LANDSCAPES OF THE IMAGINATION

Icebergs and Uncertainty in Uummannaq

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Master's Thesis in Visual Anthropology
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Resumé

Grønlands smukke landskaber hjemsøger menneskers forestillinger og fantasier. Igennem historien har vestlige fortællinger og billeder præsenteret Arktis som en fremmed og fantastisk region uden at tage højde for indfødtes perspektiver. I denne produktafhandling undersøger jeg, hvilke processer, der skaber og former de landskaber, der fylder menneskers forestillingsverden med udgangspunkt i fem måneders feltarbejde fra april til september 2018 i Uummannaq i Nordvestgrønland. Ved at benytte metoder og teori baseret på billeder har jeg analyseret Uummannaq-beboeres sociale, materielle, og teknologiske relationer til landskabet omkring byen. Landskabet er et sted, som sætter mennesker i en usikker position, og de Uummannaq-beboere, jeg har mødt har en særlig måde at forholde sig til denne usikkerhed; en særlig 'modus'. I denne modus findes der en åbenhed, som ikke forhastet klassificerer fænomener. For eksempel bliver polariseringen af binære forhold så som 'det levende' og 'det døde', 'det trygge' og 'det farlige', eller 'subjektiv' og 'objektiv' tilsidestillet til fordel for en oplevelse af landskabet og vejret, der indeholder begge elementer af disse polariteter samtidigt. Frem for at forstå folks forestillinger om landskaber som abstrakte repræsentationer vælger jeg at tage udgangspunkt i, hvordan billeder bliver dannet ud fra praktiske situationer. Her bliver antropologens egen rolle og perspektiv problematisk fordi de situationer, der studeres bliver skabt i de relationer, antropologen indgår i. Dette forhold bliver yderligere problematiseret i kraft af, at jeg er dansker fordi kolonialistiske spøgelser kommer til at præge disse relationer. For at komme udenom dette problem forholder jeg mig til teoretiske forestillinger om billeder og spøgelser, som nedbryder de dikotomier, som problemet består i. På den måde kan jeg tegne et billede i min tekst og i mit produkt, som kan indebære den usikkerhed, der findes i mine møder med personer i Uummannaq, uden et behov for at rense og udslette ubehagelige nuancer. Med produktet har jeg forsøgt at bruge interaktiv digital design til at skabe en række 3-dimensionelle scener, man kan bevæge sig rundt i, som udstiller forholdet mellem Uummannaqs landskaber og de måder, mennesker danner sig billeder af dem. Ved at præsentere fotografi- og videomateriale fra mit feltarbejde i denne kontekst, bliver deres betydningen af dette materiale ændret. Jeg argumenterer for, at denne digitale teknologi kan belyse antropologiske indsigter om menneskers forestillingsevne på en ny måde, som ikke er blevet udforsket nok.

Acknowledgements

Contents

Ajorpoq

"Come on! Take the damn picture!", Ole yelled impatiently after a large chunk of ice plunged into the water below the massive approaching iceberg, seemingly annoyed with the circumstances of setting out the long-line correctly, while at the same time dealing with an incompetent fishing mate at the tiller who seemed unable to control the boat out of harm's way. Confused I yanked the tiller repeatedly from side to side, undoing the trajectory, unable to choose any direction in particular. Was the iceberg approaching us or was it me that kept sailing stupidly towards it? Either case was bad.

Dumbfounded, I let go of the tiller, stopping the engine to get at the camera dangling from my neck, taking a few pictures of the iceberg as another piece of ice came crashing down. "Are we good?", I asked. "No, it's no good", he responded, still sounding mildly annoyed. "Keep going forwards, toward the edge of *Storøen!* (Danish name for Salliarsueq Island)". He pointed with his eyes, still keeping the long line under control as I slowly brought the boat back up to speed. It was difficult to follow his orders, trying to make out the words murmured from his aging body under the noise of the engine. When we finally managed to safely get the long line glider down, I was eager to get back to town. But Ole, suddenly relaxed and cheerful, had other plans, so he persuaded me, still trembling, with a warm smile, to continue at least for a bit to hunt for seals and to catch a few of the *Malemuk* (Arctic Fulmar) chicks that were in season.

That night I could hardly sleep. I knew tomorrow morning we had to go out to the same spot to fetch the long line. What if the same iceberg was still there? Perhaps directly above the long line. When I met him the next morning outside his house, waiting for a taxi to take us and the equipment the *very* short ride to the harbour (a lifetime as a sustenance fisher and hunter takes its toll on the body, especially the legs), I told him that I didn't sleep well and was tired. "Have you been thinking about that iceberg?" he asked me. I nodded with my eyebrows. "Well I thought so. That's no good, to think in that way" he told me. "When you see an iceberg breaking, if you then start thinking 'when will it break again?', then you become scared. You shouldn't think like that. That's no good."

Returning home from Greenland and looking back at encounters like this one, sitting at a desk far away, it takes on a dreamlike visage; a memory, partly accounted for in notebooks and

photographs, still indeterminate, persisting, even at the final writing up of this thesis, to produce new thoughts and images. Analysing and writing, untangling 'reality' and determining what it is that I have actually learned during those five months about this place, its people and their relation to the fjord and its horrific icebergs, this impulse is persistently interrupted by a deep sense of uncertainty that has pervaded whatever 'data' I have produced. Reconstructing in my memory the experience of being in that boat with Ole, I am puzzled with just how 'unreal' the whole situation seems to me. The Arctic landscape that fills out the background of the images of my memory has an uncanny and mysterious aura, as it has had on many southern travellers before me. But is this experience a product of my imagination by cause of being now positioned geographically and temporally far away, granting a perspective that produces images of a certain kind? Or could it be that some features of the Arctic landscape in itself has a certain way of provoking people? Is it the work of sepulchral European ideas of old that is collectively inherited and manipulating my consciousness? This sense of uncertainty may be amplified by a specific Danish-Greenlandic colonial structure. After all it is I who was the *stranger* in that boat. Hypothetically putting myself out of the equation produces a very different image. One without strangeness and uncertainty, but one which I can only conjure up by a leap into imagination.

Ole had an opinion about my particular way of dealing with the situation. He told me that the way I was thinking about the iceberg was "no good" (*dur ikke*), a translation of the Greenlandic word *ajorpoq*, which is used all the time to judge the viability or functionality of an action or an event. The positive counter-response would be *ajungilak*, "good enough". The words *ajorpoq* and *ajungilak* are used to make judgements that are neither abstract or absolute, but contingent on the situation. Stopping to wonder about risks, wondering when the next piece of ice will fall petrifies you. It is an *impractical* way of thinking about icebergs. Nevertheless, being able to quickly choose a course of action in the face of sudden uncertainty is a crucial skill for wayfaring safely in the mischievous freezing waters.

Actually, calling the landscape mischievous, harsh, or dangerous, as Arctic landscapes are so often portrayed in global media, is incorrect (Habeck and Broz 2015: 511). Ole pointed out that I *become* scared as a cause of a specific way of thinking, implying that the landscape is not scary in and of itself. Indeed, his explanation solved the contradiction I found in people

telling me how relaxing and enjoyable it is to sail around the beautiful fjord, while at the same time agreeing that it can be very risky and dangerous to do so. Being skilful and knowledgeable, and being able to make a viable decision spontaneously is what determines whether the icebergs are frightening or not.

I had been participating in Ole's every-day work as a hunter and fisher for a few weeks during late summer, doing my best to fit in. But it was Ole who was reminding me that I should take a picture of that awesome iceberg. Thinking about this situation gives rise to the uncanny realization that I am, besides an apprentice fisher, a rookie ethnographer, and amateur video game developer, also still just another curious Danish traveller with a camera around his neck and a keen interest in seeing and depicting the beautiful landscapes.

Is my positioned and historically determined experience diametrically opposed to Ole's? I could go ahead of myself and analyse the native hunter's practical way of dwelling and working skilfully in the landscape, implicitly or explicitly opposing it to a Western scientific consciousness, which observes the environment in a disengaged, objectifying way, thus turning Ole into a noble teacher that saves a lost soul from an inauthentic being in the world. This is often the role that indigenous people have been allowed to play in the history of Western ideas, like in the writing of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who projected onto the savage the nobility he thought lacked from a modern culture severed from 'nature' (Hames 2007).

Julie Cruikshank (2005) uses the word 'encounter' to illustrate how all forms of knowledge are porous and localized in historical events, rather than static and universal. Locals and colonials share a fuzzy history, and she is concerned that eager post-colonial scholars relegate colonialism safely to the past, while continuing to define the histories of far-away Others from their home universities with their own 'universal' knowledge (ibid.: 10). It would be not only impossible but even stupid to try and untangle the encounter. In this thesis I have tried to preserve their entanglement. The way I understand landscapes in this thesis is inspired by the way Lisa Stevenson (2014) understands and uses the *images*. Citing Walter Benjamin, she uses the image as a generalized method for working with forms of knowledge that are inherently uncertain. Images are "precipitates of experience [that] are not straight-forwardly biographical, nor even true" (ibid.: 11). In this thesis I have experimented with a new media to see how it, in

its own unique way, can create other kinds of images, and if those images can communicate and retain the uncertainty Arctic life without framing it in a fixed form.

Upon closer analysis of the very modern and culturally hybridized Arctic fieldwork site of Uummannaq where I spent five months, clear distinctions between indigenous and foreign ways of experiencing the world refused to manifest themselves clearly and distinctly. The people I met in Uummannaq did not tend to present themselves as Other, and they tended to avoid answering my questions in dichotomous ways, and so, the kind of ethnographic analysis that relies on negative definitions betrays reality by erasing nuances.

In writing, it can be difficult to avoid drawing up the contrasts rather than preserving the nuances of grey. As an alternative to writing, which relies on the writer's use of analytic concepts and symbols and the reader's imagination for visualization, photography can downplay some of the difference of the Other by including the "commonalities of being human" (MacDougall 1998: 246). I agree with MacDougall that photography has important analytical potential for anthropology, but I found that photography does not solve the issue – in some situations photography can even reproduce the same problem. The semiotic functions of text and image are not clear and distinct; a text can produce images poetically, and images can be written and read like a text (Barthes 1977: 19). Neither are safe, and neither solve the issue of representation, which is particularly problematic when working with a highly aestheticized and politicized field location like the Arctic. Perhaps the ethnographic encounter was already haunted by invisible expectations of a romantic imagination, like a story written in colonial grammar, acted out on a prepared stage.

Working with the ethnographic material I had gathered, I found myself unable to satisfactorily to describe and represent the ambiguity and uncertainty of landscape experiences by means of written text and photographs, which were both too easily read into established presuppositions. I decided to experiment with constructing a digital 3D environment that can re-present my photographs in a context that uses montage and environmental story-telling, (a concept I borrow from video game design), trying to disclose encounters that are uncertain and unsettling without 'taming' them with description.

I will explore the notion that varieties of landscape experience, rather than being native to particular cultural groups, are precipitated by different 'technologies of the imagination' (Sneath et. al. 2009). By technologies here is meant the means of practical engagement that determine the perspective from where the landscape is perceived. These include people's social relationships, skills, and activities. With this perspective, 'imagination' avoids becoming a substitute word for a new essentialist notion of 'culture' (ibid.: 7).

If such technologies of the imagination are not mere objects of observation, nor social facts confined to a particular culture, then their localization extends to ethnographic methods and anthropological theories, that are themselves specific technologies that precipitate certain perspectives of the world. Through this text, reflections on theory and method are weaved together with examples from the field as well as examples from the product. I will not analyse all aspects of the product, but will point out a few selected areas, leaving the rest of interpretation to the viewer.

As an amateur video game developer, I found that this technology, with its relation to imagination, to a large extent *already* forms my landscape experiences and so, working with the medium, thinking through it, and using it as a method for audio-visual representation and analysis of my anthropological project became a natural choice. Learning the technical art of creating virtual environment in digital 3D over many years, my senses have become attuned to identifying certain features of landscape experience and converting them into simplified digital elements of colour, shape, sound, and movement that can be used to reconstruct a prototypical imitation of that experience.

I have chosen not to classify my audio-visual thesis product as either an exhibition, a video game, or an ethnographic film, and I will refer to it in this paper simply as 'my product'. It is something in between, an experiment in digital multimediality, using elements of each genre. It contains a digitally crafted environment that is viewed and controlled on a computer with a simulated 'first-person' camera perspective. It consists of separate 'scenes' that are weaved together as a story that presents photographs video from my fieldwork in imaginative contexts, illustrating the situatedness and partiality of perspectives on the landscapes of Uummannaq,

while evoking an uncanny sense of uncertainty by interrogating binaries like nature and culture, life and death, real and unreal.

To sum up, in this thesis I employ a methodology that relies on the way images can negate simplistic binary oppositions, which I use to interpret encounters like the one described above, putting them under, sometimes painful, scrutiny, explicating the aesthetics, poetics, and politics that are at play in them. Based on photographic material from my fieldwork in Uummannaq, I have attempted, with an experiment in digital environment design, to construct an audio-visual analysis that exhibits how invisible aspects of landscapes are a determining force in how they are imagined and visualized. With this approach, the thesis aims to illustrate that the landscapes of Uummannaq are a site of uncertainty, where local knowledges and Western presuppositions of the Arctic are intertwined in a convoluted landscape imaginary.

The Heart of the Arctic

"When you have to attend [...] to the mere incidents of the surface, the reality — the reality, I tell you — fades" – Joseph Conrad in The Heart of Darkness (1994: 49)

Uummannaq, which translates "heart-shape" is the name of a mountain, an island, a town, a fjord, and a geographical district located in the north-western region of Greenland. The small island with its iconic heart-shaped mountain peak stretches abruptly from the calm waters of the 100-kilometre-deep fjord. It is home to the eleventh-largest town in Greenland with around 1400 inhabitants, where I spent five months doing fieldwork. At 450 kilometres north of the Arctic circle, the sun stays above the horizon between May and August, providing a very mild summer, shielded from coastal winds by the mountainous Nuussuaq Peninsula. In November, the town is shrouded in perpetual twilight.

Today it is the district centre, surrounded by six smaller settlements, Nuugaatsiaq and Illorsuit, which are now shut down because of the tsunami that killed four people in 2017, and Niaqornat, Qaarsut, Ukkusissat, Saattut, and Ikerasak, that are infrastructurally dependent on Uummannaq, with its harbour, hospital, police station, large school, etc. With fast skiffs, snowmobiles, dogsleds, and even cars driving on the ice, the island provides easy access to the

other settlements and a great array of other destinations in the fjord. From the perspective of life lived in the fjord, Uummannaq is not isolated, though it is remote in terms of accessing the larger global transport and trade infrastructure. During the winter, the fjord is frozen, and all commutation outside the fjord has to be done by helicopter, including shipping of all food and other consumer products that has not been stored since the previous autumn.

Viewing the fjord from above when flying in with helicopter, Uummannaq really stands out as the heart of the fjord, with an expansive network of white veins carved into the snowy surface of the sea ice extruding in all directions from the coastline of the island. When I arrived by helicopter on April 20th 2018, the blinding white landscape met any expectations of what (to me) classifies as 'Arctic', the sea ice still very much well frozen and intact, despite all that I had read about the rapidly warming Arctic and receding northern sea ice.

The morning after I arrived I was told there was a sled dog race on the ice. Walking off land and treading on the ice for the first time, while looking down through deep cracks where you can faintly make out the water below, is a scary feeling for a "land crab," as they sometimes call people like me. But the activities on the ice were far from frightening. On the vast, white plane I could see two children walking in the direction of Salliarsueq Island. Guessing they were headed for the race, I followed them and soon noticed a row of scattered black spots on the horizon. As a total stranger in this environment, determining distances between objects around me and getting an impression of the scale and shape of the fjord was very difficult. For a newcomer, the landscape seems strikingly empty, with no stories to make sense of the visual impressions except the stalking images that are brought along from home.

The Arctic was placed as a blank spot beyond the edge of the known world by imaginative Europeans. During the age of exploration, the region was understood through notions of military conquest, sublime beauty, and heroic survival. (Hastrup 2007: 790-793, Habeck and Broz 2015: 512-515). The white, natural landscape is a tabula rasa for projections of the imagination. Explorers, thinkers, and artists alike have seized it as an opportunity to challenge Western rationality, without paying much attention to what the locals think (Mackenzie et al. 2016: 46-50, 63).

In "Landscape and Memory" (1995), historian Simon Schama illustrates the impact and pervasiveness of ideas about landscapes, how they shape history. Landscape stories are seductive and dangerous, but ignoring and repressing them is even more so, Schama concludes (ibid.: 134). The Arctic has been called "The Last Imaginary Place" (McGhee 2005). For centuries, even millennia, the region has haunted the imagination of southerners who fantasized about the ultimate otherworld as a polar opposition to the life they knew (ibid.: 22). McGhee goes on with expansive historical and archaeological insight to contest this exoticized image, but concedes that even for a very experienced southern visitor, the enchanted image of the landscape "cannot be entirely submerged by reality", wondering about the possibility of the mundanity of the every-day life and rational scientific knowledge of the Arctic to co-exist with more 'fantastical' landscapes of the imagination (ibid.: 273). Much has been written about the age of exploration and colonization of the Arctic under the rubric of imperial expansion, scientific investigation, and heroic survival, but few, McCorristine (2018) points out, have understood the era in terms of the stories of enchantment which were the "real currency of Arctic exploration" (ibid.: 4).

Studying landscapes in anthropology is challenging because the concept implies something external – to the world of the psyche or social facts. If the enquiry of a landscape is limited to its history in art, to its geological or biological features, or to a set of practices occurring socially among a group of people in that landscape, it is possible to position it as an object outside of the scientific inquirer, thereby prohibiting it from entering the shared world we find ourselves in. The challenge here is to look at the interface between the external and the internal, avoiding to rely on dualist concepts of 'nature' and 'culture', acknowledging its external being in itself, while at the same time exploring its place in the minds of people, all without enclosing them in conceptual frameworks of one's own making, thereby rendering the life of the landscape and its people dead still as the paint on a drying canvas.

Origins of the word landscape can be found both in the history of art (Hirsch 1995: 2) and in the shaping of land for agricultural purposes (Ingold 2011: 126). I follow Ingold's critique of the representationalist and culturalist definitions that are used by authors of landscape textbooks in wanting instead to understand landscapes as sites of both geological *and* imaginative processes (ibid.: 130). Challengers of such representationalism can be found among academics of

a 'spectral turn' (Pereen et al 2013) that are inspired by Jacques Derrida's 'hauntology' as presented in Specters of Marx (1994). Theorists of spectral geography avoid 'deadening' the landscape by using terminologies that stay within the liminal realm of ghosts, neither dead nor alive, visible or invisible, "transgressing or oscillating between thresholds, clear-cut categories and binary oppositions, blurring the distinction between natural and supernatural, objective or subjective, fact and fiction" (Roberts 2012: 393).

I explore the problem of landscapes visually with inspiration from the book "Imagining Landscapes", where Ingold introduces the painting "La condition humaine" by surrealist painter René Magritte as a metaphor for how humans perceive landscapes (Ingold 2012), which depicts a painting on canvas standing in front of a window, blocking the view. The motif of the painting is the exact same landscape that is seen outside the window pane. To Ingold, the painting illustrates how people's perception is rather like a painting of a landscape, instead of a window through which we see the landscape itself. In my product, photographs are not presented as windows to reality, but rather as the *pictures* that they are — fictitious or imagined, like the paintings people hang on walls. But in the context of the artificially constructed 3D environment that surrounds the photographs, they appear more 'real' than the walls on which they hang.

In the first scene entitled "Sublime", you find yourself in a room of anonymous and brutalist architecture, a prototypical Western art gallery, with colourful pictures on the walls. The relation between the room and the pictures is one of *distance*. They are images of a place far away from 'here', in this 'neutral' non-place. But in fact there is nothing neutral about this place, quite the contrary. It is haunted by the ghosts of colonial imagination. In this room, the Inuit is a stranger that is kept at a safe distance behind a glass display cage or in a heavy golden frame. The imagination that is precipitated in this room is based on a technology of 'othering'. Othering of the Indigenous person and othering of 'nature', and a coupling of the two. A picture of a trail of blood spills over onto the floor of the art gallery, putting the stability of the room's structure into question.

Today, the top stories about Greenland of global concern include global warming, exploitation of natural resources, independence from Denmark, social problems such as domestic abuse, suicide, and alcoholism, and recently, a rather curious story that demonstrates how

landscape narratives have very real geopolitical impact about a certain president wanting to literally buy Greenland. All of these stories present Greenland as being in a precarious situation with an uncertain future, and present its people as defenceless victims of external destructive forces (Martello 2008, Bjørst 2011: 94, Tejsner 2013, Tejsner and Veldhuis 2018).

In the scene called 'Encounters' you are walking on the blinding white sea ice lit in the afternoon sun. The people in the pictures dispels much aesthetic prejudice, you see the 'everydayness' as a stark contrast to popular representations. The activity on the ice, the sense of community, and the joy and playfulness on the (very solid) surface of the ice radically diverges from the Western mythos of the Arctic. At the sled dog race there were children playing, friendly faces chatting, anticipating the fast return of their family members. In one picture, a man is holding a large bucket oozing with black seal meat, a treat for the first dogs to return. Red stains in the snow. Further ahead a boy is holding the Greenlandic flag, which is handed to the dog driver, who catches it as he speeds past him. People clap and cheer loudly as the dogs devour the meat that is thrown to them. One of the drivers puts out his smartphone to capture the cheerful reception of his neighbours. The sled with its drivers is lifted up in the air as they sway the Greenlandic flag above them. With this image, complete with seal meat, frozen sea ice, dogs, sleds, their drivers, and their community, they are writing a history very unlike the one written by Europeans.

In this thesis I present scenes such as this one as a specific context through which an image of the landscape emerges. By understanding imagination as a precipitate of social and material technologies, as Sneath et al. (2009) presents it, we see that imagination is a process by which modernity is made heterogeneous in different contexts (ibid.: 6). The images, stories, and myths that surround Greenland are not fixed cosmologies that have a determinable outcome in Greenlandic culture. Talking about stories of 'romanticism', of 'climate change', 'science', 'ghosts', or even 'animism', we have to bracket them or add apostrophes, since they are not singular entities that *belong* to a certain culture, and their interpretation and meaning in the lives of people can not be judged a priori as either colonial and oppressive, or local and authentic.

When I told people that I was studying at Aarhus University and that I had come to learn about people's relation to the environment, they would typically think I was studying climate

change, indicating that this topic is known to interest foreigners. Being interested in uncertain environments, I had imagined that the tsunami disaster of 2017 would take centre stage in my project as a prime example of uncertainty. But during my fieldwork I became increasingly doubtful about how to understand the case. Listening to some of the victims of the event, it became apparent that they understand themselves not primarily as victims of a dangerous natural environment, but as victims of an alienating political and bureaucratic environment that did not care for them in the aftermath of the event. In my product, I have chosen not to dedicate a section explicitly to the tsunami event. I found that they did not fear the fjord, all they wanted to do was move back home, and that going out in the fjord waters is exactly what they would do to calm down and forget about the frustration of not knowing if and when their family is going to move to a new house in Uummannaq.

Doing justice to the case respectfully requires a researcher with a different set of skills, using another set of methods entirely, and bulk of knowledge which I do not possess, understanding the politics and economics governing decisions about closing and opening settlements, assessing risks, and providing subsidy and housing. After a while during my first interview, the mourning interviewee asked me coldly "have you ever been in a settlement?" to which I had to concede and say no. As I have already implied my methodological scepticism and reflexivity, I do not trust my own experience as a viable instrument for producing 'truthful' representations. Still, the situation concerning the settlements Nuugaatsiaq and Illorsuit is an elephant in the room, appearing repeatedly in widely different contexts and conversations across Uummannaq, and some tsunami victims are among the key contributors to my project.

Pelle Tejsner, in his 2013 article "Living with Uncertainties: Qeqertarsuarmiut Perceptions of Changing Sea Ice", writing from the adjacent Disko Bay area, is at odds with the global narratives of uncertainty that surround the Arctic, pointing out that the narratives take on a very different form from a life lived on the coasts of Greenland. Life in Qeqertarsuaq, (as in Uummannaq), is not experienced by locals as being in an environmental crisis. (Recount Ole telling me that the way I was thinking about the iceberg was wrong, impractical, *ajorpoq,* and made me scared). This is echoed in Tejsner's astonishment of how, in Qeqertarsuarmiut "coastal narratives", the risky and changing environment is experienced as familiar and benevolent (ibid.:

55). As the title of his article suggests, the people he met had a special way of living *with* uncertainties.

Sila as Uncertainty

'It doesn't make sense. It just happens'. With this statement, Karen had closed a prolonged discussion about how to properly understand the seasonal change of spring. It was one of the last days of my fieldwork, and I felt I still lacked 'data', so this was one of my last attempts to get some of the basics nailed down. I had been confused about some inconsistencies in what people in Uummannaq mean exactly when they use seasonal words. For instance, when people say 'winter', they seemingly refer to the period where it is possible to safely traverse fjord sea ice, although the ice sometimes stays way until June, and not to the period around winter solstice. In Uummannaq there is not a spring season like the temperate blooming after winter, only a rapid transition where ice and snow melts, leading immediately to the summer. Nevertheless people often mentioned looking forward to spring. For clarity, my questions had been quite simple.

"Do you use the same concepts of winter, spring, summer, and autumn as in Denmark?", "When you determine the season, do you think of a specific calendar day, or is it defined by the weather?", "Does the melting of the sea ice mark the spring?" I asked her. Instead of answering yes or no to my questions, she began describing the seasons.

"In the winter, there is ice, and lots of seals. In spring, it gets warmer, and the ice melts". Up until this point, I was still trying to get some certain knowledge that I felt needed before feeling confidently knowledgeable upon returning home, so I kept trying to tease out an answer.

"But what if the sea ice comes very late one year, would you not yet consider it winter? Or what if the ice lasts until way into June, and it is already summer, would you then say that there was no spring that year?"

She continued. "Spring is when the ice melts, summer is June, July, August … ".

Our discussion went on like that for a while, until I pointed out that she had contradicted herself, mentioning June as a summer month, just after agreeing that the ice that supposedly designates winter indeed sometimes lasts until June, leaving no room for a spring season.

"What you are saying doesn't make sense," I told her.

Growing slightly bothered by my incessant questioning, she replied jokingly, "It doesn't make sense. It just happens."

As we both laughed, I understood that her response could not possibly have been more appropriate. It revealed a fundamental flaw in my questions about Greenlandic ideas about 'nature'. Her statement reminds me that it is not calendar months and dates or encyclopaedic enumeration of astronomical facts, but the experience of weather, the singing of birds, or the colours of the landscape that are primary when talking about seasonal change or 'nature' in general. In these cases it is not abstract models that are the primary vehicles of knowledge. It seems that to her, it is not imperative that models, representations of the environment, "make sense," as in corresponding logically and objectively to the world. The way she described seasonal change to me as something that "just happens", through images and by joking, transgressed my way of questioning that begged for certain answers.

The way she talked to me, time and again, about memories of sailing with her husband, looking out for seals, the coming of narwhals in November, the experiences of the changing landscape and weather, and particularly the coming of spring, reminds me of a quote by Martin Heidegger, describing the blooming of a tree. "We stand outside of science. Instead we stand before a tree in bloom, for example […] The tree and we meet one another, as the tree stands there and we stand face to face with it. As we are in this relation of one to the other and before the other, the tree and we *are*." (Heidegger 1968: 41). To Heidegger, as to phenomenologists in general, it is absurd that, in Western science and philosophy the writer has to radically make his readers understand that blooming trees are not objects of science, but an experience of the world. After this break with science, he goes on to ask the reader rhetorically, "where have we leapt? Perhaps into an abyss? No! Rather onto some firm soil, […] that soil upon which we live and die" (ibid.). Heidegger must calm the reader down, catching his breath before talking the "leap" onto the soil on which we already stand. I interpret Lisa Stevenson's (2014) ethnographic encounter with uncertainty as such a leap, a willingness to dare step onto the ground of her interlocutors.

Uncertainty is a negation, and so, it is usually understood as something negative, as a *lack* of certainty. But through encounters such as the ones described above, I have come to form an

image of a kind of uncertainty which is not negative, or non-existing, but an empirical, positive quality or property that is relevant in Uummannaq, particularly in relation to the landscape. After a brief look at uncertainty, I will then go on to explore how uncertainty can be understood in a new way through *sila*, the Greenlandic word for 'weather'. Faithful to this mode, I will not present a completed theory of uncertainty and *sila*, but will keep on drawing heuristic images to the reader, which compliment the analysis and interpretation of the audio-visual product that I have produced.

The association of uncertainty with risk, vulnerability, or crisis narratives is often present in articles about the Arctic, whether it be related to the scientific forecast of climate disaster (Hastrup 2013), or the vulnerability or risk of indigenous groups (Martello 2008). Epistemological uncertainty is the lack of certain knowledge (Wolff 2006: 144) It carries positivist or Enlightenment connotations, something which can and should be replaced by certainty, darkness awaiting enlightenment (ibid.: 149). Scholars of 'traditional ecological knowledge' have pointed out a clash with Western science methodologies, stressing that colonialism and scientific research are closely related (Leduc 2007: 240). A methodology inspired by phenomenology and post-modernism in this thesis is my way of circumventing the tendency of Western science to systematically deny and destroy indigenous ways of knowing.

These prejudices fit well into European conceptions of a harsh and unforgiving landscape of danger and mystery, which is why, at first, these negative connotations had made me prejudiced to the concept, and kept me reluctant to embrace it in a thesis concerning the Arctic. It was upon reading Stevenson's "Life Beside Itself" (2014), in which uncertainty is described, not as a specific "mode", that I found an academic semblance to what I had experienced countless times in Uummannaq. Her descriptions *do* contain loss, victimhood, and mourning, and yet there is nothing negative about the uncertainty she encounters. It is, like Tejsner (2013) implies, a way of living *with* uncertainty. She recounts how one of her interlocutors talks about a certain raven which had haunted his home since the death of his uncle. When asked about the raven, if he believes that it *really is* the uncle who has returned as a raven, he responds uncannily, "I don't know – but it's still there" (ibid.: 2). Stevenson is evoking a mode of uncertainty which evades classification by language. To evade blatant contradiction or falsehood, she turns to the *image* as

a method for "captur[ing] uncertainty and contradiction without having to resolve it" (ibid.: 10). In my product, I have attempted in my own way to present pictures in such a manner that they appear *as* images – incomplete and indeterminate – and not as texts with clear messages (Barthes 1977: 22).

In recent decades, uncertainty in philosophy has increasingly been associated with a positive quality to be embraced, such as in Ted Hieberts "In Praise of Nonsense" (2012), who cites French philosophers like Jean Baudrillard and Roland Barthes in providing a defence for the sometimes seemingly relativist or even nihilist postmodern condition. He writes: "If postmodernism breaks with a horizon of truth, it is not to replace it with a horizon of rhetorical nothingness, but something more difficult still – a horizon of imaginative possibility, no longer pre-determined by principles of logic or verifiability. The post-modern doubled face appears with full paradoxical intensity – not merely as a philosophy of nihilist defiance, but also as a fragmented poetic of encounter." (ibid.: 6). What I am on to in this thesis is an uncertainty about the 'real' that does not result in petrification and 'representation anxiety', but in a leap out into the open realm of possibility.

Still on my first day of fieldwork, after the sled dog race, I was invited to go fishing with my new hosts, Niels and Sarah, whom I had contacted on Facebook that had allowed me to rent their guest room for the first two months of my stay. When I first met them in their home the evening before I already encountered an atmosphere of uncertainty that pervaded responses to my questions. Perhaps they were simply confused about the reasons for my presence there, perhaps they didn't understand my questions. In any case, I felt an immediate emotional response to a different way of communicating than what I had been used to in Denmark. But staying in Uummannaq, meeting more people, I kept noticing similar tones of voice, shrugging of shoulders, remarks of "I don't know", or simply staying silent.

Since it was a beautiful sunny Saturday, jigging for halibut was the unquestioned designated activity. Standing on a vast uninterrupted plane of ice, it is arbitrary where exactly one chooses to make a hole in order to get the best chances at catching halibut. Asking how to decide where to cut the hole, the responses were vague. Although considerations were made in the group about tides, currents, and previous attempts, this was learning by doing. No one among

the five of us knew how exactly how deep it was. "Maybe three hundred metres … Up to maybe six hundred metres", Niels said, trying to provide a qualified answer to my question. We stood there at our holes for hours on end, silently, holding the jigging braid, concentrating on any slight sensation of movement indicating a halibut on the bait, ready to pull at the right moment. But there is often doubt whether there really is a fish or not, and so Niels, who seemed to me like the experienced fisher among us, would go to the fishing line of whomever of us that was in doubt, to help determine whether there is a fish on the line or not. "I'm not sure … It feels weird. Maybe you should pull it up", Niels said to me after I had misjudged a faint wiggle for a halibut bite several times. After eight hours on the ice, I had still not caught anything.

Asking someone about the exact depth of the ocean, or whether or not she will return with catch at the end of the day, a person might answer "I don't know". The uncertainty that exists between the states of knowing and not knowing is epistemological, which is relevant when answering a question that begs for a clear answer. When I asked Hans, the electrician, "how long does it take to dry capelin?" he told me not only that it was a "*dansker-spørgsmål* (Danish question)", but that "you cannot know that. It depends on the weather", which, on the surface, looks like an answer related to epistemology, as it addresses knowing and the limits of knowledge itself. But notice the context and how he frames the response. What is relevant here is not knowledge itself, but a general attitude of wanting or needing to know, to acquire a certain model of knowledge for drying capelin, which he wanted me to adjust. There is a hidden normative *ought* not in his *cannot*, as he implies a wrong way of thinking. Recount once more Ole telling me "you shouldn't think like that". *Ajorpoq.*

After my meeting with Hans, I knew I wanted to set up an interview, and I mentioned it to him each time I met him somewhere in town. "Sure", he would say, smiling, "maybe". Setting up semi-structured interviews, or setting up any kind of arrangement in Uummannaq is an art form that few foreigners (read: Danish people) master. I heard a few Danish people complain, construction workers, film makers, people at the hospital, etc. that it was frustratingly difficult "to get things done around here." Getting more and more used to being in Uummannaq, I had to give up on trying to control the progress of my fieldwork, and control what kinds of situations and interactions I wanted to participate in, taking a leap and accepting that I was adrift, at the

mercy of however random those five months panned out. For example, I did not anticipate finding myself at one point employed at the hospital as an unskilled nursing assistant. The head nurse had simply called me on my phone, and asked to start working there, starting tomorrow. She had seen what looked like an unemployed young man roaming the town, and had gotten the number from one of the employees who had memorized it. But there I was, in white uniform and clogs one day, as Hans came through the door, having just checked up on an electrical installation in the Hospital.

"Hey! Do you remember I asked you if we could at some point talk about the hunting and fishing you do in the area?" I asked as he was entering his car to leave.

"Sure, yes, maybe", he smiled. "Just call me".

I do not think it is a coincidence that I came to the conclusion that arranging interviews was best to do no more than two days in advance. It was the same amount of time that the DMI weather forecast was displayed in detail online. When I finally got it right, and he wasn't either working or hunting or visiting family and friends when I called him, he came immediately by the house where I stayed. He told me that Uummannaq was, as the rest of Greenland and the Arctic, in a warm period, but that these had been known to occur at regular intervals for the last century, or, as far back as he knew. His father had passed down accounts of his experiences, he told me, and his father before him. He was convinced that a new cold period is soon to come. I had designed an interview guide that included a complete circular calendar that I had had very little luck with getting people to fill out in any meaningful ways. What I had misunderstood was that the relationship people have to the environment in Uummannaq, especially when it concerns sustenance activities, should not so much be understood cosmologically as ecologically.

By this I do not mean to imply that cosmology and ecology are opposed, but, following Ingold, understanding imagination through skills and social relations in the environment rather than a culture-specific set of beliefs super-imposed on the landscape (Ingold 2002: 36). I base this approach on the experience that what people talk about concerning landscapes varies according to the context in which the conversation takes place. Using the rather complex terminology of Sneath, Holbraad and Pederson, imagination can be said to be determined by the affordances of a particular social and material relationships between people and their

environment, but determined in a 'possibilistic' way, that is, the outcome of that relationship is completely unpredictable and indeterminate (Sneath et al. 2009: 20-25). In other words, the landscapes of the imagination are not ready-made cultural entities that people carry around with them in their heads, but are images that are precipitated technologically.

When Hans filled out the calendar, confidently but reluctantly, with the seasonal migration of animals; the capelin, fulmar, narwhals, seals, and orcas, among others, and where and when to get at them using different hunting techniques. "There you go, you can use that for your project if you want", as if he was implying how crudely he thought it represents his knowledge and skill. After a short quiet moment putting down the pencil, indicating that the interview was leaning towards the end, he told me that his father had at one point seen 'something' in the water while kayaking just outside the north-eastern side of the island: A shimmer in the water of large, bright flakes or scales moving below him. And then suddenly, some strange, slender object, snaking up and down, in and out of the water like a huge tentacled creature reaching across a large distance, more than ten metres. He paddled away from the spot as fast as he could.

"That sounds very strange," I said.

"Yes. There has been many strange occurrences like that around here. Weird animals or things that cannot be explained." At this point, it was far from the first time I had heard a story like that, but I did not know what to make of it or how I was supposed to think about it analytically, or if that was even possible, and just left it at that. He had to get back to work, and so we walked outside to say goodbye. As he stood on the terrace stairs leading down to his car, he told me that his good friend Pierre, who lives mostly in Uummannaq but is from France, sometimes gets confused when he gives him contradictory advice about how to treat his dogs. He explained to me that in one situation, he might say advise the owner to be nice to the dogs and show them compassion, but in another he might suggest that they should be beaten and treated with cold authority. So his French friend Pierre, becoming integrated in Uummannaq ways of life during the last ten years, had found it difficult to form a definite opinion about which is the correct way to treat the dogs.

Now recall once more the words *ajorpoq* and *ajungilak* that I have mentioned. They are a way of judging 'good' and 'bad', not in a categorical a priori sense, but in a practical sense, as when a skilled and attentive caretaker of dogs makes the right decision in the given moment. Being in Uummannaq is uncertain, whether as a rookie ethnographer, a kayaking father, a French caretaker of dogs, or a wayfaring fisher of old age.

Sila is the Greenlandic word for 'weather'. But looking at its etymology and historical contexts, as a number of scholars have, it is evident that the word is not a simple translation of weather, (at least not if we understand weather in a superficial way). The word holds many connotations that are related to the peculiar 'mode' of uncertainty. *Sila* was described to Knud Rasmussen by Najangeq, a shaman of East Greenland like this:

Sila [is] a strong spirit, the upholder of the universe, of the weather, in fact all life on earth – so mighty that his speech to man comes not through ordinary words, but through storms, snowfall, rain showers, the sea, through all the forces that man fears, or through sunshine, calm seas or small innocent children… When times are good, Sila has nothing to say to mankind. He has disappeared into his infinite nothingness and remains away as long as people do not abuse life but have respect for their daily food. No one has ever seen Sila. His place is so mysterious that he is with us and infinitely far away at the same time. (Rasmussen in Leduc 2007: 242).

In contemporary Uummannaq, people do not explicitly associate *sila* with a deity, but it is clear to me that there is still something to gather from a modern Greenlandic conception of weather. Countless times the weather was brought into accounts, conversations, and explanations. Each year the people in Uummannaq anticipate the cargo ship that comes with sought-after supplies when the fjord melts. One time, when I asked someone about the arrival of the ship, I got the same 'cold shoulder' as I did with Hans when I asked about drying capelin, implying there is something wrong with my question. Even when I asked her if she know who is the authority that makes the call as to when it is safe for the ship to arrive, she answered that "no one" is. The ship comes when the ice melts. It depends on the weather. Very often when people explained how they were feeling, they would answer in terms of weather, for example blaming fog for feeling tired, or wind for feeling annoyed. I experienced several times when I asked someone *"ajungilatit?"* (how are you?), that they simply shrugged and said "bad weather".

Some scholars have made comparisons between the concepts of climate, weather, and *sila* to expand knowledge about the science and experience of landscape. Lill Bjørst (2011) marries the word *sila* with the phenomenological lifeworld in opposition to the scientific representation of the environment, as presented by Ingold. *Sila* is not an object in the same sense that 'the weather' is the object that meteorologists study and instruments for measuring atmospheric properties give read-outs about. According to Bjørst, it seems, *sila* signifies an experience of the environment that does not distinguish between subject and object, so that the movements in the landscape of wind and fog, snow and rain, sunshine and darkness, and the aurora, are neither external nor internal (ibid.: 90). *Sila* is, to paraphrase Heidegger, 'being-in-the-weather'.

Sila as mode of uncertainty is an experience of the weather-world (Ingold henvisning), which is precipitated through practical engagement in and around the landscape. It is the blooming of spring. It is standing on sea ice, holding the fishing line attentively for hours on end, the acceptance of not knowing whether a fish in the deep dark beyond the threshold of the ice plane will bite or not. It is sailing around in the fjord, scouting for seals, forgetting about time as the summer sun spins endlessly above. It is the careful evasion of icebergs during the misty night hours. It is being in and moving along with *sila*. It is what *happens,* not *making sense* of it, as Karen pointed out, not a model for factual questions and answers, but an uncertainty that questions the aptness of knowing.

In the product there is a scene called 'Overview' in which you stand on the steep ledge of a rather simplified Uummannaq island, looking over the fjord. The roadside is filled with spectators. Cameras with zoom lenses, collecting data. The landscape becomes 'nature' as a result of the brutal voyeurism of the cameras that are looking at nothing in *particular* — only scanning the area, mining information. A suspicious silhouette is watching the process. But on the other side of the ledge, there is a town full of life which goes on unnoticed as the voyeurs on the other side continue spectating.

In this scene I want to draw attention to different technologies of perception that are relevant to Uummannaq. The narrative is interactive in the sense that it is a dialogue between me, the designer and you, the user. I use environmental story-telling, a digitale mise-en-scene, where

you become the narrator making sense of the environment as you walk around the 3D space furnished with objects in a suggestive manner that nudges you forward, evoking a linear narrative (Jenkins 2004). But it is you yourself who actualizes the narrative by your own movements, sometimes in unpredictable ways. In this way, you are interacting with a unique technology of the imagination. The virtual landscape and photographs that I present attain their own meaning by the corporeal engagement of the user.

Ole, whom I have briefly described yelling at me in the boat steering towards an iceberg is what people in Uummannaq would typically (and ambiguously) call a *fisker-fanger* (fisher-hunter). The end of my fieldwork stay was approaching quickly, but still my project took yet another unexpected turn, as I found myself an apprentice fisher with Ole as my mentor. I had not consciously sought to learn about hunting and fishing in this way. As a matter of fact, I had been trying to resist the constant nudging of both my own presuppositions and the Uummannaq community in the direction of the traditional patriarchal hunter, a character that is the typical representative of anything that relates to 'landscape' or 'nature' in Greenland. I had thought that by succumbing to this nudging I would risk repainting the same essentialist picture of the noble traditional hunter of the north, the last guardian of an ancient culture at the brink of extinction. I was more interested in exactly the ways in which the complexity of modern Greenland defies the expectations of a Western 'Arctic imagination'. But whenever a person in Uummannaq heard me mention words like 'nature', 'landscape', or 'fjord', they would tend to say that I should talk to "the old *fisker-fangere*", "because they could teach me a thing or two about nature".

Well into the summer I did end up at Ole's doorstep, making typical, and more or less superficial, conversation about his past, about dogs and dog sledding, fishing and hunting, kayaking, etc. One thing that stood out in the interview was in how Ole kept talking about smoked halibut. He kept raising his gaze repeatedly above my head and out of the window behind me. He was watching the fumes from his homemade smoking oven on his terrace, which he could inspect from within his living room. I told him that I would like to learn more about how he prepares and smokes the halibut filets. "Yes, then you could perhaps help me a little bit with the fish", he said. "And see how it's done". It was not until a couple of weeks later that he called me one morning and asked me to come down to the harbor and help me with the fish. I

rushed out of the door in just my summer jacket and sneakers, expecting to help Ole with a simple task, such as carrying a load of fish from one bucket to another. But when I saw Ole at the harbor at his skiff, I asked "where are the fish?", he turns his head towards the sea in dismay and responds "well we have to catch them first!".

The technical way Ole works with the environment can be described by use of the concept 'taskscape', coined by Ingold, where the natural environment is not a passive backdrop for human culture, but is actualized through skillful practice. The old fisherman would in this context be what Ingold has called the "native dweller" (Ingold 1993: 153), whose life is deeply embedded in the landscape, making him *native* in a very literal sense. Recalling how he went fishing on the sea ice with a pack of dog alone at the age of six, he has a lifetime of practical wisdom that enables him to make the right decisions in the fluctuating landscape. The fisher-hunter's work is indeed very imaginative. Constantly he is exploiting objects in the environment in creative ways, attuned to the given situation. What seemed to me like trash happens to be a tool, ready at hand in his skiff or on his terrace workplace; a kind of untamed *bricolage* (Levi-Strauss 1966). He told me that growing up in the now-closed settlement Illorsuit, his family was not wealthy, to say the least. He was skeptical about the use of resources now, pointing to the Uummannaq's growing trash yard that is difficult to get rid of, and to the wealth of fishers nowadays who lack the skills of his family who were able to get by with very few resources, for example by using a seagull wing as a broom and aluminum paper as a dustpan.

He told me that when he grew up, working with his father, they did not have an alarm clock, but they awoke when time was right for work, even if it may have been four in the morning. The first morning I went out with him to collect his catch that had been waiting on the bottom of the ocean, tied safely to a large rock at the cliff edge, we found that all his equipment had mysteriously disappeared. Ole was completely baffled, immediately sailing to the nearest other fisher, asking him angrily if he had seen someone who had stolen his fish. The other fisher of course had seen nothing, suggesting a passing iceberg might have cut the rope. Ole was left completely puzzled over how it could have happened, he said that neither explanation, the iceberg or the rogue fisher, made any sense to him.

I see two diverging ways of interpreting this episode, which I can only speculate about. The first is the pessimistic view that this is an expression of the corrosion of a harmonious past through processes of modernity, such as urbanization, capitalization, or climate change, etc. that renders Ole unadapted to a changing landscape, leaving him in the uncertainty of not being 'at home', and not being able to understand his environment. The other is a more positive speculation, which implies that a person like Ole, with his life and his close relationship with *sila*, paradoxically corrodes the symbolic status of the fisher-hunter as representatives of a disappearing traditional past. (Notice how the ambiguous fisher-hunter term, which is commonly used to describe his profession, suggests that there is doubt about whether the person is really a fisher or a hunter, which relates to the historical transition from sustenance hunting to fishing). Instead, his skill and knowledge of *sila* implies resilience to uncertainty. If the native dweller knows his home to be strange or even alien, how can changes of modernity be disruptive to that imaginative framework? It may be the first time that his long line had disappeared, but it was definitely not the first time that he experienced the landscape as uncertain, surprising, even inexplicable.

Beauty and Danger

I was fortunate to be introduced to Uummannaq by fellow anthropologist Mette Schlütter, in whose apartment I had seen a couple of small, colourful and very expressive landscape paintings hanging on the wall. Mette told me that it was Karen, who had painted them, and she showed me where her house was. Seal skins that are hanging to dry adorn the outside of the entrance to Karen's pretty red house where she lives by herself. I spent a substantial portion of my fieldwork hours in a chair at the table in her living room, drinking coffee and listening to her talk incessantly, recounting her memories, telling stories of beauty and danger.

Although I learned a lot by participating in outdoor activities, most of my fieldwork was spent in the cosy confines of people's homes, drinking coffee and talking about the landscape, sitting next to a window with a panoramic view of the fjord. Imagination is precipitated by situations, locations, and activities, and it was clear how the content of

conversations varied according to the spatial and temporal distance to the object of discussion. For example, when I flew above the inland ice cap, speaking to a Greenlander who sat next to me on the plane, our conversation about geography was very abstract and generalizing, as we were looking at maps, talking about using digital cameras, specifically how best to record the movement of ice, and pointing out locations visible from the birds-eye view of the plane window. In this technological context, we shared the same point of view, and seemed to share, despite my identity as Danish and his as Greenlander, the same mythological framework for understanding landscapes. The aeroplane almost becomes an embodiment of the Archimedean overview, but rather than this being a universal disinterested rationality, it is a particular technological perspective.

Similarly, the stories that Karen told were moulded by the architecture of the perspective from which she spoke. What seemed to me to make her stories unique was exactly the fact that spoke of activities as something she did not participate in anymore, particularly not now that her husband is dead, as she frequently mentioned. With the authoritative hindsight of age, she was more keen on abstract descriptions and generalizations than some of the others that I spoke to. She described herself as a 'city girl', implying that she had not grown up in one of the small settlements around the fjord, but in the 'bustling city' of Uummannaq. The relation of presence and absence in her imagination seemed to be the inverse of what was the case when being around Ole. This is not to say that Ole did not reflect upon and imagine things about his work that were not immediately present, but that the circumstances of our interaction was focused on another kind of work, that is, with another technological relationship at hand.

Karen is first and foremost an artist. Her landscape narratives emerged from the present engagement with seal skin handiwork or paintings or photographs that she showed me. She prefers to spend time alone, designing and sewing small ladies' bags out of seal skins that her friends and family bring to her, typically her grandson and cousin. Although sewing hand bags were her handicraft of choice, she was also into embroidery, beadwork, and painting. When I asked her about her technique for painting landscapes, she said that the images are based on her memory.

"They are all in here," she said, pointing at her head, explaining that she was not reliant on her deteriorating vision for visualization. She had an interesting way of talking about images, which I have spent countless hours listening to, but have hardly been able to grasp analytically, to 'boil down' and generalize. To attempt to describe her imagination is to enter into a hybridized and confusing territory, which tends to be paradoxically both modernist and traditional, both affirming an environmental aesthetics that appreciates the beauty of nature as 'other' (Morton 2007), while also providing accounts that describe an ecology of intimate social relationships. The roles that humans and animals play in her landscape narratives oscillate between descriptions of disinterested detachment and moments of uncanny changeling or even metamorphosis where their metaphysical strata are levelled and merged.

I have mentioned that it has been useful for me to analyse these encounters in terms of technological perspectives rather than clashing cosmologies. Some may say that the 'lack' of cosmological consistency I experience in conversations with Karen is a result of colonial corrosion of traditional beliefs. While there may be some truth to that – that the uncertainty I describe is perhaps a lack – a lack of mythical meaning and stability – it is not for me to judge, and definitely not in the scope of this thesis, that the imaginative processes by which people in Uummannaq make sense of their environment is a product of colonial (Danish) oppression. What is more interesting is to see that however I choose to frame my analysis of Karen, privileging one conceptual binary, be it animism versus "Westernism", or traditional versus modern, ghosts of the opposite binary immediately put the conclusion into question. Instead of choosing between left and right, we have to, in this situation, leap forward into uncertainty.

The first day I visited her, she showed me a landscape painting of gleaming turquoise with dabs of orange and magenta. In the hazy colours I can make out a horizon in the background, some shapes that look like land in the middle, and what looks like three blue glowing Christmas trees in the foreground. It was difficult to understand her rapid and overflowing descriptions of the image, whether she talking about causality, representation, analogy, or metaphor. I did not record this first interview with her, and my notes are a mess which do not make sense. I am unable to represent the way she talked, so I have to 'translate', as

it were, from what I have gathered from bits and pieces during my many conversations with her later.

My conversations with people in Uummannaq were all in Danish. I had tried several times to recruit a paid interpreter, but I found it difficult to make the arrangements, and when I finally did arrange it, as I did with four different interpreters, the quality of the communication was very bad, and I ended up learning more about the interpreter than the interviewee. What I have learned during fieldwork has been gathered from a Danish-Greenlandic hybrid perspective, with the content of all conversations being not *lost* but *caught* in translation. By this I mean that the Danish that people spoke to me was, with variations from person to person, a kind of 'Greenlandified' Danish, and I too began to adopt a way of speaking that does not sound exactly like how I speak at home, which has gotten me a few comments from friends, but quickly faded away. The notes I wrote in the situation which I can read afterwards are a glimpse of me trying to 'translate' the encounter to words. My resolution is that there is no 'authentically real' which is simply defiled by my lack of professionalism.

When I asked about the painting she told me about a beautiful place she had visited, and about three men that had died in a tragic accident near the glacier at the mouth of the fjord. Two brothers and her uncle. As I was trying to probe around the meaning of the painting, asking more questions, she went upstairs to get a picture of three narwhals. "Look!" She kept saying. She had received the picture from a visiting Canadian. I was confused about what the narwhals had to do with anything, so I tried to make her explain. She talked about three narwhals that "live on" (*lever videre*) in relation to three men that have died. A man hunting grouse in the area found the body of one of the boys. He saw a white hare jumping from a rock when he noticed a pale foot sticking out. The boy who was the only one of the three that could swim had taken off his kamiks and swum onto land where he had died. He would receive a proper burial, and his soul may be saved.

She never explicitly stated certain beliefs about the life and death of souls, which reminds me of the raven, Stevenson wrote about, which neither is or is not a dead uncle, but is simply 'there'. "What 'thereness' do the dead share with the living?" (Stevenson 2014: 1), she asks, rhetorically, opening up to a mode of uncertainty where phenomena are not immediately

dependent on metaphysical categorization. It is a mode shared between the participants of the ethnographic conversation: "attention to moments of doubt ... dissolves the professional distance between the ethnographer and her subjects. For a moment both are thrown into the same existential frame: it is not simply that I am documenting the uncommon things my young friend believes, but also that I am arrested by his uncertainty ... he may never know for sure whether the raven is his dead uncle, and yet there is something about the raven's *thereness* that is important to him. It seems too that such thereness must be experienced rather than simply cataloged by the intellect. It also seems that uncertainty … requires not resolution but acknowledgment, and thus implicates me as an anthropologist in a mutual project of describing a world beset by uncertainty" (ibid.: 2, original emphasis). "It doesn't make sense. It just happens." She is not talking from her own unique 'worldview', but rather is evoking a "world of vision" (Viveiros de Castro 2011: 133). She identified herself as an artist and said that artists tend to exaggerate to make things more exciting. The way she paints ideas with her words is a technology of the imagination in the same way that her handicraft is. She does not want to explain to me a cosmology of beliefs, but instead keeps telling me to "look!", painting a landscape of imagination that we may share if I am willing to 'look' at (and able to see) what she tries to show me. Three narwhals. Three missing men. Three glowing trees.

Later, when I had gotten to know Karen better, and we had agreed that I could film some of our conversations, I asked her to once more tell me what the painting depicts. This time, she did not mention the three glowing trees in the foreground, but talked about a beautiful landscape somewhere near Aasiat. Maybe it was because I was filming this time around, although she did not seem to mind talking openly at other occasions, even about difficult topics. It could be because I asked about what it *depicts*, rather than what it *means,* or *why* she painted it. She talks about walking around in the landscape, looking for eggs and berries to collect, about the weather and the movement of icebergs. After a short while she goes on to make a drawing of Nuugaatsiaq, the now closed settlement, which to her mind is (or was) the most beautiful in the fjord. After quickly sketching the basic shapes and telling a few stories about Nuugaatisaq, she looks around her table to find something else to show. She holds up one of her landscape paintings that she has made on folded paper. When she unfolds it, the rear is filled with drawings

of hand bag designs, including a small text she had written at the bottom of the page, which she goes on to read out loud in a way that sounds like she is trying to prove a point to me.

"The seal's gifts – small bags and pretty mittens – of its dead body. There you go! (*der kan du bare se!*). Look! Even though it's dead, it can still make its lovely things from its dead body".

Although she has experienced great loss, and is mourning, she accepts that life goes on, and she is witness to that as she *lives on* through her work.

"I am not lonely. I still get seal skins," she told me on more than one occasion.

There is a sense in which spending time working with her seal skins keeps her company. She sometimes sells a small hand bag to one of the tourists that visit during the summer. I asked if I could buy one of them for my girlfriend, and when she finished it the night before I left Uummannaq, she added a note to her where she wrote that the bag was sewn from the skin of three different seals that was granted to her by three different men, one of them her late husband. The *thereness* of the seal skin in her handiwork extends beyond itself and is intimately intertwined in the ecology of her work, an ongoing process that includes the deaths and lives of seals and family members. Her relation to family members enable her to keep on working by bringing her skins, and through her work, the relationship to relatives, deceased or otherwise, is 'animated'. In other words, the imaginative effects of sewing hand bags and painting landscapes is not determinable by the seal skins or the landscapes themselves, but are a 'surplus' created by her specific social and material relationships with them.

Still on my first visit with Karen, she kept showing me more pictures, she even brought out her digital camera, and she scrolled through the many pictures she had taken, wanting to show me one in particular (the cover picture for this thesis), which she took of her television screen while there was a programme on *Danmarks Radio* showing a romantic painting of Uummannaq. I photographed the picture off of my own laptop display, on which we had looked through the pictures due to its larger display. The cover picture then is a digital picture in a PDF file, taken with my digital camera off of my computer screen, showing a digital picture that Karen had taken off of her television screen, showing a Danish art auction programme, captured with a (probably digital) video camera, showing a gold-framed painting of a sublime

landscape, which exists 'in reality' right outside Karen's window. The painting of Uummannaq on display at the auction in Denmark has looped 'full circle' back to me, an art-interested Dane in Uummannaq, who now finds himself again in an uncanny place where it is not clear who is representing whom. Why does Karen, to whom this mountain is the most 'everyday' image of all, in our strange relationship in the situation, present or re-present it to me? "Look!", she says. In taking the picture off of my own laptop screen, it becomes like a mirror image reflecting back at myself.

Analysing my collection of digital photographs, I often found that the situation in which the camera is brought up is more interesting than what the photograph itself depicts. In the product, they are viewed as 3D objects that can be inspected from a new virtual outside, they appear as the fragmented rectangular slices of reality that have been captured in an instance of ethnographic fieldwork that they are. In the product, the photographs are presented as *incomplete*. By exhibiting the very act of framing itself, my aim is to defer the viewer's judgement of the picture so that, rather than judging the photographs themselves as anthropologically valuable or not, she made aware of all that is absent in this form of representation. In other words, the visible presence of the image is diminished and the invisible absence is 'amplified' (Willerslev and Suhr 2013).

One thing that typically characterizes new digital media is 'multimediality' (De Mul 2010: 91). My product presents an array of different audio-visual media to the viewer, including photographs, video, audio, music, and 3D graphics. With digital camera and audio recorder, I have assembled a database of assets that I can sample from to construct a 3D world. The first-person view mediates the whole experience, which functions like a 'meta-medium' — instead of offering just propagandistic immersion, my product puts the awareness on the 'medial' (Morton 2007: 37), making the context of presentation itself visible, which in modernist aesthetics should be invisible to maintain the immersive illusion. Jean-François Lyotard, in "what is modernism", sketches the difference between modern and postmodern representation. The modern aesthetics of the sublime is nostalgic in the sense that it aims to represent an ideal that is ultimately "unpresentable", whereas the postmodern art puts emphasis on the viewer's imagination by breaking representational convention and leaving the poetic act to the viewer

(Lyotard 1984: 80-82). I perform this move in my product by presenting my photographs not as windows leading to knowledge, but as pictures that 'block the view' (as Margritte's "La condition humaine"). A digital image is "no signatures of light" (Swanstöm 2016: 14). It is a string of code that can be manipulated and translated, transported and copied to infinity by a computer into any other digital medium whatsoever.

The post-modern imagination has been characterized as a 'labyrinth of mirrors' of representations, or images, that extend infinitely in all directions, never settling on a fixed plane of 'reality' (Kearney 1998: 178). Antonio Negri (2008) comments on Derrida's hauntology, asserting that the binary of real and unreal is broken down in the technologies of 'everyday experience', which is "mobile, flexible, computerized, immaterialized and spectral", and that we find ourselves in a "real illusion before us and behind us" which is devoid of place and time. "Only a radical 'Unheimlich' remains in which we're immersed" (ibid.: 9).

A short interlude in the product which I have named 'Pareidolia' displays a confusing array of side-scrolling mountain faces mirrored in the calm water surface, lit in gleaming red, rendered through a simulated long lens camera, enhancing the morphing rock textures and leaving little depth information for the viewer. It looks like a horizontally scrolling psychedelic Rorschach test. I had visualized this sequence in my imagination after a discussion with two locals of my own age about the modalities of being on the move and being in a certain location, which offer two very different experiences of the fjord. They agreed with me that these two modalities exist and are very distinguished, and just how differently the fjord is experienced from the town of Uummannaq, perhaps through a window frame, as a scenic panorama during the majority of the year, compared to when being out on trips, typically during the summer. One of them, an aspiring politician and landscape painter, had told me that whenever he paints the iconic Uummannaq mountain, he does not mind portraying it accurately, since the fjord provides so many possible angles to view it from, its appearance can still be judged as being accurate from some hypothetical viewing angle, or a mix of different perspectives, rather than being fixed in one appearance.

The perception of landscapes in Uummannaq is tied to the perspectives offered by the different modalities of movement and placement that are available in different situations. With

the small 'Pareidolia' sequence, I want to raise the question about how images are formed in perception and imagination. One of the things that Maurice Merleau-Ponty adds to phenomenological table is the idea of a shared world of embodiment. Although any event of perception is historically contingent, and relying on the past, present, and future, and the imagination of the perceiving person, for Merleau-Ponty, rather getting at a relativist or subjectivist conclusions, wants to emphasize the sharedness of embodied experience (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xii, 22). The landscape imagination of different groups may be very different, but they come from the same landscape, albeit through different practices and perspectives. The complexity of the landscape itself, and the multiple ways of engaging with it exceeds the capacity for people to imagine it. The landscape is always "pregnant with an irreducible meaning" (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 25).

Several of the stories that I heard in Uummannaq that related to visions that were hard for people to explain and understand took place in unclear weather conditions, either in fog, twilight, or night time. Examples include a creature running across ice in front of the person, or something seen under the water. Seeing things in the landscape is not limited to fantastical experiences. Talking about appearances of shapes and colours of rocks and icebergs in terms of animal or humanoid shapes in 'every-day' situations is common, some place names are derived from 'practices of pareidolia', such as the 'black angel' seen in the rock face at the Maarmorilik mining site. To Merleau-Ponty, a misty landscape is as complete as a sunlit one. He wants to criticize what he calls the scientific consciousness, which understands the world as determinate objects, which are muddled by the perceiving subject, unable to see the world clearly. "We must recognize the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon. It is in this atmosphere that quality arises. Its meaning is an equivocal meaning; we are concerned with an expressive value rather than with local signification" (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 7).

Karen told me that beautiful things are dangerous. They are dangerous *because* they are beautiful. This includes steep fells, large icebergs, dogs, small settlements, and women, among other things. To illustrate what she meant by this, she recounted one time when she was sailing with her husband, they wanted to visit a particular place in the far northern part of the fjord where there is a legend about a fell which hides a huge diamond behind an array of

anthropomorphic rock figures – people who have turned to stone, the legend says. The name of the fell translates to something like 'where one must be silent'. As they were nearing the location, first they noticed that the fuel tank was emptying inexplicably fast, and after that they saw an unusual cloud formation over Nuugaatsiaq, which they could see in the distance. Karen noticed a strange bulging of the ocean surface, which she pointed out to her husband who agreed that the water did indeed bulge "excessively (*rigeligt*)" upwards. To be safe, they took these signs as a bad omen and decided to cancel their trip.

The purpose of a hauntological approach to landscapes should not be to obliterate meaning in an infinite regress of nihilist perspectivism, but to open up to new horizons of experience and meaning that landscapes have to offer. By leaping into uncertainty and avoiding reduction of the experiences and accounts of our interlocutors by use of hard logic, we may catch fleeting glimpses of beauty that they share with us.

Qivittoq

The first picture presented in the product is an empty void empty except for a miniscule human figure and the horizon that slices across the middle of the picture. The vast negative space around the figure opens up to endless interpretations. It could be a symbolic representation of *sila*, of human being-in-the-weatherworld, with an open horizon of ever-flowing blue currents of uncertainty. Perhaps it is a representation of 'the sublime', of the belittling of the human, of culture, of civilization and rationality in the face of the awesome grandeur of nature. It could be a representation of a *qivittoq*, a strange being that exists on the threshold of reality and fantasy, historical past and the present day. It is said that *qivittoq* is a person afflicted with unbearable suffering that chooses to leave society behind and wander out into the nothingness of nature to die, or perhaps, to acquire superhuman abilities, living as a hybrid creature of man and animal, living and dead. Or it could be a representation of my own doubt, as a first-time ethnographer, having on his first day leapt on to the unsettling ice. Who is that person on the horizon, walking to strangely alone? This question evokes the sense of the exotic, the intangible 'other', walking there on the fringe of my horizon, being at home and walking peacefully across this, to me, daunting expanse. In other words, the emptiness of the landscape evokes the imagination and the specters that haunt it.

When I set out to do fieldwork in Uummannaq I found the 'supernatural' phenomena to be so scattered, incoherent, and random that I almost gave up on including it in my project. But one day during a communal excursion to neighbouring island Qeqertat in the late summer, a crowd of people gathered to listen to Ole, (the fisher-hunter elder), who would share a few ghostly stories. At this moment I knew that these stories are important despite their diffuse and ambiguous nature. I counted ninety people gathered together in the large party tent, a majority of them children, to listen to Ole's stories. He talked with extraordinary enthusiasm, as people in Uummannaq tend to do, often using swift and expressive bodily choreography, mimicking events with sounds, facial expressions, and various gestures, whether it be someone enacting a recent whale encounter, recounting a lovely family memory, or describing the bizarre appearance of a strange creature.

Several people had told me that their grandparents or other family elders had told *qivittoq* stories when they were children. Today, as adults, they would sometimes hear similar stories on the radio, they told me. *Qivittoq,* which can be translated as 'fell-wanderer' (*fjældgænger*) is a phenomenon of Greenlandic oral tradition, and probably one of the single most pervading concepts of its kind in Uummannaq. The story goes that a *qivittoq* is a person who has been exiled by the community, or rather, who has chosen to leave the community due to some kind of emotional pressure.

 Everyone that I asked believe that the phenomenon was real to a certain extent, ranging from the very sceptical, who either locate it strictly in the past, or perceive it as an archaic concept for describing a psychological condition, or being a predecessor of modern suicide, to those who believe that there may still be *qivittoq* people living somewhere hidden in the vastness of the fjord area. Some attribute great supernatural powers to the *qivittoq,* and claim having witnessed them flying, shape-shifting, or teleporting, while others see them as more ordinary people, conjecturing the possibility of whole *qivittoq* tribes living isolated from the Greenlandic community.

When asked directly about ghosts, evil spirits, or *qivittoq*, I experienced that many would be very sceptical and deny their reality or their significance, saying it is just pure fantasy, or that it belongs to the past, which contributed to my doubt about their relevance, but the event at Qeqertat proves that they are still significant in the context of story-telling. Surprised by the sudden enthusiasm with which people gathered, I asked Arnannguaq who stood next to me about the event. "It's a tradition here in Greenland', she told me, 'telling scary stories … *qivittoq* stories."

"Are they real?" I asked her.

"I think it's a mix of reality and fantasy. Maybe people exaggerate. But there is always something true in them."

In one of the stories, Ole recounted one hunting trip during his years in Aasiaat, camping alone on the sea ice, when awakened at night by the uneasiness of his dogs, as he noticed a strange buzzing noise that sounded as if it came from beneath the ice itself. When he got out of

the tent on his sled to tend to his dogs and investigate the noise, which was still audible, he confirmed that there was no one around.

"And there were no snowmobiles back then!" he remarked, after I had asked him to repeat the story to me in Danish, anticipating my ensuing sceptical questions.

"Well, what do you think it was, then?" I asked him.

"I don't know … maybe, like, a spirit? I don't know."

He had turned his head away from the halibut on his workbench, looking at me as if asking for assistance in providing an explanation for his story. Though ninety people had gathered to listen, the story remains as elusive as was my initial conception. But the telling of uncertain stories is certainly an elementary phenomenon in Uummannaq. The specifics of what is being told may vary greatly, and is treated with great scepticism by many, but still it creates an uncanny atmosphere of uncertainty where, even in the most commonplace locations and situations, there remains the possibility for the most outlandish and fantastical occurrences. When I asked him about the seals that he hunts, if they possess a soul like that of humans, he said, "Sure, a soul, yes, I guess they do."

"So what happens when you shoot them, when they die, what happens to their soul?" I asked him.

"I don't bloody know! Shut up! Hahaha!" he replied with cheerful grin.

Here, doubting and laughing are intrinsically related. If I ever heard Karen explicitly say something vaguely reminiscent of a "strange belief", I would often sense humour or irony in her voice, and sometimes she would outright joke and burst into laughter, leaving me to doubt which parts of what she said I should take seriously. In her strange Greenlandified Danish, present tense is rarely used, and so when she talks about her husband, he is animated in a way that confuses me. One time, when my audio recorder fell off of the shelf where I had put it onto the floor, she said immediately:

"That's my husband who is haunting (*spøger*). He is allowed to haunt (*det må han ellers gerne*), but he never does. The next time my husband comes home, I am going to beat him up! Hahaha! Because I miss him so much!" she said as a joke to which I did not know if I should laugh or not.

It is interesting to note that the Danish word *spøger* used in this context has more than one meaning, and does not translate directly to the English 'haunt' or 'haunting', and can also literally mean 'joking'. Rane Willerslev (2012) had at one point been doubting his whole project of taking animism 'seriously' when his Siberian interlocutors performing an important animist ritual suddenly burst into laughter, making the whole thing seem ridiculous, leading Willerslev to wonder if laughter and 'ironic distance' is at the heart of animism (Willerslev 2013: 42). Willerslev has teamed up with Morten Axel Pedersen to theorize about the role of jokes in North Asian indigenous communities where cosmologies are not 'whole', but instead full of 'holes', which is to simultaneously bring visible and invisible bodies and souls into view (Willerslev and Pedersen 2010: 301-2).

In my product, the artificially built landscape in which the photographs are placed can be interpreted as a visualization of the invisible realm populated by ghosts. Controlling a first-person avatar, you walk 'behind the stage' of imagination, put in the shoes of an image-conjuring ghost. The virtual space operates on two layers of representation that are discordant; the two-dimensional photographs and the 3-dimensional environment. The two layers are in a dialectic relationship throughout the product, which continually challenges attempts at categorizing them with metaphysical binaries, a process where "the irreality of the imaginary impresses the real on reality and the real of reality compels the irreality of the imaginary. These ways cannot be separated. They are in dialectical tension" (Crapanzano, in Sneath et al. 2009: 10). I have positioned the photographs according to the environment, with the horizon line cutting through them to clarify the relation between the two layers. The environment acts as an oppressive negative space around the photographs, weighing them down as it were, confining them to their pictorial limitations. The area around them has depth and movement, and the photographs appear flat and dull in comparison. But on the other hand, the virtual environment that surrounds them is empty and artificial, whereas the photographs appear lifelike and complex.

There is a noteworthy critique of the medium of 3D rendering, which is very relevant to mention here. In my product, the artificial and empty environments exceed in creating an uncanny atmosphere which is useful for provoking a 'verfremdung' effect (as described by Vium

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2019) in the viewer. But when it comes to realism of human intimacy, this medium is the most crude. Only billion dollar budget video game companies can make real-time 3D rendering which comes close to representing an experience of real human presence and emotion. Here I have to rely on other media. In my product, I spent day in and day out scripting something that would feel organic for the listener, just based on a single 10-minute interview audio clip. In an earlier version of the product that did not include video, I noticed that the *verfremdung* effect was so strong that it completely outweighed the medial dialects described above, and I had to counter-measure that by adding more content of another genre, which I had not planned to include.

Since I began my education in anthropology in 2013 I have been wondering about the possibility of coupling video game design and with anthropology. When I recently looked through my old notes, I found a discarded text I wrote before handing in my project description for my fieldwork in Greenland, which read that my aim was to make a collaborative product of digital environment design in Uummannaq. My choice of fieldwork site was informed by this urge for methodological experimentation. I have been driven by a general wish to explore the possibility of animating knowledge of and relations to landscapes through digital art. Elizabeth Swanstrom (2016) sums it up very well: 'digital art, largely excluded from environmental criticism since its inception, has the potential – if not yet perfectly realized – to reconnect us to nature, remind us of our own embodied materiality, and reaffirm our kinship with other living and non-living things' (ibid.: 5).

As I have described, my project has been a leap into the unknown in several ways. My fieldwork panned out ways I had never expected, and I accepted that I had to learn about Greenland from the ground up, postponing my ideas for making such a product to the future. When I returned home I was convinced that my attempts had failed and I was not going to make a digital product. However, through the intense analysis and interpretation of my fieldwork experience, I found came up with an idea of how to present the audio-visual data I had collected in a way that was in accordance with these reflections. It is important for me to stress that, as a self-taught amateur with hard restrictions on development time and with no funding, creating all assets alone, except for a bit of help I received from my brother and a friend in programming,

including design, C# scripting, 2D and 3D graphics, audio, as well as photo and video editing, the product is not *complete*, but rather a prototype that serves to convince the reader and viewer of the potentials of this medium for conveying anthropological knowledge.

This thesis is the product of a first-time fieldwork experience in Greenland, and I feel it corresponds with the uncertainty of the rite of passage such an endeavour is. If I were to return to do fieldwork again, with all that I have learned from being in Uummannaq, and from experimenting with constructing my product after returning home, next time I would have a much better concept of how to do this kind of digital anthropology. With funding, I would gather a team that could create a deeper and more detailed world, hopefully one which could attract a larger, and younger, audience than much anthropology does. I had sought to make the digital visualization of Uummannaq more collaboratively, but I have to admit that my early inklings about how to go about doing it were not ripe for harvest, making it impossible for me to communicate my ideas clearly to interlocutors, which probably would not even have been due course for a newcomer to the field.

What I did manage to create is a thesis that is faithful to the doubt I experienced in the field and in analysis, not wanting to reduce the ambiguous encounters and lock them up in a fixed representative model, instead evoking the indeterminate ways that the landscapes Uummannaq are experienced. I have been consciously avoiding hard conclusions, preferring to describe Uummannaq in a way that corresponds with the uncertainties my interlocutors that live there. Ghosts have been haunting my experiences, accounts, and images of Uummannaq through and through. To interrogate those ghosts makes it apparent that there is no stable and determinate landscape, except perhaps in nostalgic notions of the sublime, of noble hunters, and benevolent spirits. Instead, I found that experiences of weather, beauty, and danger evoke a mode of uncertainty where the landscape is not so much imagined through a cosmological order, but experienced as simply *there*. This is not to say that there are no representations, that people in Uummannaq experience 'nature as is', no, just that the representations of the environment are not frozen in a metaphysical grid that is completely ordered. The images that the landscape continually evoke are provocative in the sense that they seem to exceed people's attempts to grasp them, even those who are most accustomed to the region.

In the end, I think my thesis and product can be interpreted as a big joke. At least I know that I have felt ridiculous through much of the process, juggling with ghosts, colonial representation, and C# scripting. But only by not taking the process too seriously have I been able to make the leap necessary for creating an exposition and visualization that is faithful to my encounters with icebergs and uncertainty, bringing the whole ridiculousness into view simultaneously.

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Product User Guide

A zipped folder containing the product is uploaded to the AU online exam web page.

1. Download the zipped folder (approx. 6 gb).

2. Unzip the folder (using any software for unzipping).

3. The folder contains two builds. One for Windows and one for Mac OS.

4. When opening the executable application, chances are your operating system will give you a warning. DO NOT BE ALARMED! This is due to the fact that I am not a professional developer and do not own a digital certificate that can make this warning go away.

5. If you receive a warning, your operating system should provide the information on how to open the file anyway. Follow the instructions and open the application.

6. If you are unable to open the application, it may be due to restricted authority over the computer that you are using. Make sure you run the application with full administrator access.

7. If this does not work, please contact someone who can help you, alternatively, ask someone if you can borrow a computer on which to run the application.

8. If for some reason it is impossible to open the application and see the product, I recommend following the link below to view a video, which is a walkthrough of the product by my brother:

   https://vimeo.com/357530522/16ddbdd716

When the Application Opens

Press Start to experience the product from the beginning. Control your avatar using either

Mouse/trackpad and WASD buttons (recommended),
Mouse/trackpad and ARROW buttons, or
simply use mouse/trackpad.

The product is programmed by myself with some help from other amateurs, so there may be a few hiccups during the experience. I implore the that the user can forgive these shortcomings