

Anarchy, Scarcity, Nature: Rousseau's Stag Hunt and the Arctic Walrus Hunt Compared


MARK B. SALTER *University of Ottawa, Canada, and Peace Research Institute Oslo, Norway*

Under conditions of anarchy, the predominant assumption is that scarcity leads to conflict. I contrast traditional Inuit walrus hunt practices to Rousseau's stag hunt to demonstrate how mainstream international relations has it wrong on three counts: (1) radical scarcity need not lead to conflict-prone outcomes, (2) the historical eighteenth-century context of the stag hunt does not prove a predisposition against cooperation, and (3) the conditions of anarchy are irreducible to cultural institutions or to material constraints alone. I leverage Latour's "symmetrical anthropology" to demonstrate that ideas and things have an equal potential to structure the culture of anarchical relations and to build on the literature which has established that comparative cultural data can be used to theorize anarchy. Rethinking the logic of anarchy is especially important in the age of the Anthropocene, given the prospects for radical ecological change in the near future.

INTRODUCTION

While some theorists ground their insights about anarchy in rational-actor or game-theoretical models, others have looked to historical or anthropological data for really-existing examples of sociality under conditions of anarchy (Alvard and Nolin 2002; Donnelly 2012; Snyder 2002). Jervis (1978, 177–8) argues that the stag hunt turns into a game of chicken which precludes cooperation, but Alvard and Nolin (2002) cast whale hunting as a coordination game rather than prisoner's dilemma that emphasizes the importance of culture, norms, and communication (549). In the eighteenth-century forest of Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality*, hunters decided between a flighty rabbit and feisty stag, but in a contemporaneous walrus hunt in the eastern Arctic, Inuit hunters were faced with a choice between an easily startled ringed seal and a dangerous, cantankerous walrus. These historically simultaneous hunts demonstrate that there are multiple cultures of anarchy. Conceptually, anarchy is a central feature of international relations (IR) and IR theory (Ashley 1988; Donnelly 2015; Schmidt 1998), although theoretical tradition of anarchism itself is often left largely out of the discussion (Goodwin 2010; Havercroft and Prichard 2017; Prichard 2016). This article contributes to that debate, by using historical and anthropological data to conclude that scarcity need not lead to conflict and might instead incentivize actually coordination and cooperation. First, I concretize and historicize Rousseau's stag hunt metaphor because the forest of the eighteenth century

has a number of specific social, political, gendered, and economic dynamics that challenge a thin sketch of universal rationality. While Wendt's (1999) constructivism permits a deeper theorization of the culture of anarchy, he too minimizes the material conditions of sociality and the impact of the nonhuman. Thus, I turn to Latour's critical model of "symmetrical anthropology" to theorize the socio-material determinants of anarchy without determinism. Snyder (2002) uses anthropological data on war to make a structurally similar argument from radically different theoretical grounds, that "material-cultural-institutional systems effect the likelihood of war in anarchy" (8). I compare Rousseau's stag hunt with a historically contemporaneous Inuit¹ Arctic walrus hunt. Eighteenth-century Inuit culture provides an excellent counterfactual example of relations possible under structural conditions of anarchy and in the ecological context of extreme scarcity. The Inuit example demonstrates that a culture may adapt to extreme scarcity by emphasizing conflict avoidance and not individualistic self-help. While there is no explicit discussion of gendered labor in Rousseau's stag hunt, which is part of its purported universalism, Inuit hunting culture is gendered, which marks a significant difference but a difference that does not account for the different valuation of self-interest versus group survival. In conditions of extreme scarcity, cooperative effort is necessary to survive, and those ethics of group survival and conflict avoidance can be as easily acculturated as self-help. The larger claim here is that IR scholars must pay attention to the nonhuman. Material, environmental, and inanimate forces have determinative effects on the conditions for sociality between human within

Mark B. Salter , Professor of Political Science, School of Political Studies, University of Ottawa, Canada, and Editor-in-Chief of *Security Dialogue*, Peace Research Institute Oslo, Norway, mark.salter@uottawa.ca.

Received: January 25, 2021; revised: February 28, 2023; accepted: July 28, 2023.

¹ Inuit were known as Eskimo from the time of early exploration until the 1970s when the Inuit Circumpolar Council rejected the term. Following convention, this article will refer to Inuit unless directly quoting a historical source. Words in Inuktitut are italicized.

nonhuman systems and the construction of particular rationalities (Cudworth and Hobden 2011; Latour 1993; 2004; Salter 2015; 2016). I conclude that IR scholars cannot assume that anarchy is natural, or simply reflective of nature, or that the human is somehow distinct or separate from the natural.² Theorizing anarchy in the Anthropocene³ not only requires attention to the role of the nonhuman, but also requires an analytical humility to bracket mainstream assumptions about the rational logics of anarchy and the agency of nature itself.

POLITICS AND NATURE

What are the stakes of being uncritical about what counts as nature in theorizing the state of nature? Separating nature and culture has been a key philosophical move in modern political thought. The social contract is portrayed as somehow distinct and separate from the world and its “natural contract” (Serres 1995, 36). The modern separation of nature as the realm of science, and politics as the realm of political science, has some profoundly problematic epistemological effects. Political science avers from the adjudication of scientific facts, whereas science avers from political facts (Latour 2017). Latour (1993) sets out this paradox: “the representation of nonhuman belongs to science, but science is not allowed to appeal to politics; the representation of citizens belongs to politics, but politics is not allowed to have any relation to the nonhumans produced and mobilized by science and technology” (28). These paradoxes lead to a false separation between facts and politics: “even though we construct Nature [through science], Nature is as if we did not construct it... even though we do not construct Society [through political science], Society is as if we did construct it... Nature and Society must remain absolutely distinct” (32). More specifically, the scientific observations about the possibility of sociality in anarchical systems (be they natural or anthropological) are always imbued with the analytical, disciplinary, and political prejudices of the observers, even when they are not portrayed as such. Within Hobbes’ historical context, although it was not his focus, his notion of nature and the state of nature was profoundly shaped by the context of coloniality and early American

occupation (Arneil 1996; Jahn 2000; Moloney 2011). Among the consequences of that seventeenth-century view, Indigenous peoples and their knowledge are relegated to the realm of the anthropological and frequently counted as the objects of “scientific” data rather than political science (Latour 1993; Shaw 2008; Simpson 2014), with some infrequent exceptions in IR theory (Bedford and Workman 1997; Beier 2005; 2009; Crawford 1994; 2017; Epp 2001).

To be sure that we are not reproducing the conventional distinction between a *natural* science of anthropology and a *political* science of IR, I start by asserting that scientific descriptions of nature are also socially constructed (Latour and Woolgar 1979). According to Latour, we must suspend the modern division between “nature” and “politics” as separate and mutually exclusive modes of knowing the world on both epistemological and ontological grounds. In Latour’s “symmetrical anthropology,” we want to avoid making an *a priori* distinction between the causal primacy of ideas and things, between the human and the nonhuman. To avoid the tyranny of sunk analytical costs in the false distinction between science and politics, Latour (1993) suggests a “symmetrical anthropology” that “uses the same terms to explain truth and errors; studies the production of humans and nonhumans simultaneously, and refrains from making any *a priori* declarations as to what distinguish Westerners from Others” (103). To avoid being caught up in modernist notions of facticity (and specific the boundaries of what phenomena might only be described by science and what only by politics), symmetrical anthropology focuses not on the “if” of truth claims, but the “how”: how is knowledge assembled, on what scientific and/or political authority, paying close attention to realms of knowledge that are pre-placed in one or the other binary. Rather than assuming that only humans have agency, the symmetrical anthropologist suspends judgment on what might have an effect on a particular controversy, and instead engages in a radically flat ontology and lets human and nonhuman agents demonstrate their capacity. This precisely does not mean that every agent has equal agency in every relation, but rather that we are rigorously open to possibility about what might have an effect.⁴ And, finally, to destabilize the colonial inheritance of colonial empiricism that values Western knowledge over non-Western and Indigenous cultures, I again remain radically open to relations and connections. There is a common objection to this kind of flat methodology, closely related to the concerns of political scientists, that Latour anticipates:

“What have you done”, people could ask in exasperation, “with power and domination?” But it is just because we wish to explain those asymmetries that we don’t want to simply repeat them—and even less to transport them further unmodified. Once again, we don’t want to confuse the cause and the effect, the explanandum with the explanans. This is why it’s so important to maintain that power,

² Kropotkin (2006) used historical anthropological data to critique dominant modes of understanding nature as an evolutionary struggle characterized exclusively by “survival of the fittest,” and referenced both the “paucity of life” in the sub-Arctic and Arctic regions and contemporary nineteenth-century accounts of Inuit culture to suggest that “mutual aid” was at least as pervasive a pattern of behavior (15, 200–3).

³ The Anthropocene refers to the geological age that is characterized by significant human impact, which can be dated to 1610 (Lewis and Maslin 2015). Davis and Todd (2017) connect the 1610 “Orbis spike” to the invasion of the Americas, which led to a depopulation of Indigenous peoples (from a precontact estimate of 50–60 M to 5–6 M), the eradication of farming and the consequent reforestation of large swaths of land, and the subsequent “little ice age.” This time frame also marks the end of the Thule people’s culture in the Arctic and the rise of the Inuit culture.

⁴ Latour’s (2005) notion of agency as that which has an effect is itself a radical challenge to traditional notions of politics and humanity.

like society, is the final result of a process and not a reservoir, a stock, or a capital that will automatically provide an explanation. Power and domination have to be produced, made up, composed. (Latour 2005, 63)

Power has to be explained, it is not what does the explaining.

In this article, I operationalize this method by historicizing and contextualizing Rousseau's stag hunt, and by making a direct comparison to a contemporaneous alternate non-Western hunting practice. Leveraging Latour's thinking tools to foreground Indigenous practices may be a risky move. Todd (2016) powerfully argues that Latour and other social thinkers do little to "credit Indigenous thinkers for their millennia of engagement with sentient environments, with cosmologies that enmesh people into complex relationships between themselves and all relations" (6–7). My goal in this article is, as Todd suggests, to "engage with Indigenous thought respectfully [to] give full credit to Indigenous laws, stories and epistemologies, [to] quote and cite Indigenous people rather than only citing anthropologists who studied Indigenous people 80 years ago" (Todd 2016, 13–4).

As part of a larger goal to decolonize the discipline, this article contextualizes Rousseau's stag hunt as a specific and historical practice that is the result of particular socio-political-economic structures and universalizes the Inuit hunt as an ontologically equally social, complex, and rational solution to the problem of cooperation under anarchy. This article is part of a larger project of decolonizing the discipline of IR (Capan 2017; Jones 2006; Rosenow 2018; Sabaratnam 2011; Tucker 2018), as a part of a scholarly project that supports Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015), and the general spirit of unsettling the "settler contract" (Pateman and Mills 2007). Beier (2005) and Crawford (2017), among others, have pointed to the systematic exclusion of Indigenous perspectives in IR theorization. We must widen the scope of academic inquiry to include subjugated knowledges and experiences for the sake of scientific accuracy and also on a politico-ethical level to unearth the connections between our knowledge production and political projects of settler colonialism and its normalization. This article enacts a double analytic move: contextualizing a "universal" example, and universalizing a "cultural" example. As Shilliam (2010) diagnoses, "the most signal effect has been the construction of a consensus that context-free knowledge is universally valid and thus thoroughly modern knowledge, as opposed to context-sensitive systems of thought that remain 'traditional'... this distinction smuggles into the assessment of knowledge production a geo-political and temporal constituency, namely the modern West and the traditional non-West." This article historicizes and contextualizes the "Western" canonical example of Rousseau's stag hunt, and simultaneously politicizes and universalizes the Indigenous example of the Inuit walrus hunt, so that IR both acknowledges the colonial and historical roots of key concepts, but also

demonstrates how that move constrains the theoretical descriptions for the possibility for cooperation in conditions of scarcity in anarchy.

By leveraging Inuit hunting practices as an alternate model for understanding the possibility of cooperation in conditions of extreme and dangerous scarcity, I reject the claim that to engage with indigenous knowledge and history is to flirt with "the (re)colonisation of indigeneity" (Chandler and Reid 2020). I do not aim to "become Indigenous" (Chandler and Reid 2019) or to render Indigenous politics simply as "spectacle" (Beier 2005, 8). I am not seeking to replicate the worst impulses of anthropology to turn to "hunting and gathering societies for evidence to explain the development of social relations in human societies generally" (Bodenhorn 1990, 56). I agree that: "time and again, the questions raised by anarchy point to anthropology for their resolution, particularly to the ethnographic record and the conclusions that might be drawn from its analysis. Yet the ethnographic record yields no easy resolution to these questions" (High 2012, 93). Nor is this article an attempt to exoticize or to fetishize a single Indigenous culture as the necessary dialectic opposite of Western IR in order to achieve some kind of escape from the colonial-settler history of the field (Latour and Miranda 2017). Rather, I am attempting to draw a precise comparison between the dominant story and a different, subaltern story. In the eighteenth century, two kinds of hunts were going on at the same time, with similar technology, in radically different environments. How does the theory of cooperation under anarchy change if we focus on the Arctic hunt rather than the European?

A REAL STAG HUNT

In the seminal *Man, the State and War*, Waltz relies on Rousseau's example of the stag hunt to illustrate the structural determinants of anarchy.⁵ The source of Rousseau's brief story is in *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*:

If a deer was to be taken, every one saw that, in order to succeed, he must abide faithfully by his post: but if a hare happened to come within reach of any one of them, it is not to be doubted that he pursued it without scruple, and, having seized his prey, cared very little, if by doing so he caused his companions to miss theirs. (Rousseau 2004, 87)

The general interest and the individual interest may be in harmony over the long term, but are in conflict in the short term. For individual hunters to rationally forsake their own immediate gain and to cooperate with the group, they must communicate with one another, trust in one another, and have an enforceable contract or accept an external binding arbiter. In the absence of an

⁵ See Waltz (2001, 167–8). This is a familiar critique. Inayatullah and Blaney (1996) make the connection between Rousseau and Waltz through the stag hunt (even to Wendt's alien encounter).

external arbiter, all hunters should rationally hunt rabbits. In the presumed scarcity of Rousseau's stag hunt (limited deer) and Waltz's international system (limited security), agents will choose short-term individual interest over an unreliable long-term general interest, or create structures that alter the risk/payoff structure. Even if realists have misunderstood the meaning of the stag hunt story in Rousseau's own thinking, as Williams (1989) argues, the structural conditions of anarchy are understood and represented as being rationally derived but socially constructed in its interpretation of the natural world (the abundance of game, the behavior of stags and rabbits, the need for fencing, etc.). Sjoberg (2017) demonstrates that Waltz's theorization of anarchy lacks space for consideration of gender, which radically limits its analytical capacity: "an account of international anarchy that leaves out the gender hierarchies within that anarchy is to provide a less full and less useful characterization of the international arena than one that includes the role that gender plays in structuring social and political life" (337). Crawford (2017) points out that Rousseau's stag hunt is among a pre-literate group (which matches the contemporaneous Inuit culture), and that the reproduction of Waltz's self-help anarchy represents one political option for coping with the trust dilemma, not often supported by archeological evidence of Indigenous cooperation (108). Kropotkin (2006) himself had also made this argument in relation to the characterization of both animals in natural systems and individuals in Inuit culture, for which he had only contemporaneous accounts (206). A zero-sum account of scarce natural resources is embedded within the mainstream account of the possibility for cooperation under anarchy (Skryms 2001).

Waltz (2001) parses this assumption: "struggles for preference arise in competitive situations and force is introduced in the absence of an authority that can limit the means used by competitors" (35). Without rehearsing debates internal to (neo)realism, we can point to shared assumptions about the uncertainty about other's perceptions and intentions over scarce resources and the universality of "human nature." Waltz (1979) argues again in *Theory of International Politics* that "international-political systems, like economic markets are individualistic in origin, spontaneously generated, and unintended. In both systems, structures are forced by the coercion of their units. Whether those units live, prosper, or die depends on their own efforts. Both systems are formed and maintained on a principle of self-help that applies to the units" (91). Unit survival in scarcity can only be secured through the mechanism of self-help, based on the assumption that scarce resources are zero-sum.

In Rousseau's fictional forest, there is an assumption of abundance: there are stags and rabbits, the forest itself is relatively benign, and the societal bounds allow for defection. While the stag is undoubtedly a better benefit, there is an assumption in the stag hunt that the success of the group hunt is not existential, that other prey is available, and that defection from the group will not lead to starvation for the rest. Rousseau robs the

actual hunt of its social and ecological context in order to situate the purportedly universal logics of anarchy and the social contract in a pre-literate group. Rousseau's forest also has no women and no gendered division of labor, which purports to make the example more universal but in fact erases the example's cultural and social specificity. However, when we reverse those ecological-material conditions (the forest is not benign, the prey is dangerous to the hunters, and spoiling the hunt for one causes the death of all, then defection would be understood as insane rather than rational), the payoff structure of cooperation in a condition of anarchy becomes radically different. To exaggerate this difference, I will compare it to an Inuit walrus hunt in the Arctic in a later section.

This section makes a different analytical move by providing the specific context for the eighteenth-century stag hunt, when Rousseau was writing *Discourse* (1754).⁶ Hunting in the mid-eighteenth century was profoundly implicated in feudal political and legal dynamics and the socioeconomic and environmental conditions this created (Thompson 1975). Not everyone could hunt. Over the course of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, "the lower nobility, clergy and urban elites were left with only minor hunting rights. With few exceptions, citizens, farmers, and the rest of society were completely excluded" (Knoll 2004, 16). The Enlightenment fashion for high status hunting was large-scale "coursing," large packs of mounted hunters and dogs chasing high status prey, requiring huge tracts of protected land (even the fencing itself was a resource drain), packs of trained dogs, and lots of labor (beaters). While hunting was profitable for minor nobility, for sovereigns hunting was a net economic loss, but politically crucial in terms of prestige and favor. "Hunting was a means for sovereigns of being seen everywhere in their domain and 'displaying all their power all over by showing their splendor and magnificence'" (Knoll 2004, 29). Deer directly competed with domesticated animals for feed. Since male peasants were required to perform hunting service that took them away from their own farming, to host and feed hunting parties, to drive horse teams or to beat, hunting was costly for rulers and ruled alike. Deer themselves were understood to be high status prey (Knoll 2004, 18). The participants of the eighteenth-century European stag hunt are thus either nobility engaged in a formalized hunt and peasants doing service, or they were poachers. Disrupting the stag hunt to catch a rabbit would have had political stakes. For peasants or nobles equally, defection from the group would incur sharp penalties if it were a formal hunt. If it were poaching, it is worse. Schulte (1994) describes the meaning: "whatever the motive—whether hunger or crop protection—it was classified as a political crime. Hunting was a privilege of the aristocracy and the prince, and the

⁶ Rousseau did not intend a specific context, but drew an abstract model of "primitive" behavior precisely illustrates this rhetorical move to accord Western thinking a universal model (and comparative non-European thought only specific data) (Crawford 2017). My thanks to Cameron Harrington for making this important point.

peasants who hunted were calling this privilege in question, especially if they went out after noble, aristocratic ‘big game’” (122). Penalties could vary from forced labor “and persistent offenders could be banished from the country” (Schulte 1994, 122). Either the peasants on hunting service were engaging in sly resistance to the courtly hunting privileges by catching the rabbit for themselves and disrupting the sovereign’s kill, or they were engaged in a high-stakes political crime that might lead to banishment.⁷ When contextualized, this stag hunt is not simply about cooperation or defection with rational peers in a benign natural environment, but about the maintenance of, or resistance, to the sovereign political order done exclusively by males. The point is neither that Rousseau is a poor anthropologist and Waltz a poor historian, nor that we should develop a more developed theory of the forest (Kohn 2013), but rather to point out that when this metaphor is repopulated and recontextualized, it teaches the opposite lesson than Waltz and Rousseau purport.

Waltz argues that states in the international state system are like hunters in the forest, and a similar logic of anarchy obtains. The different rational strategies of cooperation with the group or defection for individual interest depend also on the perception of the rational calculation of the other actors: “If harmony is to exist in anarchy, not only must I be perfectly rational but I must be able to assume that everyone else is too” (Waltz 2001, 169). Anarchy is constructed through social interaction. Without doing too much violence to the rich array of realist thought on anarchy, the stag hunt remains a dominant metaphor that illustrates some core assumptions about how sociality is constructed in relation to perceptions of the natural world and the scarcity of resources within it. Of course, the connection between identity, interest, and perception has been the primary battleground between neorealists and constructivists like Wendt (1992), who argues that “anarchy is what states make of it.”

THE WALRUS (AIVIQ) HUNT

Like Jahn (2000), Beier (2005), Shaw (2008), Crawford (2017), and other scholars taking the decolonization of the discipline seriously, this project attempts to take different non-sovereignist ways of organizing political life seriously without imposing a modernist hierarchal valuation of traditional/civilized, culture/politics, Indigenous/European, anthropological/political science, and so forth. My approach differs from Snyder (2002), who contributes to this debate with anthropological generalizations about material scarcity, culture, and conflict, because I am focused on a precise set of cultural practices that have developed over hundreds of years to cope with a specific set of environmental conditions of scarcity. It differs from Donnelly, although I agree with

the conclusion that “foragers demonstrate, empirically, that ‘the effects of anarchy,’ where they exist, are not effects of anarchy. Standard arguments that ‘self-help is necessarily the principle of action in an anarchic order’ and that ‘no amount of cooperation can eliminate the dominating logic of security competition’ are not even close to true” (Donnelly 2012, 617). Because Donnelly then wants to develop a richer sense of international structure, with little consideration of the relation between materialist and cultural conditions that determine the character of anarchy, and little actual empirical consideration of the socio-material conditions forager societies: the forager societies are the prompt for critique, but then do not figure in the actual analysis. Similarly, one could admit that Inuit society is outside of liberal, individualistic “anarchy.” Alvard and Nolin (2002), on the other hand, use anthropological data from a cooperative whale hunt in Indonesia to disrupt mainstream game-theoretical models of “prisoner’s dilemma”. However, anthropology is not a rump science, and to decolonize the discipline productively, we need to take seriously the actually existing historical examples of different ways of organizing social relations that are not philosophically indebted to eighteenth-century Europe and grant non-Western societies with equal potential for generating insights and analysis.

First, some empirical facts to distinguish the Arctic scene from the European forest. The Arctic is a harsh environment with extremely cold temperatures; permafrost prevents agriculture; there is no timber above the tree line. Food and resources are not plentiful in the same way. The cold can kill: winter temperatures easily reach -40°C , more with windchill. The ocean freezes and the ice itself can be dangerous. Indigenous traditional knowledge built up over hundreds of years of survival provides successful strategies for thriving in the Arctic, which is relayed through an oral tradition. To avoid privileging the Western-mediated knowledge about Inuit life-worlds, cultures, and practices, this section treats Western anthropological representations as equally scientific as the oral tradition of *Inuit Qaujimaqatunqangi* (IQ: an Inuit way of reflecting traditional knowledge, translated from “that which Inuit have always known to be true”) (Karetak and Tester 2017).⁸ One of the methodological orientations between the production of IQ with the scarcity of Arctic life-worlds: McGrath (2018) identifies as *pittianrniq*, an ethics of accuracy “The root *pittiaq-* is both to do *right* and to do *precisely*, or to do *well*, which comes from a survival ethic” (364–5). This survival ethic leads to the

⁷ On the poachers themselves, we should remember Der Derian’s (1998) conclusion that among actual prisoner’s dilemma, there was a strong cultural aversion to defection (117).

⁸ The six principles of Inuit Qaujimaqatunqangi are: serving (using power to serve others); consensus-seeking (respecting differences); skills and knowledge acquisition (improve skills through practice); cooperation (work together in harmony for common purpose); stewardship (treat nature holistically for actions and intentions that have consequences); problem-solving (creative improvisation); guardianship of what one does not own; respect knowledge or experience; hunt only what is necessary and do not waste; harvesting without malice; avoiding causing animals unnecessary harm; no one owns animals or land so avoid disputes; treat all wildlife respectfully (Wenzel 2004, 241).

construction of cultural scaffolds that reinforce the value of honesty and the danger of dishonesty (which speaks directly to Waltz's concern about deception).

Before the 1950s, Inuit camps were small; survival depended on social harmony, and frequently depended on hunting (walrus and other sea mammals). The prey: a walrus is more than 3.6-M long and can weigh 1,000 kg. "Prior to the modern economic era (about the early 1900s), walrus hunting supplied 60%–80% of all subsistence food consumed in many communities in the Bering Strait region" (Krupnik and Ray 2007, 2947), and provided similar sustenance across Foxe Basin in the Eastern Arctic.⁹ There is no rabbit on the floe edge—at best the parallel might be a ringed seal (55 kg). Like the stag, the walrus requires multiple hunters, coordination, and strategy. While male walruses can be hunted alone or in pairs along shoreline haul-outs in relatively predictable places across the season, Inuit hunters prefer hunting females and calves who rest on sea ice floes because of their thinner skin and less-scarred tusks (Hill 2011, 52). The female walrus, asleep on an ice floe, can best be caught by *umiak* (larger boats, rather than the typical single-person *kayak*), which require a crew of 6–8 men (Ellanna 1988; Hill 2011, 50), with attendant women at the village (because of traditional division of labor). The gendered division of labor in Inuit culture is rigid but does not follow Western models: butchering, sewing, and preparing both home and meals are understood to be hunting activities.

...among Northern hunters in general, hunting is a sacred act. Animals give themselves up to men whose wives are generous and skillful: it is also the man's responsibility to treat the animal properly, but it is the woman to whom the animal comes. When asking Leona Okakok about this, she remembered one very successful inland hunter who simply said, 'I'm not the great hunter, my wife is.' He was alluding to her generosity, not her skill with a rifle. (Bodenhorn 1990, 61–2)

The walrus itself represents an incredible bounty¹⁰: meat for humans and sled dogs, guts for lines for harpoon and sewing, bones for harpoons, houses, and tools, hide for clothing and housing, and tusks for carving (Desjardin 2020). The walrus is large, dangerous, and aggressive and might kill multiple hunters, even after it is successfully harpooned (Lasaloosie Ishulutuq in Souders 2019, 8).

Ringed seal can be hunted, easily managed and transported by a single hunter. In contrast, the much larger walrus can be aggressive and will attack kayaks and *umiak*, or chase hunters through thin ice from beneath;

⁹ There is even an archeological argument that walrus availability and this collectivist way of hunting that made possible the sudden prehistorical complexity of social life in the Bering Strait (Hill 2011, 56; see also Frechette 2013).

¹⁰ My thanks to a reviewer for pointing out that the materiality of the walrus itself might chance the logic of cooperation: while the stag has meat which is shareable and antlers which are non-shareable, the walrus represents a much greater resource for the whole of Inuit ways of life.

furthermore, walrus females will protect their young with vigour. In other words, hunting walrus for the hunter posed a high risk of becoming injured or even killed. Through a communal hunting strategy, the risk of the individual hunter was minimised; along with the communal hunt a sharing system of the game developed within the community, distributing the meat more or less equally. (Gotfredson, Appelt, and Hastrup 2018, S196)

Inuit cosmology does not identify a strong division between human and animals: "treating everything with respect (as though it were a living thing) was key. People, land, rocks, water, wildlife, weather and the environment were all thought of in this way" (Kalluak 2017, 43). The social relationship between the Inuit and their prey should be taken into account for a better understanding of their interpretation of the radical scarcity of the Arctic. "Only by hunting and eating country food can Inuit retain their strength. Thus, they depend completely on the animals they kill. The animals are thought to be aware of this and to give themselves up willingly to be killed by the hunter... The killing of game is therefore not considered to be an act of violence by a human being towards an animal, but a meaningful act in which hunter and animal are connected as partners" (Laugrand and Oosten 2015, 38). In Inuit cosmology, the walruses (and all marine mammals) have agency, and *choose* to be killed, and so adherence to rituals and taboos are markers of respect for the walrus' choice. "All animals are like that. They don't like going to lazy, selfish people whose only concern is to survive alone. An animal will refuse to go to a person who is only concerned about his own survival" (Bennett and Rowley 2014, 45). The cosmological interpretation of material conditions of the hunt lead to very different social norms about cooperation and conflict—not simply cooperation with other humans, but cooperation with the animals themselves (Gotfredson, Appelt, and Hastrup 2018).

The walrus hunt inverts the environmental and contextual factors of the stag hunt, and thus inverts what is rational about cooperation in conditions of anarchy. There is no tension between the individual and the general interest: not only would it be dangerous for the individual hunter to defect from the group disrupting the larger walrus hunt and capturing the ringed seal, but there is every possibility that the whole group might die from starvation or angry walruses. I am not making a deterministic argument that "Inuit societal forms, values, and practices [are] cultural responses to the harsh arctic environment" which leads to "scholars [lauding] the communitarian values associated with food sharing practices while ignoring the less egalitarian aspects of the institution" (Stern 2006, 257), but I am identifying some correlations.

SCARCITY CULTURE AND CONFLICT AVOIDANCE

Traditional Inuit knowledge promulgates norms and wisdom that focus on survival, social harmony, and the reduction of conflict. Individuals and families are not

able to survive alone, and so defection from the group was considered extremely serious and dangerous. “Failure to abide by the *maligarjuat* [law], could have serious consequences. A person might be ostracized by the community because they become known as someone not to be trusted. Elders would use [restorative justice] in attempts to restore the person, but in extreme cases, individuals might be banished from a camp—likely the equivalent of a death sentence” (Karetak and Tester 2017, 5). Survival is understood as a group task and responsibility. Children are raised to think of the general interest before their own: “Share your resources anytime you have the upper hand. Success does not remain in one place at all time” (Kalluak 2017, 42). Food from the hunt was always shared, and so to defect from the group to eat alone would also violate a fundamental Inuit *aglirnaqut* (taboo) (Attangalaq 2017, 109). Hoebel (1954) describes some postulates of Inuit law: “Life is hard and the margin of safety small. Unproductive members of society cannot be supported. All natural resources are free or common goods. The self must find its realization through action. The individual must be left free to act with a minimum of formal direction from others. For the safety of the person and the local group, individual behavior must be predictable” (69–70), which again speaks to a different solution to Waltz’s concern about unpredictable behavior.

The central value associated with Inuit hunting is respect. “Walrus hunting required extensive organization to ensure that the kill was *cakarpeknaki*, which is to say respectful to the animals and without waste” (Miller and Miller 2014, 58). And, a further cultural prohibition for defection from the group hunt is the strict separation of walrus meat from other foodstuffs, including caribou, seals, or salmon (Miller and Miller 2014, 62–3). This *aglirnaqut* means that a defecting hunter could not bring the seal back to camp. In short, the structural cultural logic of the stag hunt is different in the walrus hunt. To defect from the general walrus hunt would be dangerous for the group, if not unthinkable, and the defector would be understood to be mad or at the very least a grave danger to the other members of the group. The culture embodies a radically different social answer to the question of scarcity. This is not to make Wendt (1992) or Snyder’s (2002) versions of a materialist argument that the conditions of scarcity exclusively *determine* the social conditions of anarchy. Rather this demonstrates that even in conditions of radical scarcity, other anarchies are available.

Group cohesion, conflict avoidance, and sharing are core Inuit values. “Unhappiness, discontent and irritation were kept to oneself or formulated as cheerful jokes, partly because unhappy people were considered dangerous. It was thought that such individuals might resort to aggression in the attempt to change their situation or overcome their dissatisfaction or unhappiness” (Briggs 2000, 11). The effect of this desire for social cohesion also colors other kinds of calculation: “Alliances could be dangerous too, creating factions and escalating conflict by spreading it more widely, so people did not ask one another for support when they were at odds”

(Briggs 2000, 11).¹¹ Defection from the group—rather than being understood as a rational strategy that did not endanger the whole group (as in Rousseau’s stag hunt) could result in chiding, joking, gossiping, banishment, or death. “... Inuit justice was used solely to maintain the harmony and stability of the group. Anyone who became too quarrelsome or lacked self-control, or perhaps robbed another man’s cache, became a threat to the community as a whole. When that happened, one person or more, either self-appointed or designated by the group, would dispose of the threat” (Bennett and Rowley 2014, 105). Scarcity, in this context, does not lead to individualistic self-help, but rather communal conflict avoidance through social control or *in extremis* the killing of the selfish.

This is emphatically not to make the argument that Inuit, even the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Inuit, are “natural” or naturally peaceful in the way that Rousseau or Hobbes might have thought. Inuit have a rich philosophy and complex society that has enabled them to thrive in extreme conditions (and survive historical and on-going colonization). My argument here is that the nonhuman and social environment of the stag hunt has been taken for granted in previous analyses. The walrus hunt highlights the effect of nature, the environment, and social and material context by radically changing the context for cooperation and defection, as we can demonstrate with the Inuit cultural practices that emerged to condition a conflict-avoidant rationality. By placing a different conception of how social harmony is maintained,¹² a different cultural rationality emerges. Within a rubric of traditional knowledge that focused on survival and social harmony, a cosmology that granted agency and respect to human and nonhuman actants equally, and a harsh environment that itself was dangerous, the rational actor is not faced with a clear choice about short-term individual interest or long-term general welfare. The sociocultural-material context of anarchy is radically different.

CONSTRUCTIVISM AND THE NONHUMAN

In the strongest constructivist critique, Wendt (1992) contends that Waltz’s argument about the self-help nature of anarchy is incorrect.

Self-help and power politics do not follow either logically or causally from anarchy and that if today we find ourselves in a self-help world, this is due to process, not structure. There is no “logic” of anarchy apart from the

¹¹ Placing that particular vision of group harmony at the center of Inuit cultural rationality demonstrates that the IR mainstream assumptions about balancing and band-wagoning are culturally relativistic and also representative of a particular European-influenced worldview.

¹² The European model of social harmony, set out by Rousseau and others, depends upon a particular sense of the separation between politics and economy, between disputes and survival, that facilitates group cohesion through contracts and individualism.

practices that create and instantiate one set of identities and interests rather than another. (394–5)

Identity and interests are constructed by states through their interactions and the meaning that they attribute to selves and others (Wendt 1987). In this phase, Wendt remains staunchly anthropocentric,¹³ focusing on questions of identity and identity-formation through the lens of rationality and intentionality. Constructivism, then, accounts for the internal dynamics of the formation of anarchy, but defers any materialist explanation of the contexts in which those social dynamics occur. Wendt (1999) characterizes a strong version of “the materialist hypothesis,” which he argues “must be that material forces *as such*—what might be called ‘brute’ material forces—drive social norms” (24). Because material forces are only ever granted social meaning through ideas, it is “ideas all the way down” (Wendt 1999, 135). The question of scarcity, in this logic, is also socially-constructed, whatever the brute facts of the material. Latour challenges this view in his descriptions of how ideas come to become facts, which he demonstrates is an equally material and social process (Latour and Woolgar 1979). Brute material forces are always represented in some scientific and political way, to be sure, but those representations are also material (papers, observations, articles, schools, and tenured professors) and come to be materialized and concretized (Callon and Latour 1981). When those ideas have become themselves material, they come to have effects that cannot be reduced to the ideas that were the catalyst for the relation.

In Wendt’s early work, there is no substantive consideration of the agency or sovereignty of nonhumans, except for a thought experiment an alien encounter. Wendt (1992) asks a rhetorical question: “Would we assume, a priori, that we were about to be attacked if we are ever contacted by members of an alien civilization? I think not. We would be highly alert, of course, but whether we placed our military forces on alert or launched an attack would depend on how we interpreted the import of their first gesture for our security—if only to avoid making an immediate enemy out of what may be a dangerous adversary” (405).¹⁴ The encounter between human and nonhuman would definitely be anarchical, but, he argues, not inherently conflictual. Animals and the climate cannot make legal covenants, but nonetheless humans are in scientific-political relation to them. The sovereign relation has historically been exercised over the nonhuman or less-than-human—land and territory (Coulthard 2014; Crawford 2017, 110), animals (Wadiwel 2009), and in the colonial sense of domination over Indigenous peoples (Moreton-Robinson 2015). While Wendt and Duvall (2008) conclude that the invalidation of knowledge about UFOs represents a political move to

circumscribe challenges to the presumed capacity of the sovereign state, we might push them to differentiate between the agential capacity of aliens, animals, and climate change. The boundaries of knowledge production about animals and human nature are always blurry. Indeed, one might read those Inuit cultural precepts about hunting customs described above as covenants with animals, the land, and the climate. Climate change is a force that cannot be predicted, may not be susceptible to influence, and is a radically powerful, nonhuman force that might destroy human civilization if we are not able to change its current path (Connolly 2017), but we are in scientific-political relation to ourselves and to the climate. The data about climate change, ecological and geological disruption due to resource extraction and the carbon cycle, the impact of urbanization and industrialized agriculture, and the active genetic manipulation of living things demonstrate that nature is not passive. Climate acts on us, climate is more powerful than us individually or collectively, climate is in relation to us, but in theorizing that relationality, many theorists do not accord it rationality, calculation, subjectivity, or interests. Similarly, the ocean temperature and sea levels have radical impacts on the possibility of human life and contemporary forms of capitalism and urbanism. While we accord the climate patterns of reaction (to carbon and other greenhouse gases), we do not impute cognition, subjectivity, or sociality. If we ask science if there is evidence of agency and sociality in nonhuman spheres, there is.¹⁵ And, in a parallel to Wendt and Duvall’s (2008) critique, Latour (2017; 2018) points out that the politicization of scientific knowledge production about climate change has the effect of reinforcing the (in)capacity of sovereignty to cope with this challenge. But the character of anarchical relations is profoundly conditioned by these climatic changes: anarchy is what nature makes of it. Thus, our natural conditions of scarcity or vulnerability are conditioned by these nonhuman actors that in our current mode of theorizing are reduced to disentangled externalities. I will return to this crucial assumption below, because an important consequence of my thesis is that relations under anarchy are also constructed socially within an agential natural world.

TAKING THE NONHUMAN SERIOUSLY

Latour’s (1993; 2017) diagnosis of modernism is undeniably demonstrated in the age of the Anthropocene: it is impossible and dangerous to conceptually separate nature from culture, the natural from the human. How can we take these nonhuman actors like animals, the climate, and the nature seriously in our analysis of anarchy? Wendt and Duvall have opened the analytical door to thinking about other, nonhuman forms of agency to illustrate the limits of sovereignty and the culture of anarchy. While their point is about the

¹³ Wendt’s (2003) “Why a World State is Inevitable” draws that argument without any consideration of nonhuman factors, but Wendt’s (2015) *Quantum Mind and Social Science* seems to give a lot more agency to the nonhuman.

¹⁴ Inayatullah and Blaney (1996, 72) make a similar point.

¹⁵ Fishel (2017) and du Plessis (2018) demonstrate how to make this argument about nonhuman agency with much smaller things.

ontological status of the question of knowledge about UFOs and alien civilizations, the interrogation of the relationship between the limits of scientific knowledge as it relates to the project of sovereign statehood is precisely germane to this argument. What questions are askable by politics is a function of what questions are answerable by science (Latour 1993). While all material forces are represented in discourse, the material is not reducible to the social and the social is always already also material. The instantiation of states, institutions, boundaries, and so forth, what makes a state different from a civilization or a jazz band is precisely its material accretion (Callon and Latour 1981).

Theories of anarchy and sociality are often constructed in relation to “nature,” but do not take nature seriously (Corry 2017; Goodwin 2010). Hobbes justifies his grounding of the Leviathan by describing the State of Nature in philosophical terms, but also in reference to IR (Christov 2017). First, Hobbes (1962) references how this state of war exists in the world: “It may peradventure be thought that there was never such a time nor condition of war as this; and I believe it was ever generally so, over all the world: but there are many places where they live so now. For the savage people in many places of America... have no government at all, and live at this day in that brutish manner” (101; Shaw 2008). Mills (1997) points out that Indigenous people, “a nonwhite people, indeed the very nonwhite people upon whose land his fellow Europeans were then encroaching, is [Hobbes’] only real-life example of people in a state of nature” (65). He continues: “there is a tacit racial logic in the text: the *literal* state of nature is reserved for nonwhites; for whites the state of nature is *hypothetical*” (Mills 1997, 65–6; cf. Henderson 2013). Indigenous peoples are understood in both Hobbes and Rousseau to be of nature, living in harmony with nature according to natural law (in sharp contradistinction to political society) (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004). Placing the State of Nature in a state of nature has the effect of universalizing the cultural rationality of their historical context within a proto-scientific anthropology (Jahn 2000).

Latour (1993) writes “Hobbes creates the naked calculating citizen, whose rights are limited to possessing and to being represented by the artificial construction of the Sovereign. He also creates the language according to which Power equals Knowledge, an equation at that is at the root of the entire modern Realpolitik” (26). However, that set of individual rational calculations by multiple citizens is reflected by the single and singular representative voice of the Sovereign. The process of representation, of the composition of the sovereign voice, is of course social: “the Leviathan is made up only of citizens, calculations, agreements or disputes. In short, it is made up of nothing but social relations” (Latour 1993, 28). While Hobbes’ state of war appears to have emptied out these social relations in his appeal to the State of Nature, and the misapprehended state of Indigenous peoples, Latour (1993) demonstrates that, in fact, the Leviathan is social all the way down. But Latour does not stop with that point. Scientific facts about nature, indeed about all

nonhuman elements, are representable only through scientific discourse (29). These discourses function to separate out the natural and the social, while allowing both to be mobilized for the stabilization of the other. The social realm of the Leviathan is justified with relation to nature and the State of Nature; but the Leviathan transcends any particular natural fact or the actual state of nature. What Latour misses in his analysis of Hobbes, the State of Nature, and sovereignty is precisely the *international* character of sovereignty. Hobbes (1962) justifies the existence of the State of Nature by pointing to inter-state relations: “yet in all times kings and persons of sovereign authority, because of their independency, are in continual jealousies, and in the state and posture of gladiators, having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms, and continual spies upon their neighbours, which is a posture of war” (101). It is not just sovereignty, then, that is related to nature and Indigenous peoples. Anarchy is placed in nature, among (abstracted) Indigenous peoples, before, opposed to, or elsewhere from society; and anarchical IR opposed to ordered society.

In short, Latour arrives at the same conclusion as Wendt from an entirely different direction. IR and anarchy in nature are both constructed by social relations all the way down. What Latour adds to our constructivist framing of the political theory of anarchy is the material and the colonial. Methodologically, he argues that, if we are to reject the false dichotomy between scientific and political facts, and the inherent naturalization of non-Western knowledge, then we must be utterly agnostic as to what kind of actor—human or nonhuman, Western, or non-Western—will have an impact on a particular controversy or assemblage. And, there is a relatively obvious argument about the Eurocentrism of the discipline, that relegates Indigenous and non-Western ways of knowing to the realm of culture (Hobson 2012; 2022).

To set out the more controversial part of this method: there is both a weak contextual, and a strong argument about the nature of the agency of nonhuman actors here. The nonhuman as context argument is easily demonstrable (and common ground for realists, liberals, and Marxists alike): nonhuman factors like resource distribution, ecological conditions, and environmental factors determine the systemic conditions of scarcity between states which determine payoff structures that will predispose different logics of anarchy. Climate change will affect sea levels, which will create scarcity problems that may force sovereign states to cooperate and collaborate in new ways to solve. In *Facing Gaia*, Latour (2017) argues that the contemporary sovereign state system is fundamentally unable to politically or scientifically manage climate change, which is why he proposes a new *nomos* of the earth: Gaia. If New York, Hong Kong, Singapore, and London all disappear because of rising sea levels, states will be unable to behave in anarchy as they do now. And, as Connolly (2017) argues, from a different avenue, these anthropogenic changes will require

innovative, imaginative, and novel political structures that exceed our current imagination.

The stronger argument is that nonhuman actors have agency, even though they lack consciousness, rationality, or intentionality. Latour (2005) defines agency as that which has an effect. He polemically claims: “one cannot call oneself a social scientist and pursue only some links—the moral, legal, and symbolic ones—and stop as soon as there is some physical relation interspersed in between the others. That would render any enquiry impossible” (78). Let us also put it polemically: the sea does not perceive the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, COP21, the Paris Agreement, or the efforts of states to reduce greenhouse gas emission, but that is not the same as saying that the sea does not react to the actions done in relation to or because of those regimes. It does react to external stimuli and may rise and destroy large swaths of human civilization. It freezes and melts in reaction to climatic conditions like global warming or the little ice age brought on by the decimation of American Indigenous peoples after contact (Davis and Todd 2017). We only ever learn about the prospects for action (or reaction) by nonhuman entities like the sea, through the representation of the sea by scientists and other stakeholders. Politics is at the heart of this process of (re)presentation of entities, interests, and actions. At the moment, in discussion about climate change, COP21, and other international actions, there is a fundamental disagreement about the facts of the problem (Latour 2017). My argument here is slightly different from Latour (2018), Grove (2019), and Burke et al.’s (2016) “Planet Politics” manifesto, because I argue the coming resource scarcity need not lead to radical pessimism. What I am arguing is that regardless of how IR scholars theorize the prospects of anarchy in the Anthropocene, anthropogenic changes radically structure the conditions of global political (and economic and social) life. It is empirically wrong and dangerously naïve to presume that nature, the environment, and our material conditions derive their space of action by our understanding or theorization of them. If it has an effect, Latour (2005, 73) says, it acts, so let us not prejudge what might have an effect. If we restrict our conception of agency to rational, utility-maximizing calculating humans that socially construct anarchical relations, and that it is “ideas all the way down,” then we might miss the capacity of the Anthropocene to recondition anarchy in radically new ways. However, Anthropocene anarchy will not necessarily be more cooperative or conflictual than modernist anarchy, as I can demonstrate below.

CONCLUSION

The mainstream assumption that anthropogenic climate change will not alter the payoff structure for international cooperation is part of the long shadow of this assumption about a separation between politics and nature, and the universality of European modern rationalities, leading to a deluge of neo-Malthusianism doom scenarios or creative reimaginings of the global system.

In an era of radical climate change, ecological collapse, and global pandemics, the pressing question of the Anthropocene is the degree to which we can theorize or practice politics differently. Harrington (2016) poses the same kind of epistemological critique of IR as a knowledge practice in relation to state sovereignty that Wendt and Duvall do about aliens: the Anthropocene crisis poses a radical question to the capacity of the sovereign state and the international system to engage with the nonhuman. My answer is complementary to the “Planetary Politics” manifesto by Burke et al. (2016), because I am profoundly sympathetic with the call for radical rethinking of the boundaries of academic fields and the separation of scientific and political knowledges, and the urgency with which they speak. However, in addition to looking in a straight, unflinching way that the contemporary geopolitical landscapes, dominated as they are by sovereign states, have represented the challenge of climate change or biodiversity collapse as outside of their jurisdiction, we must also look to alternate ways of living with scarcity that have been ignored because of the Eurocentric bias in our discipline.

One contemporary example of the need to think otherwise about the prospect for cooperation and the long-shadow of settler-colonialism is the current food-security state for Inuit who had historically hunted walrus in our example. While affecting Canada’s Indigenous population more severely than other populations, “The [food security] crisis is most acute in Nunavut, where 18.5% of households are severely food insecure. Nunavut has the highest documented food insecurity prevalence rate for any Indigenous population residing in a developed country in the world” (Public Policy Forum 2015). There is “a high prevalence of food insecurity among homes with preschoolers in Nunavut, with nearly 70% of children residing in homes with household food insecurity and 56% residing in households with child food insecurity” (Egeland et al. 2010, 247). Because of the food prices in the North are exponentially more expensive, combined with a shortage of wage labor and thus increased household poverty, many families eat “country food”—traditional food like walrus and seal hunted on the land (Egeland et al. 2011). This mixed economy and the resultant food insecurity is the direct result of Canadian occupation of the North, the imposition of a wage economy that replaced hunting and trapping for money rather than subsistence hunting for food in the early twentieth century, and then external restriction on traditional hunting and fishing and the collapse of the fur market in the mid-century and more recently with the seal ban (Watt-Cloutier 2015, 67). But, the Inuit traditional cultural value of sharing exhibited above have persisted despite colonialism and recent government attempts to address food insecurity. “Today we have people moving in from other places... I try to be kind to them and give them food... you might not always be a successful hunter, but in order to be a good hunter you must be a giver, especially to the Elders” (Ayalik 2017, 100). In the face of radical scarcity and the colonial imposition of a broken economic system,

Nunavummiut are constantly advocating for traditional knowledge that valorizes coordination with one another, rather than cooperation with the colonial apparatus (Stevenson 2014, 49–55). And yet, the climate crisis may lead to the endangerment of the walrus and the mixed economy upon which Inuit rely.

Again, this is not to fetishize Indigenous ways of knowing—in this I agree completely with Latour, without prejudice, let them earn their value. But he may be right in pointing out that Indigenous societies have been dealing with catastrophic threats (colonialism) much longer than anthropologists (climate change), and that we may have something to learn about resilience (Latour and Miranda 2017).¹⁶ The costs of the Inuit culture of conflict avoidance may be higher than the costs of individualistic culture of self-help, but that should be established and not assumed. If cooperation becomes embedded in a new set of cultural expectations and norms, it is not clear that this is necessarily progressive or emancipatory because dissent, independence, and critical ideas are strongly discouraged in favor of traditional knowledge and received wisdom. However, we must confront the material and social dimensions of the problem of climate change equally and agnostically if we are to actively engage in the construction of the logic of Anthropocene anarchy. Decolonizing the discipline requires a double move that we both acknowledge the colonial inheritances of our past theorization and then move forward mindful of those elided experiences, concepts, and theories.

This symmetrical anthropology approach also requires that the human and the nonhuman must prove their impact, equally and without presumption. Corry (2017) argues, in “breaking down the analytical distinction between human and nonhuman, the challenge is to not subsume one under the other: either risk treating all natural systems as pliable and socially constructed; or treating social life as simply a subset of the natural world, rendered from the same matter and subject to the same (scientific) methods of knowing” (111). Rather, it is the holding-open of the category of agency to allow for relations to be constructed and maintained through both material and ideational connections. The state is not simply an abstract idea, but is concretized (often literally) in documents, buildings, uniforms, and codes of conduct (Callon and Latour 1981). Similarly, matter matters for IR—not only in terms of borders, buildings, and bombs, but also in terms of pandemics, oceans, and walruses. Brute material facts condition, but do not determine, the social construction of anarchy.

If anarchy is to remain a keystone for the discipline of IR, we must analyze it effectively and mindful of the heterogeneous shapes it might take. To supplement the constructivist theory that “anarchy is what states make of it,” I have demonstrated that anarchy is what states, the sea, walrus, and Inuit make of it, and that the

structural conditions of anarchy are also shaped by nonhuman agents like the environment, the climate, and animals. I have also clearly demonstrated that human and nonhuman agents negotiate or mutually construct societal rules in conditions of anarchy that are based on relations, but not necessarily based on identity. Building on Latour’s engagement with political theory and Inuit IQ, I have also demonstrated that there are multiple sites for investigation, testing, and teaching of anarchy. Scholars might learn as much about anarchy in the Arctic as they may by reading Rousseau, again, although if they do read Rousseau, then they should do so in context. Emphatically, I insist that any future consideration of IR and the social construction of anarchy must engage with the nonhuman as much as the human, with no anthropocentric prejudice that only humans have agency or effect, and with anthropological agnosticism.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank interlocutors Tarak Barkawi, Tristen Naylor, Kate Millar, Jairus Grove, Debbie Lisle, Michael Murphy, and Françoise Moureau-Johnson and the uOttawa Centre for Academic Leadership. The author would also like to thank the editors for their patience and forbearance, the reviewers for their rigor and generosity, and the innumerable colleagues and friends who have assisted this long-gestating project. Earlier versions of this argument have been presented at the University of Hawaii, London School of Economics, Queen’s University Belfast, the Millennium Conference, the International Studies Association, and the Pan-European Conference on International Relations.

FUNDING STATEMENT

The author acknowledges the financial support of the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

ETHICAL STANDARD

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

REFERENCES

- Alvard, Michael S., and David A. Nolin. 2002. “Rousseau’s Whale Hunt? Coordination among Big-Game Hunters.” *Current Anthropology* 43 (4): 533–59.

¹⁶ I am mindful of Chandler and Reid’s (2019) critique that the association of indigenous cultures with resilience represents a dangerous neoliberal appropriation of difference, which is why this kind of symmetrical anthropology needs to be approached with a great deal of care and humility.

- Arneil, Barbara. 1996. *John Locke and America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ashley, Richard. 1988. "Untying the Sovereign State: A Double Reading of the Anarchy Problematique." *Millennium* 17 (2): 227–62.
- Attangalaaq, Norman. 2017. "Conscientious Planning." In *Inuit Qaujimanjatuqangit: What Inuit Have Always Known to Be True*, eds. Joe Karetak, Frank Tester, and Shirley Tagalik, 102–11. Halifax, Canada: Fernwood.
- Ayalik, Alice. 2017. "Inutstapagutit (Inuit Teachings)." In *Inuit Qaujimanjatuqangit: What Inuit Have Always Known to Be True*, eds. Joe Karetak, Frank Tester, and Shirley Tagalik, 89–101. Halifax, Canada: Fernwood.
- Bedford, David, and Thom Workman. 1997. "The Great Law of Peace: Alternative Inter-Nation(al) Practices and the Iroquoian Confederacy." *Alternatives* 22 (1): 87–111.
- Beier, J. Marshall. 2005. *International Relations in Uncommon Places: Indigeneity, Cosmology and the Limits of International Theory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Beier, J. Marshall, ed. 2009. *Indigenous Diplomacies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bennett, John and Susan Rowley. 2014. *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's Press.
- Bodenhorn, Barbara. 1990. "I'm Not the Great Hunter, My Wife Is: Inupiat and Anthropological Models of Gender." *Études/Inuit/Studies* 14 (1/2): 55–74.
- Briggs, Jean L. 2000. "Conflict Management in a Modern Inuit Community." In *Hunters and Gathers in the Modern World*, eds. Peter P. Schweitzer, Megan Biesele, and Robert K. Hitchcock, 110–24. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Burke, Anthony, Stefanie Fishel, Audra Mitchell, Simon Dalby, and Daniel Levine. 2016. "Planet Politics: A Manifesto for the End of IR." *Millennium* 44 (3): 499–523.
- Callon, Michel, and Bruno Latour. 1981. "Unscrewing the Big Leviathan: How Actors Macro-Structure Reality and How Sociologists Help Them Do So." In *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology*, eds. Karin Knorr-Cetina and Aaron V. Cicourel, 277–303. Boston, MA: Routledge and Keegan Paul.
- Capan, Zeynep Gulsah. 2017. "Decolonising International Relations?" *Third World Quarterly* 38 (1): 1–15.
- Chandler, David, and Julian Reid. 2019. *Becoming Indigenous: Governing Imaginaries in the Anthropocene*. London: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Chandler, David, and Julian Reid. 2020. "Becoming Indigenous: The 'Speculative Turn' in Anthropology and the (Re)Colonisation of Indigeneity." *Postcolonial Studies* 23 (4): 485–504.
- Christov, Theodore. 2017. "The Invention of Hobbesian Anarchy." *Journal of International Political Theory* 13 (3): 296–310.
- Connolly, William E. 2017. *Facing the Planetary: Entangled Humanism and the Politics of Swarming*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Corry, Olaf. 2017. "The 'Nature' of International Relations: From Geopolitics to the Anthropocene." In *Reflections on the Posthuman in International Relations*, eds. Clara Eroukhanoff and Matt Harker, 102–18. Bristol: E-International Relations.
- Coulthard, Glen S. 2014. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Crawford, Neta C. 1994. "A Security Regime among Democracies: Cooperation among Iroquois Nations." *International Organization* 48 (3): 345–85.
- Crawford, Neta C. 2017. "Native Americans and the Making of International Society." In *The Globalization of International Society*, eds. Tim Dunne and Christian Reus-Smit, 103–22. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cudworth, Erika, and Stephen Hobden. 2011. *Posthuman International Relations: Complexity, Ecologism and Global Politics*. London: Zed Books.
- Davis, Heather, and Zoe Todd. 2017. "On the Importance of a Date, or, Decolonizing the Anthropocene." *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 16 (4): 761–80.
- Der Derian, James. 1998. "The Scriptures of Security." *Mershon International Studies Review* 42 (1): 117–22.
- Desjardin, Sean P. A. 2020. "Neo-Inuit Strategies for Ensuring Food Security during the Little Ice Age Climate Change Episode, Foxe Basin, Arctic Canada." *Quaternary International* 549 (30): 163–75.
- Donnelly, Jack. 2012. "The Elements of the Structures of International Systems." *International Organization* 66 (4): 609–43.
- Donnelly, Jack. 2015. "The Discourse of Anarchy in IR." *International Theory* 7 (3): 393–425.
- Du Plessis, Gritte. 2018. "When Pathogens Determine the Territory: Toward a Concept of Non-Human Borders." *European Journal of International Relations* 24 (2): 391–413.
- Egeland, Grace M., Angela Pacey, Ziron Cao, and Isaac Sobol. 2010. "Food Insecurity among Inuit Preschoolers: Nunavut Inuit Child Health Survey, 2007–2008." *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 182 (3): 243–8.
- Egeland, Grace M., Laakkuluk Williamson-Bathory, Louise Johnson-Down, and Isaac Sobol. 2011. "Traditional Food and Monetary Access to Market-Food: Correlates of Food Insecurity among Inuit Preschoolers." *International Journal of Circumpolar Health* 70 (4): 373–83.
- Ellanna, Linda J. 1988. "Skin Boats and Walrus Hunters of the Bering Strait." *Arctic Anthropology* 25 (1): 107–19.
- Epp, Roger. 2001. "At the Wood's Edge: Toward a Theoretical Clearing for Indigenous Diplomacies in International Relations." In *International Relations—Still an American Social Science: Towards Diversity in International Thought*, eds. Robert M. A. Crawford and Darryl S. L. Jarvis, 299–324. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Fishel, Stefanie R. 2017. *Microbial State*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Frechette, Robert, ed. 2013. *Arvik! In Pursuit of the Bowhead Whale*. Montreal, QC: Nunavik Publications.
- Goodwin, Adam. 2010. "Evolution and Anarchism in International Relations: The Challenge of Kropotkin's Biological Ontology." *Millennium* 39 (2): 417–37.
- Godfredson, Anne Birgitte, Martin Appelt, and Kristen Hastrup. 2018. "Walrus History around the North Water: Human–Animals Relations in a Long-Term Perspective." *Ambio* 47 (Suppl 2): S193–S212.
- Grove, Jairus V. 2019. *Savage Ecology: Geopolitics at the End of the World*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Harrington, Cameron. 2016. "The Ends of the World: International Relations and the Anthropocene." *Millennium* 44 (3): 478–98.
- Havercroft, Jonathan, and Alex Prichard. 2017. "Anarchy and International Relations Theory: A Reconsideration." *Journal of International Political Theory* 13 (3): 252–65.
- Henderson, Errol A. 2013. "Hidden in Plain Sight: Racism in International Relations Theory." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 26 (1): 71–92.
- High, Holly. 2012. "Anthropology and Anarchy: Romance, Horror or Science Fiction?" *Critique of Anthropology* 32 (2): 93–108.
- Hill, Erica. 2011. "The Historical Ecology of Walrus Exploitation in the North Pacific." In *Human Impacts on Seals, Sea Lions, and Sea Otters: Integrating Archaeology and Ecology in the North Pacific*, eds. Todd J. Braje and Torben C. Rick, 41–64. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hobbes, Thomas. 1962. *Leviathan*. New York: Macmillan.
- Hobson, John M. 2012. *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760–2010*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobson, John M. 2022. "Unmasking the Racism of Orthodox International Relations/International Political Economy Theory." *Security Dialogue* 53 (1): 3–20.
- Hoebel, E. Adamson. 1954. "The Eskimo: Rudimentary Law in a Primitive Anarchy." In *The Law of Primitive Man: A Study of Comparative Legal Dynamics*, 67–100. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Inayatullah, Naeem, and David Blaney. 1996. "Knowing Encounters: Beyond Parochialism in International Relations Theory." In *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory*, eds. Friedrich Kratochwil and Joseph Lapid, 65–84. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Inayatullah, Naeem, and David Blaney. 2004. *International Relations and the Problem of Difference*. New York: Routledge.
- Jahn, Beate. 2000. *The Cultural Construction of International Relations: The Invention of the State of Nature*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Jervis, Robert. 1978. "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma." *World Politics* 30 (2): 167–214.
- Jones, Branwen Gruffydd, ed. 2006. *Decolonizing International Relations*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Kalluak, Mark. 2017. "About Inuit Qaujimanjatuqangit." In *Inuit Qaujimanjatuqangit: What Inuit Have Always Known to Be True*, eds. Joe Karetak, Frank Tester, and Shirley Tagalik, 41–60. Halifax, Canada: Fernwood.
- Karetak, Joe, and Frank Tester. 2017. "Inuit Quajimajatuqangit, Truth and Reconciliation." In *Inuit Qaujimanjatuqangit: What Inuit Have Always Known to Be True*, eds. Joe Karetak, Frank Tester, and Shirley Tagalik, 1–19. Halifax, Canada: Fernwood.
- Knoll, Martin. 2004. "Hunting in the Eighteenth Century: An Environmental History Perspective." *Historical Social Research* 29 (3): 9–36.
- Kohn, Eduardo. 2013. *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology beyond the Human*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kropotkin, Peter. 2006. *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution*. New York: Dover.
- Krupnik, Igor, and G. Carleton Ray. 2007. "Pacific Walruses, Indigenous Hunters and Climate Change: Bridging Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge." *Deep-Sea Research II: Topical Studies in Oceanography* 54 (23–26): 2946–57.
- Latour, Bruno. 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Latour, Bruno. 2004. *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Latour, Bruno. 2005. *Reassembling the Social*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Latour, Bruno. 2017. *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*. New York: Wiley.
- Latour, Bruno. 2018. *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime*, trans. Catherine Porter. New York: Polity.
- Latour, Bruno, and Carolina Miranda. 2017. "A Dialog about a New Meaning of Symmetric Anthropology." In *Comparative Metaphysics—Ontology after Anthropology*, eds. Pierre Charbonnier, Gildas Salmon, and Peter Skafish, 327–45. London: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Latour, Bruno, and Steve Woolgar. 1979. *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Laugrand, Frédéric, and Jarich Oosten. 2015. *Hunters, Predators, and Prey: Inuit Perceptions of Animals*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Lewis, Simon L., and Mark A. Maslin. 2015. "Defining the Anthropocene." *Nature* 519: 171–80.
- McGrath, Janet Tamalik. 2018. *The Qaggiq Model: Toward a Theory of Inuktitut Knowledge Renewal*. Iqaluit, NU: Nunavut Arctic College Media.
- Miller, John, and Louise Miller. 2014. *Walrus*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Mills, Charles W. 1997. *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Moloney, Pat. 2011. "Hobbes, Savagery, and International Anarchy." *American Political Science Review* 105 (1): 189–204.
- Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. 2015. *The White Possessive: Property, Power and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Pateman, Carole, and Charles W. Mills. 2007. *Contract and Domination*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Prichard, Alex. 2016. "Anarchy." In *Concepts in World Politics*, ed. Felix Bereskoetter, 125–41. New York: Sage.
- Public Policy Forum. 2015. "Toward Food Security in Canada's North." Summary Report, Ottawa. <https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Toward-Food-Security-in-Canadas-North-PPF-report.pdf>.
- Rosenow, Doerthe. 2018. "Decolonising the Decolonisers? Of Ontological Encounters in the GMO Controversy and Beyond." *Global Society* 33 (1): 81–99.
- Rousseau, Jean Jacques. 2004. *A Discourse upon the Origin and the Foundation of Inequality among Mankind*. Salt Lake City, UT: Project Gutenberg.
- Sabaratanam, Meera. 2011. "IR in Dialogue... but Can We Change the Subjects? A Typology of Decolonising Strategies for the Study of World Politics." *Millennium* 39 (3): 781–803.
- Salter, Mark B., ed. 2015. *Making Things International 1*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Salter, Mark B., ed. 2016. *Making Things International 2*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Schmidt, Brian. 1998. *The Political Discourse of Anarchy*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Schulte, Regina. 1994. *The Village in Court: Arson, Infanticide, and Poaching in the Court Records of Upper Bavaria, 1848–1910*, trans. Barrie Selman. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Serres, Michel. 1995. *The Natural Contract*, trans. Elizabeth MacArthur and William Paulson. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Shaw, Karena. 2008. *Political Theory and Indigeneity: Sovereignty and the Limits of the Political*. New York: Routledge.
- Shilliam, Robbie. 2010. "The Perilous but Unavoidable Terrain of the Non-West." In *International Relations and Non-Western Thought: Imperialism, Colonialism and Investigations of Global Modernity*, ed. Robbie Shilliam, 12–25. London: Routledge.
- Simpson, Audra. 2014. *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sjoberg, Laura. 2017. "The Invisible Structures of Anarchy: Gender, Orders, and Global Politics." *Journal of International Political Theory* 13 (3): 325–40.
- Skryms, Brian. 2001. "The Stag Hunt." *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 75 (2): 31–41.
- Snyder, Jack. 2002. "Anarchy and Culture: Insights from the Anthropology of War." *International Organization* 56 (1): 7–45.
- Souders, Paul. 2019. *Aiviq: Life with Walruses*. Iqaluit, Canada: Inhabit Media.
- Stern, Pamela. 2006. "From Area Studies to Cultural Studies to a Critical Inuit Studies." In *Critical Inuit Studies: An Anthology of Contemporary Arctic Ethnography*, eds. Pamela R. Stern and Lisa Stevenson, 253–66. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Stevenson, Lisa. 2014. *Life beside Itself: Imagining Care in the Canadian Arctic*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Thompson, Edward Palmer. 1975. *Whigs and Hunters: The Origins of the Black Act*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Todd, Zoe. 2016. "An Indigenous Feminist's Take on the Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' Is Just Another Word for Colonialism." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 29 (1): 4–22.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 2015. "Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada." Ottawa, ON: Gov't of Canada. IR4-7/2015E-PDF.
- Tucker, Karen. 2018. "Unraveling Coloniality in International Relations: Knowledge, Relationality and Strategies for Engagement." *International Political Sociology* 12 (3): 215–32.
- Wadiwel, Dinesh Joseph. 2009. "The War against Animals." *Griffith Law Review* 18 (2): 283–97.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 2001. *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Watt-Cloutier, Shelia. 2015. *The Right to Be Cold: One Woman's Story of Protecting Her Culture, the Arctic and the Whole Planet*. Toronto, ON: Allen Lane.
- Wendt, Alexander. 1987. "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory." *International Organization* 41 (3): 335–70.
- Wendt, Alexander. 1992. "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46 (2): 391–425.
- Wendt, Alexander. 1999. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wendt, Alexander. 2003. "Why a World State Is Inevitable." *European Journal of International Relations* 9 (4): 491–542.
- Wendt, Alexander. 2015. *Quantum Mind and Social Science: Unifying Physical and Social Ontology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wendt, Alexander, and Raymond Duvall. 2008. "Sovereignty and the UFO." *Political Theory* 36 (4): 607–33.
- Wenzel, George W. 2004. "From TEK to IQ: Inuit Qaujimanjatuqangit and Inuit Cultural Ecology." *Arctic Anthropology* 41 (2): 238–50.
- Williams, Michael. 1989. "Rousseau, Realism and Realpolitik." *Millennium* 18 (2): 188–204.