

# LITERARY GEOGRAPHIES

**Liisa-Rávná Finbog, Joan Naviyuk Kane, and Johannes Riquet, Editors (2025)**

***Circumpolar Connections: Creative Indigenous Geographies of the Arctic.***

**Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press. 144 pp., £21.95, ISBN 978-0819501899**

*Circumpolar Connections: Creative Indigenous Geographies of the Arctic* is a joyous book for distinctly non-joyous times. I read and reflected on this book during Donald Trump's musings about acquiring Greenland and J.D. Vance's tone-deaf visit to the Pituffik space base, in the northwest of the island. Having rightly concluded that there was no appetite on the part of Greenlandic residents in Nuuk for a meet and greet, the Vance party ended up being restricted to a part of the island that has been covered by a 1951 defence agreement between the US and Denmark. This saga is ongoing as I write but reveals well the imperial qualities of this current US administration and its indifference to Indigenous Peoples who have battled to acquire self-determination and autonomy of their homelands.

By way of contrast to the Trump administration, this carefully curated collections of essays, poems, mixed media, photographs and other artistic interventions from those who call the Arctic home (alongside non-Indigenous scholars and writers those who study it, respectfully) is grounded in a deep-seated appreciation for Arctic cultures, ecologies and materialities. Skilfully edited, the book allows ideas and images to percolate generously with contributors given licence to articulate and investigate how indigenous geographies of the Arctic can be made manifest. Notably, the collection despite the English-language title is filled with interventions that range from European and multiple indigenous languages alongside translations. What emerges is a profound sense of how many Arctic(s) there might be and how they are tethered to one another in delicate and less delicate ways through shared experiences of settler colonialism, extractive projects, education and cultural dialogues, and intensifying geopolitics and national security.

In a more formal academic spirit, I would commend this collection as a substantial contribution to the growing field of both Indigenous Geographies but also Environmental Humanities. Within the Arctic regions, there are areas of the book that really resonate as Nordic and Canadian countries continue to work on truth and reconciliation projects, which must include space for Indigenous stories about Arctic homelands as well as formal political and legal autonomy and representation. Connecting Arctic artists and writers not only makes sense culturally but also politically; it emphasises both distinctiveness but also shared experiences and struggles. This collection sits alongside a suite of other books and

interventions that have interrogated how ice, land, snow, water and weather work with residents to make sense of their worlds.

All credit should be given to Wesleyan University Press for supporting such a beautiful book to come to fruition. As you work your way through the book, and it certainly does not have to be approached sequentially, the artistic and creative practices associated with place-making are foregrounded throughout. In the end, any reader who was not already familiar with the circumpolar region will, I hope, better understand how culturally creative, ecologically attuned, and politically astute Arctic communities are. There is a persistent subtlety to what is being offered here – hierarchies between human and non-human are refused, maps are not the standard two-dimensional fare that circulate in “southern” media, and cultural practices and objects have their own distinctive agencies. All of which should stand in sharp contrast to the monochrome representations being peddled elsewhere.

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