in connecting nineteenth-century history to current day Aleut experiences on the Pacific coast of North America. In doing so, the film contends that the North Pacific and Bering regions are ongoing cultural spaces for Aleut/Alutiiq people in which multiple borders have been fixed and readjusted, and imperial and national laws—Russian, Spanish, Mexican—made and unmade. The film excavates the relationship between Judy Peterson and those from Kodiak in California during the heyday of Fort Rossia showing the centrality of a translocal, “hemispheric” circuit at the core of Alutiiq

heritage, a basis of their cultural sovereignty.

While *Our Aleut History* positions Aleut cultural space through the lenses of Russian and US colonial histories, the *Aleut Story* relies on narratives of heritage and geography in World War II. Based on the premise of Aleut presence as part of the nation, the film foregrounds the Aleut as mistreated American citizens. As a voice reading a military report testifies to the harsh treatment of the Aleut, the camera fixes on a black and white photograph of a group of children standing aboard the deck of a naval ship. The narrator reads, “as the [N]ative children lined up in the fish-stinking scow they sang, ‘God Bless America’ to the tune of Irving Berlin. “ For the military officer, the image signified how the Aleut children “were just as patriotic and just as Rotarian as the rest of us,” ignoring the colonial violence the US was committing on them at the time. The film thus asserts the inherently American context of the interment—in the sense of America serving as a deeply ingrained presence in the subjectivities of the Aleut Americans, whose patriotism and self-sense of being Americans was unshakable even in the face of systematic mistreatment and violation of civil rights by state authority, as depicted in the images and historical documents.

An interview with Mrs. Bourdukofsky of St Paul Island, a former internee, details Aleut American citizenship for *Aleut Story*. She describes learning the “Pledge [of] Allegiance” before the war came to the North Pacific. Boudukofsky as a child recited the pledge for her parents, she says, to which her father responded proudly, “[w]e’re part of United States, you know, I’m glad you learned that.” From that period on, Boudukofsky explains how she was “proud to be an American, you know. Not just an Aleut.” The film downplays Aleut cultural indigeneity and exposes the intensity of the *internal* colonial processes of subjection upon them at the time. In doing so, *Aleut Story* emphasizes the location of Aleut people in the American national body through the portrayal of Petrivelli as an internment survivor. “In my mind, we were just a nuisance, okay, as far as the government was concerned,” she says displaying frustration with the ghastly internment experience. “[y]es, it was a time of war,” she admits, “but we were citizens of the United States.” The internment remains incomprehensible for Petrivelli, who cannot square it with her American citizenship and the rights and burdens that come with membership in the nation.

The appearance of Alice Petrivilli, an Atka Native, in both *Our Aleut History* (spelled Petriville) and *Aleut Story* (in which her name is spelled Petrivelli) serves to highlight the distinction between how each of the films addresses cultural history. *Our Aleut History* explores post-internment life by interviewing Petrivelli, recalling the moment she told her daughter about the internment. Peering directly into the camera, she tells the viewer, “My oldest daughter Patricia was about 15 years old and I was telling her about her Aleut family.” She continues, “and I told her that one time the US Navy burned our village and evacuated us. And I told her about how hard life [was] in Killisnoo,” a camp along the Alaska panhandle. In response, Petrivelli says, her daughter looked at her and asked, “Mama, are you sure it happened?” Petrivelli’s daughter Patricia had never heard of such an event. This tale illustrates how the internment was complexly entangled with the intimate spaces of aboriginal families, both reflecting and exacerbating a breakdown in inter-generational communication regarding heritage. Petrivelli replied to her daughter, “Yes, it happened,” and her daughter said, “but it’s not in history books.” Her daughter didn’t believe that it actually happened. At this moment, Petrivelli comments on the erasure of the Aleut internment: “We almost lost our culture. It came to a halt. Although it wasn’t our fault, it made you feel that you had something to be ashamed of.”

Unknown to her daughter, the legacy of the internment was an erasure of Aleut culture and an introduction of a sense of powerlessness and even shame.. Petrivilli's summary of the situation echoes Irene Coyle's insights that she is unable to identify an Aleut object when she sees one. "That's how lost we are," she remarks in parallel with Petrivilli.

The Impossibility of Aleut/Alutiiq Sovereignty

Alice Petrivelli appears again in *Our Aleut History*, subsequent to the camera hovering over a map of the Kodiak archipelago. The camera travels slowly down a topographic projection of the Alaska Peninsula and the Pacific Ocean, continuing to trail in a southwest direction across the Aleutian chain, to the island of Attu, sitting nearly 1100 miles away from the Alaska mainland. The film cuts from this slow pan to Alice Petriville, seated and staring into the camera, saying, "[t]hey call it the end of the earth," she pauses and smiles, "but Aleuts always believed that Attu was the beginning of the World and that it just progressed eastward toward the United States" (as well as northward into Siberia). Emphasizing the march of history from an Aleut perspective in which the world begins in Attu and moves eastward and northward, she fundamentally challenges the dominant American common sense assumption that human civilization moved west, from Europe and the Atlantic. In locating Aleut origins at Attu, this imagined geography also denies the American common sense assumption that Native peoples "migrated" from Asia to the New World; for Mrs. Petrivilli, Native people originated in Attu and moved into places non-Natives later came to call America and Asia. Contrastingly, *Aleut Story* quotes from the dominant narrative, with the narrator reading (ironically) this script: "[a]ncestors of modern Aleuts, migrants from Asia, settled along this sweeping arc of volcanic islands." But the Aleut worldview, according to Petrivilli, centers Aleut people as a place-based aboriginal people in the North Pacific and Bering Regions. The film suggests that "modern" Aleuts are "ancient" immigrants to the Americas, naturalizing Aleut claims to United States nationality and obfuscating their aboriginal heritage to the Aleutian Islands. The fundamental conceit that Aleut Americans are "migrants from Asia" stabilizes a raced-based claim to territory in American culture by reading the Bering region as a place that was "crossed over," not as an age-old cultural aboriginal place, a center in a very different map of the world's continents.

The idea of a "land bridge" once spanning the Bering Sea from Siberia to Alaska is known as the *Beringia Theory*. The Beringia concept states that a mass human migration took place roughly 17,000 years ago (scholars are constantly revising the precise dating) when the North American and Eurasian continents were connected by a grassland steppe hundreds of miles wide. This "bridge" made travel of flora, fauna, and humans possible because sea levels were lowered due to the global ice formation. Many believe that it was across this "bridge" that the present day aboriginal populations of North America migrated from eastern Siberia to Alaska and later to other parts of North and South America. While scientific communities and popular American culture have more or less accepted some form of the land bridge theory, the implications of Beringia as an accepted event in natural history have proven threatening to the rights of aboriginal peoples in North America. In *Red Earth, White Lies*, Vine Deloria, Jr. writes of the non-Native political stake and cultural investment in the land bridge theory: "people want to believe that the Western Hemisphere, and more particularly North America was a vacant unexploited, fertile land" free of previous inhabitants (68). Deloria argues, with clear frustration, that the Beringia theory undermines Native American sovereignty, because if American Indians

are thought of as recent immigrants to North America then they hold no aboriginal title to American lands in the view of settler-state governments.

“American Indians, as a general rule,” Deloria writes, “have aggressively opposed the Bering strait migration doctrine because it does not reflect any of the memories or traditions passed down by the ancestors over many generations” (81). The migration theory, for Deloria, fails to recognize aboriginal people’s histories of themselves. That does not suggest that there are no aboriginal migration theories, but they are not consistent with the land bridge theory. While “[s]ome tribes speak of transoceanic migrations in boats,” such as the “the Hopis and Colvilles for example, others speak of the experience of a creation, such as the Yakimas and other Pacific North West tribes. Some tribes even talk about migrations from other planets” (81). If Aleut creation stories center the Bering as the beginning of the world, is it possible to consider the region a historically dynamic cultural hub, not merely as a land bridge for previous immigrants to the American continents? Just as Graburn and Leite-Goldberge’s conviction that United States national citizenship and aboriginality are mutually exclusive, the film’s posing of Aleut people as immigrants to North America obscures aspects of aboriginal culture for the viewer of the film. In contrast to the land bridge theory, the Native creation story, as the one told by Alice Petrevilli in *Our Aleut History*, promotes not only an alternative theory on the origins of Aleut people, but also the Bering Region as a birthplace of culture.

Through the denial of an indigenous culture at the Bering, the concept of a land bridge reflects an imperial power seeking to manipulate the discourse of both historic and prehistoric human activity in the Americas so as to stabilize present day social and cultural relationships between indigenous people and settler formations. Naturalizing relations made across the Atlantic between the Americas reduces the Bering region to an acultural and prehistoric borderland—an untamed, unused wasteland of “migrants.” Many scholars, such as José David Saldívar, have argued that the United States-Mexican national border is in itself a culture, a “[b]order culture,” that “transgresses” established fields and disciplines of study. While the Bering region exists as an indigenous cultural center, it is also a contemporary political border culture complicating the considerations of national space for the United States (38). The Bering region, a border for the era created in Western expansion and the process of colonization of the Americas, splits the dynamic culture of the area in to two parts: the Russian and the American. Thus to truly understand what James Clifford eloquently describes as “the movements of others in a regional contact zone,” one must consider the Bering not as a boundary, but as a cultural center competing with imperialist ideas of migration (Clifford 302).

Pinning down the Bering Region as only an ancient site of the flow of flora and fauna closes off the possibilities of inquiry into present day indigenous culture. As the movements of people west, first across the Atlantic, and then across the North American landscape, came to define modernity through settlement and colonization of the Americas, it is at the Bering that the westward march of progress meets its limit and is expressed in terms of the fencing of political borders and the end point of cultural myths. This is not to deny that the Bering region was a connection point between the two land masses which are understood as Eurasia and North America, but is it possible to reconsider the Bering as a cultural space with its own history and ongoing associations in the midst of settler-state space-making? Instead of constituting a bridge, the region may be considered a point of origin—a center—and help us understand, as a case in point, the contests of the mapping of race and indigeneity globally.

Relationships between racism and space need serious attention from scholars in helping

to understand the complexity of indigenous culture. When making sense of racial inequality in American cities, for example, sociologist Paul Gilroy finds racial culture and contemporary urban space connected in the nation's origins. The North American indigenous people's initial dispossession by European colonialists, he argues, contributes to both the formation of United States racial culture and to the development of North American cities. He makes this argument through a reading of Richard Wright's "Introduction to Black Metropolis," where Wright argues that the development of urban space in cities like Chicago were a direct result of American slavery and the African Diaspora (xvii-xxxv). Countering the idea that racial inequalities are based primarily on recent economic developments, Gilroy writes of how

durable inequalities [in American cities] tempted me into another long durée speculation endorsed by a reading of Patricia Seed's brilliant *Ceremonies of Possession* ...which examines the varying rituals whereby the wild nature of the New World was made over and became private property within the rules specified by John Locke and other English apostles of improvement. (38)

In *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640*, Seed makes the case that colonial authority grew over North America in the asserting what she specifies as "clear acts," physical gestures expressing possession, such as the fence building, the planting of gardens, and the construction of houses (Seed 39). These developments created cultural space for British colonialists to justify possession, but aboriginal spaces, Seed explains, were described by the British negatively in that the indigenous people did not "improve" the land and thus failed in British eyes to 'construct' suitable tenure over a region.

Gilroy expands Seed's assertion of the colonial spatial inequality between the British and aboriginal groups in Northeastern North America to include the very formation of urban and regional space in other US urban locations. "Though the conquest of Chicago," he writes, "came much later than the acquisition of Virginia and New England, might [clear acts of colonial dispossession] even now be an unspoken factor in the naturalization of inequality and the axiology of urban space, order and disorder, good [neighborhoods] and bad" (38)? Gilroy thus argues that the very systems of land appropriation in the United States later became the framework for creating disparity and legitimizing dispossession in urban areas. These clearing acts continue to operate in order to maintain the spaces and logics constructed during the European settlement of the Americas. "That colonial nomos," writes Gilroy, "was racialized from its inception," by which he means that the contemporary spaces of racial culture and inequality in North America are directly related to the systems of denial of territoriality to, and the marginalization of, aboriginal peoples (33). "It was legitimated by conquest and purchase and then consolidated in plantation society," and "in time, those boundaries would eventually become the iconic white picket fences of US suburbia" (38). The formation of inequality in spatial terms today relates back to the colonial designations between wilderness and civilization. Within these boundaries between order and disorder, "racial discourse," Gilroy suggests, "shows how the battle for civilization and against the encroachments of wild nature and social disorder persists in US cities" (38). Gilroy's insistence on taking seriously original and ongoing conquest of aboriginal cultural space allows for an advancement in unraveling contemporary racial inequality in the United States. The fencing off of land, directly related to the creation of racial thought, still guides the spatial design of the nation so much so that it comes, for Western

culture, to define the Bering as a borderland.

The films, *Our Aleut History* and *Aleut Story*, offer a way to understand cultural space beyond the more recent colonial boundaries that situate peoples and cultures within the racialized space-making practices of the “colonial nomos” (33). *Aleut Story* peers into a collapsed logic that brings together notions of ‘national belonging’ with that of aboriginal cultural spaces—a juxtaposition that Graburn and Leite-Goldberge find oxymoronic. The centuries of enslavement and forced marriage preceding the racialized internment during World War II impose a strong case against Graburn and Leite-Goldberge’s attempt to literally fence aboriginality within the confines of today’s “clear acts” of United States racial culture and nationhood. *Our Aleut History*, on the other hand, traverses the spaces of the Pacific, melding the histories of a culture beyond the divisions manufactured through colonial development, thereby dismantling the “clear acts” of settler-state space-making. Each film unites cultural spaces amid the formalized dispossession of Native peoples by suturing present day culture with that of the past so as to center aboriginality in discussions concerning cultural space in contemporary time.

The cultural sovereignty asserted in the films reaches beyond a “tribal sovereignty,” normally held “within a Native homeland” by moving towards subjects such as international travel and citizenship (Biolsi 240). Also, since many Native peoples possess territorial rights to activities and resources off a reservation, Peterson’s travels reclaim a pronounced history of activity relocating ideas of territorial rights into another geography, an indigenous *first space*, that evades legal confines of rights and governments, into one reaching trans-territorially. These histories stress global connections, as opposed to local encampments, in proving central to indigenous culture. This form of cultural sovereignty as ongoing with the formation of settler states and empire asserts an authority beyond the current divisions of nation and race. In the *Third Space of Sovereignty: the Post Colonial Politics of US—indigenous Relations*, Bruyneel explains the political third space as a site of indigenous resistance. He writes “the articulation of a third space of citizenship and sovereignty...represent[s] [sic] ... indigenous political life in resistance to the dominant norms and institutions of the American settler-state and nation” (212). In other words, the sovereign third space for Bruyneel illuminates the nature of politically sovereign space aboriginal people use to actively resist disciplinary aspects of settler-states. In this respect, Aleut/Alutiiq cultural first space diverges from a “third space of sovereignty” in that articulations of Aleut/Alutiiq aboriginality are not bound absolutely in forms of political resistance, but function within ongoing cultural geographies predating non-indigenous boundaries on bodies, culture, and geography.

This *impossible sovereignty* centers aboriginal culture amid reactionary enunciations of an oppressive discipline seeking to erase or suppress aboriginality in its entirety. The concept of the indigenous *first space* develops from Bruyneel’s assertion that aboriginal political spaces display a “refusal of the imperial binary” by “constitut[ing] a more profound sense of indigenous political life than colonial rule and settler-state boundaries” (21). While indigenous *first spaces* exist as vast continuing geographies where systems of the “colonial nomos” attempt to marginalize aboriginal physical spaces, this impossible sovereignty regards settler logics and boundaries at the periphery of indigenous axiology. In this sense, aboriginal accounts of colonialism and empire become not only expressions of oppressed marginalizations within a settler state, but also make very concrete ways of understanding relationships between geography and culture, coexisting with mechanisms of modern empire, from aboriginal perspectives. The political and cultural barriers of settler states become aspects of an aboriginal cultural

experience.

This articulation of Aleut/Alutiiq cultural geography, also contrasts with Homi Bhabha's assertion of a "third[]space" as a consequence of both colonialism and racial culture. In as much as a third space "displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom," Aleut/Alutiiq culture as described in the films situates aboriginality at the center point of cultural spaces imbued with colonialism and empire (Bhabha 211). Urban theorist Edward Soja writes of third spaces as the "spaces difference makes," that in turn help form a "geohistory of otherness" typically suppressed by modernist spatial thinking (154-162). indigenous expressions, as relayed by the films, articulate specific first spaces, by which colonial and imperial development has grown upon, thus illuminating an imbricated aboriginal culture that has been in residence since time immemorial. In this sense, they represent not areas of otherness, but the building blocks of the colonial technologies of racial culture practiced in the United States. Both films *Our Aleut History* and *Aleut Story* contend with the normative universe of settler-state logic and its spatio-race making practices by reclaiming the first spaces of Aleut heritage in contemporary times. One film brings Aleut people into the national body and the other links them to the geographies of Russian empire. The very answer to "what does it mean to be an Aleut" is indeed to reclaim histories and practices long denied by empire and transcoloniality. *Aleut Story* also provides an answer to the questions surrounding United States citizenship and Aleut indigenous heritage by insisting upon United States national belonging, after one hundred and fifty years of mistreatment, as critical to indigenous reality.

Chapter Four: Of Displacement and Domestication

The United States began the territorial occupation of Alaska in 1867 upon the nation's purchase of the region from Russia. The nation formalized statehood in 1959 but failed to clear aboriginal title to the Alaska land until 1971, when the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) provided land and cash compensation in return for the loss of Native claim for any title to territory. A distinct relationship between the nation and the indigenous people of Alaska evolved in the one hundred and four years between the purchase and the ANCSA. This chapter examines the legal history between Alaska Natives and the United States leading up to the ANCSA, and lays out the consequences for Native people. Throughout the chapter are woven writings by Alaska Natives responding to this history.

ANCSA's politics and consequences were and are of intense interest for Alaska Native people. For example, *Letters to Howard: an Interpretation of the Alaska Native Land Claims* is a collection of previously published letters, by Alaska Inupiat writer Fred Bigjim, which appeared in the Alaska Native newspaper *The Tundra Times* in 1973, during the initial implementation of the ANCSA. In these letters, Bigjim raises concern over aspects of the claims settlement that he worried might be silenced by the dominant political narratives at the time, such as the Cold War. The "Howard" in the work's title refers to Alaskan Inupiat artist Howard Rock, the founder of the newspaper who also served as the weekly's editor-in-chief throughout his lifetime. Bigjim crafted these weekly letters to Howard Rock in *The Tundra Times* under the pseudonym of an elderly resident, *Naugga Ciunerput* (Inupiaq for *Our Destiny*), of Land's End Village, Alaska. The penname Naugga Ciunerput provided an opportunity for Bigjim to bring to light concerns about the settlement without fear of reprisal from either the indigenous or the non-indigenous community.

The first letter addressed from the nonexistent Land's End Village to the newspaper dated 30 March 1973 introduces the reader to the fictional character of Naugga Ciunerput, his friend Wally Morton, and some fundamental information about Alaska Native Claims Settlement. Ciunerput finds "The Act" a source of both interest and frustration after receiving a copy of the law in the form of a magazine a mail plane delivery.

Dear Howard:

I have been living in this village for many years all alone except for Mr. Wally Morton, who was an old VISTA volunteer who got lost up here in 1970 and never got evacuated. We didn't used to have much to do in the evenings until one day when the mail plane dropped a bundle of magazines which all turned out to be the same - AN ACT (Public Law 92-203). Wally read one copy and then told me that it had a lot to do with my life and my future here in Alaska, so we read it together in the evenings to practice our lessons. You see, he is teaching me English and I am teaching him Eskimo, and we use AN ACT as the text. So far it has been pretty one-sided because AN ACT doesn't have any Eskimo language in it. (3)

Alone in Land's End, the elderly Naugga Ciunerput is unable to read the English language text of the law, relying on his sole fellow village resident, Wally Morton, a non-indigenous Vista Volunteer, to read AN ACT aloud for him. Wally begins teaching Ciunerput English to help him

read the magazine and in return Naugga teaches Inupiaq, the indigenous language of the region. Though the provisions of the ANCSA have been discussed, voted on, and are already codified into law, this is the first notice Naugga Ciunerput receives about the claims settlement in the isolated village. The “one-sided” presentation of the law as a circular comes to represent, for Ciunerput, the one-sided aspect of the law Native in life. “Even though I am an old man,” he writes, “I am still very curious and like to know how new things work. But what troubles me is the fact that I don’t seem to have much of a choice about the whole process.” Naugga Ciunerput’s sense of having been left out of something of critical importance to him motivates him to learn about the details of the ANCSA “out of self-defense, not because [he is] necessarily interested in them” (63). His critique begins by questioning the right of the United States federal and state governments to fully direct the process of Native enrollment—a crucial step in the ANCSA implementation--in the village and regional corporations.

The ANCSA empowered the state of Alaska to claim ownership of formerly-federal lands and subsurface rights by terminating any claim to aboriginal title by Alaska’s Native groups. The law’s text announces that in regard to the territory in the state a complete “extinguishment of the aboriginal title thereto, if any” had ever been held (43 U. S. C. § 1603). As compensation for the extinguishment of Native title, the ANCSA provided for approximately 44 million acres of Alaska land and a nearly one billion dollars to be distributed to Alaska Native groups through institutions set up specifically for the settlement. In implementing the act 200 Native village corporations and 12 Native-owned regional for-profit corporations were established, as well as a thirteenth corporation located in the city of Seattle, (for Natives who had moved away from Alaska prior to the ANCSA). Eighty thousand Natives, including Alaska Indian, Alaska Eskimo, and American Aleut, (the commonly used terms at the time) enrolled in the corporations, each receiving 100 shares in a regional corporation and 10 shares in a village corporation. The 44 millions acres of land was divided between the regional and village corporations (the 13th regional corporation in Seattle did not receive monies in the settlement). Native corporation lands under the ANCSA are not held in trust, and may be taxed by state subdivisions if developed, as distinct from tribal land bases in the lower forty-eight states, which retain federal trust status. The corporations formed by the settlement are also differ from tribal governments set up under the Indian Reorganization Act in the lower forty-eight states in that an Alaska Native coporation is “in business” in order to pay dividends to Native shareholders. Alaska Natives are thus, under the ANCSA, corporate share holders, not tribal members.

The ANCSA also changed the relationship Alaska Natives previously held with the territorial government and the Alaska regional land base, in that the law modified aspects of the internal cultural structures of Native Alaska communities. According to the language in the statute, those born after December 18, 1971 were not able to enroll in either a village or regional corporation, much like the allotment and linked tribal enrollment policies in the lower forty-eight state, the claims settlement generated a fractionated status (based on complex heirship law) for Native assets. The 100 shares in a regional corporation and 10 shares in a village corporation that a Native born before December 18, 1971, received would descend to her heirs. After a very small number of generations, the stock held by any individual heir became so diluted that it was not worth holding onto. Initially, the Act allowed Native shareholders to sell their interests to non-Natives in 1991, but this clause was amended to make such a sale possible only through a majority vote of the shareholders of a given corporation to liquidate the corporate stock as a whole and sell it as one package.

The settlement separated one's status as a village resident from that of ownership in the community as a shareholder. In another letter, Naugga Ciunerput questions how the designations 'Native villager' and 'corporate shareholder' relate to his own situation.

I asked Wally if it was better to be a resident in a village or a stockholder in a village corporation. He said it was a silly question because I could be both and if I didn't want to be a stockholder, I didn't have to enroll as a Native. I had to remind him, and myself to, that I was a Native regardless of whether I had enrolled or not. But then we both began to realize that maybe this was not going to be quite so true in the future. (63-64)

Naugga Ciunerput finds that the conflation of stock in a village corporation with identity as a 'Native' contains disquieting implications for Alaska Natives. In his view, a 'Native' under these circumstances would be either someone in possession of any amount of shares in an ANCSA-established corporation, or someone who the Secretary of the Interior could appoint as a Native. Recognition as Native or Indian by the Secretary of the Interior was—and is—a critically important legal resource and source of identity (even if this is not *all* that goes into the makeup of Native identity). This legal status is based on both law (administrative, statute, and case law) and on a moral (and political) recognition of the federal government's trust responsibility toward all Native peoples. But the ANCSA seemed to be rendering all this moot by reducing Native rights and Native relations with the land to a matter of possession of corporate stock in a profit-making enterprise. Thus ANCSA was intended to change how Natives would interact with the land and with one another as "Natives" (that is, as "shareholders"). In consequence of the new public law, Alaska Natives have faced remarkable political changes, yet even forty years later after enactment, surprisingly little scholarship examines this history or its contemporary consequences for Alaska Native lives.

Following Bigjim's line of inquiry into Alaska Natives and federal law this chapter continues to trace the legal and historical relations between the United States and Native Alaska, from before the ANCSA, through its enactment and initial implementation, into the present. I start with the United States purchase of Alaska in the nineteenth century, then turn to how the manner in which Alaska Native relations with the United States evolved in ways very different from those of other indigenous groups in North America and the Pacific. This history provides a context for the second part of the chapter that critically reads a literary response to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement by Alaska Native author, activist, and politician, Diane Lxeis Benson. Her play *River Woman*, like *Letters to Howard*, contends with the settlement in ways that take seriously its consequence for the personal situations of Native people. As dramatic literature, the play contains key features drawing the collaborative nature of theatre as a response to the loss of community, and destruction of the domestic sphere in Native life—all part of the settlement's outcome.

Historian Stephen Haycox in *Alaska: An American Colony* explicates the years following Alaska statehood, leading to the settlement when Alaska indigenous communities asserted their (domesticated, under the ANCSA) rights of title to respectively occupied lands located in distinct cultural territories. The ANCSA was not the first time indigenous groups in Alaska faced pressure to "settle" their claims. During the negotiations over statehood, newly found oil deposits in Prudhoe Bay, off the shores of northern Alaska, acted as a "catalyst" for the largest

aboriginal land settlement agreement in history, between Alaska Native groups and the United States (273). Section Six of the Alaska Statehood Act (Alaska Statehood Act. Public Law 85-508, 72 Stat. 339, July 7, 1958), Haycox notes, conveyed 103 million acres of land from the federal government to the newly formed state. The Statehood Act, securing land for the government, contained a clause in Section Four acknowledging aboriginal title to lands and the necessity for just compensation to be paid to Natives for lands taken in the creation of the state. This clause was part of a boilerplate statehood form leftover from previous acts of statehood in the nineteenth century. Throughout the late 1960s into the early 1970s Native representatives, the federal government, and the State of Alaska worked toward this agreement—supposedly entailing just compensation—eventuating in the ANCSA of 1971.

During the negotiations over statehood, the federal government sponsored numerous scholarly treatments of both the aboriginal cultures and geographies of Alaska. Most impressive is the study *Alaska: Natives and the Land*, published in 1968 by the United States Congressional *Federal Field Committee for Development and Planning In Alaska*. The work details the Alaskan geography and aboriginal cultures populating the new state through academic prose, graphs, charts, and maps. The table of contents lists such subjects as “Alaska Natives Today,” “Land and Ethnic Relationships,” “Natural Resources” and of course the pressing topic of the time, relations between Alaska Native groups and the state and federal government, “The Land Issue.” The oversized work, measuring 563 pages in length, floods the reader with information on the scope and quality of the geology, the elaborate geographical distribution charts of fauna and flora, along with ethnographic studies on the indigenous people of each vast region of the newly chartered state. In fact, the study includes a large two-foot by two-foot pullout map, printed on vellum, detailing the location of sizable aboriginal villages and towns. While this might seem like a *recognition* of pre-colonial autonomy—Native sovereignty—this is not the case. *Alaska Natives and the Land* imagines the Native populations of Alaska to be *included in the transformation of the region that modernization would entail*. This was not be a matter of “clear acts” of colonialism, as historian Patricia Seed describes the colonial New England settlers who seized the Native territories that would later form the North Eastern states of New England. Instead, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act sought a marginalized incorporation in Natives into the Union (38). This literal projection of a unified Alaska by the national imagination, illustrates the physical and cultural landscapes of pre-claims settlement Alaska, lending support to what geographer J. B. Harley refers to as the colonial “idea of available boundless land awaiting occupation” (187). But while *Alaska: Natives and the Land* acts as a brochure attracting the imagination of those with interests in the new state, the book in fact presents a territory inhabited with a multitude of aboriginal cultures, not a vacant land. Many colonial maps, according to Harley, “fostered the image of a dehumanized geometrical space—a land without the encumbrance of the Indians—whose places could be controlled by coordinates of latitude and longitude,” yet *Alaska: Natives and the Land* expounds an imperial geography containing the indigenous as somehow intrinsic to the Americanization of the territory (188).

The indigenous peoples of Alaska, with no treaties or “treaty substitutes” with the U.S., uncovered no basis for legal claims to sovereignty in Alaska as was the case commonly in the lower forty-eight states. In federal case law, Alaska Native peoples, at this time, were not understood as separate national bodies, as have other North American indigenous communities. Instead they faced colonialism, not as members of separate nations, but as obligatory national and state citizens with a set of uncanny aboriginal rights in soon to be for-profit Native owned

corporations. For the settlement instituted corporate structures for Alaska Native communities that were at odds with the tribal and national institutions in use by Native peoples throughout the territory of the contiguous United States. In exchange for relinquishing any aboriginal title they might have, the claims settlement enrolled Natives shareholders in for-profit regional and village corporations. The start-up money for the corporations derived from payment for lands selected by the state and federal governments. Native groups in the settlement also chose parcels the corporations were to hold as corporate property. This agreement brought an end to the ambiguous legal relationship between those indigenous to Alaska and the United States.

The pre-settlement history of relations between the United States and Native Alaska began with the national purchase of Alaska from the Russian empire in 1867. At that time, the nation deemed Alaska a military district under U.S. law. In article three of the *1867 Treaty of Cession* between the United States and Russia there is discussion concerning the proposed treatment of Native people which the United States agreed to adhere to in the purchase of the area. The article provides that the “uncivilized tribes will be subject to such laws and regulations as the United States may, from time to time, adopt in regard to aboriginal tribes of that country.” Federal courts have interpreted the term “uncivilized” as a method to differentiate between tribes that were independent from Russian colonial rule from those who lived in proximity to Russians (Case, 58-59). This however, should not be understood to refer to a “level” of “assimilation” of Alaska Natives, only to the degree of historical interactions between certain Native groups and the Russian colonial authorities. The United States Army oversaw the area initially, after which the responsibility fell upon the United States Department of the Treasury for two years, and finally to the Navy in 1884. Congress passed the *Organic Act of 1885*, providing for basic federal services in Alaska while promoting a formal colonial economy in the region. The Organic Act spelled out the first relationship the nation would have with Native cultures and aboriginal land. The act specifies that “Indians or other persons in said district shall not be disturbed in the possession of any lands actually in their use or occupation or now claimed by them.” Thus, eighteen years after the United States acquired legal possession of Alaska, the nation allowed Indians and other aboriginals to use and occupy traditional lands. However, the Act also stated that “the terms under which such persons may acquire title to such lands is reserved for legislation by Congress...” (23 Stat. L., 24. (1884)). Then in 1912, the government renamed the region the *District of Alaska* as an organized federally-incorporated territory.

Issues of aboriginal land tenure and federal jurisdiction surfaced when in 1955 the Supreme Court ruled on the Tlingit *Tee-Hit-Ton Indians v. United States* (348 U.S. 272, 75 S. Ct. 313, 99 L. Ed. 314). *Tee-Hit-Ton* involved the Tee-Hit-Ton clan of Tlingit Indian, who reside along the Alaska panhandle, and a claim to compensation involving an alleged Fifth Amendment taking (taking without just compensation) filed against the federal government. The Secretary of Agriculture had authorized the harvesting of lumber on Tee-Hit-Ton-occupied lands. Council for the Tee-Hit-Ton clan, Tlingit, William Paul, argued that since the clan held the right of occupancy, or aboriginal title, the trees had to be paid for as just compensation under the United States Constitution. However, in an opinion delivered by Justice Reed the court held that the Alaska Indians were to receive no compensation for the claim. Reed found the acquisition of property by the federal government to not be a legal taking, because the Tee-Hit-Ton were, in the light of United States law, without right of occupancy, or aboriginal title. In the opinion of the court, the clan deserved no payment because, as Justice Reed explains, there had been no “recognition by Congress of any legal rights in petitioner to the land in question” (Reed Opinion,

348 U.S. 272, 75 S. Ct. 313, 99 L. Ed. 314). Thus the United States federal government, in violation of the *Doctrine of Discovery*, denied Alaska Natives the ability to hold occupant rights typically granted to other Native people in the Americas. For example, the Treaty of Guadalupe conveyed such rights to Pueblo people who continue to them in current day New Mexico. The *Doctrine of Discovery* is a practice between European sovereigns in their initial confrontations with Native people over land acquisition in the Americas. John Marshall, in 1832, bespeaks this agreement in relation to the aboriginal people in North America in *Worcester v. Georgia* (31 U.S. 515, 6 Pet. 515, 8 L. Ed. 483 [1832]):

This principle, suggested by the actual state of things, was ‘that discovery gave title to the government by whose subjects, or by whose authority, it was made, against all other European governments, which title might be consummated by possession. . . This principle, acknowledged by all Europeans, because it was in the interest of all to acknowledge it, gave to the nation making the discovery, as its inevitable consequence, the sole right of competition among those who agreed to it; not one which could annul the previous right of those who had not agreed to it (namely, the indigenous inhabitants). It regulated the right given by discovery among the European discoverers; but could not effect the rights of those already in possession, either as aboriginal occupants, or as occupants by virtue of a discovery made before the memory of man. It gave the exclusive right to purchase, but did not found that right on a denial of the possessor to sell. (Marshall, 31 U.S. 515, 6 Pet. 515, 8 L. Ed. 483)

Initially in 1740, the Russian empire claimed Alaska but sold the territory to the United States for seven million dollars in 1867, decades after the ruling in *Worcester v. Georgia*. There is no documented history of Alaska Natives selling the right of title to Russia. Thus by the rule of law Alaska Natives still possessed aboriginal title when Alaska was purchased by the United States. Once the United States established rule in the area and denied the Tlingit compensation due to the court’s failure to see a just claim, it had violated “the rights of those already in possession” of said area. The holding in *Tee-Hit-Ton Indians v. United States* (348 U.S. 272, 75 S. Ct. 313, 99 L. Ed. 314) which saw no Tlingit possessory claim to land then effected the status of Alaska Natives in the transformation of Alaska from a territory to a state in the union (Alaska Statehood Act. Public Law 85-508, 72 Stat. 339, July 7, 1958). Undermining Native claims to land or resources was critical for the development of Alaska. The major apprehension towards statehood, by the federal government, was the cost the government would incur upon proclamation. Alaska state proponents then countered that concern by drafting bills that would allocate 375 million acres of land in Alaska solely for economic development. Thus, while the government included Natives among population in the movement toward statehood, such integration affected the perception of Native cultural rights by ignoring or denying the rights of occupancy inherent for Alaska Natives at the time.

Part of this active ignorance or denial of Native rights and Native presence involved silencing Native people themselves. Fred Paul, son of lawyer William Paul who had originally filed Tee-Hit-Ton in 1951 with the federal district court, wanted to give testimony during a Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs hearing on land claims issues prior to the passage of the ANCSA. His lawyer, however, advised him not to do so without supplying a “good reason.”

Donald Craig Mitchell, in *Take My Land, Take My Life: The Story of Congress' Historic Settlement of Alaska Native Claims, 1960-1971*, links this silencing to a similar treatment during the *Tee-Hit-Ton* case, where according William Paul, the indigenous perspective on the case had not been included in the public record.^{iv} The article "Tee-Hit-Ton and Alaska Native Rights," by Stephen Haycox focuses strictly on the case brought forth to the court by the Tlingit band and in doing delves into William Paul possible motivations in the case. The article covers the back-story of the *Tee-Hit-Ton* case and the life and times of the Tlingit lawyer commonly considered the champion of Alaska Native rights. Haycox views Paul as one who believed that "the path to Indian equity lay in elimination special status and privilege for Indians" (334). Such a position, Haycox notes, created a strained relationship with the BIA when led by John Collier, who voiced contrasting sentiments.^v *Tee-Hit-Ton and Alaska Native Rights* uncovers the genealogy of *Tee-Hit-Ton* beginning with *James Miller et al. v United States* in 1947. Haycox also discusses how many of William Paul's actions proved unfavorable to the Alaska Native Brotherhood, a religious political group Paul co-founded in 1912.^{vi} Haycox relates William Paul's sentiments concerning the elimination of wardship for Indians to the strategic denial of aboriginal title for Natives in Alaska. This is unusual since most readings of *Tee-Hit-Ton* tend to discuss the case in relation to legal issues for American Indians in the contiguous United States.

While Haycox details the personal history of William Paul's involvement with *Tee-Hit-Ton*, other scholars have sought to understand the case in a broader context by incorporating issues of racial culture in the framework of post-war United States political atmosphere: *Like a Loaded Weapon: The Rehnquist Court, Indian Rights, and the legal History of Racism in America*, by Robert Williams, Jr. and "Brown and Tee-Hit-Ton" by Earl M. Maltz. Both relate *Tee-Hit-Ton v. United States* (1955) to the important ruling in *Brown v. The Board of Education* (347 U.S. 483 (1954)). Williams and Maltz situate and review the contradictory racist sentimentalities of the era through a comparison of *Tee-Hit-Ton* with other legal events in United States history. Maltz argues that the contextual framework of *Tee-Hit-Ton* is in many ways equivalent to that of *Brown v. The Board of Education*. For Maltz, the line of inquiry follows the court's vindication to end the separate but equal ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896), while treating the claims of Native peoples as contradictory to national principals of equality. In the conclusion of the essay, Maltz asserts that the two cases hold contradictory lessons for a scholar, writing

On one hand, the *Brown* Court sought to eliminate practices that the dominant political faction viewed as aberrational and inconsistent with basic American principles of equality and justice. On the other, *Tee-Hit-Ton* minimized the import of the injustices inherent in the process by which the nation was established. Thus, in both cases, the decisions of the Court worked to bolster and reinforce the image that Americans had of themselves and sought to project to the world at large in the mid-1950s. (35)

United States citizens, in Maltz's view, saw the nation as a place to end racism and provide equality to each citizen. This process of equality, however, proved to undermine aboriginal rights in a court of law since Native interests are proven inherently extra-constitutional. A place for further inquiry one sees after reading "Brown and Tee-Hit-Ton" is the possible intersectional ties between racial culture and aboriginal heritage in the United States. For instance, how could *Tee-*

Hit-Ton, in relation to *Brown*, illustrate ways the United States maintains an unfinished colonial process by delegitimizing indigenous claims to land and peoplehood as the nation simultaneously attempts to correct grave and racist cultural injustices? The basis for these American sentiments guiding jurisdictional encroachments in Justice Reed's opinion employ particular racist techniques, such as the denial of a continued conquest, often used by the nation against Native people to maintain authority and control over their affairs in certain territories.

"As every American schoolboy knows," writes Justice Reed in the infamous *Tee-Hit-Ton* opinion, "the savage tribes of this continent were deprived of their ancestral ranges." In the passage Reed implies that the process of land transformation was completed previous to the *Tee-Hit-Ton* case. "Given these assumptions" for the United States imagery, responds Maltz, "the actions of the United States government and its citizenry were justified. . . despite the presence of Native Americans, [the land] was in a very real sense unclaimed."^{vii} In other words, a totalized conquest had yet to be accomplished though Reed spoke as if the U.S. national take-over of Alaska was part of the past (not as a series of events unfolding before him in a court of law, at which he had a hand in). Maltz's claims for equality under the law underscores the long and outstanding legal precedence of "domestic dependant" national status between the United States and Native American communities who hold aboriginal title. Other scholars have also interpreted the Justice Reed opinion in *Tee-Hit-Ton* by lending a contextual lens to the case. The late legal scholar Philip Frickey remarks of the opinion how "[e]very learned schoolchild would be appalled by this point, for it cannot be defended as accurate, if incomplete."^{viii} Maltz and Frickey understand Reed's assertion of an unjustified claim, but Frickey, recognizing the ongoing and unfinished aspect of the colonial process, describes Reed's opinion as "a mixture of myth and ethnocentrism masquerading as past legal practice."^{ix} From this view, the study of *Tee-Hit-Ton* serves to show a continuation of the conquest of aboriginal communities never fully accomplished on the part of the United States. Legal scholar Robert Williams, in *Like A Loaded Weapon The Rehnquist Court, Indian Rights, and the Legal History of Racism in America*, concurs with these previous studies, arguing that the "Supreme Court had no problem with relying on nineteenth century precedents . . . to justify a landmark decision on Indian rights," justifying past and on going forms of colonial aggression.^x Williams stresses that even after a landmark civil rights case like *Brown v. Board of Education*, the "racist judicial language of Indian savagery" will be used against Native Americans in United States courts of law.

After *Tee-Hit-Ton* refuted Native rights of occupancy, the Alaska state government moved toward selection of lands for statehood. This compelled Native groups to file suits with the Federal Indian Claims Commission to protect their land claims. As a result, Congress passed the Tlingit-Haida Settlement Act of 1959 (Act of June 1935, 49 Stat. 388, Ch. 295 (as amended by Act of June 5 1942 , 56 stat. 323 and Act of June 4, 1945, 59 Stat. 231) to remedy the troubled *Tee-Hit-Ton* ruling. The statute paid compensation to the aforementioned Indian groups, acknowledging possessory Alaska Native rights to aboriginal land title claims—precisely what was denied by *Tee-Hit-Ton*.^{xi} Soon after the initial discussions, the Alaska Federation of Natives came to represent a movement of Alaska Natives towards Native land and cultural rights in the light of continued US authority. Congress "did the right thing" in the Tlingit-Haida case, but what if Congress did not act so forthrightly in other claims cases, essentially leaving *Tee-Hit-Ton Indians v. United States* in place? As mentioned above, in pursuit of reducing the costs of statehood for the federal government, a bill was being drafted to allocate 375 million acres of land for economic development in Alaska. Would Congress side with Native title in the face of

economic and political pressures? The disparate Alaska Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut communities began collectively participating with the government in land rights activities as outside business interests began seeking to exploit Alaska's resources.^{xii} Collective political struggle was viewed as imperative because Natives found that they, in the words of one Native leader, were "to live with it now and in the future whether we like it or not."^{xiii} In other words, the Alaska Native culture had to incorporate a legalized incarnation of itself through the combination of Eskimo, Aleut, and Indians under one collective Alaska Native community in this transaction with the Alaska state government.

The 1936 Alaska Reorganization Act, Philp details, promised to set aside four large reservations for some Yupik, Inupiat, and Athabascan communities, but largely left the broader Native Alaska population alone. The Interior Secretary, at the time, also returned 11 traditional fishing sites to various native groups. The Non-natives, the settlers and their businesses, protested against the federal government giving "Alaska back to the Natives." In addition, the Haida and Tlingit Indian groups along the Panhandle secured rights to their land without signing onto relocations to reservations. In doing so, the clans kept rights to certain parts of the Tongass National forest. Aboriginal property rights became more important to the nation as the state sought to claim public lands and to sell extraction rights to oil companies. With the economic future obscured, state and federal governments aspired to settle the issue of aboriginal title with Native Alaska (34-49).

While the settlement has proven an extremely complicated issue, there is a sense of the surmounting problems ensuing from its implementation in the secondary literature. The language of the act—which is complex-- has been recognized as "frequently" textually ambiguous, and responsible for generating a host of new legal difficulties between the United States and Native America.¹ Extremely technical, but nonetheless material, matters are at stake: from corporate distributions, through land easements, to questions of taxability. Additionally, corporate "income flow is hardly sufficient to pay full-time corporate staff, much less provide the cash needed for business investments or community improvement."^{xiv} In other words, many of the Native corporations are without the capital to sustain daily business operations, the only relief comes from the profits of other corporations, whose profits pay forward to smaller village corporations. It has also been made clear that there are significant divergences between Alaska Native cultural values and traditional organizational forms on the one hand, and the values and forms upon which the ANCSA and its model of Native corporations are presumed to operate on a day-to-day basis. Not surprisingly there is criticism of "the elite position of Native corporate executives and the lack of sophistication of shareholders" and that the "symbolic manipulation of shareholder concerns" has become a pattern in corporate governance.^{xv} Given this tension, it is also no surprise that some feel that Natives have responded to the corporate presence by developing an Alaska Native subsistence movement, in which communities mobilize sovereign claims through a community-based subsistence as a way to strengthen community ties as an alternative to corporate membership as the basis of Native membership.^{xvi} The Alaska Indians along the panhandle, in Dombrowski's view, "(i)n particular, [N]ative advocates have used subsistence to counter external political manipulation" brought on through state and federal political and legal imposition upon Native peoples.^{xvii} The subsistence movement brings together Native sentiments that are outside the current framework of official Native political formations.

The best known—both among academics and among Natives, both academic and not—

work on the impact of ANCSA is Berger's *Village Journey*, which was commissioned by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference in 1983, and cosponsored by The World Council of Indigenous Peoples. The book's eight chapters focus on Berger's understanding as the most important political issues facing Alaska Natives and their relationship with the territory and the United States. Much of the information gathered for the study came from testimonials given by native people as Berger toured a number of villages. The chapter "Native Sovereignty in Alaska," argues for a distinction between Alaska Native sovereignty and the legal and political status represented by the corporations, drawing the conclusion that tribal government based on the Indian Reorganization Act—as in the lower forty eight states—are better suited for the sovereign goals of Native people. Since the people of Alaska were neither conquered by Russian or American forces, Berger insists, they still retain 'inherent political powers' which in Berger's view ANCSA may not address. That this just because it is ignored or denied by ANCSA does not make it untrue. Before the settlement, many IRA-based tribal governments existed in various parts of Alaska. In this line of reasoning, tribal structures are based upon continuing government-to-government relationships with federal authorities; corporate structures are organized under state, not federal, law, and this leaves the status of Alaska Natives as "federally recognized" Native groups out of the picture. In addition to state-chartered corporations, there are local governments—subdivisions of Alaska state government, though they may be staffed with Native individuals—operating along side IRA-based tribal governments have, with contrasting goals and sources of authority.

LITERARY RESPONSE TO THE SETTLEMENT

Historical anthropologist Michel Rolph-Trouillot, in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* an overlooked history of the Haitian Revolution, argues history as a project of the present always silences certain past events (27). When people create history, in Trouillot's view, the order in which the past is organized holds great effect on retrieving and using elements of the past in other historical projects. A recent Alaska Native response to the claims settlement, which breaks the silences in the previously narrated history, is the play *River Woman* by Tlingit writer Diane Benson.^{xviii} The historiography of Alaska Native legal relations with the United States—even work that is "pro-Native"—developed primarily for a non-Native, national audience and in that respect silences aspects of the aboriginal history in the construction state and national presents. Turning to Alaska Native cultural texts, such as *Letters to Howard* or *River Woman*, and as *historical sources* provides voices absent from the previously silenced past. The writings of aboriginal peoples of the Alaska region establish a distinct narrative regarding the legal "Americanization" of Alaska. These cultural texts diminish the gap between the legal and historical "facts" and the cultural context of Alaska Natives.

The dramatic work *River Woman* examines a post-ANCSA world, before the implementation of IRA-based tribal governments of the 1990s, from the perspective of a Native writer. The play tells the story of a family displaced by the complications of the settlement's implementation. *River Woman*, taking place in a fish camp, is a single scene play adapted from the longer piece, *Spirit of a Woman*, first premiering in Anchorage at the *Out North Theater* in 1996. Alaska Native Scholar Jean Breinig emphasizes the importance of the play in regard to Alaska Native culture, for it serves to comment on the present day conditions by attempting to convert the bereavements of indigenous history into the aspirations for the future. She writes

Life's creative possibilities for transformation and renewal are ... important to ... Tlingit writer, Diane Benson, who says she "write[s] about pain and recovery . . . I want to move people, to cause them to experience sadness and then hope. Sometimes to laugh in the midst of despair. No matter what, hope is the outcome" (1). In her one act play "River Woman" (Spatz, Breinig and Partnow 259-261) Benson uses humor and irony to tell the painful story of one woman's loss of her child to the State. The play forces readers to consider how traditional values--in this case participating in "fish camp"-- are not always recognized or validated by Western institutions. (4)

Breinig views Benson's exploration of Alaska state authority over aboriginal land and family in post-settlement Alaska as a powerful and painful story. The play delves into the state conversion of public land, previously acquired through the settlement, into privately held settler parcels, based on the federal Homestead Act of 1862. This federal territorialization of land significantly connects to the state's assertion of custody rights over a child from an indigenous family destabilized through the loss of village land in the settlement process, perhaps forever augmenting their "traditional" Native values.

As Chapter 2 argued, Alaska was imagined in American thinking as a wilderness filled with economic opportunity, even though the vast region was already populated with diverse and traveled aboriginal peoples. Scholar Susan Kollin observes how ideological representations of Alaska as a *Last Frontier* stem from the industrial imperial practices of the nineteenth century, combined with the progressive era's conservation movement that built steam in the early twentieth (7). Through a national lens, Alaska exists both as an area for the exploitation of natural resources and as a captive ecology targeted for environmental conservation efforts. The play *River Woman* delves into the consequences of such ideological practices from an indigenous writer's perspective that is concerned with how the law effects indigenous domestic structure.

Set in a present-day fish camp along a river in the interior region of Alaska, *River Woman* opens with the play's lone character, River Woman, on stage, peeling potatoes. As she works, she greets the audience saying, "Heeyeee, I haven't seen you folks in a long time" (259). She stands up and leaves the stage to enter the auditorium, shaking hands and verbally greeting audience members before a return to the stage. Breaking the wall between the performance and the audience, Benson merges the dramatic space of the character River Woman with the audience, making the work seem less a dramatic production and more of a series of real-time events unfolding before the audience members-made-participants. Following her return to the stage, River Woman reminisces about the past practice of harvesting vegetables in her home village. "Hey you remember how we used to get potatoes outta that garden back home[?]," she asks, "right in the middle of the village" (259). Delivering the monologue as though the audience members are fellow members of her village, she reveals a primary aspect of subsistence living for Native people, which is what they require for sustenance from a general bounty, held communally. In this passage, River Woman expresses that the fish camp is not the place she considers her home but is a second familial space outside the village environment. "We had a good time," she says, "[be]fore those homestead things, I guess that's what they call it" (259). Here, the reference to the Homestead Act of 1862 quickly unearths her recent and personal history of displacement flowing from United States law.

The Homestead Act to which she refers was enacted during the civil war, long before the late twentieth century setting of the play. The law nonetheless presents dire consequences for River Woman's current situation. The initial purpose of the Act was to allow American citizens and intended citizens to claim up to 360-acre parcels of surveyed government land. Nevertheless, in order to gain clear title to these tracts of land, a settler was required to use the acreage as a primary residence (with at least a "claim shack") for five years and to cultivate the land. Though people intermittently used the act into the mid twentieth century, it stayed in effect until the passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 in the 'lower 48 states', and then in 1988 in the state of Alaska. Settler Kenneth Deardorff filed the final national claim under the Homestead Act in Stony River, Alaska, located in the west central part of the state approximately 100 miles south of the town of Ruby, Alaska. Important to note here that the land Deardorff claimed was originally opened for such settlement through the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. Under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act village sites and other aboriginal lands were to be claimed and surveyed for native communities and then separated from lands that were to be appropriated by the state of Alaska and the federal government upon passage of the law. River Woman tells the audience of the family's entanglement with the settlement law, saying her brother "didn't get some kind of paper work done or something," and because of this "the government didn't know it was his land so they took it away from him" (259). The family lost the rights to the Stony River village area due to the failure of the brother to file the claim with the government at the time of settlement. The State of Alaska appropriated particular sets of lands, like that of the Stony River area, through the Alaska Native Claims settlement, parcels the state then offered to non-Native U.S. citizens under a process derived from the federal homestead procedure. River Woman describes that "now," after the claims settlement, "they," the state and federal government, "got this homestead thing on 160 acres and all these people been comin' and lookin' like they won the bingo or something" (259). By failing to file the claim with the State of Alaska, the family has relinquished Stony River into settler hands, and this led to a multitude of potential claim-stakers traveling in the area with the hopes of coming upon their own windfall homestead. At that point, River Woman hollers to children unseen and off stage in the wings to stay clear of the "fish wheel" (a notorious non-Native tool for commercial fishing) at the river, adding, "You want something to do you come down and cut some fish strips for auntie. Come on now... You too Charla. That Charla a good kid. I been takin' care of her now 8 months" (259). As the story goes, River Woman's brother left Charla, so he could find employment outside the area, perhaps in the town of Ruby. This development in the play reflects the fact that the family holds no title to village lands and so is without a traditional means to support themselves fully. In this sense the play argues that as the State of Alaska gained title to particular tracts of land in the passage of the Claims Act, the newly formed territoriality lured settlers to then domesticate the perceived wilderness of the Last Frontier, ultimately dispossessing Native families. In fact, *River Woman's* main theme of the state's power of territoriality can be observed extending through many dimensions of life in Alaska, as Benson suggests, including the relationships between Native people themselves.

Through dramatic exploration, *River Woman* depicts how the familiar national trope of an empty Last Frontier in need of settler domestication relates in every respect to the disposition of Native domestic life via intrusive state and federal law. Legal scholar Richard Thompson Ford suggests of state territoriality that "we could think of a continuum between larger and smaller

territorial institutions, with the family at one pole and the nation at the other” (211). In *River Woman*, the jurisdictional practices of the state, such as the Homestead Act and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, have established an authoritative relationship between a national geography at one level and the domestic space of family life at another. *River Woman* shows to what ends United States territoriality seeks to regulate land and people in the creation of Alaska as the Last Frontier. Connecting issues of family destabilization to that of state land transference, *River Woman* proceeds to compare the recent invasion of homesteaders in Alaska to a wily raven—a common Native trickster form—she recently witnessed during a visit with her sister in Ruby, Alaska, the former gold rush town along the Yukon river.

Pausing from the chore of peeling potatoes, *River Woman* stands up and watches a raven pass across the sky. “That Raven like to get into mischief” she says and begins telling a story about a raven she will later relate to the matter of American homesteading in Alaska. The story begins at a time when she was picking up mail from her sister in Ruby and they observed a construction worker leave a bulldozer at a jobsite and walk into the nearby woods to relieve himself. While the man disappears into the woods, the sisters noticed a raven appearing in the sky and landing upon the work vehicle. Traditionally in Tlingit narrative, as in many other cultures, Raven can be depicted as a trickster and creator. For example, a popular story involves Raven stealing the sun from a leader of a rival village in order to secure the sunlight for his people. The story follows Raven who, for the sake of his community, turns himself into a “hemlock needle.” The rival leader’s daughter eats the needle and eventually births the raven as a son. Appearing as a boy to the leader-grandfather, Raven pleads to see the sun, moon, and stars, all kept by the grandfather in little boxes. Upon handling the boxes, the raven releases the moon and the stars, returning to the village with the sun still in a box (de Laguna 796). Referencing this traditional narrative, *River Woman* continues telling her own version of this raven story, in which the Raven in Ruby pulls a chocolate bar from a box contained in the bulldozer once the construction worker has left for the woods. The bird, stealing the chocolate bar is very similar to how Raven took the moon, stars, and sun from the rival chief in the traditional story. Unlike the traditional tale however, *River Woman*’s Raven places the chocolate bar on the hood of the vehicle then returns to the box for even more items. In the continued absence of the construction worker, Raven continues to liberate the sweet food in excess, stacking a total of seven bars upon the bulldozer’s simmering hot hood. As the sisters watch the man return from the woods, Raven attempts to carry away all seven of the bars at once. Unfortunately, the winged trickster drops one back onto the hood as he flies away, luckily escaping the construction worker’s notice. Upon the worker’s return from the woods, he immediately notices the chocolate bar melting on the vehicle.

Finding the stash box empty, he confronts the sisters about the theft. “We tried to tell him Raven took it, but he didn’t believe us,” she explains adding, “Dat white man don’t know his people just as greedy as that raven. It seems like they always think that everything belongs to them” (260). This story drawing from the legal history of the Tee-Hit-Ton makes use of the moiety of the main indigenous actor in the case. For the Tlingit attorney William Paul who brought the issue to the Supreme Court was a member of the *Teeyhitta* clan and the Raven moiety. The trickster in the play is avenging the actions of colonialism documented in the *Tee Hit Ton* decision by removing the chocolate bars from the container. This critique of American territoriality, as similar to the raven’s unruly desire for chocolate bars, gains even more depth as the play continues to unfold.

In fact, following the whimsical and insightful tale, the play takes a bitter turn involving River Woman's family. In this final segment of the play, she produces a piece of paper from her pocket and hands it to an audience member, announcing that she never learned to read the written word. "Who is it from," she asks, provoking the audience member in possession of the letter to read it aloud (261). The audience member, now a performer in the drama, holds the letter and reads, "The Division of Family and Youth services." In response, River Woman asks the audience member to loudly recite the letter in its entirety because her "hearing is kinda bum," (261). The audience member reads the following letter

Since the documents we sent several months ago, regarding the legal guardianship of Charla Carrie Albert have not been returned, and since it has been reported that said child has been abandoned, it is hereby ordered that Carrie Charla Albert be turned over to State custody until which time it is deemed in the best interest of the child to maintain residence with an appropriate family guardian. (261)

The state's imposed jurisdiction over River Woman's niece Charla mirrors that of the State's acquisition of the family village land during the claims settlement. The initial loss of land to the state propelling the father to leave the child with her aunt River Woman then leads to the acquisition of Charla into State custody. The intended domestication of the perceived wilderness, has led to the state's domestication of a perceived abandoned Native child. In *River Woman* the territorial authority of the State proves to reach over both land and family so as to make legible and standardized subjects through authorized homesteading and the regulation (diminishment) of extended family relationships. Much like Raven with the seven chocolate bars, the State of Alaska seeks to appropriate all aspects of Native Alaska in totality. The land claims settlement denying shareholder status to those born after 1971 damages the intergenerational community because younger people would not be able to gain access to the corporation until the shares are willed to them. The state seeking possession of Charla, who will not learn village ways or take part in business of the corporation, add another layer of dispossession to River Woman. She becomes like the chocolate bar left on the hood of the bulldozer. Additionally, River Woman's response to the letter reveals that the teaching of subsistence practices as a form of native culture is yet another aspect of Native life under fire from state authority. "You mean they are gonna take her from us" she asks, "I been takin' real good care of her . . . She can cut fish real good. She digs up potatoes . . . She likes fish camp! We have to stay here til we got our food for the winter" (261). Charla's possible removal from the fish camp by state authorities means that the child will not continue to learn valuable subsistence skills she may need later in life. In addition, River Woman doesn't want Charla to leave because she needs the assistance of the child for the maintenance of the fish camp. The domesticate space of *River Woman* is reliant on intergenerational sharing of workloads.

The state's authority over Native children in the play also clearly illustrates the legal complications of Native family life before the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (Pub. L. 95-608, 93 Stat. 3071, enacted November 8, 1978). For as River Woman believes Charla's "best interests" are being met through her education at the camp, the state authorities label her as an abandoned child in need of interventional assistance through her removal. Later, with the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act, authorities will secure the placement of Native children with relatives, tribal or village affiliates, or willing Native adoptive parents,

but *River Woman* reveals how it was possible before the Act to remove a child from a secure Native home into state custody through the implementation of the numerous legal tools of imperial authority and cartography.

Additionally, the play responds to the historiography of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act by asserting to the audience that the law in fact engages in the modern day displacement of Native people. In breaking the barrier between the space of the audience and the performance, *River Woman* encourages the one to view of how the spaces between aboriginal family and the village are intricately manifested as one. The state of Alaska geographic displacement of the family through law defines the settler's development as civilization's representative domestic spaces. The "[d]omestic," Amy Kaplan writes, "in this sense is related to the imperial project of civilizing, and the conditions of domesticity often become markers that distinguish civilization from savagery" (25) By fracturing an aboriginal familial structure the state of Alaska presents Natives as incapable of providing for their own welfare and presenting itself as the arbiter of "civilization." Charla embodies, not part of a displaced family, but a target of state domestication as to realize the vision of civilization inherent in the settlement process. As Amy Kaplan explains, in "the process of domestication the home contains within itself those wild or foreign elements that must be tamed;" here in subjecting *River Woman* and her family to state authority, they are marginalized as members of the nation at the same time that their indigenous community is undermined and coerced into being "tamed." For the state "domesticity not only monitors the borders between the civilized and the savage but also regulates traces of the savage within itself" in the way Natives become subjects of settler state regulations (Kaplan 1998 582). *River Woman*, a figure of the domestic village space from the indigenous standpoint of the play, transforms into a target of a colonial system bent on framing aboriginality as a "savage" but tamable—with judicious state surveillance, discipline, and interventions--part of the nation, through the settlement.

As a response to the legal history between Native Alaska and the United States *River Woman* connects the laws governing land tenure with state social service practices in order to examine how a series of legal instruments can be employed to unravel indigenous families, communities, and cultures. As I write this chapter, author Diane Benson has announced her candidacy for Lt. Governor for the State of Alaska in the next election cycle. In doing so, she is remarkably bringing an indigenous voice to formal state politics, which has been previously marginalized in mainstream Alaska politics. In the light of this event, the play allows one to understand how indigenous people become a settler-state citizenry while Benson connects her literary work to her political activism. Perhaps after the next election she will possess a degree of power in changing the system of laws, which unraveled the lives of her characters in *River Woman*.

Chapter Five: The Ends of Imperialism

This chapter explores Inupiat and Yupik twentieth-century writing concerning United States and Russian activity in the Bering Region, especially in the midst of the Cold War. While the last chapter focused on the legal relationships between the United States and Alaska's indigenous peoples, this chapter reads Native responses to the bordering nation-states at the Bering region, which have created a division between regionally linked indigenous cultures. Positing the Bering as a distinct cultural location, this chapter also reads the way "American" and "Russian" nationalisms construct, as New York Times reporter Peter A. Iseman calls it, a "global seam," but seen through the historical perspectives of regionally indigenous writers. In doing so, the chapter inquires into the nature of "America" as embodying more than a nation, or a bounded continental space, but also a collection of ideologies restricting and containing indigenous cultural forms and ways of knowing. These non-indigenous conceptions of the Bering allow one to understand the way imposed, organized, belief systems have taken shape in the region. For example, the belief in the Bering as a fundamental border partitioning the world in fact holds such strength in the "American" cultural imagination as to be comparable to the prehistorical Flat Earth Mythologies held in various cultures throughout the Classical era world.

The novel *The Island Between*, by Margaret E. Murie, describes the Bering as a mythological and liminal space. Though a non-indigenous writer, Murie was a long time Alaska resident and often referred to by environmentalists as the 'Grandmother of the Sierra club.' Combining many traditional Siberian Yupik narratives into an epic story of survival in the Bering, *The Island Between* composes a tale of harrowing adventure and excitement. The novel narrates the trials of a young Yupik male protagonist, Toozak, from a village on St. Lawrence, an island sitting between the Eurasian and North American continents. Murie's bildungsroman has Toozak venture through a series of quests involving the search for a lost love and the challenges of survival in an often harsh arctic environment. From the novel's beginning, Murie employs the St. Lawrence Island creation story in the introduction, "Ahipani: In the Back Ages." "[A] great giant lived in the Far North," she writes, and one day he "happened to be standing with one foot on the Siberian Coast and one on the other shores of Alaska." As the giant stood on both shores, the narration of the traditional story continues, "[h]e chanced to look down at the narrow strip of water between his feet," surveying the waters of the Bering Strait without the St. Lawrence Island. Peering deep into the Strait, he plunged his hand into the drink, taking up a fistful of "sand and stone from the ocean's bed" (1). The giant, Murie writes, proceeded to squeeze the materials tightly, allowing the salty ocean water in his fist to drain back into the Strait. Raising his arm in the air, the Giant then threw the compressed dirt in his fist back into the water. The dirt, Murie writes, "stayed there—an island between the two continents" (1). In the Siberian Yupik language, the island's name is *Sivuqaq*, and equates in English to the word "Squeezed," due in part to this story and the compressed shape of the island in which the mid-section of the Island appears from a birds-eye view to have been "squeezed," as suggests the story. The name of the island changes when Western sailors came upon it and called it "St. Lawrence" after the saint whose date of martyrdom, August 8, 1728, was the day the ship arrived at the island's shores.

From the island's creation story *The Island Between* relies upon the mythology of the Bering Sea land bridge to propel the narrative. Murie relates the arrival and departure of the ice age and the transmigration of bears and deer over to North America from Eurasia by way of

Beringia. Merging the traditional creation story of Sivuqaq Island with the land bridge theory, the writer makes manifest a continental connection between Siberia and Alaska that world politics denied in 1977, the year of the novel's publication. In the using the Yupik creation story, Murie attempts reconciliation of a global geography during the Cold War, when as Russian Poet Yevgeny Yetushenko described it, world politics turned the global "us into 'Enemies'" and "destroyed the historical ties between the twins—Alaska and Siberia" (224).

The Siberian born Yetushenko believed the Cold War was "against history and against nature" with political and cultural reverberations extending beyond the boundaries of the two nations. Murie's story, told during the escalating tensions between the United States, William Appleman William's "America," and the Russian Federation, unites the Bering transnationally, through the appropriation of indigenous stories for an uneasy political national culture. In the tale protagonist Toozak and his village community come in contact with explorers, but the work steers clear of any critical discussion about the intensive colonial history of United States expansion west and the Russian expansion eastward across Eurasia, expansions that eventually settled at a convenient—but inherently arbitrary—"break" between the two continents. Instead, *The Island between* presents a Yupik culture imagined for an outside audience to illustrate a separation between Siberia and Alaska, or as Yetushenko puts it, "twins divided" (224). Nowhere in *The Island Between* do indigenous characters face the impositions of nation-states dividing the indigenous field of Bering culture and society with serious consideration.

Using the idea that the Bering region as a cultural center, this chapter continues to examine the ideologies and durable practices that mark the region as a problematic place-boundary through the Fred Bigim poem, "Ballet in Bethel." The goal in this chapter is to reorient perspectives from one peering into the region from the Cold War, nation-conscious outside, to one gazing outward from a place—the Bering—that is continuous and not abruptly bounded. Moreover, the chapter proceeds this interpretation through the work of two Siberian Yupik writers, American and Alaska Native Susie Silook from St. Lawrence Island, Alaska and Russian Siberian writer Zoya Nenlyumkina. In doing so, these readings reveal the imperial cultures of the United States and the Russian Federation in Yupik writing in the Bering Strait region. As a sculptor, performer, and writer Susie Silook's work greatly contributes to Alaska Native literary culture, and in this chapter the narrative poem "Adventure in Chinatown 1958," and the short story "The Anti-Depression Uliimaaq," are used to discuss the complex histories, both familial and cultural, relating to the construction and maintenance of empire in Alaska. A broken *uliimaaq*, the Yupik word for sculpture, in the narrative, comes to represent the national and continental boundaries separating Siberian and American Yupik culture and society in the Bering region. Poet Zoya Nenlyumkina confronts the atrocities of empire in an untitled poem she recites to fellow poet Yetushenko. The work details the utter collapse of her family village, Naukan, formerly situated on the coast of Siberia, in the midst of World War II. Nenlyumkina's poem expresses the continued force of the historical evacuation of the village during Cold War developments. Both Silook and Nenlyumkina testify to how two separate national expansionary projects work simultaneously in partitioning a living indigenous culture and society, a process that in the end serves to magnify the region's wholeness.

Twins Divided and Cold War Borders

The regions of Western Alaska and Eastern Siberia, as well as the islands between, compose a meeting point for the North American and Eurasian continents. They are also the only shared border between the United States and the Russian federation. These national projects partition the geography of the Yupik, as *The Island Between* explicates, *a cultural center, not a frontier, from the point of view of indigenous worlds*. Multiple settler-state projects, however, continue to split the region with various types of borders. The international dateline, running down the middle of the strait, marks the legal separation between the Russian governed island of Little Diomedede, or *Ignaluk* in Yupik, and Big Diomedede Island, or *Imaqliq*, presently the territory of the United States. The islands sit approximately two miles apart. This division between the two was drawn during the United States purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1887 and possesses a profound power in the global cultural imagination. For example in 1988, Peter A. Iseman writing for the New York Times, described an explorative journey to the center point between the two islands:

About thirty yards to the west, across the snow and ice hummocks of the Bering Strait, lies the international date line . . . Crossing it is only a matter of steps, but this global seam separates today from tomorrow, the Americas from Eurasia, and the territory of the United States from that of the Soviet Union. Here, offshore between the barren islands of Soviet Big Diomedede and American Little Diomedede, 52 miles below the Arctic Circle, the two great continental powers reach out across the map and all but touch, like the outstretched figures in Michelangelo's "The Creation of Adam." (2)

For Iseman, recent national histories at the borderline are reminiscent of the fresco painting called "The Creation of Adam," on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel. The work illustrates the biblical tale of the *Book of Genesis* from the *Old Testament* Bible, in which God, as an elderly man, literally breathes life into a nude figure of young Adam, the first human being. The two Diomedede Islands are understood by Iseman to stand as the fingers of God and Adam, which point so close to one another from the continents that they almost touch. In "The Creation of Adam," God's index finger gestures toward Adam, risen from the other fingers of the hand, nearly meeting with that of his creation of human beings on the earth. Iseman's simile describing the region as these two figures gesturing toward one another incites visions of Eurasian antiquity, most often in the terms marking the Americas as the "New" World and Eurasia as the "Old." Iseman's description more than suggests that Europe has given birth to the Americas, or in other words, the "Old" world of Eurasia invented that of the "New" world by means of divine guidance. The simile resonates with the Beringia theory, the transference of life from God's finger to Adam's, parallel's the trope of mammals and flora across a land bridge. The national borders of the West and the East (here, in the Bering, the East is the New World, not Asia) have produced one another by marking their separation at the Bering. "Crossing it," writes Iseman "is only a matter of steps, but this global seam separates today from tomorrow, the Americas from Eurasia, and the territory of the United States from that of the Soviet Union" (1). This descriptive image allows the reader to cognitively map the geography of his subject matter, since either shore of the Bering region represents an abstract landscape that to many is almost other worldly, if not beyond their personal experiences.

Both the work *The Island Between* and Iseman's travel narrative represent an unusual dilemma in that they attempt to unify an area separated by national, international, and continental

cultural logics. For each side of the Bering, the “American” and the “Russian,” possesses separate but recent histories establishing a connected but divided indigenous culture. The parts however are placed into opposing national histories instead of being read as one connected regional history. Anthropologist Eric Wolf asks, in *Europe and the People without History*, “[i]f there are connections everywhere why do we persist in turning dynamic, interconnected phenomena into static, disconnected things” (4)? Wolf believes that dividing the world into parts, such as the East and the West, denies the connective aspects of a broad global system. Therefore, even though the cultures of the Bering are partitioned through mutually articulated boundaries, the experiences gained through such divisions maintain an indigenous cultural unity. By seeking to manufacture a static and disconnected region, the acts of two nation-states only highlight the “interconnected phenomena” of indigenous culture.

The Bering region represents a limit in the vision of United States expansion westward since the Strait is the furthest an American continental National territory can grow without meeting the nations of Eurasia. The closing of the United States frontier in the late nineteenth-century, as well as the Klondike gold rush, led to gradual American settlement of Alaska. Statehood and the subsequent aboriginal land claims settlement with the federal and state governments that cleared indigenous title, however, have not produced large settler cities in the region. The largest city in Alaska, Anchorage was established in 1914 as a port city, but it still remains a moderately-sized metropolitan area with a population of only 350,000, over half of the entire state’s population. The villages and town in Alaska are fundamentally aboriginal in population and origin, even if they have been chartered into municipalities as subdivisions of the state.

The State of Alaska’s land holdings are larger than the states of California, Texas, and Montana put together, thus the vast area may seem “empty” in comparison to these aforementioned states to the south. Similar in size to Alaska and just across the Bering Strait the region of the Siberian Far East is populated by approximately 7 million people. These divided twins are continually imagined as distinct for both the United States and Russia. For indigenous studies, the region possesses a unique opportunity to draw from the imperial histories of east and west in order to produce a globally-minded and indigenously-orientated framework. The continental and international borders, and the dateline stretched through the region all maintain the differences between cultures and societies historically continuous. The various projects acting to divide this area continue to subject the indigenous peoples to a colonialism devaluing the *shared culture and history of regional connection*. Instead these developments instill and reinforce “Eastern,” in the case of Russia, and “Western,” in the case of the United States, cultural values and systems (although the literal meanings of East and West are reversed in this case: it is to the west that one finds “the East,” yand to the east that one finds “the West” in the Bering Region). In the case of North America, many would adhere to the tropes of American expansion and the vanishing of the indigenous population as the nation moved west, but how does one consider the Bering if it is not quite an area dominated by the actual presence of settler populations? Edward Said writes of the connective imagery the United States transposed from the conquest of North America onto other sites in the worlds. In *Culture and Imperialism* Said writes,

There were claims for the North American territory to be made and fought over (with astonishing success); there were native peoples to be dominated, variously

exterminated, variously dislodged; and then, as the republic increased in age and hemispheric power, there were distant lands to be designated vital to American interests . . . (Said, 8)

The Bering region, imperatively critical for hemispheric power, embodies at once the “North American territory” and a “distant land designated vital to American interests,” but the indigenous populations of the Bering are neither wholly dislodged, nor exterminated. The poem “Ballet in Bethel,” by Inupiaq writer Fred Bigjim, expresses the experiences of living with United States cultural territoriality in the Northern village of Bethel, Alaska. In doing so, he reads the relationship Alaska Natives hold with popular fine art performance during the mid-twentieth-century. The town of Bethel, built from the central Yup’ik village of Mamterillirmuit, is the largest population center in Western Alaska and Bering region on the American side. The town’s aboriginal population has never been “dislodged” and compose officially sixty percent of the town. “Ballet in Bethel” spells out a disconnection that is not within the horizon of the dominant East-West narrative, one which breaks up the idea of “the West” by suggesting that Western artistic expression may not make sense for indigenous audiences,

Skintight dancers spinning across a stage,
Displaying only fantasies of a foreign world.
Opera in Shishmaref.
Piercing and screaming, the words unknown to all,
The sound shatters the stillness of the night.
Mime in Elim.
Stark Faces of fools
Saying nothing. (1-9 674)

For the speaker, a dancer’s flowing forms on stage display “only fantasies of a foreign world” and opera singers “screaming, the words unknown to all” clarify the ineffectiveness of imposed cultural practices upon the subjectivities of Alaska Native onlookers. The poem makes clear that these performances possess little relevant content for a Yup’ik audience. The “separate worlds” here are not Russian and American, but American and indigenous. Through these lines Bigjim suggests that the imperial project for assimilating Natives to Western culture and incorporating Alaska Natives into the United States cultural and politically proves incomplete though the singers and dancers, symbols of colonialism, have “shattered the stillness of the [Alaska] night” (3-20 674). To return to Said’s presumption of the completedness of the imperial project, the poem reads as though it might have been written by an American Indian facing the westward march of settlers in the nine-teenth century in the lower, contiguous, forty-eight states. The point is that the poem concerns the present, and suggests that the difference we must take into account is not that between “Americans” and “Russians,” but between indigenous people in the Bering Region and their “fellow citizens” in distant Russia and America.

“Ballet in Bethel” speaks of a time when those unfamiliar with the history of Alaska would assume the United States had “pacified” or “assimilated” all Native North Americans in nationally held territories. However, the poem is a product of an Alaska Native writer commenting on his mid-twentieth-century experiences with Western Art. Many consider the project of United States expansion to be one concluded long ago, yet Alaska Natives have faced

intensive projects of cultural incorporation into the United States on a variety of fronts in the later half of the twentieth-century and into the present, as previous chapters have argued. “Ballet in Bethel” cites, for the reader, this disjuncture between Alaska Native culture and United States territoriality so as to contradict the assumption that Native North Americans have had their subjectivities reformatted through the reproduction of Western cultural practices in their homelands. *Ballet in Bethel* allows for a conversation about the institutionally marginalization of indigenous culture in contemporary Alaska. Surely, the tendency to confine “domination” of Native North America to the past denies a contemporary Native culture under attack, if resilient, in the present.

Bigjim makes apparent a structure of feeling, by showing the lapse between the imposed cultural practices of the West and the lived reality of Alaska Natives,

Repertory Theater in Barrow.
Actors waiting for Godot
In a play that never reaches our world.
Symphony in Wales.
Instruments of time
Being blown by history
Of one world overpowering another.
Impact disguised as cultural creativity. (10-17)

The meaning and value of the play “Waiting for Godot...never reaches” the Alaska Native narrator’s “world,” even if the sounds of a symphony are “[b]eing blown by history/ Of one world overpowering another./ Impact disguised as a cultural creativity.” The sights and sounds of theatric performances and of classical music concerts emphasize, for Bigjim, only the indelible usurpation of geo-cultural dominance by the United States in the region. The “impact” of these performances undercuts the local culture—or attempts to--through the empty recital. These imposed practices “disguised as cultural creativity,” he suggests, construct and maintain—or, again, attempt to--a cultural domination at the edge of Western expansion, such as a “symphony” in the Native village of “Wales,” Alaska, the western most settlement on the North American continent (10-17).

Russian and American Yupik Experiences

Acts of United States cultural hegemony in Alaska created such upheaval even Native peoples in the Bering transformed their lives in unpredictable ways. For example, the narrative poem “Adventure in Chinatown 1958,” by Susie Silook, expounds an indigenous interpolation into the machinery of a federal program used to dislocate Native American peoples. The poem follows the Silook family on a journey from Gambell, Alaska, to the contiguous the United States after her father enrolled in the Federal Indian Relocation program implemented by the United States government in the 1950s and 1960s. The Relocation program promised to assist Native Americans in obtaining economic opportunities not available to them in their hometowns, reservations, or regions. “My father was a steel worker in Skokie Illinois,” writes the visual artist and poet, addressing her father’s experience in the lower forty-eight. “He would leave before dawn,” she writes, “and return long after the sun no one ever saw in Chicago went down.” In

comparing the village's built landscape and arctic air of St. Lawrence Island to that of the city, her mother claimed, "the buildings were too tall and the air stank." Unimpressed with the Chicago suburb, her mother only ventured outside the apartment to attend church (3-4 252).

The Silook family from St. Lawrence Island "were invited to give up their subsistence life style -- a harsh and demanding existence writes Scholar Ronald Spatz, "in order to take their place in a great American city" (litesite). The Termination and Relocation era of US federal Indian policy steered the government away from the goals of the Indian Reorganization Act, which many viewed as supporting American Indian self-government. On 1 August, 1953, House concurrent Resolution 108 announced a policy of abolishing federal trust obligations to native communities. In the same year Congress ratified Public Law 83-280, transferring civil and criminal jurisdiction over Indians in some states from the federal government to state government. These were radical changes in federal Indian law that sought to undo the historic obligation of the federal government to protect Indian people and their communities.. The Indian Relocation Act of 1956, known also as Public Law 959, encouraged Natives to move from hometowns and villages in order to find gainful employment. The aspirations for the Termination and Relocation Era (in the historical relationship between Native North Americans and the United States government)t are embodied in the terms that describe the policy goal as one of "emancipating" American Indians from federal authority. The ultimate goal, however, was to sever the longstanding trust agreements with Native nations.

The newly seated commissioner of the Indian Affairs, Dillon S. Myer instigated the Relocation program, even before Congress brought into law, by paying to transport indigenous people from villages and reservation communities to metropolitan areas of the United States. Before his employment with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Dillon Myer operated a similar program called the War Relocation Authority, during World War II as discussed earlier in this dissertation. In this program, the United States moved Japanese, Italian, and German Americans living in the United States metropolitan areas of the U.S. to internment facilities. The Relocation Act of 1956 advanced the policy and between 1956 and 1958 many Native people moved from their hometowns into cities. Bureau of Indian Affairs relocation offices located in major cities brought tribal members from throughout the country under the promise that the relocation would improve an individual's economic condition in the urban atmosphere. However, the Relocation program, like the Allotment program in the nineteenth-century, held negative effects for familial and cultural affiliations. As Susie Silook explains of the program, "in those days they paid the expenses to move Native folk out of Native Neighborhoods" and for her family, "and into Asian ones" (22-24 252).

The Silook family entered the program, accepting placement in the town of Skokie, a suburb of Chicago, Illinois. The Silooks traveled from the small village of Gambell on St. Lawrence Island to a town that was once promoted as the 'world's largest village.' With relocation the Silooks found their household duties significantly changed, it brought her father into the industrial labor system, as it removed him from nature in critical ways, perhaps for the first time in his life. She notes that he would miss the sunrise and sunsets seen on St. Lawrence Island. The family also removed themselves from an intricate economic system based upon the practice of subsistence hunting. "My father's hunting fed his family," writes Silook, "and his mother's/ and his brother's family" (15-17 252). The move left a gap in that system but also brought the family to depend on the market economy as their food source. Because this move damaged established familial patterns, Silook writes, how "people still wonder why he agreed to

the government relocation program and without my mother's consent took his family to Chicago" (18-21 252). Other members of the family reacted differently to the new home: "My sister used to take off all her clothes," she writes, "and run about naked—that's everyone's favorite Chicago story" (29-31 253). Yet the story involving another sister became the family's most important memory. She "got lost and only spoke Yupik and so they took her all over Chinatown looking for her non-existent Asian family" (32-34 253). Silook writes

Someone must have told them
That child is not Asian for
She remembers eating ice cream at the
Precinct and my father remembers
How big her eyes were when he
Came to claim his
Relocated but not indigenous to
Chinatown girl. (35-42 253)

Concerned for his children's safety, Silook's father refused to work the midnight shift unless their mother "stayed up all night to watch everyone" in order to make sure they remained safely in their beds (52). The emotional toll taken on the family was such that Silook calls the stay in Chicago "Custard's Last Stand II, or infinity" because the family chose to return to their home in the village of Gambell after only a month in residence, thereby surviving the battle of the Relocation program. In referencing the relocation as "Custard's last stand II," she emphasizes *the program's failure* to permanently lure the Silook family to the Midwestern metropole. The poem ends with the italicized line "*Chicago is too big to remember*" (46-53). In this sense the Silook family, feeling lost and displaced, was unwilling to continue developing a life for themselves in the city. The Relocation program created both many dislocated indigenous peoples, but unlike the Silooks, many never returned home.

Interestingly, the Relocation program is not the only time Susie Silook traveled beyond the confines of St. Lawrence Island only to return to her childhood home. The short narrative "The Anti-Depression Uliiamaq," details Silook's healing homecoming to Gambell on St. Lawrence Island after living for many years in Anchorage. The return provides Silook ample time to observe and address the emotional stress suffered by the Island's villagers due to government activities. Silook maps changes of the island's architecture and domestic spaces in terms of United States imperial territoriality. St. Lawrence Island lies approximately one hundred miles from the coast of Alaska in the Bering Strait, between the continents North America and Eurasia, as will be recalled from the discussion of Murie's *The Island Between*. The Native Village of Gambell, on the northwest side of the island, sits closer to Eurasia than to North America, and yet the inhabitants of the island fall under the sovereignty of the United States since 1868, and for purposes of American law are considered "Native American."

In the "Anti-Depression Uliiamaq," Silook describes suffering from such an emotional condition of extreme sorrow that made her leave Anchorage and journey alone home to Gambell without the company of her children. She admits to the reader that she was under such distress from an episode of depression that, "Looking back," she suspects, she "went home to die" (245). At her childhood home, she finds not her deathly wish but a process of healing through carving ivory. In the solitude at the family house she works on a tusk, transforming it into a sculpture, an

uliimaaq, of two connected figures. The only time she interrupts the work is for tasks necessary in the wintertime household, such as hauling water and supplies.

The opening paragraphs of the narrative describes the sense of isolation and alienation she feels from the local village residents. Undisturbed in seclusion, her time spent carving is “broken only by [her] need to dump” the ‘honey bucket’ into the chilled water of the Strait (245). When she treks to the sea with a sled loaded with the “honey buckets,” she becomes taunted by the freezing winds blowing strongly off the Bering. The gusts push at her shoulders, swaying the containers of human waste from side to side. Without the comforts of Anchorage and the company of her children, Silook realizes near complete solitude in St. Lawrence, except for the wind.

Many arctic cultures gender and personify the wind, and in Yupik and Inupiat the mass movement of air is known as *Silap Inua or Silla*, a male figure without a physical form. The Yupik believe, Silla, one who literally breathes into the world, is responsible for all universal movement from the galactic to the bodily. For example, the story of Silook’s movement from her childhood home to the shoreline can be viewed as an act of Silla. The wind communicates with her as she pulls the sled through the snow along the treeless island to dispose of waste. As she walks the mile from the house, Silla “bull[ies] the five gallon jugs behind” her, and she writes, “[s]ometimes he shov[es] them over and I’ll right them, knowing he’d win again by sheer unrelenting persistence” (245). Other times when he was in a “loving mood” he pushes the buckets to the shoreline, with the sled dragging her in tow behind. These games between her and the wind, breaking her isolation, become paramount to her survival during her bleak mood, or as she writes of the situation, “sometimes small things keep you alive” (245). In this way, Silla’s attention to Silook’s movements lends her some relief from her isolation and her low emotional state.

Apart from her ventures with Silla, the narrator spends her time carving ivory amid “uninspired spurts” within an unheated room set aside for that purpose in her mother’s house. In this traditional Yupik practice, Silook claims a space for herself when the act of ivory carving, an art form traditionally reserved for men. As she works, the wind seeks to gain entry into the house. Silook describes Silla as furiously moving outside the house, “making those mighty sounds of air claiming its domain” in an attempt to gain access to the interior of her workspace (246). The negotiation for territory between her inside the house and Silla moving forcefully outside, becomes a thematic image for the narrative as a whole. Her determination to have sole propriety over the interior of the house, working in media reserved for men, against the wind, leads the narrator to discuss United States occupation of the island.

Amid this negotiation for space, Silook begins relating her upbringing to the changes in village shape brought on in the twentieth-century by US occupation. “The house I was born in was originally F. A. A. housing,” she writes, “set far apart from the extended family layout of the original village site” (246). At one time, the Federal Aviation Administration occupied an area adjacent to the village. She writes that the original village design of Gambell was spatially composed in clusters based upon familial genealogies indigenous to the island. The original layout in these natural formations consisted of local designs made before the coming of Western imperialism to the village. Labeling the collection of homes built from this heritage “Gambell I,” she continues to detail how a BIA school was constructed in the center of the village. Before the school, this once open space, sat like a hub with a series of houses radiating from the center point of the square. The space served to host most village activities, including the matches of strength

between locals and crewmembers of whaling ships, who happened past in the icy waters of Bering Strait. The placement of a B. I. A. school in the community space by the federal government works as an actualization of power over the residents of Gambell. Gone from the village is the transparent and creative space that the village once used for public functions such as sporting events with the visitors to the island.

While the original layout of the village of Gambell remains, other recently constructed parts of Gambell take a very contrasting form to that of the villager's organic one. One new section of the village, that Silook labels "Gambell II," was constructed as part of a Housing and Urban Development program. Unlike the cluster formation of Gambell I where families lived communally, the houses of Gambell II sprawl out in identical and symmetrical rows signifying the "rational" formations of modernist planning. Also, contrary to the traditional village layout, Silook explains that the individual, nuclear family-occupancy of the houses in Gambell II is based upon a waiting list, not the "ancient clan system," shaping the architectural space of the old section of the village. Though the formation of both Gambell I and Gambell II are so different "every available living space is taken" and is "over crowded" with residents in both sections due to a historic population influx to the island by the United States (245). The imagery of the crowded village Silook describes contrasts with the solitude she professes in the beginning of the narrative. One might think she was describing the density of an urban space, such as San Francisco, California, not a village on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

While crowded Gambell I and Gambell II village formations have separate origins and functions, they both address the history of United States territoriality on the island. They reveal the transition of the architectural space of the village from organization based on extended families to rectilinear, state-controlled *housing projects*. Silook's search for domestic stability in returning to her childhood home unearths the islander's powerlessness over their own space in the face of government dominance. The government's control of the village also meant transforming the population through importing Inupiat from the Alaska mainland to settle among the Yupik village residents. For before Silook was born, the Yupik population of the village, became a site of a eugenics project by the territorial government of Alaska.

Her own family history was part of this venture by the government to mix the community in Gambell with another population. "My Inupiaq-Irish mother was an orphan sent to St. Lawrence Island," she writes, "along with other orphans of a diphtheria epidemic in the late '30s" (246). Mimicking the imposed manipulation of village space brought on first by the Federal Aviation Administration, and secondly by Department of Housing and Urban Development, the previous infusion of other indigenous people by the state magnifies the severity of the nation's dominance. "The State," she confesses, "decided they'd [the Inupiat children would] make excellent new blood," among the Yupik population in Gambell (246). The orphans, including her grandmother, were survivors of a diphtheria outbreak in and around the village of Nome in 1926. The transportation of the medicine from Anchorage to Nome by dog sled became the inspiration for the 1,050 mile Iditarod dog sled race, also known as the "Great Race of Mercy," held every year in Alaska, which runs between the two locations. Interestingly, the tale of the outbreak and the delivery of medicine to Bethel came to American popular culture in the Disney film *Balto* (1995), the name of the dog that lead the team of sled dogs whom delivered medicine through the final leg of the journey to Nome. While many are familiar with the Iditarod race in Alaska, from Willow to Nome, the relocation of Inupiat children three

hundred miles northwest of their homeland to a foreign island is absent in popular American history.

This relocation of Inupiat children, victimized by the passing of their parents, to the community in the Native Village of Gambell aligns with the seeming “rationality” of eugenics thinking in American national culture. Historian Susan Currell writes, “by the 1920s, eugenic thought permeated modern cultures and societies on a global scale. This bio-social philosophy came to affect the way national identities were constructed and represented in many countries” (2). Certainly, governmental authorities could have placed the orphans with Inupiat families on the Northern Alaskan Mainland instead of in an Yupik community. In fact, the “mixing” of the children on the island presents an interesting development in comparison to other policies practiced in the United States at the time. For example, the state of Virginia’s Racial Integrity Act of 1924 also held disastrous effects for indigenous people on the eastern shores of North America. The act only disallowed marriages between those of the recognized “White” and “Colored” races. A union crossing this barrier was a felony by law. Walter Ashby Plecker, the first registrar of the state of Virginia’s Bureau of Vital Statistics from 1912 to 1940, also reclassified American Indians as either “White” or as “Colored” for almost thirty years. Eliminating “Indian” as a possible category on birth certificates, light-skinned indigenous children went to “white” orphanages while dark-skinned children to “colored” orphanages. Historian Peggy Pascoe notes how the law drew upon the marriage between John Rolfe and Pocahontas to establish the “Pocahontas Exemption Clause” which grandfathered “European” families with aboriginal ancestry into the “White” race (Pascoe 142-143). Through this framework of United States race-making the peoples of the Arctic served whiteness in a distinct fashion.

Even though peoples of North American Arctic possessed a degree of racial indeterminacy for the national culture in the early twentieth-century they still fell victim to racial oppression. The move to alter the island’s population contradicts popularly held cultural notions of racial purity the United States and contemporaneously enforced upon the indigenous populations elsewhere in North America. Normally, if Native communities are to maintain land holding and treaty agreements with the nation they must maintain a minimum degree of Indian heritage determined by federal law. The eugenic activities on St. Lawrence reflected the United States contradictory ideas of racial purity. The notion of an Eskimo, as a primitive white placed the northern aboriginals in “a subordinate position,” writes Shari Huhndorf, “in part because they functioned primarily as a means for Westerns’ self-realization” (Huhndorf *Going Native* 104). The Eskimo served to distance “Whites” from peoples they imagined as even more savage and barbaric. Even though the West placed Northern Aboriginals indeterminately between “whiteness” and “color,” the later still became subjects of the ward-guardian relationship with the United States, unable to control how racial culture effected their communities.

The experiences of Silook’s grandmother, a child in the mass transfer, serves as an illustration of the contradictory roles Native people play in the United States imaginary as a vanishing race and how in practice the United States continually implements disturbances in Native villages with devastating effects. For instance, in order for Native individuals to maintain aboriginal rights in the United States they must meet a certain minimum “blood quantum,” even if this means not passing aboriginal rights on to the children of tribal or corporate shareholders beyond three successive generations. Similar to changes in village structure brought on by the Federal Aviation Authority housing and the Housing and Urban Development homes, the Inupiat

population set among the Yupik on St. Lawrence Island can be understood as dramatically changing the composition of the village. While the differences between the Yupik and Inupiat may appear trivial to someone unfamiliar with Arctic aboriginal cultures, language and other practices are significantly distinct between the communities. Silook, herself confused over how to make sense of the history, writes “I don’t know what problems there were with the old blood [on the island], but that is what happened” (246). She views this aspect of village history and her familial lineage as “U. S. D. A. New Blood” in the village and describing the descendants of the Inupiat children as aboriginal people approved by “United States Department of Agriculture.” In Silook’s view, she and the other villagers drawing Inupiat heritage signify the totality of colonialism’s consequence on the island.

Silook articulates Yupik culture’s own method of demarcating space and belonging in the midst of these burdens. Upon visiting another’s house, she writes, “[t]he custom is to enter and receive acknowledgement in the entrance,” but people not from the community who “stay for any length of time post Please Knock signs on their doors” (246). Much like the play for space between the wind Silla and the narrator, an island visitor struggles to maintain a degree of command over space so as to distance themselves from the other village residents through customary practices. The insightful and familiar passage by Edward Said concerning the importance of geography to human experience, quoted earlier in the chapter, implicates cultural imaginings in the struggle over geographic control of territory and calls to mind that that cartography is an act of cultural production. Similar to written texts and visual artwork, the map is a negotiated labor of territorial representation attempting some degree of “sovereignty” over the landscape. For example, the Please Knock sign hung from the door attempts to free the visitor from the Yupik cultural geography of the island. Nevertheless, the act of creating a topography can be accomplished through works as carefully as one can produce a map by sketching contour lines and using color to mark different spaces. Silook lends an example of territorial place-making at numerous scales realizing, as Edward Said writes in *Culture and Imperialism*, that “no one of us is outside or beyond” clashes over territory (Said 7). The symbolic contestation of space between the narrator and Silla, the clashes between the indigenous and imposed architectural forms of Gambell I and Gambell II, and the inoculation with “new blood” of the St. Lawrence population all represent cartographies of movement and struggle.

Topographic representations of the world come in seemingly endless projections because each form of mapping aims for a particular standpoint—a particular set of eyes—to see meaning in the landscape. Such mappings necessarily reflect contestations in culture and geography. For example, more often than not, a published map of the world places the Atlantic Ocean at the center point of the global topography. This perspective gestures at the puzzle-piece quality relationship between the Americas and Western Eurasia and Africa. One can easily imagine their coastlines matching up like a jigsaw. This way of situating a world map draws upon the mass colonization of the Americas that began in the fifteenth century, the spread of the Iberian Empire from Spain and Portugal into central and south America, Northern Europe’s colonization of North America, and the gruesome history of the transatlantic slave trade. Due to those remarkable events this map view becomes an icon for modernity and for Eurasia’s connection to the Americas. A disadvantage of centering a map around the Atlantic is that the *cartographic image slices through the middle of the Pacific*, between North America and Eastern Eurasia, leaving the Americas on one edge of the map and Eastern Eurasia upon the other—*worlds apart*.

From this perspective the dynamic connection between America and Eurasia becomes obscured and the geography of the Pacific made liminal to that of the Atlantic. The Bering, split by this map view, embodies the “Seal of the World,” yet is embodied also a cultural focal point for certain Native people from time immemorial. St. Lawrence Island in the middle of the Bering Strait, between North America and Eurasia, is suspended on the edge of the topographic projection. It appears to be in danger of falling off the edge of the world, rather than being in the middle of an indigenous social and cultural field that is continuous between two continents (indeed, from an indigenous standpoint, they do not appear as two continents at all). The practice of space making via cartography and the borders one places between oneself and the world outside, such as Please Knock signs, seek to provide an authority over space that others will acknowledge. These measures of space-making, however, create divisions between associated objects.

The practice of knocking on doors has divided the Yupik on the island from others to such a degree that “the ten and under crowd sometimes mistook me for a white lady, and asked questions about me in Yupik, thinking I wouldn’t understand” (247). Other times her entrance silences people which causes her to think of herself as the “outsider-insider, who knows only the intruder knocks politely (247). This conflict is expressed in the artwork she produces while in Gambell. Through the ivory tusk she works on, the two figures refuse “unification, like the vast world between Gambell I and Gambell II” (247). Much like the Yupik and Inupiat cultures that spread across the continents of North America and Eurasia, and yet are made estranged by the cartographic projects of modernity, these figures are separate yet they’re undeniably connected by their base material, the ivory. Unsatisfied with the sculpture she leaves the uliimaaq in the “freezing work room” where the subzero temperature sets upon the tusk. Later as the narrator retrieves the piece to show her “old blood” sister-in-law, the piece composed of two female figures breaks in half due to the change in temperature between the workroom and the rest of the house.

The conflict between the cold air in the workroom and the rest of the heated house ends in the destruction of the sculpture. The “clean and final” break between the two figures occurred, writes Silook, “as if they had decided to go their separate ways” (247). While the two pieces of the uliimaaq separate from one another, they are also parts of one ivory tusk. Like the battle between Silla and the narrator, or the space of Gambell I and Gambell II, or even the vast distance between Anchorage and the Native Village of Gambell, the separated figures come to represent a division between a culture that imperial cartography has separated between national and continental borders by imperial cartography. The maintenance of North American borders against Eurasia—along thought of, off and on, as a potential route of attack or invasion--at the Bering denies the cultural reality that Arctic peoples possess a “transcontinental” culture, even though, again, the idea of distinct continents means little to a people living in a place that spreads out in all directions from home. A year after the incident when she has returned to her life in Anchorage, she denotes the sculpture as an “Anti-depression Uliimaaq” that brought her out from her time of darkness. The figures charting her pathway from depression reveal her relationship to power through textualizations of space. One figure of the uliimaaq she buries with her late brother; the other piece remains with her (247). Again, she and her brother are from the same family but separated indefinitely, like the severed relations between the divided twins of Siberia and Alaska.

Twins Divided

Similar to the tensions of empire placed upon the Alaska Native-Siberian Yupik of St. Lawrence Island, and the Inupiat of Northern Alaska, by the United States, a centralized Russian government located close to 5000 miles away in St. Petersburg incorporated Yupik in Siberia into its empire. Russians encountered Siberian peoples in the sixteenth-century, and estimated the population at 227, 235. While cautious of generalizing the different communities and cultures of indigenous peoples present in Siberia during that time, historian James Forsyth identifies sixteen different cultures, one of them Siberian Yupik (71). The Yupik peoples in Siberia became slave servants of male Russian functionaries, with whom they were married, most times forcibly (82). In World War II Stalin recruited many indigenous peoples into the Red Army to fight on the frontlines against Germany for the Battle of Moscow.

Siberian Russian poet Yevgeny Aleksandrovich Yevtushenko, describes the role those from Siberia played in Red Army activities. “During World War II Siberia fed millions of people evacuated from the front-line cities and gave up its sons to the war.” “Moscow,” he writes, “was saved by Siberians” (42). The Red Army brought in individuals from all corners of rural Russia to fight the Axis. “indigenous Siberians were conscripted,” writes historian James Forsyth, “without choice on par with Russian, Ukrainians and other nationalities;” he notes the similarity to the methods used by the United States to incorporate American Indians and Alaska Eskimos in to the military. Situating indigenous Siberians with the broader Russian citizenry, Lincoln also relates their wartime experiences to Native North Americans, asserting, “[i]n the USA too, Indians were recruited on a voluntary basis, while the Eskimos of Alaska were organized voluntarily into a home defense force” (Lincoln 349). The forced recruitment of Siberian Natives into the army produced drastic consequences for those conscripted as well as the communities they left behind whom also suffered great losses:

In addition to the direct effects of obligatory military service, the total mobilization of the male population of the Soviet Union placed an enormous strain upon the rural economy of every region, whatever its way of life. Only women, children, and old men were left to carry on the work of farming, tending livestock, fishing and hunting, while tractors, lorries and horses were requisitioned for the war front. (Forsyth 350)

Siberian villages without the labor of the male hunters fell into decline during World War II. In *Fatal Half Measures*, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, revisiting his childhood home, meets with Siberian Yupik writer Zoya Nenlyumkina in a hotel in the Bukhta Province of Siberia. Nenlyumkina’s work is published in Russian and Yupik, and she is the first Siberian Yupik to have her work published outside the Russian Federation and translated in to other languages (Kudrya). In their meeting, the two discuss the current state of indigenous Siberia. Expressing her concerns for the wellbeing of indigenous Siberians, she reads to Yevtushenko a poem composed in the Nuakansky dialect of the region. The untitled piece refers to World War II conscription and the villages of Siberia. The first lines of the poem set the evacuation in the fall, as the cold weather brings the first snowfall. She writes

Autumn.

A long, thick snowfall.
The Raven cries out:
Brrrrother.
Me?
You?
And half a legend
Half-story
Saved by the people
Comes to mind.
How house after house
Emptied horribly. (1-12 234)

In the fall of 1941, Stalin sent conscripted indigenous soldiers from Siberia to fight the German army in the Battle of Moscow. As winter set in on the German army, the Red Army soldiers dislodged them from Moscow on 7 January 1942. The poem expresses the frustration felt by the remaining members of a village after the men had been taken into the Red Army to fight on the—European’s and American’s--eastern front. Even Raven cries “Oh Brrrrother” to the coldness of the Siberian weather setting in without the assistance of the missing men to help maintain the village. The poem’s confused speaker questions who will be going to the frontlines to save the country and who will be remaining in the village watching “house after house / Emptied horribly.” She continues to describe the condition in the village as members faced starvation.

How families were tormented
By hunger
And the land from under the snow
Without strength
Strove for warm like black flesh.
But no matter how the shaman begged at the sky,
The warm rain did not fall
And only death stirred the ashes. (15-20 234)

As winter came, the war that had created a labor shortage in the village. The village’s shaman worked to bring warm weather back to the unprepared people but instead of “warm rain,” the snow fell bringing with it death to a community without the resources to properly survive the winter. While the fall of 1941 marked the beginning of the battle that is well known globally for massive accounts in the loss of human life on both the Russian and German sides, Nenlyumkina illustrates the despair felt by those of the village:

Great-grandfather remembers the bitter time . . .
How many were killed by hunger in September . . .
The raven survived
Side by side with the dwelling
Fed by Eskimo food,
Miserable,

Accidental,
But it helped him last until summer (21-28 234)

Nenlyumkina was born in the now abandoned village of Nuakan at the edge of Siberia on the Cape of Dezhneva, twenty-seven miles west of the island of Big Diomedea. As a young woman, she participated in Eskimo Radio broadcasting, while earning a degree from Anadyr teachers college. Her first book of poetry, *Birds of Naukan* was published in 1979 in both Yupik and Russian (Alia 43). The noted sense of the loss in her poetry reflects both the loss of villagers to the second World War and the village's extinction, during the ensuing Cold War. In 1954, the Russian government began evacuating the village after its seven hundred year lifespan due to tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and perhaps to consolidate rural areas of the nation. The government relocated many villagers to Chuchki villages by the 1970s, and only a handful of people remained in Naukan. Siberian Yupik filmmaker Alexei Vakhrushev used the title of Nenlyumkina's *Birds of Naukan* for a documentary film in 1996, detailing the history of the village and the other sixty villages evacuated in the same manner during the Cold War era. The focus on birds in Nenlyumkina's work draws attention to the transnational and continental aspects of Yupik culture amongst the Russian Federation in Siberia.

After the Nuakan village was emptied out first from the conscription of working-aged men by the Red Army, then from the government's post-war mandatory evacuation. Nenlyumkina's great-grandfather, who did not leave, watched the winter season pass in to spring:

The snow melted.
Rivers and buds opened.
The sun poured blossoming on the earth.
The raven flew, a black dot, into the sky. (29-32 234)

The migration of birds back into the village from the Bering Sea symbolizes, for Nenlyumkina, the village's larger connections to places outside the borders of the then Soviet Union. Not only are villagers divided by these national borders, their villages also became subjects of governmental evacuation. Nevertheless, there were those whose imaginations were not pacified by the imposed jurisdiction. The speaker notes in the poem that as the government draws villagers from Nauka, "My great-grandfather did not leave the dwelling/ But in his cares/ In his brief joys/ taking his eyes from the land/ he followed the flock of birds," with this eyes (33-37 235). What to the government officials looked like a "remote" village "at the edge of the continent," a village whose population could and would be "rationally" evacuated, the poet's great-grandfather watches birds fly back and forth across the Strait, as they always had. The image of a bird flying out toward the icy waters off the shore of the village emphasizes the connectedness of North America and Eurasia at the Bering, which national boundaries have sought to deny and ignore. The poem's black bird mends the partitioned cultures, just as did the uliimaaq, a task seemingly untenable in the midst of Cold War politics. Nenlyumkina's poem envisions the Bering not as the seal of the world but as an indigenous place overlain by the intersection of two empires whereby indigenous subjects are bound at the borders of nation-states. The poem argues that their culture inhabits the region as the raven flies, boundless.

Image Appendix



Figure 1. Designs by School Children for Alaska's Flag, 1927. "Alaska territorial flag competition." American Legion Collection. Alaska State Museum. ID number: ASL-MS14-1



Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Figure 2. Title: The Five Luke Children. Athabascan brother and sisters posed before an American Flag. From: the Lawyer and Cora Rivenburg Photograph Collection, 1910-1912. Archives, U of Alaska, Fairbanks. ID: UAF-1994-70-33



Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Figure 3. Title: *Jumping for Joy* from the Ernest H. Gruening Papers, 1914-[1959-1969] 1974. Caption with photograph: Jumping for Joy- “When the news of statehood reached the arctic village of Kotzebue, the town started jumping. Here pretty Laura Mae Beltz goes aloft, via walrus hide blanket toss, carrying a flag that will soon have a star for native land. U of Alaska, Fairbanks.” ID: UAF-1976-21-55334



Alaska State Library - Historical Collections

Figure 4. A photo of Benny holding the winning flag in 1927. ID: ASL-Benson-Benny-1 ASL-P01-1921.



Figure 5. Title: Benny Benson with Gov. Egan and Charlotte Benson
Description: Benny Benson, Governor William Egan and Benny Benson's daughter Charlotte Benson pose with the Alaska State Flag design. This photo taken shortly after statehood. U of Alaska, Fairbanks. ID: UAF-1985-120-135



Figure 6. Title: Benny Benson & Miss Seafair. From the Ward W. Wells Collection
Title taken from Verso. John "Benny" Benson (at left) presenting Miss Seafair with copy
of book "Benny's Flag" by Phyllis Krasilovsky. Miss Seafair scholarship program for women
was sponsored by Seafair annual community festival held in Seattle, Washington.
From Verso: "P[acific] N[orthwest] A[irlines]." 1965. Photographer: Ward W. Wells.
Original photograph size: 4 ¾" x 6". ID: AMRC-wwc-6363-1

Meet Alaska's Benny Benson

■ Kodiak would like to claim one of her citizens as her very own, but Benny Benson really belongs to all of Alaska. Benny, as an orphan boy of 13, designed Alaska's symbolic flag. At the time he predicted that Alaska would become a state, and that her Northern Star would become the most northerly star in the union.

In 1958 Benny's prediction came true. Just as Benny Benson had become an honored member of Alaska's family, so too, Alaska had finally become an honored member in the family of states.

Marie Drake expressed the thoughts that were in Benny's heart when he designed the flag and the haunting melody composed by Mrs. Eleanor Dusenbury gave a final touch to their beauty:

"Eight stars of gold on a field of blue
Alaska's flag. May it mean to you,
The blue of the sea, the evening sky,
The mountain lakes, the flowers nearby;
The gold of the early sourdough's dream,
The precious gold of the hills and streams;
The brilliant stars in the northern sky.
The 'Bear,' the 'Dipper,' and shining high,
The great North Star with its steady light
O'er land and sea a beacon bright
Alaska's flag to Alaskans dear
The simple flag of a last frontier."

Alaska's Benny Benson presents one of his autographed flags to a pretty Seattle nurse.



Figure 7. Excerpt from *Koniag to King Crab* (page 161).



Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Figure 8. Collection: Edward Lewis Bartlett Papers, 1938-1970

Title: Benny Benson and Bob Bartlett

Description: Photograph of Benny Benson, the man who designed the Alaska State Flag, and E. L. (Bob) Bartlett, pose beneath the Alaska State Flag with a mounted bear. The stars on the state flag are aligned in the constellation "The Bear." Bob Bartlett, referred to as 'The Architect of Statehood,' posing with Benny in front of a Kodiak bear. ID: UAF-1969-95-449

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End Notes

- ⁱ Jesse Lee Home Brochure. March-2007. Available at <http://www.jesseleehome.net/images/jlh_brochure.pdf> Accessed 5 August, 2010.
- ⁱⁱ *Inuit* is used here as a cover term for indigenous peoples the Arctic. The term *Eskimo* is at times used by Yupik and Inupiat peoples in Alaska to distinguish themselves from other Inuit peoples.
- ⁱⁱⁱ The term *Aleut*, meaning coastal dweller, is a word Russian functionary originally procured from the Chukchi of Siberia in the eighteenth century. This essay groups communities of people living in where are now the state of Alaska and the Russian territory of Kamchatka Krai in Siberia that the Russian called Aleut. The Alutiiq, or Supiac, are at home on the southern coast of the Alaska Peninsula and the Kodiak Island archipelago. The term Alutiiq is the regional indigenous form of the word Aleut. The Unangan exist on the Aleutian chain, on either side of the International Date Line, and the islands of St. Paul and St. George in the Bering Sea. The Russians also considered the Sasignan people to be Aleut. They are the aboriginal people on the Bering and the commander islands in Russian territory of Siberia (Svarny Carlson, 211-214). At times Aleut is used interchangeably with the more accurate and indigenous cultural names depending on an individual's personal choice.
- ^{iv} Donald Craig Mitchell. *Take My Land, Take My Life: The Story of Congress's Historic Settlement of Alaska Native Land Claims, 1960–1971*. (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2001) 211-213.
- ^v Haycox, Stephen. "Tee-Hit-Ton and Alaska Native Rights," *American Indians and the Law*. Vol. 1. Ed. John Wunder. Lincoln: University of Nebraska P (1996) 333-352.
- ^{vi} Haycox (1996) 333-352.
- ^{vii} Earl Maltz, "Brown and Tee-Hit-Ton" (August 18, 2004). *Bepress Legal Series*. Working Paper 340, 35.
- ^{viii} Philip P. Frickey. "Domesticating Federal Indian Law," 81 MINN. L. REV. (1996), 31-32.
- ^{ix} Philip P. Frickey. (1996), 31-32.
- ^x Williams, Robert. *Like a Loaded Weapon*. Minneapolis, MN : University of Minnesota Press, (2005). 93.
- ^{xi} Snapp, Thomas. "Native Groups Unite: Inupiat Patriot, Dena Nena Henash, ANB to Affiliate." *Tundra Times*, 17 June (1963), 1.
- ^{xii} "Native Groups to Meet: Leaders to Gather Together to Talk" *Tundra Times*, June 8, 1964, p.1
- ^{xiii} "Native Groups to Meet: Leaders to Gather Together to Talk" *Tundra Times*, June 8, 1964, p.1
- ^{xiv} Lazarus, Arthur. and W.R. West. "The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: A Flawed Victory." *American Indians and the Law*. Vol. 4. Ed. John Wunder. University of Nebraska. P (1996) 165.
- ^{xv} Anders, Gary C. and Kathleen. "Incompatible Goals in Unconventional Organizations: The Politics of Alaska Native Corporations." *Developing America's Northern Frontier*. Ed. Theodore Lane. New York: University Press of America (1987), 143.
- ^{xvi} Dombrowski, Kirk. *Against Culture: Development, Politics, and Religion in Indian Alaska*. Forth World Rising. Lincoln: University of Nebraska P, (2001), 81-82.
- ^{xvii} Drombrowski (2001), 89.

^{xviii} These very *sources* of historical production maybe influenced by an opposing power and thus would engender silence about certain aspects of history. Then the organization of these sources may produce silences by establishing barriers between two sources. In addition, the collection methodology of sources from these archives influence the manner in which primary information about the past is produced into narrative. The final point for silence in historical production involves the investment of significance into the produced historical narrative. For instance, if a set of sources produces a particular narrative, then the importance of that narrative in history may be influence by a certain positionality.