

University of Bristol

Department of Historical Studies

Best undergraduate dissertations of
2022

Henry Brooking

**Strangers in a Strange Land –
Comparative Analysis of Indigenous
Interactions within the Arctic and the
Metropole**

The Department of Historical Studies at the University of Bristol is committed to the advancement of historical knowledge and understanding, and to research of the highest order. Our undergraduates are part of that endeavour.

Since 2009, the Department has published the best of the annual dissertations produced by our final year undergraduates in recognition of the excellent research work being undertaken by our students.

This was one of the best of this year's final year undergraduate dissertations.

Please note: this dissertation is published in the state it was submitted for examination. Thus the author has not been able to correct errors and/or departures from departmental guidelines for the presentation of dissertations (e.g. in the formatting of its footnotes and bibliography).

© The author, 2022

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means without the prior permission in writing of the author, or as expressly permitted by law.

All citations of this work must be properly acknowledged.

Strangers in a Strange Land: Comparative Analysis of Indigenous
Interactions within the Arctic and the Metropole



Word Count: 9555

Contents

List of Illustrations	5
Abstract	5
Introduction	6-8
Literature Review	8-14
Chapter I <i>Arctic Voyages</i>	14-25
Chapter II <i>Within the Metropole</i>	25-33
Conclusion	33-35
Bibliography	36-39
Index	40-43

List of Illustrations

Figure 1. Photograph of the Gjoa crew in the Arctic. Amundsen (far left) and his crew are dressed in Inuit clothing. (1906) Photograph source: Roald Amundsen, *The Amundsen Photographs*, 1987.

Figure 2. Advertisement for P.T. Barnum's Museum, featuring an Esquimaux Inuit family, brought from Greenland by Hall. (1862) Poster source: Charles Francis Hall Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

Figure 3. Advertisement for James Ambrose Cutting's New Boston Aquarial and Zoological Gardens, featuring an Esquimaux Family, brought from Greenland by Hall. Poster source: Epistemophilia, Russell A. Potter.

Figure 4. 'Why Arctic Explorer Peary's Neglected Eskimo wants to shoot him'. (9 May 1909) Newspaper Source: *San Francisco Examiner*, Magazine supplement.

Abstract

This dissertation will investigate how the extreme nature of the Arctic environment was able to shape unique and distinctive kinds of interactions between indigenous groups and Western peoples. This dissertation will employ a comparative narrative, looking first toward the nature of relationships that operated in the Arctic itself. It will focus on the role of indigenous intermediaries who operated within voyages of discovery and the modes of exchange that nurtured mutual interactions between explorers and Inuit settlements. This dissertation will then look beyond the Arctic periphery and toward the imperial metropole. It will examine how this shift in environmental conditions necessitated a similar shift in the interactions between Inuit and imperial audiences. Exploring how the effects of exoticization, commercialization, and scientific exploitation of the Inuit created a racialized, dominating structure of interaction.

Introduction

In December 1897 within the confines of the Museum of Natural History in New York, a clandestine funeral was taking place. Keeping vigil was the seven-year-old Inuit orphan Winik Wallace who watched as his father's casket was lowered into a makeshift grave. In truth the casket was loaded with rocks and debris, only a few rooms away his father's actual remains were being skinned and dissected for museum display. Only months before had the Arctic steamship the *Hope* anchored in New York harbour, as large crowds gathered to catch a glimpse of American explorer Robert Peary and his "strange cargo". Accompanying him was a group of six Greenlandic Inuit, known as the Inughuit from Cape York, who had helped assist Peary during his initial voyages around Baffin Bay. In the three years Peary spent navigating these northern Arctic passages, he seemingly built a close, intimate connection with the indigenous Inuit communities. Enough so to persuade this rough assembly to follow him to America with promises of gold, munitions, and their safe return within a year. None of the passengers onboard the *Hope* would ever make the return trip, only two of them would even survive beyond the winter. Traded by Peary to the Museum of Natural History, they were made to endure abject conditions as scientific specimens, before being dissected and exhibited as anthropological oddities. Such a marked shift in the dynamics between Inuit and explorers asks questions as to the significance of these changing environments. While the tragic nature of Winik's story is representative of the complex relationships emerging during this 'heroic' age of Arctic exploration.

This dissertation will employ a comparative narrative to analyze the environmental nature of these interactions and the types of relationships that emerged between American/Europeans and Inuit populations local to Northern Canada and Greenland. It will engage with several key case studies, including the polar expeditions of Charles Francis Hall, Robert Peary, and Roald Amundsen as they navigated the Northwest Passage. These examples will demonstrate how local Inuit populations harmonized and integrated with North Atlantic polar expeditions. Building upon the brilliant work of

Dorothy Eber in *Encounters on the Passage* and her extensive work in codifying the oral histories of contemporary Inuit communities. This dissertation will illustrate the nature of first encounters, how the Inuit assisted expeditions, the reliance of explorers on local populations, and the broader legacy of these cultural interactions. Chapter one of this dissertation will engage with how the nature of 'golden age' imperial exploration was unravelled within the Arctic environment. Where extreme environmental conditions and the deadly nature of arctic exploration fostered a relationship of cooperation and, at times, dependency in early endeavours. The first key aspect this section will focus on is how local Inuit populations integrated into new roles on Western voyages of discovery. The mechanisms which fostered these relationships and perceptions were built on trust, respect, and racial equality. The secondary focus of this section will emphasize the nature of initial interactions between the two groups. As American and European explorers pushing the frontiers of Occident knowledge allowed for rich examples of cultural discourse and exchange in language, knowledge, and culture.

The imperial nature of these relationships was reflected not only in the periphery of 'Western' exploration but within the imperial metropole itself. In chapter two, this dissertation will maintain a focus on the characteristics that formulated these relationships framed in a comparative and altogether different, urban landscape. Analyzing how this radically different environmental context fostered a similarly remarkable shift in these perceptions. The absence of extreme survival situations remoulded and hardened attitudes among explorers, while the metropole itself provided new modes of colonial 'othering' and anthropological exploitation. Building on the cases of chapter one, this section will explore the aftermaths of expeditions by Hall, Peary, and Amundsen. This will reveal an opportunity to focus on lived experiences from the perspective of the Inuit themselves. To complement recent work by the likes of Kenn Harper in *Give Me My Father's Body* and *Do You See Ice* by Karen Routledge. Many of these individuals were exploited in the aftermath of Arctic expeditions for the benefit of the metropole or had personal experiences within imperial society. This section will explore the extent to which this environment framed indigenous interactions within the prism of cultural commercialization

and imperial anthropology. Exploring their exploitation in human zoos, the othering of Inuit populations as foreign curiosities, and their exoticization in displaying imperial civilization.

Engaging with this comparative approach hopes to enhance how the extreme conditions of the arctic forced European and American explorers to challenge their preconceptions and prejudices. To question ingrained, racialized thinking. But this dual narrative also demonstrates what was a limited, temporary transformation. A fleeting departure from the entrenched metropole-periphery relationship that characterized the period.

Literature Review

Recently the study of exploration has undergone a significant reappraisal, accompanying some of the broader shifts in historiographical writing. One of the most pronounced ways historians have approached these new histories is by challenging the old. An increasingly rich area of study has seen scholarship challenge the explorer narrative of exceptional, white, Western individuals mastering the hostile environments surrounding them. Uncovering the 'hidden histories' of exploration has torn down the barrier between local indigenous populations and explorers that traditional accounts erected.¹ Incorporating a postcolonial approach, scholars have shown that exploration missions often relied upon the knowledge, guidance, and support of local populations.² Distancing entirely from the image of the Western Explorer, this network of indigenous individuals, who were often crucial to the success of exploration missions and hidden from official records, have been characterized as 'indigenous

¹ Felix Driver and Lowri Jones, *Hidden Histories of Exploration: Researching the RGS-IBG Collections*, (London: Royal Holloway, 2009), p. 5.

² Peter R. Martin and Edward Armston-Sheret, 'Off the Beaten Track? Critical Approaches to Exploration Studies' in *Geography Compass*, 14 (2020), 1-14 (pp. 7-8).

intermediaries'.³ Dane Kennedy's *The Last Blank Space*, for example, highlights the role of indigenous intermediaries as "guides, interpreters, and, above all, cultural brokers" within the context of the Australian bush.⁴ Despite a lack of indigenous firsthand records, Kennedy reveals a much more culturally diverse, ethnographically complex account of discovery. One that squarely contests traditional white expedition narratives. Integrating narratives of dependency upon indigenous populations has breathed a new life into the histories of global exploration. Historian Stephen Rockel has illustrated how early expeditions into the African interior were shaped by pre-existing caravan trade routes and the assistance of Waungwana porters.⁵ While D. Graham Burnett has demonstrated how the limits of imperial understanding were exposed by dependency on indigenous guides in the torturous navigation of British Guyana, the success of which "must be understood as the product of such coagency".⁶ Such approaches extend even to the far-flung extremes of the Arctic, as James Ryan touches upon in *Photography and Exploration: "Indigenous people were a constant and essential presence for explorers, even in the remotest locations. Despite the predominant imagery of the Arctic as desolate and uninhabited, Arctic exploration was often full of encounters between European and Inuit people".*⁷ These developments in the historiography of exploration, however, also reveal areas where fresh analysis is distinctly lacking in polar exploration. Complimentary to recent publications

³ Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent and Tiffany Shellam, 'Exploration Archives and Indigenous Histories: An Introduction', in *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on Exploration Archives*, ed. by Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent and Tiffany Shellam, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2015), pp. xv-10 (pp. 1-2).

⁴ Dane Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces: Exploring Africa and Australia*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), p. 163.

⁵ Stephen J. Rockel, 'Slavery and Freedom in Nineteenth Century East Africa: The Case of Waungwana Caravan Porters' in *African Studies*, 68 (2009), 87-109 (pp. 88-91).

⁶ D. Graham Burnett, *Masters of All They Surveyed Exploration, Geography, and a British El Dorado*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 234.

⁷ James R. Ryan, *Photography and Exploration*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), p. 113.

by the likes of Karen Routledge's *Do You See Ice*, more scholarship can be dedicated to unearthing the hidden experiences of these local communities. Exploration of the Arctic represented one of the most arduous and final frontiers of Western exploration, the especially extreme nature of which demanded cooperation with local peoples. This dissertation hopes to occupy contemporary scholarship's shortcomings, exploring the agency of local Inuit communities within modes of Arctic exploration as indigenous intermediaries. Building upon a collection of expedition logs and first-hand accounts, it will demonstrate how Inuit intermediaries became vital components in the machinery of discovery.

Alongside a renaissance of literature on indigenous intermediaries, the field of exploration history has also sought to incorporate new approaches and methodologies into its analysis. In many instances, historical analysis of exploration is restricted by the Eurocentric perspectives of the available source material. To separate exploration narratives from this European bias, and to uncover more complex, nuanced hidden histories, therefore, requires creative use of source material. Works by Felix Driver have similarly questioned the nature of historical methodology in exploration narratives. Suggesting that to rescue local agency from the condescension of posterity requires us to replace traditional hero-myths with new ways of thinking about wider exploration networks and relationships.⁸ Driver argues that "indeed, new layers of interpretation and new kinds of evidence (notably oral history or creative practice) may need to be added before they can be made to generate new stories, suggesting a program of construction as much as archaeology".⁹ Reconceptualizing how historians approach colonial-era modes of knowledge ties into broader developments within the historiography of post-colonial studies. One of the most important influences arrived with the publication of Edward Said's

⁸ Felix Driver, 'Intermediaries and the Archive of Exploration' in *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on Exploration Archives*, ed. By Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent and Tiffany Shellam, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2015), pp. 11-29 (p.16).

⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 25-26.

Orientalism. While not concerned with exploration itself, *Orientalism* was able to draw heavily on the experience of Western explorers as key literary vehicles in constructing the ‘Orient’.¹⁰ How imagined geographies and the knowledge gained through voyages of exploration served to construct imperial relationships of power between metropolises and peripheries.¹¹ Scholars have developed and appropriated Said’s original theorization for decades, including within the field of Arctic exploration. Hayden Shields highlights how the among the Canadian Arctic and local indigenous populations, explorers “appealed to the concept of wildness to designate an area of subhumanity that was characterized by everything they hoped they were not”.¹² As exploration literature highlighted the backwardness of Inuit settlements and perceived the Inuit as a race seemingly going extinct in the face of modernity. While E. C. H. Keskitalo has demonstrated how the indigenous peoples of the Arctic “are required to be framed, or frame themselves, in terms of non-modern, authentic, traditional labels”.¹³ Since Inuit description was confined within this orientalist framework of an uncivilised wilderness, European and American explorers, therefore, often framed their experiences and knowledge within a Foucauldian prism of imperial relations. Historians, therefore, have sought to build upon Felix Driver’s ‘program of construction’ by integrating new kinds of evidence and perspectives into their narratives. One such approach has seen the incorporation of Inuit oral history into exploration narratives, as their interactions with eighteenth and nineteenth-century voyages were passed down generations. The work of Dorothy Eber in *Encounters on the Passage* is notable in this respect, as she embarked upon cataloguing generations of indigenous oral history. The utility of retelling this

¹⁰ Dane Kennedy, *Reinterpreting Exploration: The West in the World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 7.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 7.

¹² Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity*, (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1991), p. 163.

¹³ E. C. H. Keskitalo, *Negotiating the Arctic: The Construction of an International Region*, (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2003), p. 180.

dimension of exploration history is in providing a picture of the Inuit world before it was forever changed by the arrivals of foreign explorers.¹⁴ Delivering an Inuit point of view and Inuit voice to the history of the Northwest Passage.¹⁵ This dissertation hopes to offer a similarly exploratory perspective on the relationships and networks that emerged between local indigenous communities and successive Arctic expeditions. Reengaging with Inuit oral histories and the few written recorded experiences of Inuit intermediaries, as well as focusing on points of first contact between these groups to reveal hidden histories.

In seeking to distance and remove the figure of western explorers from dominating exploration narratives, recent historiography has taken a novel transformative approach. Rather than distancing the figure of Western explorers from indigenous environments, instead, they attempt to place indigenous peoples within Western environments. Recognizing that exploration was not just an accumulation of knowledge and learning but rather a transfer or exchange. Exploration represented a two-way process, just as Western explorers discovered new lands and encountered unfamiliar peoples, so too did indigenous groups experience the ‘virus of new thinking’ and explore distant, new environments.¹⁶ The ‘first encounters’ that are revealing as to the nature of explorers/indigenous relations happened respectively in both metropole and periphery environments. Scholarship by Jack Brook, for example, chronicles the experiences of the Aboriginal intermediary Bennelong and his first exposures to British society in the late eighteenth century.¹⁷ The utility for historians of exploration lies in understanding the cultural structures of the metropole that informed explorer relations in the periphery. Brook’s work

¹⁴ Dorothy Eber, *Encounters on the Passage: Inuit Meet the Explorers*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. xiv.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. xix.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. xiv.

¹⁷ Jack Brook, ‘The Forlorn Hope: Bennelong and Yemmerrawannie go to England’ in *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, 1 (2001), 36-47 (p. 36).

highlights the hierarchical, racialized structure in England, one which depicted indigenous imperial agents like Bennelong as “totally incapable of civilization and form a lower order of the human race”.¹⁸ Coll Thrush’s recent publication *Indigenous London* is an extensive and ambitious chronicle of these indigenous experiences within imperial centres. Like the work of Alden Vaughan, Thrush grounds his narrative in the real lived-in experiences of indigenous groups in the metropole, including those of the Inuit who visited London in the late eighteenth century with George Cartwright.¹⁹ Thrush’s central thesis argues that metropole centres in the West have “been entangled with Indigenous territories, resources, knowledges, and lives from the very beginnings of its experiments with colonizing ... not just as the actor, but acted-upon, not just the center but also the periphery”.²⁰ More focused and less overarching publications have also explicitly focused on the experiences on arctic Inuit peoples. *Give Me My Father’s Body* by Kenn Harper is one example of recent scholarship. Harper charts the tragic life of Winik the Inuit orphan from his first arrival in America, his life as a pawned out cultural oddity, and his fruitless efforts to reclaim his father’s bones. Here Winik’s story serves as a snapshot of the burgeoning science of anthropology that shaped scientific perceptions and the fascination and ‘othering’ of indigenous groups within urban environments. Demonstrating the scientific racism that became a foundation of metropole relations and the commercialization of Inuit and other ‘exotic’ peoples within imperial menageries.²¹ While Karen Routledge has bound indigenous experiences around the idea of the home - how Inuit and Americans experienced one another’s

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 38.

¹⁹ Coll-Peter Thrush, *Indigenous London: Native Travelers at the Heart of Empire*, (London: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 114-116.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 15.

²¹ Kenn Harper, *Give Me My Father’s Body*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), p. xiii.

countries as inhospitable and dangerous.²² Routledge argues that representations of Arctic homelands by imperial societies had powerful repercussions in justifying colonialism, as well as shaping how travellers and governments interacted with these diverse landscapes and their inhabitants.²³ This dissertation hopes to build upon and be complementary to these recent publications by framing Inuit/Explorer relations through a comparative discussion. Relocating the focus of these networks away from the Arctic and providing opportunities to frame them across the backdrop of imperial metropolises. Utilizing case studies of lived experiences by indigenous Inuit groups, this dissertation will demonstrate how environmental context forms a crucial component of imperial relations.

Chapter I – Arctic Voyages

One of the all too common but erroneous assumptions is the characterization of the history of exploration as the history of its explorers. Dominated by European and American perspectives and emotively emphasizing their struggles, the myth of the heroic explorer has overtaken exploration narratives. Demonstrating exploration as a collective mission remains challenging, but one of the important ways in doing so is by introducing the perspectives of ‘indigenous intermediaries’. These were navigators and guides, interpreters, hunters and merchants, and individuals regarded as possessing other kinds of specialist knowledge useful to explorers.²⁴ As Dane Kennedy suggests, unearthing these obscured historical agents illustrates how expeditions were “much more culturally

²² Karen Routledge, *Do You See Ice?: Inuit and Americans at Home and Away*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), p. xiv.

²³ *Ibid*, p. xiv.

²⁴ Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent and Tiffany Shellam, p. 16.

hybrid enterprises than conventional accounts suggest".²⁵ One which reveals an equally complex and hybrid relationship between white explorers and groups indigenous to the Arctic. Understanding the nature of these indigenous intermediaries is vital, especially when considering the difficulties in revealing indigenous agency among these narratives. Indigenous agency was not just overlooked but was actively removed from officially recorded accounts of expeditions. As D. Graham Burnett recognizes, the vulnerable confidence of European explorers in their power meant they were unwilling to recognize any form of dependency upon local populations.²⁶ Written accounts of expeditions, which traditional historiography heavily relies upon, frequently obscured their fragility while reinforcing the need among indigenous groups for Western civilization.²⁷ Incorporating the role of indigenous intermediaries, therefore, distances itself from familiar 'great men' narratives that characterize exploration as a simple geographical progression. In revealing these alternate perspectives, what emerges is that European and Western explorers were significantly impotent in these Arctic environments.²⁸ This reflected deeply upon the relationship between Inuit and explorers, suggesting that the two were involved in a more complex network of exploration. They depended upon local knowledge, extensively recruited from local populations, were forced to interact with communities, and endeavoured to nurture relations between themselves and indigenous peoples. Often explorers were astonished, if not frustrated, to acknowledge their shortcomings in these extreme, hostile environments.²⁹ As such, many voyages of exploration to the Arctic regions were made alongside Inuit indigenous intermediaries who were hired to accompany expeditions. Among the narratives of western

²⁵ Dane Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces*, p. 193.

²⁶ D. Graham Burnett, "It Is Impossible to Make a Step without the Indians": Nineteenth-Century Geographical Exploration and the Amerindians of British Guiana' in *Ethnohistory*, 49 (2002), 3-40 (p. 28).

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 28.

²⁸ Dane Kennedy, *Reinterpreting Exploration: The West in the World*, p. 11.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 11.

explorers, there is a tendency to minimalize the agency of these intermediaries. The Inuit in written accounts were often cast as nothing more than faithful followers and loyal servants - explorers led, the Inuit followed.³⁰ The memoirs of the Inuk Hans Hendrik on the other hand, demonstrate how indigenous peoples became incorporated into the voyages of Western peoples. Hendrik's memoirs, the first of their kind, reveal how indigenous intermediaries held agency of their own, choosing which voyages they accompanied, where they took employment, and how they negotiated and fought for fair pay.³¹ Many of the notable expeditions to the Arctic during this depended upon hiring and working closely with Inuit peoples. Charles Hall's expedition, for example, hired Hans Hendrik alongside an Inuit couple named Ebierbing and Tookoolito. While Robert Peary saw to it that three Inuit who had already accompanied him on previous expeditions were rehired for his 1910 expedition to the North Pole.³² These indigenous intermediaries had become inseparable from the activities of Western explorers who relied upon their knowledge, experience, and methods of survival.

Indigenous intermediaries were not unique to polar expeditions, and neither should these interactions, while noteworthy, distract from very tangible tensions between indigenous peoples and explorers. While there is significance in incorporating these underappreciated historical agents, focusing the spotlight entirely on the triumphs of indigenous intermediaries simply replaces one kind of hero myth with another.³³ This is to suggest that indigenous intermediaries did not always represent an entirely revolutionary departure from traditional imperial dynamics. These remained deeply entrenched to varying degrees among almost all exploration narratives, including within the unique

³⁰ Felix Driver, *Intermediaries and the Archive of Exploration*, p. 22.

³¹ Hans Hendrik, *Memoirs of Hans Hendrik, the Arctic Traveller: Serving Under Kane, Hayes, Hall and Nares, 1853-1876*, trans. by Hinrich Rink, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 48.

³² Robert Peary, *The North Pole: Its Discovery in 1909 Under the Auspices of the Peary Arctic Club*, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1910), p. 7.

³³ Felix Driver, *Intermediaries and the Archive of Exploration*, p. 25.

environments of the Arctic. This is particularly apparent in the characteristics of knowledge production on polar expeditions and the language deployed in its description. Relationships between Inuit communities and explorers remained framed around social hierarchy, European exceptionalism, and racialized ideas of progress and human development. Burgeoning ideas of anthropological and eugenic development also seeped into these characterizations. Amundsen, for example, suggested that there was “a difference of a thousand years of evolution” between the two.³⁴ Not only were the Gjoa crew “brought face to face with a people from the stone age: we were abruptly carried back several thousand years in the advance of human progress”.³⁵ Polar explorers, despite recurring admiration for the hardiness and constitution of local populations, consistently framed the Inuit way of life as backward, barbarous in nature, and devoid of higher civilization or attainment. This is chronicled in the personal accounts of expedition leaders, which were later published outside the Arctic for a wider readership. While Robert Peary, for example, recognized the Inuit as useful companions and means to an end in polar exploration, he did not perceive them as equals.³⁶ Recounting his 1905-1906 voyage for American audiences, Peary frequently emphasizes the baser instincts of local Inuit intermediaries, even comparing them to animals. Praising their ‘indefatigable’ spirit Peary continues:

I have often been asked: ‘Of what use are Eskimos to the world?’ They are too far removed to be of any value for commercial enterprises; and, furthermore, they lack ambition. They have no literature; nor, properly speaking, any art. They value life only as does a fox, or a bear, purely by instinct.³⁷

³⁴ Roald Amundsen, *The North West Passage VI: Being the Record of a Voyage of Exploration of the Ship Gjoa, 1903-1907*, (Redditch: Read Books Ltd, 2013), p. 176.

³⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 296-297.

³⁶ Peter J Kitson, ‘Exploring Race and Gender’ in *Nineteenth-Century Travels, Explorations and Empires: North and South Poles, 1835-1910*, ed. by Peter J Kitson, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 16-20 (p. 19).

³⁷ Robert Peary, *Nearest the Pole: A Narrative of the Polar Expedition of the Peary Arctic Club in the S. S. Roosevelt, 1905-1906*, (New York: Doubleday Page & Company, 1907), p. 390.

What Peary deliberately excludes from his narratives is just as revealing as to how he presents information about Arctic exploration. As Lisa Bloom highlights, within Peary's published accounts from his 1909 voyage no indigenous individuals are ever given subject positions, excluding Uutaq, Ukkujaaq, and Sigluk communities.³⁸ These forms of knowledge production are vital components in understanding indigenous relations with Western explorers, representing a powerful tool in how Inuit groups were perceived and presented. The majority of local communities were relegated as standard environmental arctic commodities, comparable to its polar bears, mountain ranges, or icebergs.³⁹ Knowledge of the Inuit and how it was applied by explorers held a Foucauldian-like influence on the nature of indigenous relations.

Indigenous intermediaries, therefore, inhabited their own unique and complex relationship within Western expeditions by the way in which they bridged the divide between environment and inhabitants. This relationship distinguishes, however, between these agents of exploration and wider indigenous populations. What differentiated these distinct types of intermediaries was access to privileged, transferrable sources of knowledge and personal mobility, especially when compared to other local populations.⁴⁰ Hence both Ebierbing and Taqulittuq were fluent in English, having spent time onboard European whaling vessels and having visited England before embarking alongside Charles Francis Hall.⁴¹ Ebierbing and Taqulittuq, for example, were able to distinguish themselves to Western audiences from their fellow Inuit. Encountering them for the first time, Margaret Penny, the

³⁸ Lisa Bloom, *Gender on Ice: American Ideologies of Polar Expeditions*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 96.

³⁹ Stefan Jonsson, 'Where Humanism Finds Its Ends: Lessons from Pia Arke and Katarina Pirak Sikku on the difficulty of narrating the Arctic' in *Studies in Travel Writing*, 20 (2016), 226-236 (p. 230).

⁴⁰ Felix Driver, *Intermediaries and the Archive of Exploration*, p. 16.

⁴¹ H. G. Jones, 'Teaching the Explorers: Some Inuit Contributions to Arctic Discoveries' in *Polar Geography*, 26 (2002), 4-20 (p. 9).

Scottish explorer and first woman to explore Baffin Island, commented how “They really conduct themselves with great propriety... (Taquilittuq) has made a great improvement amongst the natives & is herself quite civilized”.⁴² While some Inuit intermediaries like Hans Hendrik managed to make successful careers from their interactions and coexistence with explorers. Hendrik would serve on the expeditions of Elisha Kane, Isaac Hayes, and Charles Hall among others. Intermediaries, therefore, were able to inhabit an in-between space between the explorer and the local, precisely what made them so useful for expeditions. But this suggests that the relationship between the two was also separate, a component of larger networks operating within exploration. The relationships that formed between explorer and intermediary were different in both substance and development to the relationship between explorers and wider indigenous populations. If indigenous intermediaries were uniquely placed in their interactions with explorers, what was the nature of relations with indigenous groups explorers were not forced to rely on? How did explorers approach local populations who were not components of expeditions and were not integral to the success of their missions?

These questions suggest the need to reframe the point of interaction away from the structures of Arctic expeditions and towards the process of discovery itself. Shifting the scope of analysis outside of the confines of organised interactions and toward the natural cultural encounters between explorers and indigenous peoples.⁴³ What is meant by this idea of cultural encounters is the moment of ‘first contact’, the initial points of interaction between explorers and the indigenous peoples they encounter. These points of first contact offer new avenues of historical inquiry and unearthing narratives from alternate perspectives, particularly among indigenous communities without a tradition of literary records. In particular, they demonstrate the imperial-periphery and explorer-‘other’ dynamic that

⁴² William Gillies Ross, *This Distant and Unsurveyed Country: A Woman's Winter at Baffin Island, 1857-1858*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1997), p. 38.

⁴³ Dane Kennedy, *Reinterpreting Exploration: The West in the World*, p. 11.

initially framed most indigenous interactions. The moment of first contact between the Ogluli Inuit and Amundsen's Gjoa expedition, for example, was marred by traditional expectations of violence and conflict. In his account of the expedition, Amundsen wrote:

“We were now near the end of October, and we thought the Eskimo were extinct. And here they were before us. All the information we had gathered concerning these Arctic barbarians rushed back into our memories... The only right course was to consider the newcomers in the light of enemies. I was going with two men to meet the enemy. The rifles were carefully examined and loaded to the utmost capacity of the magazine.”⁴⁴

Approaching in battle formation Amundsen's motley crew had expected the hostile environment of the Arctic to be matched by its inhabitants. Instead of conflict, however, the Gjoa crew encountered the outstretched hand of the Inuit. While explorers were stubborn to explicitly recognize the degree of dependency within the Arctic, the collision between what they perceived as the 'civilized' and 'barbaric' did provide moments of cultural exchange and close connection.

It is important to understand that the history of these imperial-periphery relations formed on exploration voyages cannot be divorced from the wider history of expeditionary science.⁴⁵ The two were intimately connected. While explorers operated as representatives of national strength and imperial reach they were also dominated by the search for knowledge and extending the boundaries of understanding. Hence, Arctic expeditions were heavily funded and mediated through scientific and geographical institutions like the Royal Geographic Society.⁴⁶ In Britain, scientists had professional incentives to collect information and to understand non-European peoples and places as an avenue of

⁴⁴ Roald Amundsen, *The North West Passage* V1, pp. 113-115.

⁴⁵ Max Jones, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 48.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 48.

imperial expansion.⁴⁷ While Robert Peary's expeditions to the North Pole, for example, owed their successes and financial backing to support from the American Geographical Society, the National Geographic Society, and the American Museum of Natural History.⁴⁸ The significance of this concerning indigenous relationships lies in understanding the motivations of European and American explorers. Exploration was not, according to the post-colonial critique, simply an extension of empire but it was also a means of understanding and exchange with the unknown. Explorers like Amundsen were shaped by the desire to discover, collect, and chart new information about the unexplored. As Diganta Bhattacharya suggests, exploration and travel in the late nineteenth and twentieth century accrued greater significance as they became associated with knowledge and its transformative aspect.⁴⁹ Explorers were actors firmly situated within international networks of scientific knowledge production and circulation.⁵⁰ Recollecting his early experiences, Amundsen "found its crusade in me in the form of Arctic exploration. I, too, would suffer in a cause- not in the blazing desert on the way to Jerusalem, but in the frozen North on the way to new knowledge in the unpierced unknown".⁵¹ For explorers, therefore, contact with indigenous groups fulfilled a primary motivation for their expeditions, as they sought to extend the reach of scientific understanding. These cultural encounters presented explorers with rich opportunities for cultural discourse and exchanges in language, knowledge, tools, and culture.

⁴⁷ Kelly Lankford, 'Arctic Explorer Robert E. Peary's Other Quest: Money, Science, and the Year 1897' in *American Nineteenth Century History*, 9 (2008), 37-60 (p. 43).

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 42-43.

⁴⁹ Diganta Bhattacharya, 'Post-Enlightenment Exploration and the Aesthetic of Information: Curious with a Purpose' in *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 13 (2021), 1-10 (p. 7).

⁵⁰ Jonathan Wright and Diarmid Finnegan, *Spaces of Global Knowledge: Exhibition, Encounter and Exchange in an Age of Empire*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), p. 55.

⁵¹ Roald Amundsen, *My Life as an Explorer*, (New York: Doubleday: 1927), p. 2.

The desire among explorers to understand and communicate with the indigenous peoples of the Arctic helped to foster a relationship built upon trust, mutual respect, and, despite the entrenched perceptions of explorers, a platform of relative equality. One of the primary mechanisms of this new relationship was the function of trade and bartering between the two communities. After having met the Ogluli Inuit, for example, Amundsen endeavoured to nurture a friendly relationship with the expedition's new neighbours. The relationship that emerged because of this was mutually beneficial, the Gjoa crew extensively engaged in trade exchanging metal tools and needles to the Inuit, who highly valued such items.⁵² In return Amundsen's expedition received full sets of traditional Arctic Netsilik clothing sewn from caribou pelts and Inuit-style footgear. Trade had functioned as an integral aspect of several European and American voyages, as both Peary and Amundsen adapted to Inuit sewn clothing, constructions in shelter and sledging, and foodstuffs freely traded between the two. Friendly trading relationships with indigenous groups in the Arctic fulfilled an important role in the success of exploration missions but also the scientific function of their mission. Explorers were eager to collect and exchange any kind of unique ethnographic objects, ranging from amulet bands to blubber pounders.⁵³ The University of Oslo Museum of Cultural History, for example, features a collection of over five hundred artefacts the Gjoa crew traded for and subsequently brought back to Europe. Modes of exchange between explorers and indigenous groups were also not restricted to material objects, as long periods of wintering gave time to nurture transfers in knowledge and culture. During the Gjoa's first winter in Gjoahaven, for example, Amundsen's crew hosted the old Inuit Teraiu and his family as Christmas guests with food, drink, and gifts.⁵⁴ Teraiu was one of the Gjoa crew's oldest Inuit friends, having met them during the very first encounter on the ice. In Teraiu Amundsen had an excellent tutor,

⁵² Roald Amundsen, *The North West Passage VI*, p. 120.

⁵³ Oslo, Museum of Cultural History (UiO), Amundsen's Gjoa Haven Collection 1903-1905, Amulet Band (ornament) UEM16160.

⁵⁴ Roald Amundsen, *The North West Passage VI*, p. 131.

in return for his assistance and hospitality Teraiu imparted his knowledge on the construction of igloo shelters.⁵⁵ The relationship between these two groups is emblematic of the interactions on the Arctic periphery. For both explorers and the Inuit, they were rooted in pragmatic considerations and bartering between the two offered the means with which each side could mutually benefit. The result was an amicable, respectful environment of co-habitation not just from the perspective of explorers but also from the local Inuit groups. Gjoahaven Inuits have passed down oral histories of Amundsen's expeditions, for example, to contemporary communities.⁵⁶ These oral histories fondly remember the expedition voyages and noticeably differentiate them from other instances of European interaction. David Aglurraq, known as Siksik, recorded that "The Amundsen people were generous and even though a lot of the Inuit people stole from them, they didn't get angry. They were not like the qallunaat – the traders – who came later. Even today there's no one like Amundsen – the kindness, the generosity".⁵⁷

The characterization of the Arctic environment also played an influential role in shaping interactions between indigenous peoples and explorers. As James Ryan demonstrates, the Arctic was depicted as a hostile, barren wilderness devoid of civilization (Figure 1). Not only was the presence of non-European peoples in these desolate environments contrary to the prevalent myth of adventurous imperial men conquering and discovering the unknown.⁵⁸ But in a similar way to the use of language by explorers, the process of knowledge creation and the perceptions they shaped framed indigenous Inuit populations as equally barren and backward. The landscape provided the means with which explorers could perceive the Inuit as a backward, dying race on the outskirts of civilization. Robert

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 142.

⁵⁶ Dorothy Eber, p. 117.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 117.

⁵⁸ James R. Ryan, p. 113.

Peary's first interactions with the Inuit of Melville Bay, for example, were framed within an "existence in complete isolation and independence, under the utmost stress of savage environment".⁵⁹ The 'savage environment' shaped Peary's initial perceptions of the Inuit as having the "habits and conditions of life hardly above the animal, these people seem at first to be very near the bottom of the scale of civilization".⁶⁰ At these first points of interaction, therefore, the desolate, inhospitable environment was synonymous with the nature of its inhabitants. The initial exposure to savage environments, combined with their struggles to survive, suggested that only an equally savage population could survive. To this end in overcoming initial prejudices of Inuit savagery, the hostile nature of the Arctic also served to highlight the strength of Inuit resilience and survival. The chaos and barrenness of the Arctic expanse contrasted with the order the Inuit had managed to tame the environment with. Indeed, the perceptions of explorers contrasted sharply with that of the Inuit themselves, who described this land as 'nunattiavak' – meaning good or beautiful land.⁶¹ In the same account by Robert Peary, he argues that despite the harshness of their existence "yet closer acquaintance shows them to be quick, intelligent, ingenious, and thoroughly human".⁶² Explorers were awe-inspired by the tenacity of indigenous populations framed against the extremes of the Arctic. In one of the most touching accounts of the Gjoa expedition, Amundsen witnessed the igloo construction of the Inuit among the surrounding wastes:

When I stood upright inside, I was speechless with astonishment. It was quite an apartment for festive occasions; it had been constructed the day before, and was therefore still gleaming white. From floor to roof the room

⁵⁹ Robert Peary, *Northward Over the Great Ice: A Narrative of Life and work Along the Shores and upon the Interior Ice-Cap of Northern Greenland in the Years 1886 and 1891–1897*, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1898), p. 479.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 481.

⁶¹ Karen Routledge, p. 3.

⁶² *Ibid*, pp. 480-481.

measured fully twice a mans height. It was evident that Alikleura knew how to build beautifully. Everything gave the impression of the most perfect order.⁶³

Depictions of the environment, therefore, were important in shaping the nature of first interactions as the savagery of the environment reflected upon its inhabitants. Developments in Inuit-explorer relationships, however, demonstrate how the environment also translated feelings of respect and humanity upon indigenous populations. How explorers depicted the Arctic environment was not always as solitary expeditions through the unhinged wilderness, but rather as manifestations of intricate processes of encounter and exchange.⁶⁴

Chapter II – Within the Metropole

For all explorers, discovering the ‘unknown’ remained a matter of perspective. Whereby the process of expanding the furthest reach of their mastery and knowledge overlapped with frontiers populated and familiar for centuries. Exploration, therefore, represented a particular perspective of knowledge formulation. Undoubtedly these imperial voyages of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by European and American explorers had their distinctive characteristics. They featured a combination of scientific research, geographical discovery, and a burgeoning status of popular celebrity.⁶⁵ But exploration was a far more complex process of exchange, one not entirely dominated by white, European and American explorers. In the case of Arctic exploration, indigenous Inuit populations had their own instances of interaction, exploration, and encounter. The Inuit of Northern Canada and Greenland had a legacy of interaction with white travellers since the early expeditions of Martin

⁶³ Roald Amundsen, *The North West Passage VI*, p. 168.

⁶⁴ James R. Ryan, p. 113.

⁶⁵ Peter R. Martin and Edward Armston-Sheret, p. 2.

Frobisher. They too, however, also pushed the frontiers of traditional knowledge and ventured into the 'unknown'. As the case of Winik and others like Ebierbing and Tookoolito demonstrate, individuals were transported to new lands and experiences beyond the Arctic. Here they engaged with their own forms of cultural interaction within imperial metropolises such as London and New York. For the Inuit, these equally extreme forms of urban environment imposed altogether new relationships. The metropole environment translated a dramatic shift from the dynamics which dominated polar expeditions. The degree of dependency among Western explorers on local groups had necessitated a particular kind of relation which, as previously discussed, featured a delicate balance of trust, respect, and reliance combined with submerged prejudice and racialism. The removal of this environmental dependency or indeed the reversal of it exposed the latter of these characteristics. At the height of this colonial racism, Inuit peoples were shipped and transported from the Arctic to be exploited and abused below the Arctic circle.⁶⁶ The personal experiences of the Inuit were exposed to the key forms of interaction at play within these environments. Early forms of colonial entertainment, commercialization, and developments in the scientific fields of anthropology and ethnology motivated and encouraged their exploitation. Indigenous peoples displayed in the West were, as Raymond Corbey suggests, "commodified, labeled, scripted, objectified, essentialized, decontextualized, aestheticized, and fetishized".⁶⁷

Initial encounters between the Inuit and the metropole were shaped by the early developments in the history of Arctic exploration. Occurring when the phase of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century exploration was in its infancy, encounters with indigenous populations captured and motivated the fascination and desire of the public. Ultimately the exploration of the polar areas depended upon

⁶⁶ Stefan Jonsson, p. 230.

⁶⁷ Raymond Corbey, 'Ethnographic Showcases, 1870-1930' in *Cultural Anthropology*, 8 (1993), 338-369 (pp. 363-364).

the cultural and political preconditions present in the domestic arena.⁶⁸ In fact, the idea of the ‘discovered’ Arctic was, as Anders Houltz suggests, created within the interplay between explorers and metropole audiences.⁶⁹ This section would also argue to incorporate another key factor into Houltz’s characterization, the rarer occasions of interaction with the Inuit themselves. To this extent, encounters with Inuit peoples through the popular medium of entertainment represented a primary medium through which the public encountered the polar regions.⁷⁰ For the public within these imperial centres, these ethnological displays of imperial oddities shaped perceptions of the Arctic environment and, in turn, their relationship with the Inuit themselves. Similarly to how explorers framed their points of first contact, these displays emphasized the Inuit as just another environmental commodity among other defining images of mountains, glaciers, icebergs, and animals native to the polar regions.⁷¹ The difference, however, rests in the nature of the metropole environment, whose imperial society continued to frame them in racialized, animalistic ways. The experiences of Ebierbing and Tookoolito in the aftermath of Charles Hall’s voyage demonstrate how the Inuit were framed in this environment, what characteristics were emphasized or fictionalized, and how they were treated by American audiences. Accompanying Hall from Greenland to New York, this small Inuit family were handed from institution to institution for display including within Barnum’s American Museum, founded by the famous showman P. T. Barnum. Advertisement boards from these expeditions are revealing how the Inuit were represented and perceived (Figure 2). Paraded as “beyond all controversy, the greatest

⁶⁸ Anders Houltz, ‘Captives of Narrative: Scandinavian Museum Exhibits and Polar Ambitions’ in *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research*, 2 (2010), 719-744 (p. 721).

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 721.

⁷⁰ Katie Murray, *Memorials of Endurance and Adventure: Exhibiting British Polar Exploration, 1819 – c. 1939*, (St Andrews: 2017), p. 14.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 14

curiosity in the world”, the Inuit were exoticized as objects of imperial fascination.⁷² There is particular significance in the language and visual images deployed in Barnum’s advertisement. The use of the term ‘singular race’ suggests they were purposefully racialized within this American environment, while the illustration presents the Arctic as a desolate, empty environment. As with most colonial encounters, they are presented as a backward, uncivilized group doomed to extinction. This imagery was purposefully enforced by the exhibitions themselves. Despite owning their own westernized clothing, the Inuit were forced to parade around the sweltering museum dressed in full Arctic furs while they were stared at, poked, prodded, and handled by leering audiences.⁷³ For Ebierbing and Tookoolito the experience was punishing, they were paraded for seven hours a day, seven days a week amongst the rest of the ‘menagerie’.

The idea of the menagerie is an important one in understanding how the relationship between indigenous groups and western peoples was understood in the metropole. Here indigenous peoples, including the Inuit, were not only seen as imperial curiosities synonymous with environmental extremes of the imperial periphery. They were framed with specific forms of language and imagery which contributed to a process of animalization. Relationships between the Inuit and western peoples, therefore, operated through an animal and master dynamic, one which was far removed from the nature of interactions in the Arctic. This was demonstrated in the proliferation of human zoos, or ‘ethnological expositions’, which sought to parade indigenous groups in their base state. In America, for example, a group of Inuit were displayed at the New Boston Aquarial and Zoological Gardens (Figure 3). The description of these exhibits illustrates how the exoticization and animalization of Inuit peoples were made even more explicit in the metropole imagination. The Inuit were paraded and advertised alongside several animal curiosities including ‘gigantic Japanese salamanders’ and a ‘superb black

⁷² Karen Routledge, p. 40.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 41.

African ostrich'. With no other humans on display, there was an explicit depiction of parity between the Inuit and the animals of empire. Beyond the widespread existence of racial prejudice, was there a reason why the Inuit were portrayed as such? Ultimately, these depictions were often curated around bending societal notions of race and normalcy.⁷⁴ Perceptions of Inuits were made, in America at least, to align with existing stereotypes and prejudices about other indigenous groups. Most likely the majority of visitors to such displays would have been unable to discriminate between reality and construction in representations of Inuit culture.⁷⁵ Presented with abnormal garments and habits and characterised by poor behaviour and morals, these displays functioned as a comparative tool for metropolitan society. These exaggerated or outright fabricated descriptions of the Inuit served to illustrate the type of appearances, behaviour, and gender roles that were acceptable in an urbanising American society.⁷⁶ Ethnological expositions were also not restricted to the legacy of American voyages, with numerous recorded instances of exhibits that stretched across Europe. In Paris, for example, the Exposition Universelle in 1889 saw the importation of Inuit groups and the construction of 'authentic' indigenous villages with dubious legitimacy.⁷⁷ While the accuracy of these exhibits was suspect, it was arguably the least important factor in shaping indigenous interactions. As Rob David suggests, "the evolutionary message was clear, with the Arctic people's placed adjacent to the 'colonies of the savages whom the French are attempting to civilize'".⁷⁸ The metropole environment, therefore, permeated and intensified Arctic indigenous relationships built upon imperial domination and hierarchy. If the Arctic fever which occupied western culture during this period reflected

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 41.

⁷⁵ Robert G. David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination: 1818-1914*, (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2017), p. 135.

⁷⁶ Karen Routledge, p. 42.

⁷⁷ Robert G. David, p. 138.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 138.

subconscious ideas and attitudes already present, it also “projected them, focused them, and gave them the force of argument”.⁷⁹ The Inuit became a dispensable tool through which imperial audiences could articulate their identity between self and ‘other’.⁸⁰

Alongside popular forms of entertainment, relationships between the Inuit and Western peoples were also shaped by an emerging scientific interest in the fields of anthropology and ethnology among imperial conquests and frontiers. These were structured through the proliferation of Inuit museum pieces and displays for Western audiences, locations where science, commerce, and imperialism went hand in hand.⁸¹ Museums held particular importance in projecting a certain kind of indigenous relationship as places of learning and knowledge with claims to objective truths. Museums, therefore, were creators of meaning and coherence which shaped Arctic narratives.⁸² During this period of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the fever development of the ‘new science’ of anthropology reached its zenith. Work was encouraged to source and collect any subjects and objects of ethnological relevance. Anthropological and ethnological schools in America and Europe functioned according to one fundamental imperative – to salvage what could be salvaged.⁸³ The most important salvage of which was indigenous subjects themselves, as anthropologists like Franz Boas and museums such as the Museum of Natural History in New York funded arctic voyages in return for live ‘specimens’.⁸⁴ Traditional ‘fieldwork’ was brought into the familiar spaces of scientists themselves. As Friedrich Pohl

⁷⁹ Michael F. Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible: Arctic Exploration and American Culture*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 164.

⁸⁰ Raymond Corbey, p. 364.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 356.

⁸² Anders Houltz, p. 722.

⁸³ Friedrich Pöhl, ‘Assessing Franz Boas’ ethics in His Arctic and Later Anthropological Fieldwork’ in *Études/Inuit/Studies*, 32 (2008), 35-52 (p. 39).

⁸⁴ Kenn Harper, p. 25.

suggests, demand among anatomical institutions and museums for such material was immense and as such, people violated religious and ethical boundaries without a second thought.⁸⁵ Franz Boas, for example, the most famous American anthropologist of his time, was willing to effectively imprison Robert Peary's group of Inuit for scientific study. Before dissecting and requisitioning their bones for anatomical display against their will. Much in the same way that imperial menageries functioned, these scientific schools structured indigenous relations and modes of understanding. The goal of anthropological study was to demonstrate the superiority of the white race and the strength of modern civilization.⁸⁶ While the treatment of Inuit peoples as objects of scientific study was equally horrifying. The work of Boas' contemporary Dr Rudolf Virchow demonstrates how Indigenous peoples were restrained, interrogated, and measured in "line with the lowest races of the world". Virchow's anthropological studies were tainted by the fate of the Inuit subjects themselves who died of infection soon after arriving from Labrador.⁸⁷ If the context of the Arctic formulated pragmatic interactions, within the metropole, it was ingrained with scientific claims of evolutionary superiority and exploitation.

The extremes of the Arctic environment and the dependency dynamic it generated forced explorers to reorientate how they perceived and interacted with the Inuit in person. By comparison, a combination of exoticization, animalization, and teleological claims to progress within the metropole maintained traditional top-down relationships between imperial society and indigenous groups. And yet, this relationship has been framed almost entirely from the perspective of western audiences, both those creating these mediums of interaction and those experiencing them. Historians must continue to interrogate and highlight the experiences of those on display, how they handled and experienced an

⁸⁵ Friedrich Pöhl, p. 40.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 43.

⁸⁷ Anders Houtz, p. 349.

unfamiliar world, a harsh environment, and an alien society.⁸⁸ Here first-hand accounts are even more uncommon, the Inuit who operated in these environments were often poorly treated or perished before ever being able to return home. The scant accounts that are available, however, reveal how they felt, what they thought, the identities they constructed for themselves and how they conceptualized the Western peoples that surrounded them.⁸⁹ One such account was that of Minik, the Inughuaq Inuit boy brought from Smith Sound in northern Greenland to New York by Robert Peary. Minik, alongside the rest of his family, experienced the same intersection between the commercial, the scientific, and the imperial. The group was exhibited as commodified oddities to crowds, measured and analysed by interrogating anthropologists at the American Museum of Natural History. Since the rest of his family perished to outbreaks of tuberculosis and with Minik himself just a small child, their agency was submerged and consumed by the skeletal displays of the museum.⁹⁰ Minik, however, survived and he became one of the few Inuit to translate their experiences as ‘strangers in a strange land’.⁹¹ His testimony is revealing as to the effect that imperial scientific appropriation and ethnological display had on indigenous communities themselves. Speaking to the *San Francisco Examiner* in an article titled ‘Peary’s Neglected Eskimo Boy Wants to Shoot Him’, Minik recounted (Figure 4):

At the start Peary, was kind enough to my people. But as soon as he was ready to start home his other work began. Before our eyes he packed up the bones of our dead friends and ancestors... Our sole supply of flint for lighting and iron for hunting and cooking implements was furnished by a huge meteorite. This Peary put aboard his steamer and took from my poor people, who needed it so much.⁹²

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 349-350.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 350.

⁹⁰ Penny Petrone, *Northern Voices: Inuit Writing in English*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 81.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 82.

⁹² ‘Why Arctic Explorer Peary’s Neglected Eskimo Boy Wants to Shoot Him’, *San Francisco Examiner*, 9 May 1909.

This testimony also demonstrated how the nature of relations and interactions with Western explorers was altered by the contextual environment. Much in the way Charles Hall proceeded to offload and loan out his Inuit companions, as Robert Peary retreated from the polar extremes so too did he reshift the nature of his relationship with the Inuit.

Peary promised that with them would come a great stock of guns and ammunition, and wood and metal and presents for the women and children... So the five of us said a last farewell to home and went on Peary's ship. We were crowded into the hold of the vessel and treated like dogs. Peary seldom came near us.⁹³

The lived-in experiences of the Inuit at the hands of Western people were brutal, inhumane, and all too often deadly. Within the metropole, the Inuit were disposable, perishable items of Arctic legacy. While for the indigenous peoples themselves, it represented a trial of survival within an unforgiving, hostile, and lonely world.

Conclusion

In the history of Arctic exploration, encounters with indigenous populations were a relatively sidelined component of explorer narratives. Interactions between the two, however, offer rich insights into the nature of relationships that developed on the imperial frontier. A comparative approach between periphery and metropole has demonstrated that ultimately relationships between Inuit groups indigenous to the Arctic and Western peoples were environmentally deterministic. In chapter one, integration and cooperation were seen as a natural consequence of expedition voyages. Within the harsh, inhospitable conditions of the polar region explorers were forced, through a combination of dependency and survival, to form intimate connections with 'indigenous intermediaries' and wider

⁹³ 'Why Arctic Explorer Peary's Neglected Eskimo Boy Wants to Shoot Him', *San Francisco Examiner*, 9 May 1909.

Inuit populations. Expeditions depended upon local groups as navigators, translators, guides, and labourers, not just as components of successful missions but as integral to their survival. Points of first contact were characteristically framed through traditional imperial ways of seeing, characterized by racialized prejudices and western exceptionalism. Subsequent interactions in knowledge, trade, and cultural exchange developed a platform of mutual respect, realigning the nature of encounters with indigenous groups. This reimagining of indigenous relationships had important consequences not only on the perceptions of American and European explorers but the cultural legacy of Inuit populations. Groups were exposed to new ways of thinking, became increasingly connected to the wider world, and formed new narratives in their oral histories.

In chapter two, we analyzed the nature of indigenous relations within the confines of the imperial metropole. Where the dramatic shift in environmental context translated to an equally radical departure from the Arctic dynamic. Indigenous relations became a component of the imperial machinery, commodified as objects of empire. Inuit peoples were dehumanized, fetishized, and characterized within the imperial menagerie. Abused and exploited, the Inuit living within the metropole existed within a structure of domination. Far removed from the mutual relationship in exploration narratives, here indigenous groups were perceived as innately inferior and backward. Popular exhibitions served for metropole audiences to identify the ‘self’ and the ‘other’, living testaments to the success of western civilization. While scientific developments in anthropology and ethnology fueled this process of othering through racialized modes of knowledge production. The comparative shift away from the Arctic, however, also illustrates how exploration was a perspective driven process. The Inuit experienced instances of interaction, cultural exchange, and discovery as they travelled beyond the polar regions. Discovering new narratives of exploration within imperial centres.

Indigenous interactions in the Arctic, therefore, were significantly different in practice, driven by the environmental extremes of the polar regions. But how extensive was such a shift among the

perceptions of European and American explorers? Returning once again to the story of Minik, the actions of Robert Peary, but indeed those of other Arctic explorers such as Charles Hall, suggest that these indigenous interactions were nothing more than a temporary departure. The Arctic represented a distinctive, but short-lived escape from the racialized, imperial dynamics of the metropole. The particularly dangerous, hostile, and deadly environment imposed its agency on Western peoples. While the removal of such conditions ushered back in traditional power dynamics. Indigenous interactions in the polar regions were a temporary phenomenon brought about by the arrival and departure of explorers, like the changing of the tide. Despite its temporal nature, however, it still retains extensive degrees of historical utility. More than ever there is an opportunity to reveal the agency of the indigenous Inuit who operated in both environmental extremes. These subaltern agents, ever removed from heroic narratives of nineteenth and twentieth-century exploration, were intrinsic to the success and survival of exploration voyages. They are a testament to the historical forces at play in our environment and the nature of relations that formed within it.

Bibliography

- Amundsen, Roald, *My Life as an Explorer*, (New York: Doubleday, 1927)
- *The North West Passage VI: Being the Record of a Voyage of Exploration of the Ship Gjoa, 1903-1907*, (Redditch: Read Books Ltd, 2013)
- Bhattacharya, Diganta, 'Post-Enlightenment Exploration and the Aesthetic of Information: Curious with a Purpose' in *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 13 (2021), 1-10
- Bloom, Lisa, *Gender on Ice: American Ideologies of Polar Expeditions*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993)
- Brook, Jack, 'The Forlorn Hope: Bennelong and Yemmerrawannie go to England' in *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, 1 (2001), 36-47
- Burnett, D. Graham, "'It Is Impossible to Make a Step without the Indians": Nineteenth-Century Geographical Exploration and the Amerindians of British Guiana' in *Ethnohistory*, 49 (2002), 3-40
- *Masters of All They Surveyed Exploration, Geography, and a British El Dorado*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001)
- Corbey, Raymond, 'Ethnographic Showcases, 1870-1930' in *Cultural Anthropology*, 8 (1993), 338-369
- David, Robert G., *The Arctic in the British Imagination: 1818-1914*, (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2017)
- Driver, Felix, and Lowri Jones, *Hidden Histories of Exploration: Researching the RGS-IBG Collections*, (London: Royal Holloway, 2009)

- ‘Intermediaries and the Archive of Exploration’ in *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on Exploration Archives*, ed. By Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent and Tiffany Shellam, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2015), 11-29
- Eber, Dorothy, *Encounters on the Passage: Inuit Meet the Explorers*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008)
- Hendrik, Hans, *Memoirs of Hans Hendrik, the Arctic Traveller: Serving Under Kane, Hayes, Hall and Nares, 1853-1876*, trans. by Hinrich Rink, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)
- Harper, Kenn, *Give Me My Father’s Body*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001)
- Houltz, Anders, ‘Captives of Narrative: Scandinavian Museum Exhibits and Polar Ambitions’ in *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research*, 2 (2010), 719-744
- Jones, H. G., ‘Teaching the Explorers: Some Inuit Contributions to Arctic Discoveries’ in *Polar Geography*, 26 (2002), 4-20
- Jones, Max, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott’s Antarctic Sacrifice*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)
- Jonsson, Stefan, ‘Where Humanism Finds Its Ends: Lessons from Pia Arke and Katarina Pirak Sikku on the difficulty of narrating the Arctic’ in *Studies in Travel Writing*, 20 (2016), 226-236
- Kennedy, Dane, *Reinterpreting Exploration: The West in the World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)
- *The Last Blank Spaces: Exploring Africa and Australia*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013)
- Keskitalo, E. C. H., *Negotiating the Arctic: The Construction of an International Region*, (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2003)

Kitson, Peter J., 'Exploring Race and Gender' in *Nineteenth-Century Travels, Explorations and Empires: North and South Poles, 1835-1910*, ed. by Peter J Kitson, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 16-20

Konishi, Shino, Maria Nugent and Tiffany Shellam, 'Exploration Archives and Indigenous Histories: An Introduction', in *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on Exploration Archives*, ed. by Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent and Tiffany Shellam, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2015), 1-10

Lankford, Kelly, 'Arctic Explorer Robert E. Peary's Other Quest: Money, Science, and the Year 1897' in *American Nineteenth Century History*, 9 (2008), 37-60

Martin, Peter R., and Edward Armston-Sheret, 'Off the Beaten Track? Critical Approaches to Exploration Studies' in *Geography Compass*, 14 (2020), 1-14

Murray, Katie, *Memorials of Endurance and Adventure: Exhibiting British Polar Exploration, 1819 – c. 1939*, (St Andrews: 2017)

Peary, Robert, *Nearest the Pole: A Narrative of the Polar Expedition of the Peary Arctic Club in the S. S. Roosevelt, 1905-1906*, (New York: Doubleday Page & Company, 1907)

— *Northward Over the Great Ice: A Narrative of Life and work Along the Shores and upon the Interior Ice-Cap of Northern Greenland in the Years 1886 and 1891–1897*, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1898)

— *The North Pole: Its Discovery in 1909 Under the Auspices of the Peary Arctic Club*, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1910)

Petrone, Penny, *Northern Voices: Inuit Writing in English*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992)

- Pöhl, Friedrich, 'Assessing Franz Boas' ethics in His Arctic and Later Anthropological Fieldwork' in *Études/Inuit/Studies*, 32 (2008), 35-52
- Robinson, Michael F., *The Coldest Crucible: Arctic Exploration and American Culture*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006)
- Rockel, Stephen J., 'Slavery and Freedom in Nineteenth Century East Africa: The Case of Waungwana Caravan Porters' in *African Studies*, 68 (2009), 87-109
- Ross, William Gillies, *This Distant and Unsurveyed Country: A Woman's Winter at Baffin Island, 1857-1858*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1997)
- Routledge, Karen, *Do You See Ice?: Inuit and Americans at Home and Away*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018)
- Ryan, James R., *Photography and Exploration*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2013)
- Shields, Rob, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity*, (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1991)
- Thrush, Coll-Peter, *Indigenous London: Native Travelers at the Heart of Empire*, (London: Yale University Press, 2016)
- Wright, Jonathan, and Diarmid Finnegan, *Spaces of Global Knowledge: Exhibition, Encounter and Exchange in an Age of Empire*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2015)

Index



Figure 1: Photograph of the Gjoa crew in the Arctic. Amundsen (far left) and his crew are dressed in Inuit clothing. 1906

BARNUM'S MUSEUM.
F. T. BARNUM MANAGER **GREENWOOD, Jr.** SUPERINTENDENT

Every Day and Evening this Week, commencing Monday, November 3rd, 1862

POSITIVELY NO FREE LIST.

Admission to everything 25 Cents | **Children under 10 years** 15 Cents each
Tickets for Parquet or First Balcony 50 Cents | **Seats in the Lecture Room** 15 Cents extra
For Children (under 10 years) 10 Cents
Reserved Seats in Private Boxes 50 Cents extra | **Children under 10 years** 25 Cents extra

The manager takes unbounded satisfaction in announcing an engagement, for
A VERY FEW DAYS ONLY,
 WITH THE



ESQUIMAUX FAMILY

Just brought to this country, From Davis Straits, Greenland, by
C. F. HALL, Esq., ARCTIC EXPLORER.
 The notoriety recently given to this singular race of men by the several Arctic exploring expeditions, including
DR. KANE'S, DR. HAYS, and DR. WALTERS,
 has interested them with an interest in the public mind, which no other race at the present time possesses. As they can remain but a very short time, those who are curious to look upon the inhabitants of the

ARCTIC REGIONS.
 Will do well to embrace the opportunity in time, they will be on exhibition from 10 to 12 o'clock A. M., from 2 to 4, and at the close of the Afternoon Dramatic Performances, also from 7 till 10 evening.



COM. NUTT
THE \$30,000 NUTT,
 Will be on exhibition here
FOR A FEW DAYS ONLY,
 Prior to his departure for Europe. He will be seen at all Hours Day and Evening, and at intervals, and on the stage during each Dramatic Entertainment will give a variety of performances, including Songs, Dances, Military Drill, &c.

NAMES OF ADDRESS OF PANEL HOLDERS IN F. T. BARNUM'S MUSEUM, GREENWOOD, N. Y.

Figure 2: Advertisement for P.T. Barnum's Museum, featuring an Esquimaux Inuit family, brought from Greenland by Hall. 1862

**NEW BOSTON AQUARIAL AND
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS!**

Corner of Summer and Chauncy Streets.

**This Magnificent Exhibition of Novelties in
Natural History, Art, Science, &c.,**

Will be opened on
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 26, 1862.

WHEN THE

WONDERFUL ESQUIMAUX INDIANS,

brought to this country from the ARCTIC REGIONS by
C. F. HALL, Esq., ARCTIC EXPLORER, will appear
These most extraordinary specimens of humanity, which
represent a DISTINCT RACE OF MEN, are the first that
ever visited America, and are, doubtless,

The Greatest Curiosities in the World!

A familiar description of their Habits, Customs, Religion,
&c., will be given.

THE AQUARIAL DEPARTMENT,

under the direction of Mr Cutting, is *unique*, and comprises
among many valuable specimens.

Two Gigantic Japanese Salamanders,

a new animal from the mountains of NIPPON;

A SUPERB BLACK AFRICAN OSTRICH;

A PAIR OF BUILDING BEAVERS;

AN IMMENSE HAPPY FAMILY CAGE;

Rebel Relics from Recent Battle Fields:

together with a great variety of other objects of interest.

Open from 9 A. M. until 10 P. M.

Admission 25 cents; children 15 cents

CUTTING & GUAY,

Proprietors.

n24

tf

H. K. W. PALMER, Treasurer.

Figure 3: Advertisement for James Ambrose Cutting's New Boston Aquarial and Zoological Gardens, featuring an Esquimaux Family, brought from Greenland by Hall. 1862

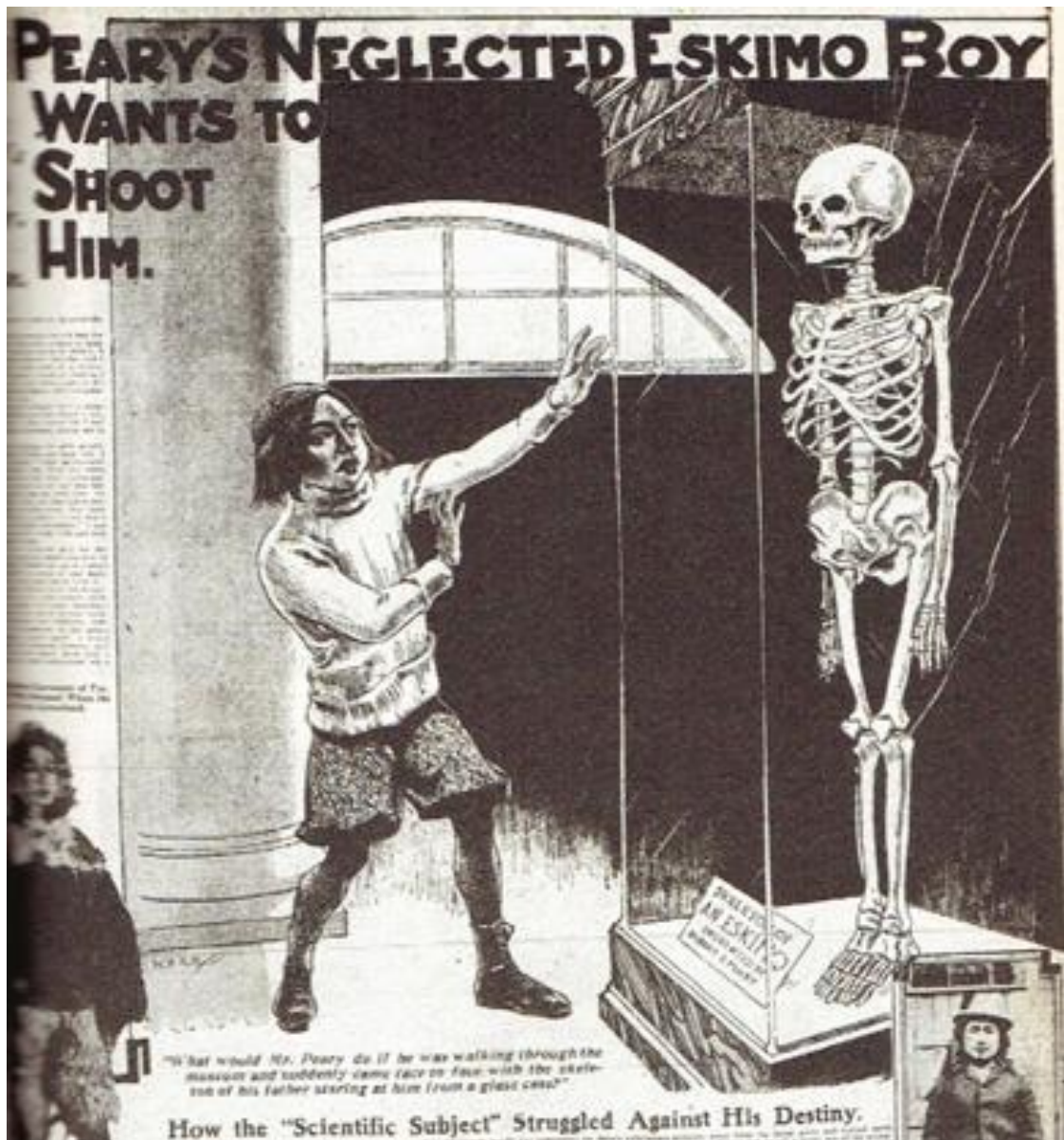


Figure 4: 'Why Arctic Explorer Peary's Neglected Eskimo wants to shoot him'. 1909