

“Utiqtuq” Discussion

ENGL 131 Z 11/21/2023

Background

We have been discussing the Anthropocene through Kathryn Yusoff’s book *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, Kyle Whyte’s speech “Braiding Kinship and Time,” and his article “Indigenous science (fiction) for the Anthropocene.” Now, we look to the science (fiction) itself to discuss the ways in which these ideas can be applied. Science fiction has its roots in Western ways of thinking about the future, one very common in popular culture today as people across the world create conversations about what it means to live in a society that is post-colonial and post-COVID currently facing the Anthropocene. Though as Whyte discusses, science fiction is not a new genre, but one that has been a part of storytelling (especially Indigenous storytelling) for millennia¹.

Task

Gather into groups of 3-4. Spend ~20 minutes discussing the following questions. Be sure to consider Kyle Whyte, Kathryn Yusoff, and the videos we watched in class today. Take notes to turn in at the end of class as your Exit Ticket.

- What narratives are present in Utiqtuq?
 - Are there ancestral dystopias, ancestral fantasies?
- How is the apocalypse presented?
 - How is it different for the Inuk characters than for the qallunaat (white characters)?
 - Do either follow a traditional apocalypse narrative? Do either subvert it?
- Why might Aliisa have chosen to go with the qallunaat, while Ittuq chose to stay behind? What made her change her mind just before leaving?
- “Utiqtuq” was written before the COVID pandemic. In what ways do you read the story differently having lived through (and continuing to live in) a pandemic?
- duk^wibəł and Aak’wtaatseen are both older stories, dating back tens of thousands of years. “Utiqtuq” was written in 2019.
 - How is the science (fiction) in “Utiqtuq” different from in either of those stories? How is it similar?