

**INHERIT MY HEAVEN: KALAALLIT GENDER RELATIONS.** By KARLA JESSEN WILLIAMSON. Nuuk, Greenland: Department of Culture, Education, Research and Church, Government of Greenland, 2011. ISBN 978-87-92554-14-7. Inussuk Arctic Journal 1. 207 p., maps, references, appendix. Softbound. No price indicated.

It seems to me this could be an important book, both methodologically and theoretically. Williamson's doctoral project, out of which this volume emerged, was to produce an ethnographic portrait of her home community of Maniitsoq, Greenland, through her profoundly collaborative relations with Maniitsoq women. The result is a well-written account that deftly uses Greenlandic concepts to draw the reader in—for instance, the title of the introduction is *iserit tamassa* ('do enter; it's all there')—and subsequently to challenge still common ideas about gender as an inevitably structuring principle of *kalaallit* (Greenlandic) sociality. On a broader scale, the conceptual frame goes against the grain of still prominent binaries such as mind vs. body, individual vs. society, and nature vs. culture. Instead, the author draws on Oscar Kawagley's (1993) work to suggest a tripartite scaffolding—mind, soul, body—for exploring the bases as well as the processes of Maniitsoq social life today. I found the overall account to be original and provocative.

It is no longer unusual to recognize the dependence of social science research on collaborative efforts. Collaboration is one way to decolonize the research process, which is particularly important in contexts such as Greenland (or rural Alaska, Mexico, or India, for that matter), where the politics of knowledge production, as well as the implications for its application, are shot through with issues that systematically privilege some voices and mute others. What makes Williamson's form of collaboration so striking is the extent to which it infuses all levels of her work. Each of the seven women participating in the research had to "pay" for her participation with a research question. The topics of their questions included an interest in how couples cooperate, the role of gender in child rearing, challenges of becoming and being an independent woman, the causes and forms of abuse, and the role of women in development. Each woman was the primary researcher for her own question, which was then discussed collectively.

These topics form the basis of core chapters in the volume, which Williamson then uses to formulate a series of her own arguments about conceptual frameworks and structuring processes. Noting that one elder explicitly drew on three Greenlandic concepts to explain her understandings of her own life—*timikkut* ('body'), *tranikkut* ('name-soul'), and *anersaakkullu* ('creative energy autonomous from mind' or roughly translated, 'spirit')—Williamson draws on Kawagley's framing of 'tetrahedron' as a key (Alaskan) Yup'ik structure, intellectual as well as physical. It is a form, Kawagley asserts, that both supports structural stability and allows flow. In Maniitsoq, Williamson suggests, these three elements serve 'to expand the intellect' and are deployed when life-altering events occur. Together

they contribute to *sila*—imaginative intellect that simultaneously reflects knowledge of the world and encompasses the intelligent energy that is the world. In a later chapter she returns to the tetrahedral in thinking about work that likewise combines three elements: it is a continuation of social relations with animals, with other souls, and with *nuna* ('land'), and it expresses existential ideas that are simultaneously physical, spiritual, and cosmological—*sila* from another view. The key argument for me in the volume revolves around the recognition that gendered categories exist—they are apparent for instance in parental roles and a marital division of labour and are made more complex though colonial contacts—but that they do not inform the key tetrahedrons that structure *kalaallit* worldviews. The Maniitsoq view of the cosmos is genderless. This is an important argument, and well made.

Although I very much enjoyed the way Williamson uses the exact words of her interlocutors to explore key *kalaallit* concepts, I nonetheless feel that she offers her readers a slightly over-determined characterization of genderlessness in the language of the *kalaallit*, pointing, for instance, to the fact that personal pronouns are not gendered. *Die sonne, el sol*, and the sun all refer to the same object in the sky; the fact that it is gendered female in German, male in Spanish, and neutral in English tells us virtually nothing about the gendering of social worlds in the places those languages are spoken. There has been considerable—and powerful—work done in sociolinguistics to explore the ambiguities between thought and language, which were not taken into consideration in these arguments.

I was convinced by Williamson's argument that the core concepts through which Maniitsoq social life becomes meaningful are gender-free, and I think that it is an important argument to make. Nonetheless, her ethnography is shot through with gendered material—from distinct patterns of parental behavior to differential rates with which men and women attempt to take their own lives. I think the key argument would have emerged with greater impact if the author had brought these two elements together analytically—showing the ways in which the presence of core meaning that is not structured through gendered assumptions does not erase gendered aspects of social life—and equally illustrating that the presence of gendered categories does not by definition render them structuring principles.

Nevertheless, over the course of the volume, Williamson explores the linguistic concepts through which Maniitsoq residents reflect on the quality of their lives: what happens when couples '*tulluutinngitsut*'—do not complement each other with regard to the triadic elements; the relation between *kalaallit* and Christian human and non-human centered origin stories; the different Kalaallisut words through which knowledge as a complex category may be unpacked—and importantly for local politics, the power of defining words, actions, or people as *kalak* ('backwards'). Williamson's final chapter is a consideration of the tensions that occur when these particularly *kalaallit* knowledge forms are brought into question—sometimes by *kalaallit*

themselves—with a privileging of modern, Danified ways of knowing.

The story resonates with the effects of “colonization” as a form of knowledge production and of “decolonization” as a focus of education reform in many contexts across the world. It is, in this instance, a story that is powerfully told in its commitment not to shy away from complexity. As such, it should be of interest to those engaged in gender studies, the sociology of education, anthropology, Arctic studies, and development.

## REFERENCES

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**NORTH PACIFIC TEMPERATE RAINFORESTS: ECOLOGY & CONSERVATION.** Edited by GORDON ORIAN and JOHN SCHOEN. Anchorage: Audubon Alaska and the Nature Conservancy in Alaska; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013. ISBN 978-0-295-99261-7. xi + 383 p., maps, b&w illus., 20 contributors, literature cited, index. Hardbound. US\$60.00.

Very few places on earth are as productive as the temperate rainforests along the Pacific coast of North America. Here, wild rivers connect marine, freshwater, and terrestrial environments to verdant rainforests distributed on thousands of islands and the mainland. These forests are young by geological standards (< 10 000 years) but populated by centuries-old rainforest trees. Only three other temperate rainforests share the distinction of relative intactness with those of this region: portions of the Valdivia rainforests of Chile and Argentina, cool-temperate rainforests of the Russian Far East and inland southern Siberia, and ancient Gondwana temperate rainforests of Tasmania. Thus, the region's importance is noteworthy globally.

In particular, the Tongass and Great Bear rainforests in this region are champions in storing vast quantities of carbon important in regulating global climates; they contain the most productive salmon runs in the world; and they support intact predator-prey dynamics, a rarity in temperate areas globally. These rainforests certainly deserve the kind of meticulous attention provided by editors Gordon Orians and John Schoen and the many distinguished chapter authors.

The book is well written, thoroughly researched, and balanced in its approach to conservation and responsible forest management, taking into account dependencies of aboriginal peoples on the rainforest's life-giving ecosystem services (Chapter 5); the historical and transitioning economics of the region, including changes in the forestry sector (Chapter 9); the role of island biogeography and glaciation in rainforest biodiversity (Chapter 2); riparian ecology (Chapter 3) and watershed planning (Chapter 8), and disturbance ecology (Chapter 4). I highly recommend this book for students of forest ecology and land managers concerned about the fate of these remarkable rainforests as rainforests around the globe face off against rising land-use demands and unprecedented climate change.

The book's greatest strengths are its solid scientific underpinnings. The science is interpreted through the lens of practical applications to ways of recalibrating forest management so that it can operate within rainforest limitations (Chapters 9, 10). We have the scientific knowledge to do this right now through advances in conservation biology, climate change modeling, and reserve design (Chapters 7, 8, 10), and efforts are underway to trigger a concomitant shift toward compatible and bio-regionally based economies. However, we do not yet have a policy-relevant means for achieving the book's bold and much needed vision, as the authors rightfully let others schooled in the sausage-making of conservation policy figure out how to navigate the region's stormy political waters. Most notably, the Chapter 10 synthesis cites the need to transition the timber industry into second-growth management in order to save what is left of remaining old-growth forests. Advances in second-growth management and restoration forestry can be combined with production of specialty wood items, obtained from a small number of old Sitka spruce trees harvested for community purposes, to enable a speedy transition out of large-scale old growth logging. Getting to that vision, however, will require a new business model that must overcome the economic challenges of small-diameter wood products in northern latitudes, as the authors aptly note. Also needed for this transition to take place are federal subsidies to provide the means for sawmills to retool to accept smaller logs and the emergence of value-added and job-producing wood products, such as wood pellets for home heating. These efforts are currently underway and will require new investments in infrastructure and market demand as noted by the chapter authors.

The only weaknesses in this book are minor. Some of the materials repeated in several of the chapters could have been summarily condensed as a more integrated reference. And while the authors cite new work on temperate rainforests since the 1990s, they rely on prior inventories that are outdated, for example, Ecotrust's estimate that the region's rainforests represent 50% of the global total (vs. the 35% provided by new estimates using standardized computer mapping techniques). The authors could also have added a section on emerging carbon markets as a tool for rainforest conservation on nonfederal lands given the globally significant carbon stores in this region and the need to provide an economically