

ISI DE PAULA

SINGING/WRITING INTO THE RIVER

Yoik and watery subjectivity
in Elin Anna Labba's *Far inte till havet*



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Studying indigenous literature in a Western academic context can be a paradoxical endeavor. It always carries an inherent risk of untranslatability: by attempting to grasp non-Western worldviews through Western concepts, we are already limiting them, and thus our understanding of them. As Western thought traditions, both Literary Studies and the Blue Humanities will therefore face some challenges, ethical and conceptual, when approaching indigenous water knowledges from within their own theoretical apparatuses. In recent years, the emerging field of the Blue Humanities has seen a growing scholarly interest in non-Western water knowledges, recognizing the need to engage more deeply with them through literary works from outside an Anglophone canon.¹ Taking the opportunity in this introductory issue to the field for a Swedish audience, I propose here an analysis of a Sámi novel where the human-water relationship is central: Elin Anna Labba's *Far inte till havet* (2024; translated as *The Home of the Drowned*, 2026). This interspecific relationship is approached here through Sámi cosmology, in which natural water bodies are understood as living subjects endowed with agency, sentience, and memory.

Western rationality, for the last centuries, has built itself upon a Cartesian dualism that, dividing the world into *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, separates nature from culture and grants subjective capacities, such as agency, sentience, and memory, exclusively to humans. Following this logic, Literary Theory classifies fictional depictions of nature as either realist or non-realist – narratives that defy the Cartesian divide being usually regarded as belonging to the latter, thus indicating the occurrence of non-realist genres such as fables, myths, fantasy, and magical realism.² In the seminal *The Fantastic: A Struc-*

tural Approach to a Literary Genre, Tzvetan Todorov classifies works of fiction in relation to the reader's level of uncertainty about how they deal with reality, or “the world as we know it”:

In a world which is indeed our world, the one we know, [...] there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world. The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he is a victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination – and laws of the world then remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place, it is an integral part of reality – but then this reality is controlled by laws unknown to us.³

Todorov's definition, however useful, is based on the assumption that there is a singular world – “which is indeed our world, the one we know”. A reasonable assumption, provided that it refers to a specific *we*, namely a *we* that understands reality through Western lenses. Within such a worldview, therefore, it is only logical to regard phenomena that escape the established laws of nature as “supernatural events”, which can be explained away as either products of an illusion (the uncanny genre) or as real only within the premises of the fictional world (the marvelous genre). Indigenous worldviews, on the contrary, do not abide by that divide. The literary representations of nature they inspire should thus not always follow the same principles applied to works of Western fiction.⁴ How are we, then, to engage with works of fiction that draw inspiration from alternative, non-Western ways of being *we*, which entail fundamentally different conceptions of “the world as we know it”? The human-water relationship in *Far inte till havet*, where the river is portrayed as a character endowed with agency, sentience, and memory, certainly deviates from the Cartesian dualism that defines the laws of nature in the Western worldview, and therefore does not meet the requirements for realist literature.

As a literature scholar, I have attempted to tackle this discordance by taking inspiration from a method from the field of Anthropology, namely the “ontological turn”. As Martin Holbraad and Morten Axel Pedersen write in *The Ontological Turn: An Anthropological Exposition*, in the context of anthropology, this movement has been

of great significance as an attempt to “take off the socially, culturally, politically (etc.) ‘tinted glasses’ with which we must necessarily see the world, which typically in anthropology is designated technically as ‘ethnocentrism’”.⁵ One way of applying this approach to literary studies is regarding the classification of certain literary works as types of non-realist literature as determined by our Western “tinted glasses”, and thus seek novel classifications that would emerge from the literary works themselves and the worldviews they propose. The field of Blue Humanities has developed in productive dialogue with other contemporary theoretical fields – such as Posthumanism, Animal Studies, Ecocriticism, and Feminist/New Materialism – that have been influential in Literary Studies as well, contributing to delineating new modes of reading that take into account the perspective of the non-human. Indigenous knowledges, however, have often functioned as a silent and unacknowledged interlocutor and inspiration source for these theories. I believe that the ontological turn as a method can be a positive tool for bridging the attempt to establish a dialogue between the Blue Humanities and non-Western worldviews, and this article presents an experimentation with this method in a literary analysis, taking as a starting point the human-water relationship through the practice of yoik. As will be discussed below, I argue that this knowledge is central to understanding the human-water relationship in the novel, not as a non-realistic or metaphorical account, but as an actual practice of taking on other, non-human subjectivities.

Far inte till havet

The story in *Far inte till havet* revolves around three Sámi women – Ingá, Rávdná and Anne – and their efforts to belong in a territory that is exploited in the name of the country’s development. When the company “Bolaget” builds a hydroelectric power station, the waters of Stora Luleälven rise and submerge the villages where they live. With their huts under water, the Sámi families living in that area are forced to move and leave everything behind. The story is based on an actual historical episode, the damming of the Stora Luleälven’s spring lakes between the 1920s and 1970s, for the construction of Swedish hydroelectric power stations. Several times during these decades, Sámi

villages established in that land were drowned, and the families were forcibly displaced. The novel shows how different generations cope with those changes. The sisters Rávdná and Ánne represent a generation that is more connected to the territory and its history, whereas Ingá, Rávdná's daughter, represents a younger generation that grew up in a context of constant transformation and instability of identity, less resistant than the older one to adopting the lifestyle of the social majority. Rávdná engages in protests against Bolaget and its demands that the Sámi people should sacrifice for the common good of the developing nation. She dreams of building her own house by Stora Luleälven, defying the State's imposition that the Sámis, a supposedly naturally nomadic people, were not suited to live in permanent accommodations. Ingá, on the other hand, sees no point in fighting the State to preserve a tradition that is increasingly jeopardized as she grows up. Instead, her efforts are directed at fitting into society and enjoying the small comforts of modernity, such as having a regular job, a warm house, and a car.

The situation outlined above, with its material consequences for both humans and the landscape, is portrayed as intertwined and inseparable from its immaterial aspect, which regards the relation between humans and territory, especially water bodies, and how it affects both parts' sense of identity. The characters in *Far inte till havet* are shown to have a close relation to nature and communicate with it, especially with the river – at times through everyday language, at times through the practice of yoik. And the river also communicates with them. In indigenous literature, nature is not depicted merely as a background scenario that serves to illustrate human emotions, but as characters with complex emotions of their own. The largest part of the narrative, centered on the human characters and told by a third-person narrator, is invaded by Stora Luleälven's narrative in first person. With small blocks of texts resembling poems that run through a few (unnumbered) pages, it does that seven times throughout the novel, possibly symbolizing the seven spring lakes that form the river, or the number of dammings that took place during those fifty years.

Yoik, memory and identity

Already at the opening of the novel, memory is established as a central theme:

Jag hade ett namn som jag inte minns. Minnena är otydliga, de flesta sjunker, några flyter upp ibland. Jag var sund och stränder, vattenfall och vikar.

Jag hade fisk. Sjöfåglarna, de var kvar.⁶

As we will see in the unfolding story, this sense of memory is sustained by the practice of yoik. The river continues:

Jag var en sjö som hade namn och sånger. De som bodde här sjöng mig... Nana, det minns jag att de sjöng, nana sjöng de innan det här... Det var innan det blev så här.⁷

Those who lived in the territory sang the river (“sjöng mig”), as Stora Luleälven recounts.⁸ The expression “to sing the lake” could be regarded as a poetic way of saying something else: perhaps that people sang songs, and these songs were *about* the lake, or addressed *to* the lake. In the Sámi worldview, however, this formulation is not strictly poetic. As literary critic and writer Harald Gaski explains, the yoik, from the Sámi *juoigan*, “is not *about* a person, it actually *is* the person”.⁹ The verb “to yoik” thus translates more adequately as to sing *into* something/someone rather than singing *about* something/someone:

Traditionally unaccompanied and often sung in wordless syllables, yoik is a musical language of feeling: a yoik describes or evokes an emotion, a person, a landscape, an animal, or whatever the singer may choose. “We don’t sing about,” says yoik singer Mari Boine, “we sing into being—a person, landscape, animal, situation.” A yoik can be joyous, loving, contemplative, haunting, angry, danceable, humorous; always it feels intimate and confident. It’s the song of a culture at home with its soul.¹⁰

To sing *into* rather than *about* a natural phenomenon or entity, in

this case the river, thus refers to a phenomenon that the structure of the Western worldview does not have the tools to grasp. It is a conceptual, ontological difference, which is where the method proposed by the ontological turn becomes relevant: by taking the concept of “singing *into*” to its logical conclusion, we are able to challenge what we understand about singing and about how to relate to other persons, human or non-human. When the river remembers being sung by the people, it is giving an account of a being endowed with memory (remembering being sung), sentience (hearing the songs), and a subjective interpretation of these past events. Following the ontological turn’s approach, we are able to read this account not as a poetic interpretation of a “primitive” cultural practice based on animism, nor as a metaphorical (and thus anthropocentric) illustration of the people’s experience of the dammings. Instead, we can take part in another worldview where the river’s subjectivity is a literal phenomenon, and the yoik a practice of taking on other subjectivities – the people actually sing into Stora Luleälven’s “riverness”.

In *Far inte till havet*, the yoik constitutes a common language between humans and nature. While talking to one another, the characters are seen, for instance, to yoik the low mountain or the rapids’ current in order to change the atmosphere of the conversation (“Han gjorde tonerna lätta som om han jojkade ett mjukt lågfjäll”; “Han jojkade forsens ström, som han gjorde när han ville både blidka och reta henne”).¹¹ Or to calm an animal by yoiking a *dovdna*, “den lätta melodiska barnjojken som fick en att somna, drömma, vakna till en annan morgon”.¹² But in addition to being a form of communication, the yoik is also a practice that helps the characters to preserve their memory and sense of identity, deeply connected to a sense of belonging to the territory: “Jojk var bön. Marken ville att människan skulle jojka, på samma sätt som den satte dem att slöjda och berätta. Det var böner på platser där man var så hemma att ens skor var marken och marken ens skor”.¹³ According to Gaski, “when a person had received a yoik, he or she was looked upon as a member of the community”.¹⁴ From the portrayal of the practice of yoik in the novel, we can perceive the close connection between this sense of identity and memory. As music researcher Olle Edström puts it, yoiking allows the person to “recreate and experience one’s feelings anew and strengthen

them. Just as the memory of someone or something is reinforced when one joked, the opposite could also be the case: when one thought about someone or something, one would be inclined to joke him/her/it”.¹⁵ With the damming of Stora Luleälven, the people living in that territory are repelled, and the connection between humans and nature, especially the river, is lost, causing both of them to forget their common language and close relationship, and consequently, their sense of identity. Stora Luleälven relates its own experiences of being turned into an artificial sea and drowning surrounding villages as a process of memory and identity loss:

*Jag var ljust fjällvatten som blev mörka hål och blött tyg sjönk. Jag hade kåtornas mjuka väggar mot min mun, de vita spetsarna från kvinnornas mössor. De som gick ut på min svaga is. Vi är här fortfarande, nana, vi lämnar inte. De sjöng Siivujávri, den goda sjön, men mitt minne skulle försvinna. Jag välldde...*¹⁶

—

*Jag minns inga namn och nästan inga ord längre. Jag är en av de språklösa och jag väntar här. Jag är kallare men jag fryser inte, låter inte isarna komma. Inga isar lägger sig på mig längre och regnet det faller om vintern. Jag har stor ebb och jag har lång flod. Jag är torkan och floden.*¹⁷

As Stora Luleälven's memories are embodied, the act of forgetting happens in parallel with physical transformation: overflowing and no longer being able to freeze, the river loses contact with the humans, who no longer are able to walk over its ice during winter, or navigate and fish in it during the summer. “*Siivujávri, Siivujávri, stay, the people still sang, but I didn't recognize the songs. I drowned them*”.¹⁸ The presence of the name of the river, followed by the epithet “the good lake”, indicates that this is a specific type of yoik, namely the personal yoik. In this genre, “[b]oth the musical and the verbal portrait of the subject are usually short, concise, striking characterizations”.¹⁹ Stora Luleälven is thus treated as a person with a personality of their own, and the yoik is a document of the river’s sense of identity that is affected by the loss of memory.

With the aim to give more complexity to the properties of water, describing it as “more than just ‘fluid’”, feminist Blue Humanities scholar Astrida Neimanis has proposed six “hydro-logics”, one of which is that of the archive.²⁰ This hydro-logic describes how water bodies, by accumulating non-degradable residues over time, “become material repositories of the past”.²¹ This hydro-logic applies well to the narrative of *Far inte till havet*, where we can follow, as the dammings take place, how the villages repeatedly turn into submerged landscapes. However, the river is not only material, but also immaterial repository: “Det var vatten och under vattnet fanns ett land av tysta berättelser. Platser och människor”.²² More than that, the river is not only an archive of *human* histories and stories – it has a history and a story of its own. It becomes an archive of itself, of its past form and subjectivity. “Water remembers”, Neimanis writes, summarizing the hydro-logic of the archive.²³ But here, water also forgets as it ceases to be yoiked and goes through a physical transformation. More than a passive archive, water is portrayed in the novel as having actual memory in its double capacity of both remembering and forgetting.

The forgetfulness becomes mutual between the human and the non-human. Ingá’s remembrance of her father, who died when she was little, gradually fades away: “Sedan sjön hade kommit mindes hon inte hans ansikte riktigt. Han var mest ögon, han hade ingen mun och rösten var låg”.²⁴ But Stora Luleälven’s memory loss is shared especially with Rávdná – both characters are increasingly affected by amnesia as the story develops. Later in the story, Rávdná is admitted to a nursing home. She forgets how to speak Swedish, the major language, and starts speaking Sámi again. In her mind, she is back in her village, living close to the river, where she can ride her boat and fish. From her perspective, the one suffering from memory loss is actually her daughter: “Hon brukade snegla på Ingá, hennes vackra dotter som hade förlorat minnet av den hon var”.²⁵ What does it mean to lose memory, really? Only by forgetting where she is and what has happened, Rávdná is able to reconnect with her identity, transporting herself to a time where she lived in a closer relation with the territory. Still, the experience of the river is not portrayed as metaphorical, or as an illustration of the human’s. Instead, their shared experience is at

the same time individual, showing that, in this worldview, the capacity to memory is not exclusively human. By playing with different senses of memory, the novel highlights how embodied experiences and identity are intertwined, for both humans and non-humans.

Towards the end of the novel, when the protests against Bolaget have shown not to be giving the expected results, the eldest reconnect with the yoik as a last act of resistance, a means of reestablishing a connection with the already estranged river, and reclaiming their Sámi identity:

Det fanns fjäll av glömda jojkar med tonerna så djupt begravda att de aldrig skulle hittas, så fanns det några få jojkar som hade stannat i kroppen, fastän de inte tog sig ut i luften mer. Jouná hade börjat jojka Siivujávri, en av få jojkar Rávdná hade kvar. Den djupaste delen av den gamla sjön. Den urgamla, mitterst av de sju sjöarna.²⁶

Anthropomorphization: literal/metaphorical embodiments

With the loss of the interspecific language of yoik, there is a shift in the affective relation between the humans and the river:

De har blivit otacksamma. De som brukade längta, de som brukade sjunga och tacka. Åren har gått och folk undviker mig. De svär åt mig och jag tycker inte om det.

Svårt att vara ensam. Åren sliter, de sliter, fram och tillbaka. Jag höjs och sänks.

Jag saknar lågvattnets vila. Jag saknar mina vita isar.²⁷

These affective transformations that Stora Luleälven goes through – loss of connection with the human realm, along with a loss of memory and identity – are concretized in its physical body in several ways. Besides the transformation in volume and fluidity, from a running river into an artificial and static sea, there is also a change in coloration. As we see in the excerpt above, the white color refers

to a time of “low tide’s calm”, when the river was still able to freeze and let the people walk over its ice. In its new physical form, the river is no longer white: “*I grönt vatten klädde jag mig när isarna smälte. Solen glänste och glaciärerna föll*”.²⁸ The humans perceive the river’s different colors as characteristic for its state of mind:

Det hade varit ett helvete att få upp näten de sista dagarna, sjön hade blåst, lugnat sig, retat upp sig igen.

Den var orolig.

De trasiga näten hängde på stranden och glodde på henne varje dag och sjön bytte färg varje timme. Klarblå, mörkblå, grå och sedan ljus igen.²⁹

The more grey Stora Luleälven becomes, the more physically and emotionally uneasy it reveals itself to be: “*Kroppen svällde och kokade, och mitt vatten blev grått*”.³⁰ These states of mind are often shared with the humans: “Åja, inte en bra i dag”, sa hon till sjön. ‘Go nu heajos mielan?’ Den var grågrön och rastlös, såg ut som hon kände sig. Orolig”.³¹ In fact, the water bodies in *Far inte till havet* seem to exert a strong influence on how the human characters perceive themselves and each other, helping to construct their sense of identity: “Jouná var tuff. Han hade alltid påmint mer om männen i de andra byarna, det rann ett annat slags stridare vatten i deras bäckar. Det var så stenigt och brant på andra sidan, då blev människorna sådana. De var inte som deras mjuka backar som föll ihop och blödde rakt ner i sjön”.³² In a double movement, humans acquire traits of nature and vice versa.

Stora Luleälven’s embodied experiences are at times expressed in an anthropomorphized manner, its experiences described as a mixture of human and non-human embodiments: “*Vit och blek vred jag och sprack, jag frös och sprack. Jag blev vakar och malströmmar. Jag fick svarta ådror, blånader och sprickor över min kropp som jag gömde under snön*”.³³ Not only Stora Luleälven perceives itself in human terms, but also the humans perceive the water bodies in that way: “Sjön sträckte ut sina händer och bar människorna från ena världen till den andra, det hade Rávdná ofta tänkt”.³⁴ While anthropomorphization is a common stylistic resource in narratives on nature, here we are dealing with two different kinds of it; the first one consists in

transferring human bodily characteristics to nature, and the second in transferring supposedly exclusively human mental capacities to nature. My argument here is that, in specific cases such as this narrative, only the first kind is to be treated as metaphorical, while the latter is to be taken literally. That is: while the river's "mouth", "hands", and "arteries" are anthropomorphic metaphors, its subjectivity and capacity for sentience and memory are not.

This kind of metaphorical resource is not always appreciated in academic fields that engage critically with the non-human realm. As Escobar et al. summarize this concern:

For Western-educated intellectuals, the invitation to relate with phenomena once relegated to the categories "inanimate", "object", "non-(self)-conscious" or "not-human/not-person" as something like people (a word that will suffice here as a stand-in for beings with whom we have some ethical responsibility/relation) can lead to the real apprehension of committing the "cardinal sin" of anthropomorphism. What if we project upon natural phenomena our own traits?³⁵

On the other hand, they argue, the anthropomorphization of nature constitutes a sort of poetic knowledge, or "bio-poetics, [that] includes engagements that are not only literary but also tactile and material".³⁶ Serpil Oppermann as well criticizes what she regards as Western scholars' limited understanding of metaphor as a resource that favors abstraction:

*This is a misunderstanding of metaphoric meanings and/or the figural notions of the sea, because what we take to be a symbolic, figural, or metaphoric meaning is a way of relating in which the meaning is modulated in the interweaving field of the material and the discursive. This doesn't mean that metaphoric representations are an addition of something else to water's material reality; rather, when used disanthropocentrically, they effect a kind of a better cognitive response to the oceanic realities with a new focus today, dissolving anthropocentric foundations of figural representations.*³⁷

Even though Oppermann and Escobar et al. argue for the positive,

material value of metaphors, I believe that, when dealing with narratives based on non-Western cosmologies, we still should make a commitment to taking certain phenomena literally. In the case of *Far inte till havet*, treating water memory as truly literal is a way of expanding the concept of “memory” itself beyond the human model. In a metaphorical reading, the river’s “remembering” means, following the hydro-logic of the archive, that it is a repository, material and/or immaterial, for human residues and histories/stories. In a literal reading, on the other hand, we are dealing with a real mechanism of remembrance, albeit different from the human. This is the ontological turn provided by such a reading: instead of “translating” the river’s memory to our Western conceptual apparatus, we allow our very understanding of what “memory” is to be challenged by the narrative.

*

The ontological turn can be a relevant tool for analysing literary works that approach the non-human in ways that challenge the Cartesian divide. Given its concern with the issue of untranslatability between non-Western worldviews and Western concepts, the ontological turn also shows some potential for bridging a gap between the field of the Blue Humanities and indigenous knowledges. In this analysis, we have experimented with a literal, rather than metaphorical, reading of watery subjectivity in the Sámi novel *Far inte till havet*. The outcome of such an analysis is to open space for the possibility of there being other versions of “the world as we know it” than the Western. Especially in the context of the Anthropocene, understanding water bodies as literally alive and intelligent can lead to more productive strategies than metaphorical readings would be able to provide. The practice of yoik is portrayed as an interspecific language that strengthens the sense of memory and identity between humans and water. As singing *into* rather than *to* or *about*, the yoik has a parallel with the literary practice: both can be used as rituals of performing other, non-human subjectivities through a specific use of language.

Noter

- 1 Steve Mentz, *An Introduction to the Blue Humanities* (New York: Routledge, 2024); Serpil Oppermann, *Blue Humanities: Storied Waterscapes in the Anthropocene* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023); Craig Santos Perez, “‘The Ocean in Us’: Navigating the Blue Humanities and Diasporic Chamoru Poetry”, *Humanities* vol. 9 (2020:3), 66 <https://doi.org/10.3390/h9030066>.
- 2 The concept of “realism” (or “Realism”) has had different connotations throughout literary history (Cf. Steven Earnshaw, *Beginning Realism* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2025]). Here, I am dealing specifically with the conception of realism as opposed to the types of literature, consisting of various genres and subgenres, that are grouped under the umbrella term “speculative literature”. It is realism in this sense that, I argue, reflects the Cartesian divide – even though the concept has different connotations within philosophy and the natural sciences as well (Cf. Alex Rosenberg and Lee McIntyre, *Philosophy of Science: A Contemporary Introduction*, 4th ed. [New York: Routledge, 2020], Ch. 8; Cora Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy, and the Mind* [Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991], Ch. 1).
- 3 Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975), 25.
- 4 There are, of course, cases of contemporary indigenous fiction that can be classified as e.g. myths and fables. Here I refer specifically to cases that depart from a non-Western, although realist, view of nature.
- 5 Martin Holbraad and Morten Axel Pedersen, *The Ontological Turn: An Anthropological Exposition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 5.
- 6 Elin Anna Labba, *Far inte till havet* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 2024), s. 1, [*Jag hade ett namn...*]. Since the pages containing Stora Luleälven’s narration are unnumbered, “s.” indicates in which one of the seven sections the fragment can be found. In the English translation: “*I had a name that I don’t remember. The memories are indistinct, most sink, but now and then a few float upward. I was sound and shore, waterfall and bay. I had fish. And the sea birds were still here*”. Elin Anna Labba, *The Home of the Drowned* (London: Random House UK, 2026), s. 1, [*I had a name...*].
- 7 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, s. 1, [*Jag var en sjö...*]. “*I was a lake with names and songs. The ones who lived here sang to me... Nana, I remember how they sang, nana before this... That was before I was this*”. Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, s. 1, [*I was a lake...*].
- 8 Even though an analysis of the translation lies outside the scope of this article, it is important to note that the English translation consistently renders the expression as “sing to”, a choice that, as will become clear below, obscures an important aspect of the practice of joik.
- 9 Harald Gaski (red.), *In the shadow of the midnight sun: contemporary Sami prose and poetry* (Karasjok: Davvi Girji, 1996), 13.
- 10 Catherine Madsen, “Singing into Being”, *UAF Department of Music*, accessed December 26, 2025, <https://www.uaf.edu/music/cms/singing-into-being.php>.
- 11 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, 44; 48. “He made the notes light as if he were singing a soft low mountain”; “He sang the joik to the current of the rapids, as he did when he wanted to both placate and tease her”. Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, 30; 34.

- 12 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, 30. "(...) a muffled, light melodic lullaby, the kind that put you to sleep, to dream, to wake up to a new morning". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, 20.
- 13 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, 286. "Joik was prayer. The earth wanted people to joik, just as it wanted them to craft and tell stories. It was a prayer of home, the places where your shoes were the ground and the ground your shoes". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, 222.
- 14 Gaski, *In the shadow*, 12.
- 15 Olle Edström, "From Joik to Rock and Joik: Some Remarks on the Process of Change and of the Socially Constructed Meaning of Sami Music", *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* vol. 44 (2003: 1/2), 269–289, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/902650>, 272.
- 16 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, s. 1, [Jag var ljus fjällvatten...]. "I was shining mountain water that turned to dark holes and the wet cloth sunk. The soft walls of the goathi were pressed against my mouth, the white tips of the women's caps. The ones who walked on my thin ice. We're still here, nana, we won't leave you. They sang Siivujávri, the good lake, but my memory faded. I welled...". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, s. 1, [I was shining mountain...].
- 17 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, s. 7, [Jag minns inga namn...]. "I don't remember any names now and barely any words. I'm one of those with no language, who will lie here and wait. I'm colder now, but I don't freeze, won't let the ice come. No ice settles on me anymore, and the rain it falls on the wind. I have big tide, and I have long river. I am the drought and the river". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, s. 7, [I don't remember...].
- 18 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, s. 1, [Jag välldde över fåglarna...]. "Siivujávri, Siivujávri, stay, the people still sang, but I didn't know those songs, I drowned them". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, s. 1, [I washed over the birds...].
- 19 Gaski, *In the shadow*, 13.
- 20 Astrida Neimanis, "Feminist Subjectivity, Watered", *Feminist Review (Print)* vol. 103 (2013), 23–41 <https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.2012.25>, 30.
- 21 Neimanis, "Feminist Subjectivity", 32.
- 22 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, 36. "There was water and beneath the water was the land of silenced stories. Places and people". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, 24.
- 23 Neimanis, "Feminist Subjectivity", 32.
- 24 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, 207. "Since the lake rose, she couldn't really remember his face. He was mostly eyes for her, he had no mouth and his voice was very quiet". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, 159.
- 25 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, 340. "She liked to watch Ingá, her beautiful daughter, who had lost the memory of who she was". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, 262.
- 26 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, 284. "There were whole mountains of forgotten joik with notes so deeply buried they would never be found, and there were a few that remained in the bones of your body, even though they couldn't make their way out into the air any more. Jouná had started to joik the Siivujávri, one of the few Rávdná still had in her. The deepest part of the old lake. The heart of the ancient lake". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, 221.
- 27 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, s. 4, [De har blivit otacksamma...]. "It's hard to be alone for so many years. The years passed, and the people avoided me. The ones

- who used to long for me, who used to sing to me and offer me their thanks, became ungrateful. I don't like to hear them cursing at my shores and my waves. The years wear on, they wear down, back and forth. I am raised and lowered. I long for the peace of low tide and the healing white ice". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, s. 4, [It's hard to be alone...].
- 28 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, s. 4 [I grönt vatten...]. "I clad myself in green water while the ice melted. The sun shone, and the glaciers fell". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, s. 4, [I clad myself...].
- 29 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, 241. "It had been hell getting the nets up these last few days; the lake had been choppy, calmed down, then stirred up again. It was worried. Every day the broken nets hung on the shore staring at her, and the lake changed color with the hour. Clear blue, dark blue, grey, then light again". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, 188.
- 30 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, s. 5, [I vaken skrek flickan...]. "My body swelled and boiled, and my waters turned gray". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, s. 5, [In the ice hole...].
- 31 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, 58. "'Oh, not a good day', she said to the lake. 'Go nu heajos mielan?' Gray-green and restless, the lake looked like how she felt. Worried". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, 42.
- 32 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, 271. "Jouná was tough. He'd always reminded her more of the men in the other villages; a different kind of fighting water ran in their streams. It was so rocky and steep on the other side of the mountain, that the people, too, became like that. They weren't like these soft hills that gave way and bled straight into the water". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, 211.
- 33 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, s. 2, [Vit och blek...]. "White and pale. I writhed and cracked, I froze and cracked. I became holes and maelstroms. Black veins, bruises, and cracks spreading through my body, which I hid beneath the snow". Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, s. 2, [White and pale...].
- 34 Labba, *Far inte till havet*, 86. "It was as if the lake stretched out its hands and carried these people from one world to another, Rávdná had often thought of it so" Labba, *The Home of the Drowned*, 63.
- 35 Arturo Escobar, Michal Osterweil and Kriti Sharma, *Relationality: an emergent politics of life beyond the human* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2024), 44.
- 36 Escobar et al., *Relationality*, 48.
- 37 Serpil Oppermann, *Blue Humanities: Storied Waterscapes in the Anthropocene* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 23.